

Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024
at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell.**

Members Present:

Charlotte Leech
Nick Doran
Martin Bennett
Councillor Ian Huddleston
Richard Entwistle
Clare Griffin
Jez Kenyon
Paul Richardson

Louise Hawson (Chair)

Craig Best
Cllr Susan Hobson
Austin Knott
Dave Savage
Charlotte Gilbert
Alastair Harvey
Geoff Nickolds
John Towe

Others Present:

Gill Millward, (DCC)
Rich Pett, (PDNPA)

Sue Smith, (PDNPA)
Mike Rhodes, (PDNPA) (Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ben Seal.

26. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Ben Seal.

27. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING - 21 FEBRUARY 2024

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21 February 2024 were agreed as a true record.

28. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING NOT COVERED BY AGENDA

Any updates on the progress of Recreation Hubs should be reported back to LAF as the work on the National Park Management Plan develops. There is nothing to report back to the June meeting.

Charlotte Gilbert, Charlotte Leech and Craig Best were thanked again for their presentations on the perspective of land managers at the previous meeting. Charlotte Gilbert advised, following on from one of the identified problems of land ownership, that recently published NFU data recorded £2.4 million worth of stock had been killed or severely injured in incidents involving dogs UK wide in 2023. This is up from £1.8 million the previous year. These incidents will continue to be a challenge and worth coming back to at future LAF meetings.

Item 6

Louise advised that the consultation responses on the long term Directions at Diggle and West Nab have now been sent. An amendment on the West Nab Direction was on today's agenda for discussion later in the meeting under Item 9.

Item 7

Martin Bennett advised that the letter he was asked to draft at the February meeting to DCC

cabinet members regarding the work on roadside marking would need to be resent.

29. ELECTION OF CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

Louise Hawson's term as Chair of the Peak District Local Access Forum has ended after 2 years. Louise would like to step down at this point, and the Forum is now required to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair. No names have been put forward for the role of Chair.

Clare Griffin advised that she would not be able to put her name forward for the role of Chair because of the commitment required in between the main meetings. Other members may feel similar. Clare suggests that the position of Chair should be done on a meeting by meeting basis whereby the person appointed takes on the duties for the next meeting and any associated work up until the next meeting is due. Mike Rhodes was happy to go with that suggestion. The decision needs to be decided by members, and would need to be a standing item at the end of each agenda.

Dave Savage asked if the responsibilities of the Chair could be outlined. Louise set this out. An agenda is set at a pre meeting a month before each full LAF meeting. This is circulated to members. The Chair suggests the theme for each meeting, along with who might be asked to make any presentations to the committee. Minutes of the previous meeting are sent out to members for review, and to suggest any amendments that need to be made. Statutory items, such as TRO's or Directions, need to be identified for discussion and consultation. The Chair may also need to respond to any queries relating to LAF business.

Nick Doran suggested the Chair could be chosen by taking it in turns, possibly from an alphabetical list of names.

The next meetings are 16 October 2024 and 19 February 2025, which Clare advised, she could act as Chair for one of those meetings. Sue Smith suggested as each meeting has a theme, members may want to act as Chair where that theme matches their own particular experience, interest and knowledge as representatives on the LAF on behalf of their stakeholder groups. Health and Wellbeing is the suggested theme for the next meeting. If it was agreed to have a Chair on a meeting by meeting basis, the standing item on the agenda would need to be selecting both the theme and Chair for the next meeting.

Charlotte Gilbert stated that for the purposes of continuity, she was happy to continue as Vice Chair to support the role of Chair on a rotation basis, and she also advised that she would be happy to act as Chair for the next meeting. As the theme next time is Health and Wellbeing, Louise suggests that Charlotte acts as Chair in October, and that Clare Griffin makes a presentation.

Decision:

All members around the table agreed that Charlotte Gilbert acts as Chair for the next meeting on 16 October 2024, with a theme of Health and Wellbeing. No-one voted against.

The committee thanked Louise for her work over the last 2 years as Chair. It had been quite a difficult time for LAF members after the previous Chair, John Thompson, passed away. And also not the easiest time for Louise to take up the role at the end of the Covid epidemic. Louise confirmed that it has been a pleasure to act as Chair, and appreciated that everyone on the committee contributes to the Forum.

Action:

To have selection of Chair and theme as a standing item at the end of each agenda for future meetings.

30. ACTIVE TRAVEL - PRESENTATION

Tim Nicholson (PDNPA) – Transport Policy Planner and Matthew Eglin (PDNPA) Sustainable Travel Officer, gave a presentation on the project to produce a PDNP Walking and Cycling Plan in order to seek the Forum’s assistance in its development.

Tim gave some background detail of the Sustainable Transport Project. The PD National Park is a complex location, with many constituent authorities, and currently four Mayoral regions. 13.5 million people live within 1 hour of the PD National Park by car. Visits have increased after Covid. The majority of visits are by car, and there is less public transport provision since Covid.

A public transport accessibility study was undertaken in autumn and early winter 2022. 138 random postcodes outside the park were generated, travelling to 21 key locations in the National Park. The journeys had to meet certain criteria, such as staying at the destination area for at least 2 hours, and less than 30 minutes walking time to get on public transport. This generated nearly 3 thousand journeys. On average using public transport involved 3 separate services, with 23 minutes walking time between transport stops. Total travel time was 3 hours and 49 minutes, allowing for 3 hours and 17 minutes time available at the destination.

Public transport access was compared to access by car, including costs. This looked at where people were setting out from, and which locations in the National Park they visited. The research found that there are a number of villages and recreation hubs that can’t be accessed by scheduled public transport. Visits by public transport in comparison to travelling by car showed that more time was spent travelling than spent at the destination.

An online survey was carried out asking respondents about their most recent journey. A significant number travelling by car visited more than one PD destination, which is a much more difficult proposition for people using public transport. Cost wasn’t the main reason given for opting not to use public transport. Frequency of service and location of stops were seen as more significant. Almost a third of respondents visited on a weekly basis, with almost two thirds visiting at least every 2 weeks. Encouraging frequent visitors to use public transport or active travel would reduce the negative effects of visitor travel on the National Park.

A Transport Symposium took place in February 2023 to look at promoting increased use of public transport, which resulted in the establishment of a 3 year fixed term Sustainable Travel Officer Post, and provision of a £50k budget to support the project. Matthew Eglin then spoke about delivery of the project. His role as Sustainable Travel Officer is aimed at addressing the need to reduce transport emissions, and to look at ways to increase access to the NP by active travel and reducing carbon intensity of journeys.

Matthew advised that car ownership in the NP is high, and provision of public transport is low. Commuters into the Park make up a substantial amount of travel undertaken in the Peak District. Sustainable Travel Plans need to take into account the needs of residents, visitors and commuters. The current project phase will gather data, and is looking for funds to support research and programmes which improve travel, whilst both protecting the Park’s special characteristics and encouraging enjoyment of the PDNP.

Tim talked about the Active Travel England (ATE) bid in 2024 where each English National Park was successful in securing £100k funding from ATE. This has to be used to develop a Local Walking & Infrastructure Plan within 12 months. The work falls into 4 areas.

Producing the plan, data and evidence collection, facilitation and consultation, and scheme development. Tim went on to ask for LAF support to establish a sub-group to help produce a plan, and to widen out the project to difficult to access groups.

Geoff Nickolds asked about the figure of 26 million visitors per year, which seems high. Tim responded that the information comes from STEAM data for all National Parks looking at visits of 3 hours or more of 13 million, plus an equivalent number of 1 hour visits. This is a pre-Covid figure. What we've seen in the last year is on particular days, especially with good weather, there have been very high visitor numbers to certain sites. Matthew added that these figures are correlated with traffic data, and although exact figures are difficult to record, what can be gathered from the data is the frequency of visits going up or down over periods of time. Susan Hobson, who is a cyclist and an occasional bus user, said that the reliability of buses affects the number of people using the service. Transport providers should be part of the wider sub group. Given the number of visitors to the NP, the level of online survey response (362) was poor.

Craig Best commented that this was good research, and as some of the sites fall under National Trust ownership, it is useful information to include in NT plans. The National Trust secures good income from car parks which is all re-invested. Craig felt that it was a short period to come up with a plan, and suggested that NT could contribute project manager time.

Alastair Harvey said it was good to see the figures, and welcomed the idea of setting up a sub-group. The responsibility for provision of sustainable routes lies with local authorities, where there is a tendency to work in silos. Wider strategies are therefore a good idea. Yorkshire Water are looking at permissive routes around their sites. It might be possible to establish an off road, or quiet roads cycling route from Stockton to Langsett. They sponsor a bus in the north of their region, and are looking at sponsorship to other areas, but options are limited. Managing cars is a headache and parking charges don't seem to put people off visiting.

Jez Kenyon stated that cars give people freedom, and that cars will become greener. Improving access to car users increases access to a lot of people. This is about managing cars and we shouldn't be anti car. Understanding the total journey picture indicates that emissions due to visitor impact are low. The focus needs to be where the biggest emissions are.

Tim advised that the current project and related discussions are not anti car, but the impact is higher in some places than others. The provision of alternatives to car use has become less over time, and there are groups who can't afford to own a car. The aim is to give a choice and enable people to visit. Jez added that we should be positive about managing cars and parking as it brings in money. Matthew Elgin confirmed the point about emissions is correct. The discussions aren't anti car, but if people can use public transport it frees up roads and parking areas.

John Towe said that public transport is useful for people with disabilities. For some countries this provision isn't a problem, but globally there is a disconnect. There are some people who can't access the National Park. Tim advised that the project will be looking at accessibility issues, including walking, cycling and wheeling options. The trails are accessible for most users, but people need to be able to access the Park in the first case to access them.

Martin Bennet expressed an interest in being part of the sub group. He highlighted the Netherlands where people cycle everywhere, travel is integrated, with a good standard of public transport. Paul pointed out that the Netherlands is flat. Martin responded that wind is a factor though – and there are electric bikes for hills. The model for effective public transport systems is there. Paul also added that there are cost implications with electric

bikes. In order to increase cycle use into the PDNP, there should be reclassification and upgrade of some off road routes.

Tim set out that the first year development of the plan will be high level rather than the detail, but he will be working with constituent authorities to identify gaps in the network getting into the PDNP. It's a long process to change the status of a footpath to a bridleway. Paul added that the provision to carry bikes on public transport is poor.

Clare mentioned that there is useful data on where people go, through heat maps and working with STRAVA. This data can be used for managing parking. For example, the village of Wetton has a small car park, and parking can be a problem. A farmer has opened up a field for parking, but this information isn't generally available. There is no publicity for ad hoc parking places. Tim advised that there is a policy for ad hoc parking areas, so that people are aware what they can do without requiring planning permission, but then these locations aren't recorded. It could be useful to find a way to make this information more publicly available.

Craig mentioned the National Trust's 10 year strategy for Carbon reduction and ending unequal access to nature. Cars are used to carry kit that people need when they are travelling and visiting the area, but cycling and walking will be encouraged in relation to access rather than emissions. STRAVA data comes from a certain demographic, so we need to look at how data is collected. There is an anti-car perception from how the information is presented. We need to get over it. Money from car parking benefits people by improving access. It's questionable whether 28 days is enough for temporary parking provision. Roadside parking causes damage and maybe this could be formalised in some way, as well as potentially charging vehicles to park there.

In the case of Wetton car parking, Charlotte Leech said that the farmer opening up a field for parking helped the farmer both financially and with their own access issues. Promoting parking there could swamp the area with visitors. Car owners may want to use public transport, but it is too expensive.

Tim said that the ticketing system should be made easier, through transport authorities talking to each other and combining tickets. There could be a potential for more integrated working with the new mayoral authorities. Car use should be accepted, and the wider use of vehicles generally, such as camper vans. Paul added that increased traffic takes a toll on the roads, and road maintenance projects can cut places off for periods of time.

Action:

Charlotte Gilbert, as Chair for the next LAF meeting, will move the Peak District LAF Sustainable Transport Project sub-group forward. Craig Best, Alastair Harvey, Martin Bennett, Susan Hobson, Charlotte Leech, Jez Kenyon, Paul Richardson and Geoff Nickolds expressed an interest in being part of that sub-group

31. DERBYSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGEMENT AND REPAIRS INCLUDING REPORT ON SUB-GROUP MEETING

Rob Greatorex, DCC Rights of Way (RoW), updated the Forum on Rights of Way management and repairs, including notes from the Peak District LAF sub-group meeting on 20/05/24. He also outlined the Capital spending programme for 2024/25.

From 13 May, Rob has a new role as Senior Project Engineer for Highways Inspections, with a remit for all highways inspections, the new roads and street works function at DCC,

and public Rights of Way. Rob oversees the work on RoW rather than having direct involvement.

Towards the end of 2023-2024 it wasn't possible to complete that year's programme due to adverse weather. This was compounded by a residue of works from previous years, so DCC have had to be realistic about what can be delivered for the 2024-2025 Capital Programme.

Hollowford Road at Castleton and the Long Causeway at Outseats are among the 30 minor schemes scheduled for 2024-2025. The proposed delivery of some schemes in the Peak District that haven't been completed in previous years include routes at Bamford, Edale, Birchover, South Darley, Monyash, Chinley, Holmesfield and Eyam.

The need for DCC to prioritise repairs to Derbyshire's roads has resulted in a backlog of rights of way schemes to be delivered on the ground. The programme of works is open to review as a result. Some schemes may have to come back onto the list for 2025/2026 or beyond.

Nick Doran noted that the aims this year were lower, with smaller projects compared to the previous year. Rob responded that they had probably been over ambitious previously, plus the impact of bad weather, which meant a relook at setting the schedule. The 2024/25 list is deliverable.

Martin mentioned the number of pot holes, but also that cycling routes are good. Could route maps and interpretation boards show definitive map numbers. Rob felt this was a good idea, and will look into it. Susan praised the fingerpost work that had been carried out.

Clare wondered how work was prioritised and Rob advised this was done using a scoring criteria of incoming enquiries from the public, parish councils etc as well as input from the LAF. Clare suggested that the LAF could help by feeding back information to DCC. Louise said that there was an annual meeting between LAF and DCC RoW to help prioritise route repairs.

Craig asked how DCC works with larger landowners such as the National Trust, where their priority work could help with resourcing for RoW maintenance. Although this was something to explore, Rob pointed out the complex procurement regulations within DCC and service level agreements with other organisations.

Austin Knott asked about the route at Bamford Clough, which has been closed for a while. Rob advised that they aim to sort this year with an experimental Traffic Regulation Order, where consultation responses need taking back to the Cabinet Member for guidance. BOAT 31 at Eyam has been washed out and has had to be temporarily closed. Austin queried why the route has to be closed to all users, when people can still walk and cycle on it. Rob advised that the route is very damaged, but it could be reviewed.

Austin commented on the good work done on signposts, but unfortunately some have been removed. Some could have been accidental, but others are malevolent. Stickers have been added to advise against removal which is a criminal offence. Rob confirmed that even though timber signposts have been installed, some way markers are still being removed or damaged.

Gill Millward commented on the 23 red routes discussed at previous sub-group meetings, where it was useful to have feedback from all the different user groups represented on the LAF. Louise encouraged LAF members to feedback about key routes at the sub-group meeting, which can provide a different perspective on current schemes. Feedback is mainly on Derbyshire schemes. LAF doesn't hear back from other constituent authorities on a routine basis.

Martin said that people can take secateurs to keep access on routes clear, for example, going over stiles. Rob advised that a vegetation clearance programme started in mid-May. 700 sites are treated each year, and most paths are visited twice.

Jez suggested that with the amount of surfaces being washed away, more drainage work rather than less should be carried out. Landowners would be happy for people to do their own maintenance, but there is no mechanism to connect up volunteer groups with landowner. The Land Registry can be accessed to check details of land ownership, but Martin suggested that this service should be made free and open to all. Louise added that drainage work should include working with landowners on schemes to hold water.

Action:

The report on Derbyshire RoW management and repairs is noted, along with that from the LAF Sub-Group meeting on 20 May 2024.

32. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE

Gill Millward mentioned some of the highlights from the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) update report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

- **Aim 1:** Existing Rights of Way Network

This has been covered in the previous item with Rob Greatorex.

- **Aim 2:** Definitive Map and Statement

Work is ongoing to clear the increasing backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order applications.

- **Aim 3:** An improved network

An on-line consultation is underway until 24 June 2024 to collect people's views on the Active Travel Masterplan for the three market towns of Glossop, Ilkeston and Belper. LAF were encouraged to respond on the masterplan for Glossop. There will be a plan for Hope Valley coming up.

- **Aim 4:** Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

As the next LAF meeting will focus on health and wellbeing, Gill offered to find out more about the Move More/Nature Connection Map and whether someone could talk about this at the next LAF meeting.

- **Aim 5:** Greater community involvement 337

Volunteer contribution is important for carrying out much needed maintenance and improvements on Derbyshire's network of paths and trails. However, it does require managing, which can be with limited staff resources.

Susan commented on the progress with the White Peak Loop and was pleased to hear about the study into creating the Derwent Valley Cycleway. Small initiatives, such as locking bikes up safely, should be promoted.

Action:

The Update on the Derbyshire RoWIP is noted and will continue to be an agenda item for future LAF meetings.

33. ACCESS FOR ALL

Sue Smith updated LAF members on DEFRA Access funding, which is in Year 3, with funding of £155.8k.

Work identified for Year 3 takes forward three aims of: more miles, more places and more mobility. This includes a proposed Changing Place at Parsley Hay to complement the trampers on offer there. The Goyt Miles without Stiles route is already partly resurfaced and some of the funding will be used to double the length of the route.

After the meeting, LAF members were invited to go and look at the proposed improvements to the link between the Monsal Trail and Coombs Road, which includes better surfacing and hand rails to assist with the steep gradient. The High Peak trail at Hurdlow will also be improved. Miles without stiles route videos will allow people to view locations before visiting.

Martin commented that the Ramblers, as an outdoor group, campaign for the sorts of changes Sue has highlighted. More seating and resting places in landscaped areas are needed and provision of shelters given the amount of rain we have in the UK.

Sue said that in Year 1 of the funding, a ramp was installed to one of the former weighbridges on the Tissington Trail. The other weighbridges and shelters will be looked at in Year 3, and will include seating and interpretation boards.

Craig advised of grant money that had been accessed for Ilam Country Park, which wasn't a good site for anyone with mobility problems. Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) funding means that improvements have been made to make the café, river and the bridge accessible. There is also an Ilam and Dovedale bid for Heritage Lottery Funding so that the National Trust can make further improvements. The exact plans are still to be determined. The NT is working with the LAF to look at transport issues at Mam Tor, Winnats Pass and Odin Mine, to explore ways that visitors can be spread out more across sites. An estimated 1 million people visit Mam Tor every year.

Nick suggested video route descriptions are worth encouraging in other scenarios, but need to be kept up to date. Louise agreed that these could benefit other people. Sue is considering whether videos may be an option for informing the public about new permissive paths. Currently the focus is on Access for All routes. People need to be confident in using the routes and they can be developed for use elsewhere and with different user groups.

Action:

The report is noted

34. ACCESS RESTRICTIONS CONSULTATIONS

Long term directions are reviewed every 5 years. The 3 that are due for review this year all involve areas where shooting takes place. Deer Hill and Diggle Rifle Range are larger in scale than West Nab. The consultation considers land management and the safety of people when they access these areas.

At Deer Hill and Diggle it is proposed that the restrictions continue. Opportunities will be sought for improving access on the areas around the sites.

At West Nab, a variation is proposed in order to improve the existing situation to give good visibility for people entering the site. Sue advised that the proposed variation on the direction proposes a new track through the site to link to the adjoining area of Access land, with the track to remain open 365 days a year. The LAF supported the work undertaken so far.

Austin asked if the review of directions looked at the access restrictions for dogs. Sue

responded that long-term directions are reviewed from the perspective of land management and public safety. A further long term direction to review this year is at Hollins Hill, where there is linear access with a dog restriction in place from May to October annually. There is no discretion to review restrictions at other sites, as they run for 5 years.

Action: The consultation response in Appendix 1 is confirmed and the LAF to respond to the consultation as set out in Appendix 2

35. ANNUAL REPORT

Mike Rhodes asked for LAF members to feed back to him on any themes or topics for discussion at future LAF meetings, along with any thoughts on the shape of the Forum in the future.

Action: That the Local Access Forum Annual Report 2023 be noted.

36. MEMBER REPORTS

- a) **Martin Bennett:** There had been a year long process of setting up a consultation plan for Derbyshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Martin had attended an engagement event at Shipley Country Park near Heanor.
- b) **Charlotte Gilbert: Update on the Trails Management Plan:** An update on the works that have been completed has been circulated. In addition to the work that is detailed in the Action Plan, the Trails Team has been responding to the structure survey work, with work on tunnels and bridges completed in line with the prioritisation for the 6-yearly inspections. A regular inspection regime is in place. Vegetation clearance is now part of the annual maintenance plan, and annual risk assessments are completed. Work to increase capacity at some car parks, and charging being introduced to further carp parks, is taking place in line with the Trails Management Plan. Charlotte asked if a link to the Trails Plan and NPMP could be circulated.
- c) **Charlotte Gilbert: National Park Management Plan (NPMP)**
LAF members had asked for an update on the NPMP which is the overarching plan for the Peak District National Park. The NPMP has now been updated for 2023-2028, and the National Park Authority works with partners and groups to deliver its aims.
 - The Partnership group oversees and reviews delivery and is made up of senior representatives from partner organisations such as Local Authorities and large landowners who have significant statutory duties. This group meets once a year.
 - The Delivery Group is made up of representatives from partner organisations to make sure the NPMP is being delivered. This group meets 4 times a year.
 - The Stakeholder forum is open to all stakeholder and partner organisations with an interest or wider role in NPMP delivery. The Forum meets once a year. The LAF is part of this wider stakeholder group. The forum gives partners an opportunity to influence the NPMP and vision with direct officer contact. It is a large group made up of around 80 partners. Stakeholders go to the wider group on specific issues. The LAF has been identified as a relevant group to contribute on only one area, which is to encourage and enable a strategic approach to actively manage prevention and mitigation of uncontrolled fires on moorland. There are other groups who have been asked to input on this issue. There is no fixed date for the first forum.

The first annual monitoring report is in the final stages of production, which is due to be published in July. Charlotte feels that the LAF only being asked to have input on fire management is a missed opportunity. She suggested that once the annual report is published, the LAF should ask for someone from the PDNPA to be present at a future LAF meeting, and that the LAF's scope and vision is included in other areas of the NPMP.

Louise agreed that LAF should be consulted on the NPMP. Mike felt this had been an

omission not to include LAF as part of the NPMP process. Martin mentioned that the Council for National Parks had produced a health check report on nature recovery, which was worth the group looking at in any input that is made to the NPMP.

Action: MJR to circulate links for the National Park Management Plan and Trails Management Plan to LAF members, and to ask that someone from the PDNPA speaks at a future LAF meeting and to consider wider feedback from the LAF in addition to moorland fire management.

37. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Charlotte and Martin are happy to remain as joint Vice Chairs of the LAF.

Decision: LAF members unanimously supported Charlotte Gilbert and Martin Bennett continuing as Vice Chairs to the Peak District LAF.

The meeting closed with a presentation to Louise for her work as Chair. Louise will remain as a member of LAF.

38. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING -16TH OCTOBER 2024

Date of the next meeting is Wednesday 16 October 2024 at Aldern House, Bakewell.

The dates for 2025 meetings are Wednesday 19 February, Wednesday 11 June and Wednesday 15 October.

Meeting ended - Time Not Specified

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