

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

18<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**North Yorkshire Countryside Volunteers**

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of activities of the Countryside Volunteers service.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Countryside Volunteers are part of NYCC's Countryside Service. Volunteers assist officers with PRow and Open Access work as well as in conserving the county's Natural and Historic Heritage.

3.0 Progress

- 2.1 Current strength of Countryside Volunteers service is 183.
- 2.2 The Countryside Volunteers' condition survey of the PRow network has been completed. Revisions of the information are soon to begin. New PDAs are being trialled for recording revision information.
- 2.3 Ten Volunteer groups led by Rangers meet regularly across the county, working mainly on PRows. New weekend groups are being set up in addition to the weekday groups, to provide volunteering opportunities for people in employment.
- 2.4 Twenty Volunteers are trained in the use of strimmers, and a further 9 are due to be trained in March. Many undertake to clear local PRows, for which more brush-cutters are being purchased.
- 2.5 Trained Volunteers have carried out checks on c.700 known ploughing & cropping issues; this will be repeated periodically, as required.
- 2.6 Open Access Volunteers continue to patrol access land in the Nidderdale AONB every weekend. Additionally, in conjunction with Natural England who will providing training, Volunteers are to monitor habitat recovery on the Blubberhouses Moor UCRs which are subject to TROs due to damage caused by MPVs.
- 2.7 OA volunteers have contributed local knowledge to the production of a new NYCC/RA publication of walks on access land, by recommending favourite routes.
- 2.8 Countryside Service has registered with "Investing in Volunteers", a national quality standard, and is currently working towards accreditation by achieving best practice in working with Volunteers.
- 2.9 A Draft Countryside Volunteers Development Strategy has been

produced setting out ways for volunteering in Countryside Service to grow and develop over the next few years.

- 2.10 The Countryside Volunteers' newsletter is produced quarterly, keeping volunteers informed of news and volunteering opportunities available. It is made available to selected interested outside bodies.

#### 4.0 \_\_\_RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the report be received for information.

#### Contact Officer

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