

Peak District Local Access Forum

Date: 4 February 2026

Item: 8

Title: Access Update

Author: Sue Smith

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on issues related to access in the Peak District.

Defra Access for All

The full extent of the £255.9k of funding for 2025/26 has now been received. Projects are underway for delivery by end of March 2026. This includes: schemes for improved access to nature for all, a Changing Place at Trentabank, Accessible Bakewell, interactive mapping for Miles without Stiles routes, trikes, wheelchair bikes, and e-bikes.

Farming in Protected Landscapes

Funding for the FIPL programme has been extended for a further 3 years until end March 2029.

- [Case studies 2024-25](#)

Access Funding

The LAF have written to the Peak District Foundation with details of their support for donations and funding raised for improving access. Appendix 1.

- [2024/25 Annual Report](#).

Local Plan

The response provided by the Forum to the Local Plan [Preferred Approach Consultation](#) is attached in Appendix 2.

North Lees Verge Parking Byelaws


The making, implementation, and enforcement of byelaws to restrict verge parking on areas of Authority-owned land, access land, and highway is proposed to be taken forward across the North Lees Estate in particular.

- [Draft byelaws for verges](#) and [plans](#)

Recommendation

- 1. That the report be noted.**

Appendix 1

 The logo for the Peak District Local Access Forum. It features a stylized green mountain range with a blue winding path leading up to a white semi-circle representing the sky. Below the graphic is a green rectangular box with the text 'PEAK DISTRICT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM' in white capital letters.	<p>Peak District Local Access Forum c/o Peak District National Park Authority Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1AE Email: PDLAF@peakdistrict.gov.uk</p>
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Roisin Joyce
Director, Peak District National Park Foundation
Aldern House, Bakewell, DE45 1AE
by email: roisin@peakdistrictfoundation.org.uk

10 December 2025

Dear Roisin

PDLAF AND THE PATH AND TRAILS APPEAL

The Peak District Local Access Forum is the statutory body advising the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC) (among others) on recreation and access matters within the Peak District National Park area. We were set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 to advise on the improvement of public access in the Peak District and Northwest Derbyshire for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment. Forum members are drawn from a wide range of access interests including walking, climbing, cycling, horse riding, recreational motor vehicles, farming, land management, major landowners, conservation organisations, and local businesses.

I am writing on behalf of the PDLAF to invite you to attend a future meeting to tell us more about the work of the Foundation and in particular the Paths and Trails Appeal, which has cross-over with the LAF's priorities and with the Access Fund, which we have supported for a number of years (see footnote).

We very much welcome the Foundation's focus on fundraising for improvements to the rights of way network and access more widely. It's clear these are vital issues for residents and visitors to the National Park, and contribute to health, wellbeing and the local economy. As a Forum, we'd like to understand more about the Paths and Trails Appeal, how projects are identified and how funds are allocated, and to look at the ways that PDLAF members can support the future of the Appeal.

PDLAF brings together a wide range of knowledgeable access stakeholders, and as such can provide expertise, knowledge of the access priorities and issues facing the Peak District and the opportunity to engage potential project partners and supporters.

On a practical level, opportunities for support could include:

- ☐ Promotion of fundraising appeals and activities
- ☐ Strategic advice on key themes, identifying priority routes or targeting access challenges in the Peak District

□ Involvement in distribution of funds (e.g. through a member of the LAF being involved in the appeal's grant making process on our behalf)

Our next meeting is 10am – 12.30pm on 4 February 2026, at Aldern House. We'd be delighted if you can join us then.

If you would like to discuss this further prior to the meeting, I'd be happy to have a call with you.

Yours sincerely

Louise Hawson
on behalf of the Peak District Local Access Forum

Copies by email to:
LAF members
Peak District National Park Authority: Sue Smith
Derbyshire County Council: Gill Millward

Footnote: PDLAF's involvement in the Access Fund


PDLAF supported the creation of the Access Fund in 2014 as a standalone fund administered by the PDNPA Access Team and overseen by the Forum. PDLAF advised on how monies should be spent, including priorities for future years, and received annual reports and regular updates from the access team on how monies had been distributed.

The purpose of the Access Fund was to provide an opportunity for donations to be made towards access improvements in the National Park, in particular new and upgraded access points, new areas of access land, new permissive paths to improve links to existing access, signposts and signage, and mapping and leaflets.

Money was raised by public donations, sales of the Miles without Stiles Handbook and old copies of "the Clarion Ramblers" guides, and donations from organisations. Many of the public donations came from PDLAF members or were raised through the work of members.

When the Peak District National Park Foundation took on fundraising for the Access Fund in 2021, our understanding was that the Access Fund would remain ring-fenced and that the PDLAF would retain a continued role in the activities of the fund and receive regular reporting about how the money was spent. In recent years we have received reports on funding but have not been directly involved in advising on priorities for spending.

Appendix 2

 The logo for the Peak District Local Access Forum. It features a stylized green mountain range with a blue winding path or river in front of it, all enclosed within a circular frame. Below the graphic, the text 'PEAK DISTRICT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM' is written in green capital letters.	<p>Peak District Local Access Forum c/o Peak District National Park Authority Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1AE Email: PDLAF@peakdistrict.gov.uk</p>
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Policy and Communities Team,
Peak District National park Authority
Aldern House,
Baslow Road,
Bakewell,
DE45 1AE

21 December 2025

Dear Policy and Communities Team

Local Plan Review Preferred Approach Consultation

I am writing on behalf of the Peak District Local Access Forum in response to the Peak District National Park authority's request for feedback on the Local Plan Preferred Approach consultation. The Peak District Local Access Forum welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Local Plan. We welcome the scope and vision of the overall Plan and the outcomes, detailed in Section 3 - Spatial Objectives and Strategic Housing Provision, in support of the overall Vision statement are welcome. These are in line with our objectives of sustainable access, whilst maintaining the diverse landscape for which the Peak District is renowned. We will reserve our comments and observations to the aspects of the Plan as they refer to our areas of expertise.

The Peak District Local Access Forum has members drawn from a range of interests and is a statutory independent group appointed by the Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council. It advises those two authorities on improvements to public access in the Peak District and North West Derbyshire for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment. It was the first in the country and originally met in December 2000 following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. Its members bring experience of a broad range of interests including walking, climbing, cycling, horse riding, recreational motor vehicles, farming, land management, conservation, climate change and local business.

PDLAF Response to the Local Plan

The Peak District Local Access Forum welcomes the protections placed on the rights of way network in the local plan, however the LAF is disappointed to see no mention of the distance and percentage makeup of the RoW network in Key Facts point 5, pg17. The RoW network in the National Park is a key attraction for visitors and the LAF feels the importance of the network should not be downplayed.

The LAF appreciates the document is predominantly a document about planning policy and the LAF is pleased to see specific mention of opportunities to improve the right of way network in relation to future developments. The LAF is also pleased to see the specific safeguarding of the

Monsal and Trans Pennine Trails against development prejudicial to their current use as recreational trails. The LAF feels there needs to be clarification over the recognition of safeguarding blue and green spaces; the LAF would like the inclusion of access land and permissive rights to be encouraged as part of any development within the park and surrounding area.

The LAF is pleased to see the protections in place to minimise water pollution and protect water ways and ground water, as well as environmental protections aimed at increasing the park's resilience to climate change. However the LAF is concerned that access to blue spaces is barely mentioned, and not at all in relation to recreation. The LAF would like to see blue spaces being afforded the same consideration as the public rights of way network. Particularly a desire to see enhanced access to blue spaces in policies 62 and 63.

Policy 63 makes reference to walking, cycling and horse riding (paragraph D) with regard to the development of new routes. The LAF has been pleased to see the park authority's work on Miles Without Styles and would suggest wheeling and accessibility are added to this section, and others relating to rights of way and access.

Again, with regard to policy 63 paragraph D, the LAF is unsure of how any new route could meet all four subclauses and 'conserve and enhance the Special Qualities of the area'. Any new route could be seen as not enhancing or conserving in isolation, yet spreading the high volume of visitor traffic across a wider area of the park would act to conserve and enhance the whole of the park. The LAF feels new routes should be made as easy as possible to create. The LAF feels that policy 63 should be extended to help increase the RoW network, not just ensure its continuation. Whilst the RoW network in the park is extensive the percentage of bridlepaths is far below the national average of 22%.

LAF members were pleased to see support for sustainable transport to be included in the Preferred Approach but some LAF members would like to see this go further. Specifically, Policy T1 was asked to be significantly strengthened to require all major tourism and recreational developments to deliver fully funded high-quality, direct cycle routes and demand-responsive public transport links. There is a feeling that developments, business and residential, are not required to consider non-vehicle connections during planning. This can create isolated developments where there is no option but to use private cars. In an area already highly visited with limited access via public transport or active travel, developments could easily run counter to the national park's legally defined purposes.

The LAF welcomes "Draft Policy Direction 7 - Recreation Hubs" as a sustainable initiative for managing visitors to the National Park and would encourage this policy to be strengthened by the inclusion of sustainable transport links to the Hubs from outside the National Park and from the Hubs to the wider Park. The LAF is unclear on the definition of "recreation management areas" and would like this clarified as the policy appears to support developments designed to "reduce/mitigate" visitor pressures on these areas. The LAF seeks to increase access rather than reduce it.

With regard to "Draft Policy Direction 11 - Temporary Campsites; the LAF has discussed the role of Temporary Campsites as an alternative to wild-camping for those who wish to have a less formal experience. There is clearly a need for wider camping facilities in the park and the economic benefits could outway the negative impacts. The LAF would like to see a wider consultation, with alternatives to an Article 4 Direction, before this is applied for. Could reduced numbers of temporary sites, or sites limited to camping only, be a compromise?

The LAF welcomes the inclusion of public access as part of restoration schemes in Policy 44 and notes the reference to “amenity” in this policy as well as Policy 50. The LAF also notes the priority for “nature recovery”. The LAF has previously discussed the importance of access in areas of restoration, for example restored quarries for climbing, or the potential for increased access to blue spaces. The reference to amenity specifies ‘nature conservation’, however the term is not confined to this and includes access. The LAF feels nature recovery and access are not mutually exclusive and would encourage public access to be strengthened in these policies.

Yours Sincerely

Nick Doran
Chair, Peak District LAF