

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held at The Council Offices, King Street, Pateley Bridge on Thursday, 5 August 2004.

**PRESENT:-**

In the Chair: Derek Welford.

County Councillors Steven Barnes, Eric Broadbent, Leo Crone, Rob Dennison, Roland Firby, Edward Flexman, Mrs Alison Fuller, John Goss, Nigel Graham, Max Grant, Tim Laurie, Stephen Ramsden, Rodney Waddilove and Thomas Wheelright.

Officers in attendance:- Paul Atkin, John Edwards, Angela Flowers, Chris Jones, Keith Watkins and Jane Wilkinson.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Bill Hoult and Judith Radcliffe.

Five members of the public attended the meeting.

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**COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK**

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**71. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

That subject to the following amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June, 2004, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record:-

- In Minute 66 on page 5 of the Minutes the reference be to a poster campaign for public consultation.
- Reference in the last line of the preamble to Minute 66 on page 5 to the web page survey being available until the end of October 2004 and not to the end of the week as stated.

**72. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS**

Gill Makin, a local resident who resided in Ramsgill asked whether, during the setting up of open access it would be possible to ensure that villages with moor land adjacent to them would have immediate access to that moor land, rather than as, for example, in Ramsgill where residents would have to travel three miles in either direction in order to gain access to moor land that was immediately to the rear of properties in the village. Chris Jones responded that it had been identified that in some cases, such as at Ramsgill, there was limited access and consequently it would be a matter of entering into negotiations with landowners in order to get improved access; residents of the village being considered in the same light as all other members of the public. However, whilst endeavours would be made to move this forward, the priority at present was to

concentrate on the immediate commencement for open access. A Member commented that as residents of villages had the same rights as the general public, if there were reasons for access to land immediately adjoining a village, then such access could always be created. It was also pointed out that access could be part of the Improvement Plan and it was also suggested that the Parish Council may be an avenue in resolving the matter as these had powers to create Rights of Way as well. It was therefore suggested that Mrs Makin may wish to approach her local Parish Council in this respect.

### **73. RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY**

Hilary Scott, representing the Countryside Agency, gave a presentation to the meeting.

She outlined the role that the Access Forum played in the process where the Countryside Agency had to go out to consultation if they made a long-term direction with the Access Forum being part of this process because:-

- (i) This was part of the remit of the LAF
- (ii) It was seen as an extra democratic step; and
- (iii) This was a chance to put forward things which may have been missed in the local context.

The meeting was informed that the Countryside Agency was the relevant Authority in this respect, except within the National Parks where the relevant Authority was the National Park Authority and, in the case of dedicated woodland where the relevant Authority was the Forestry Commission.

In order to deal with the situation, the Countryside Agency had two staff in the Leeds Office, two in Manchester and one who covered the Peak District. The Countryside Agency had a responsibility to consult the LAF on any direction it was proposing to give, which could restrict access for more than six months continuously. However, if this was not a continuous period, then it would not need to consult. There were two main streams for applications, firstly on land management grounds or, secondly, on grounds of public safety. In addition, the Countryside Agency could proceed where an application had not been received on heritage and nature conservation grounds working respectively with English Nature and English Heritage.

The other "statutory consultees" were local and varied and included for example, the British Mountaineering Council, the NFU, the Open Spaces Society, the British Association of Shooting and Conservation and the Ramblers' Association. Members of the public could also view proposals on the Open Access Website and comment if they so wished.

The meeting was informed that the process would be all web-based and the LAF would be e-mailed with details of how to log into the Open Access Website and as to how to submit comments. Subsequently each proposal would be sent by e-mail to the relevant person and this would include a copy of the original application and other documents, for example, the Consultation Notice and a map of the affected land, together with a brief of the determination and any details of parallel consultations that may be taking place, for example, in cases where half of the parcel of land may be in the Yorkshire Dales National Park area and the other half outside and where consultation was undertaken with both relevant Authorities.

With regard to making a response, there was a requirement that a single response be made by the LAF and this would be preferred on a special consent form. In addition, the Countryside Agency could attend any meeting of the LAF when the proposal was discussed. However, responses could not be accepted after the consultation period had elapsed.

As regards time constraints, the Countryside Agency had six weeks in which to determine an application and experience to date had proved that this period was just about right. If at the end of that period where it was proposed to make a long term direction, then the period was extended to a total of four months, ie being an extra ten weeks and endeavours were always made to try and give the LAF six weeks in which to consider a proposal.

In cases where a proposal was received at a time when the LAF had no scheduled meeting, there were a number of options, these being:-

- The holding of an extraordinary meeting.
- Delegating the matter to a smaller group.
- Canvassing Members' views by e-mails.

It was suggested that the LAF may consider implementing a dedicated Forum e-mail address, since the proposals could arrive at any time and did not allow for periods when either the Chairman or the Secretary were on holiday, etc. and consequently this would give others access to the information in order that the matter could be proceeded with.

North Yorkshire covered areas 2, 4, 5 and 8 and these mapping areas were as follows:-

- Area 8 (part of Craven) being open now.
- Area 4 (Harrogate, Richmond and the remainder of Craven) being open now.
- Area 5 (Hambleton, Scarborough and Ryedale) being open on 29 November 2004.
- Area 8 (York) being open on 16 May 2005.

With regard to the notification of decisions, the comments would go back to the Open Access Contact Centre which would:-

- (i) Review the comments before making a decision.
- (ii) Notify the applicant in writing of the decision.
- (iii) Publish the decision on the website and notify the LAF by e-mail.
- (iv) Send a copy of the direction to the Access Authority.

The Countryside Agency was not obliged to follow advice received, but would have regard to the views of the LAF. There was also an appeals system and in this respect Hillary Scott undertook to look into whether the LAF would be consulted in appeals situations and to subsequently report back on this matter. A Member also questioned

whether users could appeal against the decision and was advised that the appeal process was only open to the applicant.

In answer to a further question, Hillary Scott responded that to date, with regard to the areas which were already open, there did not appear to have been any problems with regard to consultation. She also commented that so far as she was aware, the National Park Authority may have set up a Sub-Committee to deal with these applications.

Max Grant asked whether, when applications were received, the information provided by applicants as for the reasons for the applications, were checked out by the Countryside Agency. Hillary Scott confirmed that this was so, being undertaken by a site meeting and investigation of the reasons with specific questions being asked in this respect. For example in the case of shooting licences, details would be checked against the licence with regard to the days on which shooting had been permitted.

Rodney Waddilove referred to the increasing popularity of paint ball shooting and asked whether any applications had been received in this respect. He was informed that none had yet been received and that there was provision in the guidance for such activities, with the process being on the website and one of the criteria dealing specifically with events held on land. Hillary Scott added however that it was unlikely that such activities would need cover, unless they were in respect of such activities undertaken in dedicated woodland.

Nick Graham raised a question with regard to long-term directions relating to Grouse Moors and was informed that the powers in this respect only related to a working Grouse Moor. Chris Jones asked whether such directions would be notified to the AONB as the Local Access Authority and was informed that the details would be available on the website. Hillary Scott also confirmed that details of restricted areas were contained on the website and were available to be viewed by Parish Councils and others.

Max Grant asked whether the previous problems with regard to the operation of the website had been resolved and was informed that a final testing of the second launch was currently being undertaken and that the website would be fully up and running in the next two weeks.

In concluding the debate, the Chairman thanked Hillary Scott for her presentation.

#### **74. ENGLISH NATURE'S ROLE ON OPEN ACCESS**

David Slater from English Nature made a presentation to the meeting. He informed the Committee that he was based in Leyburn and dealt specifically with English Nature matters as they related to Open Access. He mentioned that some Local Access Forums had nominated a specific person in order to lead on English Nature issues. He pointed out that there were two parts to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 that were of direct relevance, these being, firstly, Section 26 which allowed English Nature to restrict access, which however did not necessarily mean closing the land, for example, there may be a banning of dogs for an additional period to the statutory period when dogs were required to be kept on leads, the key issue in this respect being "to the extent necessary". Secondly, there was Section 94(6)(b) of the Act, which was more fully detailed in Appendix 1 to the report with the agenda. Under this Section, there needed to be consideration given to the conservation of flora, fauna, geological and physiographical features of the area. English Nature would be only too happy to provide assistance with regard to the duty of the Local Access Forum in this respect in order to

ensure that the Forums would have access to adequate expertise in this field, including the encouragement of voluntary conservation organisations and Local Authority staff to add their competence.

With regard to the CROW assessment work, English Nature was required by both European and National Law to look at the impact made on sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs). It was noted that 50% of access land was SSSI in the County and 70% of this was CROW access land. English Nature had had five staff who had spent two and a half years accessing CROW access land, for example in the South Pennine Moors in respect of which English Nature had submitted its advice to the Countryside Agency with regard to its concerns about access to the moors in places where it was likely that people would be disturbing breeding birds. The Countryside Agency and the Peak District National Park Authority had undertaken an analysis of the likely increase and decrease of visitors to the vulnerable areas and had passed this information to the Local Access Authority, with this resulting in a Local Access Management Plan which would be available in the next two to three months. Apart from matters relating to restrictions with regard to dogs, the other main source of advice provided by English Nature was with regard to signage. Mr Slater added that no exclusions had been identified on the South Pennine Moors.

More locally, with regard to Nidderdale which was part of the North Pennine Moors, work had been undertaken on predicted levels of usage and advice had been provided, which was being put together with the AONB as an Area Manager Access Plan, which would be signed-off with the Countryside Agency fairly soon. Any restrictions of more than a six month period, would be brought to the LAF.

David Slater outlined details of what were deemed to be vulnerable features, firstly with regard to breeding birds, however, he did not believe that there would be lots more people walking across the moors to affect this. He was more concerned about where areas became popular dog walking spots with regard to the affect this would have on ground nesting birds and where informal parking became established for dog walking. He added that dogs could flush out birds from quite a distance and this would result in lack of parental care, the chilling of eggs and the lack of breeding success. He therefore undertook to keep the LAF informed of English Nature's plans with regard to the issue of habitats through Chris Jones.

In North Yorkshire, Nidderdale and the west of the County was where English Nature had undertaken most of its work, together with the Yorkshire Wolds where habitats could be vulnerable before Area 5 came online. English Nature was a proactive organisation which perhaps had not been so much the case in the past and encouraged people to go out into the countryside and it was the aim of English Nature to enter into open dialogue with both local landowners and user groups.

As a walker, Rodney Waddilove asked whether there were any circumstances where a total ban on access would be appropriate in a particular area. David Slater confirmed that one such area had been identified in the County, where due to the risk of a large number of people using the area, it was intended that English Nature acted through the imposition of an exclusion. A further question was raised with regard to the protection of plants and David Slater confirmed that English Nature had advised of such Access Management matters in order to avoid trampling of plants, but the situation was eased as many plants were contained in wet areas where it was not too difficult to keep people off them and avoid damage. Consequently, it was intended to provide an alternative route around such areas with the provision of appropriate signage as on English Nature's own Nature Reserves.

A Member commented that in France, especially in the open National Parks, there was use of clear signage, for example, for such issues as “no flower picking”, “no fires” and “no camping”. The Member asked whether it would be possible for signs to be standardised on all access points in order that these could be readily identified by members of the public. David Slater commented that whilst this would be very useful, the Countryside Agency had carried out a large amount of work with regard to the development of signage guidance in order to achieve some consistency of signage across the country. A Member expressed concern that certain cliffs were refuges for rare plants, due to their remoteness, since they were inaccessible to animals. However, they were also vulnerable by the removal of vegetation of limestone cliffs by climbers. David Slater informed the meeting that rock dwelling vegetation was protected in the Pennines and that English Nature was currently looking at such in popular climbing areas. The situation was eased in Britain through having the British Mountaineering Club of which the majority of climbers were members, unlike many other such bodies. The problem of the stripping of vegetation in Ingleton had been discussed with the BMC which had provided information to its members through its website. If persons were stripping vegetation or drilling, then they would be breaking the law. David Slater confirmed that the current situation was working well, although he would take on board consideration of the provision of notices for crags which were more accessible.

A Member expressed concern that landowners were not party to any of the discussions and therefore asked what arrangements were being made for informing landowners, especially in respect of cases where English Nature may have some concerns about that particular landowner’s land and since the landowners themselves would be the best people to provide any information which was required and to police the situation. It was noted that initially English Nature had started off endeavouring to consider 1m hectares of SSSI, but this had been reduced to 50,000 hectares where a programme of examination was being undertaken. David Slater added that with now having a Management Plan for Area 2, English Nature now had a good idea of where the landowners were.

Nigel Graham referred to the Management of Access issue and questioned whether there was any allowance for linear access over certain times of the year and was advised by David Slater that this was something that could be recommended by English Nature and had been done so in a couple of places and worked quite well. However, this needed to be in respect of smaller rarer species that appear, with the aim being to have nature conservation gain at the end of the day.

In closing the discussion, the Chairman thanked David Slater for his presentation and the Secretary to the Forum undertook to include Mr Slater on the circulation list for agenda and all other appropriate papers.

**75. APPLICATIONS FOR RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO OPEN LAND –  
CONSTITUTION OF PROPOSED SUB-GROUP**

CONSIDERED –

Report by the Secretary to the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum concerning the establishment of a Sub-Group to deal with applications for restrictions on access to open access land and membership of such a Group.

The Committee considered the options that were available with regard to the formation, or otherwise, of a Sub-Group.

Members considered that it would be advantageous to set up a Sub-Group and in respect of paragraph 3.4 of the report, where it had been stated that no Members of the Forum had yet specifically indicated that they would be interested in serving on such a Group a Member reminded the meeting that a previous discussion had suggested that the membership of any such Sub-Group should be identical to that which had been established to advise on the development of the Access Management Plan, as indicated in Minute 64 at the previous meeting.

A Member commented that if a Sub-Group was established then it was important that Members actually went out on site when considering the application. It was therefore accepted that one of the first issues to be considered by any Sub-Group would be to establish some working policies and ground rules including how best it would consult with the rest of the Forum and also the issue of dealing with site visits. Hillary Scott commented that to date there had been very few applications for long term restrictions.

Members also raised the issue as to the advantage of establishing substitute members when those nominated persons on the Sub-Group would be unable to attend a meeting. It was also suggested that when specific matters such as sheep worrying or metal detecting was under consideration then some one with specialist knowledge of such subject areas should be invited to attend meetings of the Sub-Group.

#### **RESOLVED –**

That –

- (i) The Forum establish a Sub-Group to advise the Countryside Agency of the Forum's views on applications for restrictions on access to open access land of greater than six months duration and the Members of the Sub-Committee be as follows:-
  - Ted Flexman (other interest group)
  - Max Grant (user interest group)
  - County Councillor Bill Hoult (other interest group)
  - Stephen Ramsden (landowner/occupier interest group)
  - Rodney Waddilove (user interest group)
  - Tom Wheelwright (landowner/occupier interest group)
- (ii) The respective six members of the Committee be authorised to appoint deputies for each of their related interest groups when they are unable to attend at meetings of the Sub-Group;
- (iii) At the forthcoming meeting of those Members to be held with Chris Jones in order to consider the draft Access Plan. Those Members thereafter as the Sub-Group give consideration to the establishment of some working policies and ground rules together with how the group will consult with the remaining members of the Local Access Forum and as to how it will implement site visits;
- (iv) A standing item be placed on the agenda for each meeting of the Local Access Forum with regard to the reporting back of matters considered by the Sub-Group.
- (v) The Sub-Group be empowered to advise the Countryside Agency of the Forum's views in respect of applications for restrictions on access to open access land of greater than 6 months duration, on the Forum's behalf.

**76. ACCESS TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACES (SECTION 42 OF THE CROW ACT)**

CONSIDERED –

Report by the Access and Public Rights of Way Manager concerning the outcome of a meeting held in London on 20 July 2004 at the offices of DEFRA to discuss issues related to access to public open spaces affecting by quarries and mines.

A Member commented on the vast amount of work that would be required in order to undertake engineering surveys and questioned whether such were really necessary particularly as only a small amount of information was currently available. Chris Jones reported that the AONB had undertaken a survey on the history of mining in the Greenhow area and had ascertained that there were 500 mine shafts in that area. He considered that the survey was important and commented that there was enough evidence to show that there was a potential problem in relation to mines, the surface entrances to many shafts still being open. He added that it was for the Harrogate Borough Council's Environmental Health Department to identify a statutory nuisance which open mine shafts would be.

Max Grant reported that he was not aware of one recorded incidence of any person falling down a mine shaft inadvertently and therefore suggested that the first matter to be dealt with was the undertaking of a Risk Assessment in order to ascertain if there was indeed a problem. He also suggested that perhaps a notice stating that "this is an area where there may be open mine shafts" would be appropriate as in his view it would be impossible to fence off every mine shaft. Another Member commented that he was aware of one instance at Cross Fell where somebody had been killed in falling into an abandoned mine shaft.

Mr Watkins reminded the meeting that if the land was to be open for access then the public had a right to be there and so there would be an increase in activity and it would therefore be for the District Council's Environmental Health Directorate to decide whether a mine shaft was a statutory nuisance which needed to be abated. This was of particular importance since the public had a right to be on the land as DEFRA had decided that such land was a public space.

Max Grant remarked that the statutory duty could be covered by undertaking the Risk Assessment however Mr Watkins contented that it was not always possible to know where these mine shaft entrances were especially as they could have been covered with timber and grassed over a considerable time ago in view of the fact that local mining had curtailed at the beginning of the last century. In addition whilst such coverings may bear the weight of passing sheep the passage of time may have resulted in them now being in such poor condition that any persons walking across them would be vulnerable.

A Member wondered whether each District Council would take a different view on the matter and suggested that this was a matter for the District Council and suggested that this was a matter for the District Councils Association in order to take a specific line.

Max Grant also questioned as to what would be deemed to be an appropriate engineering survey and another Member asked whether DEFRA could be persuaded to pay for such surveys.

Hillary Scott reported that the Country Landowners Association had held a meeting with DEFRA about the matter from two recommendations had arisen. Firstly that DEFRA



would look at and issue some guidance to Environmental Health Officers in order to implement some sort of graded approach to each situation ie whether one shaft or several were involved and, secondly DEFRA had agreed with the CLA to look at the question of further funding.

Chris Pope, representing the Countryside Agency, stated that the matter was still being discussed and lobbying was still taking place with the issue still having an effect especially on LAF. Edward Dennison stated that on the other side of the Right to Roam Legislation he was of the view that no responsibility for this should fall on the landowner. Chris Pope added that there had been a parliamentary question some weeks previously about the issue in which the Minister had confirmed that there would be no obligation on landowners to have a financial implication. A Member added that even if surveys were undertaken it would prove impossible to find all of the shafts especially as some had been sunk as early as the 1600's.

County Councillor John Fort, BEM who was present at the meeting as an observer, being the local County Councillor and a former Police Officer for the area informed Members that he was aware of several people having been involved in instances concerning open mine shafts on Greenhow. He therefore suggested that the Forum should write to DEFRA and ask that the area be chosen as a pilot scheme in this respect especially as all of the constituent ingredients that would be met with in other parts of the country would arise in the area especially as it had the constituent authorities of two District Councils, a National Park Authority and the Local Access Forum together with a considerable number of dis-used mine shafts and also a considerable quarry.

Chris Jones also reminded Members that there were a number of open mine shafts situated only yards from the shooting tracks at Greenhow. Keith Watkins added that he was aware, especially in the Swaledale area of many shafts which had been covered and which could easily bear the weight of sheep but would not be able to bear the weight of a human being. Added to this there was the nearby Bewerley Park Centre which would give rise to the access by children to open land and children could easily run off the line of a path and give rise to increased potential for an accident to happen.

Another Member remarked that it was not really possible for the LAF to do nothing about the situation when it was obviously aware of the problem and had debated the matter for nearly half an hour.

## **RESOLVED –**

That –

- (i) The content of the report be noted;
- (ii) The Forum requests the County Council to write to DEFRA on its behalf to:-
  - (i) Request that clear guidance be issued on the responsibilities of land owners and occupiers and Local Authorities with regard to access to open country affected by former mining activity;
  - (ii) Request that funding be made available to enable appropriate engineering surveys to be undertaken at no cost to the landowner or occupier or to the Local Authority to determine the safety of mines and shafts in areas of open access land;

- (iii) DEFRA and the Countryside Agency be requested to run a pilot scheme in the area of the Local Access Forum in order to ascertain the most appropriate way of undertaking engineering surveys and to establish a management scheme for Mine Shafts especially as it is considered that the area of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum has all the necessary ingredients that would be necessary in due course to resolve similar issues in other parts of the country.

**77. DEFRA CONSULTATION – GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRYSIDE**

**CONSIDERED –**

Report by the Head of Countryside Services concerning details of a draft DEFRA Circular giving guidance to Access Authorities on Access to Open Country under Part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and concerning a response to be made on behalf of the Local Access Forum.

Mr Edwards reported that a further report would be made to the LAF at a future date with regard to wardening arrangements.

Rodney Waddilove remarked on the importance of only introducing Bylaws as a last resort since they could be unduly restrictive. He considered that the only time when such Bylaws were useful were when, as on the Duke of Devonshire's land they were implemented so as to restrict any risk of fire.

A Member questioned as to how the Wardalls were covered by insurance and Mr Watkins responded that as the County Council was their employers then they would be covered by the County Council's insurance.

**RESOLVED –**

That –

- (i) The comments set out in section 3 of the report be submitted to DEFRA as the basis of the Local Access Forums response to the draft circular;
- (ii) A report be submitted to a future meeting of the Local Access Forum on proposal to appoint Voluntary Open Access Wardens in the Nidderdale AONB.

**78. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Angela Flowers reported with regard to the consultation on the Rights of Way Draft Plan which was being undertaken through the use of posters and leaflets being distributed to Parish Councils, Tourist Information Offices, Libraries etc and also having been publically launched at The Great Yorkshire Show; a range of other leaflets being provided for the information of Members at the meeting.

The Public Rights of Way Website had been updated to incorporate the information contained in the leaflets and also with regard to information about the consultation process and how to contact the County Council.

On the previous Monday Angela Flowers had met with representatives from the two National Park Authorities about the arrangements for getting a Plan into place and all working together on it and this had coincided with the LPT2 Guidance which was currently out for consultation and which closed on the 8 October 2004, with the LTP having to be produced by the end of January 2005. Consequently there was a need to obtain local information for input both into the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the LTP and therefore a group of three officers, being Angela Flowers and one officer from each of the National Park Authorities together with the LTP Officer were preparing to set up a Working Group in order to interface the two plans. She added that she would also like to set up a Steering Group comprising of a representative from North Yorkshire LAF and the two National Park LAFs to meet on three occasions before the end of December 2004 in order to agree the process, review the findings and finally to endorse the final report.

Rodney Waddilove suggested that it would be more appropriate to have two representatives ie one from the users and one from the landowners/others. Max Grant suggested that each of the three LAFs could appoint a representative from a different group so long as each group was represented on the Steering Group. It was therefore suggested that it would be appropriate to find out who were the representatives being put forward by the other LAFs before suggesting a name from this Forum and that the matter could be resolved subsequently by e-mail.

Angela Flowers referred to the necessity to have information from different types of users for example from the cyclists perspective with regard to issues relating to Rights of Way and improvements that could be made in the future. In the LTP one of the questions related to an audit of local issues and consequently there needed to be a local perspective from everyone and it was suggested that this could be covered by sending a questionnaire to Members in order that they were able to provide instances of actual local issues on the ground.

Angela Flowers referred to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan leaflet and the need for people to contribute their ideas and for the momentum and interest to be maintained. The response to date had been good on the website but only one leaflet had been returned although a few letters had been received and she therefore would be asking communities to keep up the publicity with Parish Councils being approached separately in this respect.

Max Grant asked whether anything was happening in Skipton and John Edwards referred to a meeting which had been arranged with the BHS and the RA to which the BHS had not been able to attend and consequently an alternative meeting with those parties had been organised for the forthcoming week.

John Edwards drew attention to the high quality of the leaflets that had been produced, these having been used at the launch of the new countryside unit and Members expressed their thanks to Angela Flowers for her efforts in this respect.

## **79. DRAFT ACCESS PLAN**

CONSIDERED –

Report by the AONB Access Officer concerning the production of an Access Plan outlining how it was intended to manage Open Spaces when the Act comes into force over the next 18 months and explaining the methodology behind the preparation of the draft Access Plan, outlining what form the constitution will take.

Chris Jones explained that the plans were available for perusal at the meeting, which identified a number of "access points". There was also a need to include Special Protection Areas information as part of the plan and these would be separately assessed by the Countryside Agency and English Nature. Roadshows would commence at the end of August and would be held in locations between 3.00 pm and Members were also informed that the maps were likely to change considerably until the end of the consultation period, it being suggested that the Local Access Forum should again look at the plans before they were finalised.

In answer to a question Chris Jones confirmed that Members could visit his office in order to look at the maps.

Rodney Waddilove asked whether any thoughts had been given to vandalism of the signs and whether they would be constructed of robust materials in order to withstand vandalism. He also stated that there was quite a number of managed moorland sheep in the area and as dogs were going to be banned for a period of five years there would therefore need to be specific signs erected, perhaps in the format of a dog with a red cross through it. Chris Jones said that this could be incorporated in a general sign although it may be possible for there to be a special sign for this purpose. He also reported that signs would be constructed on the toughest material available at the price.

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the Local Access Forum:

- (i) Examines the draft Access Plan immediately following the meeting and submits comments as appropriate;
- (ii) Agrees that the Local Access Forums Sub-Committee should meet at a later date in order to further examine the detailed plans on behalf of the Forum before finalisation.

#### **80. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the next meeting of the North Yorkshire LAF be held on Thursday, 11 November 2004 at 1.00 pm at a location to be agreed by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairman.

#### **81. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman agreed that the following item could be considered as a matter of urgency in view of the fact that the meeting referred to was to be held on the following day.

#### **82. MANAGEMENT OF GREEN LANES**

Max Grant referred to a meeting which was being held on the following day with regard to the Management of Green Lanes. The meeting was part of a result of a process concerning alternative means of managing Green Lanes that had been requested some months previously by the Craven Area Committee when they had approved the introduction of ETRO's. Whilst Max Grant would be attending the meeting on behalf of the Ramblers Association he suggested that it would be appropriate for the LAF to be

also represented. John Edwards drew attention to the fact that the forthcoming meeting with regard to the Management of Green Lanes was purely in respect of those green lanes which were contained within the area of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and was restricted to addressing the four Traffic Regulation Orders which had been implemented for an experimental period. In addition no representative from the Yorkshire Dales LAF had been invited to attend that meeting. However he agreed that in due course such meetings may be extended to cover management of green lanes in other areas. Equally the North York Moors LAF had not been invited to attend.

**RESOLVED –**

That Max Grant be authorised, in addition to attending the forthcoming meeting in his capacity as a representative of the Ramblers Association to also attend as a representative of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum and to report back to the LAF in due course.