

# Peak District Local Access Forum

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 9 December 2021 at Aldern House, Board Room.

### Members Present:

Martin Bennett  
Richard Entwistle  
Louise Hawson  
Geoff Nickolds

Charlotte Gilbert (Chair)

Ben Seal  
John Thompson  
Jez Kenyon  
Paul Richardson

### Others Present:

Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)  
Gill Millward, (DCC)

Rich Pett, (PDNPA)  
Sue Smith, (PDNPA)

## 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Charlotte Gilbert (as acting Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular Mark Williams from the Hollowford Centre who was attending the meeting as an observer.

Mike Rhodes reported that apologies had been received from Steve Martin, Cllr Susan Hobson, Cllr Huddleston, Alastair Harvey and Clare Griffin.

Ally Turner and Bob Berzins, both long serving members, had resigned from the Local Access Forum.

### Tribute to John Thompson

Cllr Andrew McCloy, Chair of the Authority and former Chair of the LAF was invited to say a few words of thanks to John as he had stepped down from being Chair of the LAF and thanked him on behalf of everyone connected with National Parks on his leadership and vision in bringing people together to advise the National Park Authority on issues that had many different voices. He then invited John to say a few words to the Forum.

“It has been a great honour for me to Chair the Local Access Forum (the first to be established under the CROW Act, 2000 with Joint Sponsors in the Peak District NPA and Derbyshire CC), following on from Andrew Critchlow & Andrew McCloy as Chairs and Edwina Edwards in 2017. Delighted to join the Forum in 2009 when Andrew was Chair and to be Vice Chair to Edwina from 2010. I have thoroughly enjoyed being Chair.

I am most grateful to Vice Chairs - Bob and Charlotte for their support and value Charlotte kindly taking the Chair for today's meeting. The interest and support of members with different skills and experiences remains invaluable and greatly appreciated in our work and actions as statutory independent advisors. We work well together and usually achieve consensus in making our recommendations.

The advice and support of officers has been excellent and is very much appreciated in the work of the LAF - Mike Rhodes as Secretary of the Forum since the Forum began in 2000 is a driving force for the work of the Forum and he has great colleagues in Gill Millward, Sue Smith and Richard Pett providing excellent reporting to us and arranging site visits.

We have had good communication from Sarah Fowler and Sarah Wilks on National Park

issues. Minute taking is with the experts in Democratic Services who give us excellent support through Ruth Crowder, Karen Harrison (today) and Belinda Wybrow in organising meetings online and in current circumstances with Covid restrictions.

All staff involved with the LAF show great enthusiasm, knowledge, professionalism and dedication which I have greatly valued. I welcome the support of the Peak and Derbyshire for our advice on access and rights of way matters and scope for improvements.

Thank you again Andrew and Colleagues and I am happy to support a new Chair as I continue as a LAF member currently until December 2022”.

Mike Rhodes, Secretary to the LAF, reported that it had been a pleasure working with John and thanked him for his professionalism and dedication.

John was then presented with gifts of an engraved tankard and a framed photo along with a card kindly signed by colleagues.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES INCLUDING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR/VICE CHAIR**

Mike Rhodes tabled a report to invite expressions of interest from existing LAF Members for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair following the retirement of John Thompson and the current terms of the existing Vice Chairs (Bob and Charlotte) having expired. If any LAF Member was interested, then they were invited to email Mike, supported by the names of their promoter and seconder by the 28th February 2022. These appointments will be made at the next meeting of the LAF on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and will be for a two year term.

Mike also reported on a number of vacancies on the LAF at the moment and that an active recruitment for new members was underway, reaching out to a number of organisations, and it was hoped that these vacancies would also be filled by the March meeting.

**Recommendation: That the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the Forum be carried out in accordance with the proposal outlined in the report and that any expressions of interest be emailed to Mike Rhodes by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.**

## **3. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 9TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> September were approved as a correct record and Ruth Crowder was thanked for producing them.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Ben Seal updated the LAF Members on a meeting he had attended recently regarding the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) and the recent Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) announcement and feedback from the Government on the Designated Landscapes Review which should be out soon.

### ELMS

ELMS has been around now for the last 2 years in design phase and replaces the basic payment to landowners and will now be to encourage the provision of public goods rather than a standard rate. At a local level, farmers should be paid if they want to, for improving and enhancing access. There was nothing in the recent Government announcement regarding access, but still pushing really hard at a national level to get it back on the agenda with DEFRA.

### Designated Landscapes Review

No update on when the Government's response to the Glover Review will be available as yet or what the content will be.

The Treasury commissioned Lord Agnew to look into access to the countryside and how the Government could bring about a 'quantum shift' in thinking as a result of the uplift in interest brought about by COVID. This now appears to not be happening.

In 2022 it is expected that there will be two new pieces of legislation which may affect National Parks:-

- Levelling Up Bill – may have interesting things relating to access
- Nature Recovery Green Paper – which will include a review of the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest/Special Protection Areas and will also include a piece on Access to Nature

John Thompson thanked Ben for his good work in keeping Members informed and for his dedicated enthusiasm in pressing DEFRA officials on the Landscapes Review.

### Sustainable Transport Initiatives

Martin Bennett asked if Tim Nicholson, the National Park Authority's Transport Planner could provide an update on the Hope Valley initiative and the potential for future area management scope in the National Park at the next LAF Meeting in March.

**ACTION: Invite Tim to the March meeting to give a presentation (MJR).**

## **5. FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES – FIPL (PRESENTATION)**

Rebekah Newman, Farm Advisor introduced Rob Kenning to the Forum, who has been appointed for 6 months to deal with FiPL and access projects within the National Park. She reported that they were looking to recruit another half time post up to the end of March 2024 when the scheme ends and ELMS takes over some of the projects.

Rob then gave a presentation to LAF Members on FiPL, which was a snapshot of current and completed projects and . There were roughly 30 projects on the active pursuit list at the moment, with most of the suggestions coming via the Local Access Forum's Wish List or the Peak District National Park's officers, with only a small number coming from landowners,. he was always open to hear about other proposals and is actively looking for more projects that could be suitable for FiPL funding.

Rob informed LAF Members that after 2024 when the funding is withdrawn, there was no necessity on the landowners' part to keep the routes open. They will be branded as Peak Permissive Paths on the National Park website so visitors are aware. Rob and Rebekah are speaking to Sue Smith on how best to promote the routes.

Ben Seal asked how the list was chosen? There were good long standing relationships with the landowners on the 4 routes that had been completed and these were not contentious. Rebekah informed Members that all landowners/farmers were emailed to inform them of the funding available for them to provide access, but also welcomed suggestions from user groups.

The LAF thanked Rob for his presentation.

**Action: Rob to supply the summary sheet to Mike Rhodes to distribute to LAF Members.**

## **6. ACCESS UPDATE**

Sue Smith updated the Members on the Peak District National Park Foundation which had met its gift target this year and thanked the Foundation for supporting the Access Fund and in particular the Miles without Stiles work.

Sue provided an update on Anniversary Gates which celebrates the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peak District National Park and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of open access and the Local Access Forum. Approximately 40 stiles have been replaced with gates, which includes bespoke wider gates constructed by the Countryside Volunteers, to enable people with mobility issues to have better access. Sue suggested a future site visit by LAF Members to look at what's being achieved.

Sue thanked Jess Coatesworth for her help with the Ease of Use Survey on rights of way throughout the National Park. The pass rate was 83.7%.

**The report was noted.**

## **7. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE & GREEN LANES**

Gill Millward from Derbyshire County Council presented her report on progress towards the delivery of the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Major rights of way schemes highlighted at the last LAF Meeting have been programmed for delivery and more than 170 other paths across the county will also benefit from improvements by the end of March 2022. Details of locations where DCC is planning to install roadside signposts can now be viewed on the Derbyshire Mapping Portal. If anyone sees a byway/bridleway or footpath that does not have a signpost in place where it leaves the road, then please report it so it can be logged.

Gill reported that work continues to investigate and process the Definitive Map Modification Order applications (approx. 300) which have been received. Members of the joint LAF Sub Group are looking at unrecorded ways and how best to prioritise them. This will be discussed at a future LAF Meeting.

The annual condition surveys on the Pennine Bridleway National Trail have now been completed and the results will inform work planning and budgeting for 2022/23.

The feasibility studies for the White Peak Loop continue to be progressed and the County Council awaits the outcome of the recent funding bid under Tranche 3 of the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund.

The new Cycle Derbyshire Leaflet has proved very popular, so much so a reprint of 30,000 is underway.

### Green Lanes

Sue Smith updated Members on the proposed repairs to green lanes and other routes in the National Park and gave a presentation showing routes that were due for repair which included routes not necessarily on green lanes but some on routes that were multi-user. These had been inspected by the Sub-Group on recent site visits which were well attended by LAF Members.

**The report was noted and progress on delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the update on the repairs to Green Lanes was welcomed.**

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND PUBLIC ACCESS**

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the LAF in March 2022.

## **9. MEMBERS' REPORTS**

National Park Management Plan (NPMP) – Charlotte attended an online meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> December to review the visions and aims of the NPMP. Lots that the LAF can contribute to.

Local Plan – Martin reported that there was nothing more to add at this time.

Business Case Review – John Thompson reported on the opportunity that was offered to contribute to review part of the Business Change Project. John had produced some notes that had been sent to LAF Members. Janice Southway, Business Change Manager has completed the review which will be taken forward. Report to follow in March.

Stanage Bridleway – The LAF has been involved with the bridleway which runs through Stanage Plantation over the years. There are 2 bridleways, 1 runs through the plantation and the other around the edge which ends in a bog and is not ideal to be promoted. The route through the plantation has been maintained as a bridleway and is a massively important route for mountain bikers as well. Work is to be undertaken in the plantation to remove the diseased larches then repairs to the bridleway can be carried out to protect the route.

Mike Rhodes thanked Charlotte, John and Martin for flying the flag for access.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE**

John Thompson reported to LAF Members that proposals by MEMRAP for the re-opening of the Monsal Trail as a railway through the Government's Restoring Your Railway Fund had not been successful. In line with the LAF's view, Derbyshire County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority had agreed that the Monsal Trail should be preserved as a key recreational route.

Ben Seal reported that he had received an invite from Severn Trent Water to discuss allowing canoeists onto Ladybower Reservoir. There were also plans to create a parking area on the old road which would have a gated entrance.

## **11. DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2022**

The dates for the LAF meetings for 2022 were agreed as follows:

17<sup>th</sup> March

16<sup>th</sup> June

15<sup>th</sup> September

1<sup>st</sup> December

Meeting ended – 12:45

e:\moderngov\data\agendadocs\0\9\8\00002890\\$\$minutes.doc

