

NORTH YORKSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010

ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 There is a duty to produce an annual report on the business of the Local Access Forum. The draft annual report for 2008/09 is presented here.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Forum approve the draft annual report with or without amendments.

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**North Yorkshire**

**Local Access Forum**

# **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009**

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**CONTENTS**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Area covered by the Local Access Forum</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Role and Responsibilities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Membership of the Forum</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Member Profiles</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Meetings of the Forum</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Business of the Forum</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Management of Open Access</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Rights of Way Network</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Local Access Forum Consultations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Presentations to the Local Access Forum</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Developing the Work of the Local Access Forum</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Forum Attendance</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Forward Plan for 2009/2010</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>19</b>

## **Introduction**

The Local Access Forum has completed another year's business as the body responsible for providing advice and guidance to the County Council on Countryside Access Issues in North Yorkshire. This year was a year of change and marked a transition from a focus on Open Access Land and the Rights of Way improvement Plan to a wider outlook on access issues and particularly the development of access opportunities in North Yorkshire.

## **Area Covered by the Local Access Forum**

The area covered by the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum is the administrative county of North Yorkshire, but excluding the areas of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North York Moors National Park. In both of these areas, the respective National Park Authority has established its own Local Access Forum.

## **Role and Responsibilities**

Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on the County Council, as highway authority, to establish a Local Access Forum. The primary purpose of the Local Access Forum is to provide advice to North Yorkshire County Council on how to make the countryside more accessible for open air recreation. Key functions include providing advice on:

- The development of access strategies, including the Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Improving the rights of way network; and
- The implementation, management and review of the statutory right of access to open countryside.

## **Membership of the Forum**

The Local Access Forum regulations require that the members of the Local Access Forum should be representative of:

- (a) Users of local rights of way and areas of open access;
- (b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land covered by rights of way; and
- (c) Other interests relevant to the local area.

In appointing members to the Forum, the County Council has therefore tried to ensure a reasonable balance between these three interest groups. It has also aimed to achieve representation from different parts of the county and, where possible, adjacent areas where recreation users live.

There are 18 members of the Forum, who are appointed for a three-year term, after which they must retire or seek re-election. Appointments are phased to ensure that only one third, i.e. six members, retires each year. This process ensures continuity, whilst also allowing a regular opportunity to recruit members with new interests.

Vacancies on the Forum are advertised in the press and interested candidates are asked to submit written applications outlining their interests and experience and their reasons for wishing to serve on the Forum. Candidates are then asked to attend an informal recruitment day, following which appointments are made by the Secretariat, with advice from the County Council's elected members on the Forum. Appointments to the Local Access Forum during the current period were made on

In addition to those members recruited by open competition, the County Council periodically appoints three of its own elected members to serve on the Forum for a three year period.

During 2008/2009 membership of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum was as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Term of office to</b>	<b>Interest Group</b>
Allan Aspden Leo Crone David Gibson Rachel Connolly Paul Chapman Ian Jakulis	Craven Darlington Craven Richmonshire Hambleton Hambleton	2009 2009 2008 2010 2011 2011	Users
Edward Dennison Stephen Ramsden (Vice-chair) Paul Tibbatts Anthony Martin	Hambleton Harrogate (AONB) Craven Harrogate	2008 2010 2009 2011	Owner/occupiers
David Swabey David Shaftoe Anthony Turner (Chair) Co.Cllr.Eric Broadbent Co Cllr John Fort	Hambleton Harrogate Scarborough (NYMNP) Scarborough Harrogate	2008 2011 2009 2008 2008	Other interests

Co.Cllr Michael Knaggs John Taylor Vacancy	Ryedale Selby	2008 2010	
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The County Council is grateful to all members of the Local Access Forum for their very valuable contribution to its work over the course of the past year.

New recruits are always welcome. Enquiries about future membership should be made to the Secretary (see contacts).

## **Member Profiles**

### **Allan Aspden**

Allan lives in Settle. He is a working party co-ordinator for the Craven Ramblers and a member of the Ramblers Association North Yorkshire campaign working group. He has a keen interest in the countryside and outdoor pursuits and in improving the county's rights of way network. He wishes to encourage others to enjoy the North Yorkshire countryside.

### **Eric Broadbent**

Eric is North Yorkshire County Councillor for Northstead, Scarborough. He sits on the Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee and is Chair of the Transport and Telecommunications Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He also serves on Scarborough Borough Council and is a member of its Planning Committee. He is semi-retired, a keen walker with three dogs and has a strong interest in countryside matters.

### **Paul Chapman**

Paul lives in Topcliffe near Thirsk and works as a Project Manager for the UK's largest retailer of Canoes and Kayaks, owns a small business delivering outdoor activity courses and is the Duke of Edinburgh Award Coordinator at Ripon Youth Centre. He is a keen outdoor enthusiast enjoying mountaineering, canoeing and mountain biking and holds a range of National Governing Body qualifications from the Mountain Leader Training Board and the British Canoe Union.

### **Rachel Connolly**

Rachel lives north of Scotch Corner and enjoys all aspects of the countryside. She walks regularly, birdwatches and dowses! As a retired access volunteer she understands the needs of landowners as well as users and is enthusiastic to make improvements in the network.

### **Leo Crone**

Leo lives in Darlington. He is a member of the North Yorkshire County Council Rights of Way Liaison Group and also sits on the Durham County Council Rights of Way Forum. He is a primary contact on vehicular access to the countryside with the Durham and Cleveland Police Forces. He was previously on Sports Council regional forums and the North York Moors National Park Rights of Way Committee. He aims to represent the views and aspirations of vehicle user groups and has a large network of contacts.

### **Edward Dennison**

Edward is a farmer and landowner from Thornton-le-Beans near Northallerton, where he is a Parish Councillor. A former NFU County chairman and is knowledgeable about the countryside and wildlife. He is interested in seeking a balance between protection of the environment, access and the rights of owners and occupiers.

### **John Fort**

John Fort is North Yorkshire County Councillor for Pateley Bridge and lives at Dacre in the Nidderdale AONB. He is a retired police officer with an interest in country pursuits and is the County Council's Executive Member for community services.



## **David Gibson**

David is a retired solicitor and justices clerk from Burton-in Lonsdale in Craven. He is a founder trustee and former Chairman of North Lancaster Victim Support, a charity working with victims of crime. He is a keen walker with an interested in history and archaeology. He is Access Officer for West Riding Ramblers Association, Footpath Officer for Craven Ramblers Association and a member of the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum.

## **Ian Jakulis**

### **Awaiting Profile**

## **Michael Knaggs**

Michael is County Councillor for Malton and chairs the Ryedale Area Committee. He is a retired farm machinery salesman, former president of Malton Agricultural Show and member and former President of Malton Rugby Club. Over the years he has developed a wide range of contacts across the county and an understanding of the needs of a range of user groups.

## **Tony Martin**

Tony has been a Parish Councillor at Follifoot with Plompton Parish Council ( between Harrogate & Wetherby ) for several years . He is also on Follifoot Village Hall Management Committee and is co-ordinator of the local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme . His broad interest in rural affairs is lifelong together with an active involvement in field sports . He is particularly keen to develop a greater understanding between landowners and the public wishing to access the countryside . As a result of his parish council service he wants to help forge a strong , effective , ongoing and sustainable relationship between the L A F , NYCC and the various parish councils within the county to resolve outstanding issues and generally improve access for all members of the community .

## **Stephen Ramsden**

Stephen is a farmer and landowner from Middlesmoor in the Nidderdale AONB. He is a Parish Councillor for Upper Nidderdale and serves on a committee for Moors/Dales training for land-based industries. Living and working on the moors, he can provide the Forum with first hand knowledge of day to day countryside issues, local farming contacts and advice on how to manage an increase in visitors.

## **David Shaftoe**

### **Awaiting Profile**

## **David Swabey**

David lives at Great Ayton. He is a retired college principle and serves as Hon.Sec. for the North-east Regional Committee of the Inland Waterways Association. He writes 'Weekend Walk' for the Darlington and Stockton Times and is a voluntary assistant in the Great Ayton Tourist Information Centre. He is committed to the principle of full and unhindered access to the countryside through the rights of way network and access land.

## **John Taylor**

John lives in Bolton Percy near Tadcaster and has spent his working life in the oil industry. He enjoys the countryside and is keen to see a balance between the needs of both land owners and those who want to share the pleasures of our landscape. He believes that it is important when encouraging access to emphasise the responsibility to protect our natural heritage.

## **Paul Tibbatts**

Paul lives at Austwick. He is a retired manager from the transport industry. He owns a smallholding of mainly open access land which is part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest. His interests include conservation, heritage and livestock.

## **Anthony Turner**

Anthony lives at West Ayton near Scarborough where he is programme manager for Surestart, a family support programme for children aged 0-4. He was previously an education officer for community learning and a head of department teacher. He is a leisure walker who owns two horses and is a member of Scarborough and District Riding Club.

## **Meetings of the Forum**

Meetings of the Forum are advertised in the local press and are open to the public, who are always made very welcome. An opportunity will be provided for any member of the public who attends to ask questions or to make a statement should they wish to do so. Wherever possible, meetings are held at locations relevant to the business under discussion.

## **Business of the Forum**

The agenda and minutes of the quarterly meetings, and a copy of the most recent Annual Report, are available for inspection on the North Yorkshire County Council website at [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk).

The principle agenda items at each of the regular quarterly meetings during 2008/2009 were as follows:

### **25<sup>th</sup> May 2008 Springboard Business Centre - Stokesley**

- Subgroup Reports – Access for all, Improving rights of way & Definitive Map
- Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads
- Draft Marine Bill
- Buildings Obstructing Public Rights of Way

The meeting was followed by a site visit to recently improved rights of way in the Stokesley area.

### **21<sup>st</sup> August 2008 Herriots Hotel - Skipton**

- Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads Group
- Open Access – Links to isolated areas
- Buildings & other obstructions
- Achievements & Performance 2007/08
- Definitive Map Modification orders

The meeting was followed by a site visit to the Pennine way National Trail.

### **20<sup>th</sup> November 2008, County Hall, Northallerton**

- Countryside Strategy Consultation Draft
- PRow Budget
- Maintenance Backlog Breakdown
- Work Completed 2007/08 to date
- Signposting & Waymarking
- Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads
- Access to water

26<sup>th</sup> February 2008, County Hall, Northallerton

- Joint LAF – City of York Council proposal
- Definitive Map Modification Orders
- Definitive Map Team – changing priorities
- Countryside Volunteers
- Review of Routes & Trails consultation
- Countryside Strategy
- Wharfedale Trail

In addition to the regular quarterly meetings of the Forum, members held two meetings of the newly formed sub-groups.

A summary of the major business transacted during 2008/2009 is set out below under six main themes:

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Management of open access
- The Rights of Way network
- Local Access Forum Consultations
- Presentations to the Local Access Forum
- Developing the work of the Local Access Forum

#### The Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Following final publication of the Improvement Plan the forum turned its attention to other matters during 2008/09 whilst also seeking to ensure its themes were incorporated into the everyday business of managing access to the countryside.

#### Management of Open Access

As in the previous year, Open Access featured less heavily in the business of the forum and the focus this year was on improving links to isolated areas of open access land.

#### The Rights of Way Network

The Forum took two update reports on network maintenance and also considered the difficult issue of obstruction to the network by buildings. Members were supportive of looking at a business case for a self funding officer to resolve serious building obstructions through diversion orders. The backlog of outstanding issues on the network was also considered and members resolved to monitor the backlog profile on an annual basis. The Forum also considered signposting and waymarking of the network and gave feedback on options to improve and standardise signage, members looked forward to the finalisation of the changes during 2009/10.

## Local Access Forum Consultations

At the May 2008 meeting the Forum considered a report on the Draft Marine Bill. Response to the consultation was sent to Defra via the chair highlighting the following points:

- 1) The lack of compensation available to landowners in consideration of routes created.
- 2) Lack of clarity around long term responsibilities for provision of coastal access
- 3) The creation of another type of access may prove confusing to the public – issues of standard signage should be considered.
- 4) The need to incorporate higher rights in the process

At the February 2009 meeting the Forum received a report regarding a review of National Trails and other routes by Natural England. Members noted the comments of the Access & Rights of Way manager, who responded on behalf of the Forum to Natural England outlining their broad support for the review outcomes, subject to specific funding being allocated to Highway Authorities to support implementation.

## Presentations to the Local Access Forum

At the November 2008 meeting Chris Hawkesworth of the British Canoe Union gave a detailed presentation on access to water and the BCU. Members were given an overview of user requirements in order to access water and the Forum noted the BCU's offer to provide advice at the early stages of projects dealing with access to water.

## Developing the work of the Local Access Forum

Members continued to support the concept of sub groups dealing with issues in more detail and resolved to continue with this approach during 2009/10. Sub group feedback will continue to be a standard agenda item for the main Forum meeting.

In May 2008, the Local Access Forum approved its Annual Report covering 2007/2008.

## Budget

The following expenditure was incurred by North Yorkshire County Council during 2008/2009 on behalf of the Local Access Forum

	£
Annual Report	TBC
Meeting expenses	TBC
<b>Total</b>	<b>TBC</b>

## Forum Attendance 2008 – 2009

✓ = attendance      × = apologies / non-attendance

<b>NAME</b>	<b>25/05/2008</b>	<b>21/08/2008</b>	<b>20/11/2008</b>	<b>26/02/2009</b>
	<b>Stokesley</b>	<b>Skipton</b>	<b>Northallerton</b>	<b>Northallerton</b>
Allan Aspden	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leo Crone	✓	×	×	✓
David Gibson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rachel Connolly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Chapman	✓	✓	✓	×
Ian Jakulis	✓	×	✓	×
Edward Dennison	✓	×	✓	×
Stephen Ramsden	✓	✓	×	✓
Paul Tibbatts	✓	×	✓	✓
Tony Martin	✓	×	✓	✓
David Swabey	✓	✓	✓	✓
David Shaftoe	✓	×	✓	✓
Anthony Turner (Chair)	✓	✓	×	✓
Co.Cllr.Eric Broadbent	×	✓	×	×
Co.Cllr.John Fort	×	✓	×	×
Co.Cllr.Michael Knaggs	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Taylor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Members of the public/press/observers	1	2	3	1

## Forward Plan for 2009/2010

Members are asked to consider future agenda items in advance and to discuss these with the Chair prior to each meeting of the LAF. The LAF then agrees a Forward Plan at each meeting covering the following year.

<b>APRIL 2009</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment Interviews</li></ul>
<b>14<sup>th</sup> MAY 2009 – County Hall, Northallerton</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sub Group reports</li><li>• England Access Forum</li><li>• Work Completed 2008/09</li></ul>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2009 - County Hall, Northallerton</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sub Group Reports</li><li>• Local Transport Plan 3</li><li>• Yorkshire &amp; The Humber Access Forum</li></ul>
<b>19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009 – County Hall, Northallerton</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sub Group Reports</li><li>• Definitive map Team work update</li><li>• Maintenance Work Completed update</li><li>• Draft Annual Report 2008/09</li></ul>
<b>FEBRUARY 2010 – County Hall, Northallerton</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sub Group Reports</li><li>• Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads</li><li>• New Member Recruitment</li></ul>
<b>APRIL 2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment Interviews</li></ul>

## **Contacts**

Information on the work of the Forum can be obtained from the following County Council staff:

### Countryside Service Officers:

Countryside Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall,  
Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

Aidan Rayner            Public Rights of Way Team Leader  
Penny Noake            Definitive Map Team Leader

e-mail: [paths@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:paths@northyorks.gov.uk)

### Local Access Forum Secretariat:

Committee Services, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall,  
Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

Jane Wilkinson        Local Access Forum Secretary

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