



**Unapproved Minutes**  
**Meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum**  
**Held on Tuesday 15 June 2010**  
**Yoredale, Bainbridge**

Present: Michael Bartholomew (MB) – Chair, David Bartlett (DB), Jon Beavan (JB), Andrew Colley (AC), David Gibson (DG), Neil Heseltine (NH), Ken Miller (KM), Jerry Pearlman (JP), Alistair Thompson (AT), Pat Whelan (PWh), Phillip Woodyer (PW).

YDNPA Officers present: Alan Hulme (AH), Rachel Briggs (RB) – LAF Secretary, Kathryn Beardmore (KB), Jon Avison (JA) – first five items, Andy Ryland (AR).

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

**1. Welcome**

JA began the meeting by announcing to members of the YDAF that he would be retiring in October and that this would be his last meeting. He thanked members for their support over the past eight years. MB responded by saying, on behalf of the YDAF, that JA would be missed and that his guidance and support had been invaluable to the forum.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Michael Kenyon (MK), Robert Mayo (RM), Stuart Monk (SM), Guy Keating (GK), Malcolm Petyt (MP), Mike Stephenson (MS).

**3. Approval of the minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record of the meeting.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were several matters raised:

- (a) MB raised member's attention to item 4b, where members had discussed the uncertainty over the future resourcing of the English Access Forum (EAF). A letter has since been sent, from Duncan Graham to all LAFs asking for any views of the EAF (annex 1 of item 11).

JP began the discussion by saying that he felt the EAF needed the support of LAFs. It was noted that Poul Christensen, the Chair of Natural England was supportive of access issues.

DG thought it essential that the EAF continue especially considering the lack of communication from Natural England to LAFs. JB agreed that support from Natural England is imperative for LAFs to run smoothly.

Summing up, MB concluded that members of the YDAF were in support of the EAF and he would write to the chair to reflect this opinion.

**MB to write to Duncan Graham and Andrew Mackintosh, saying that Yorkshire Dales Access Forum wants the English Access Forum to continue, and to be properly resourced.**

(b) MB informed members that DG, as a member of the North Yorkshire LAF, had received a copy of the Unclassified Unsurfaced Roads (UUR) policy, written by Doug Huzzard as it had been a North Yorkshire LAF agenda item. MB asked if officers from the YDNPA had received the document on behalf of the YDAF. It was confirmed that it had not. MB asked RB to speak to Doug Huzzard asking for him to circulate copies to all members of the YDAF.

**RB to write to Doug Huzzard (NYCC) asking for copies of the UUR policy for circulation to members of the YDAF.**

(c) MB thanked members for sending their comments on the Gorbeck Road consultation to RB and PW. Members agreed that the response submitted reflected the view of the YDAF.

(d) AT asked AH if there had been any decisions made about the misleading signage at Holgates pasture (item 9b). AH said that the restrictions consultation had now finished and that the next step was for the ranger for Upper Wharfedale to speak to the landowner about the signing issues.

e) DG asked if a decision had been made on the fencing on Whernside Common. RB said she would find out if any decisions had been made and would invite Ben Gray (the consultee) to a LAF meeting to discuss the application.

**RB to find out if a decision had been taken on the Whernside Common consultation.**

KM asked officers whether the YDAF should be consulted on all planning applications for fencing on open access land as he had recently seen a notice in the paper for fencing at Arkengarthdale. KB expressed surprise as fencing proposals didn't usually require planning permission but would pass on the YDAF's request to the Planning department.

**KB to look into the planning application for fencing at Arkengarthdale.**

#### **4. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

#### **5. Future Forum Meetings**

##### Dates of meetings

The next meeting of the YDAF will be on 19 October and will be held at the People's Hall in Sedbergh.

##### Future Agenda Items

MB asked members to send any further agenda items to him or RB.

#### **6. Survey of landowners and managers**

MB presented the results of the landowner survey, which was requested by the YDAF, and asked for any comments.

PW was encouraged to see that almost half of the respondents had said that they were happy to see gates used to improve access. MB asked AH if he had any comments on this figure. AH responded by saying that whilst it was encouraging there will always be landowners that prefer ladder stiles as they are the only truly stock-proof barrier. There is also, still, the perception from landowners that gates are left open and stock can escape. AH did agree, though, that landowner attitudes are changing.

NH added that there is a difference in landowner opinion between pedestrian gates and kissing gates and that the questionnaire didn't distinguish between the two. JB agreed with this and added that ladder stiles are often helpful for navigational purposes as they can easily be seen compared to stone step stiles.

AC said that closure of gates was an issue but gate mechanisms were very much improved nowadays. He also thought that in more remote areas, where ladder stiles were used for navigation, a pole could be put in next to the gate for this purpose.

MB asked members to consider sections 6.6 and 6.7. It was agreed that it was a very positive result that the relationship between the rangers and landowners was so good.. However, by contrast, 49% of the respondents had not heard of the YDAF. KB informed members that publicity for the YDAF and new members' adverts had been included in the YDNPA landowner newsletter as well as the North Yorkshire Times. She was unsure as to what else could be done to raise the profile. PW suggested members could mention the work of the YDAF at their local parish council meetings.

NH expressed a concern regarding the number of issues that had occurred on land in the last year (as seen on page 11 of the report). He thought it was important to get clear messages out to users of the countryside. JB agreed with this and asked if any amendments could be made to the Country Code. KB said that the YDNPA has a ranger

code but it relies on people reading it and taking note. AH added that he would be looking at revising the open access signage in the National Park during the next year and would include this issue.

AC was surprised to see that litter didn't appear to be a higher concern. AC added that he collects lots of rubbish, as a walker, when out in the Grassington area. MB wondered if this was because much of the litter in the countryside is landowners' litter e.g. baler twine, bale wrap etc.

DB asked if the YDNPA could hand out gloves and bags to people who were willing to collect rubbish whilst out walking. MB agreed with this, especially since the CPRE are running a litter campaign this year (Stop the Drop). KB said there were health and safety issues of picking up litter with the incorrect equipment but added that the YDNPA would give litter pickers to any members that wanted one, and also that the YDNPA was happy to coordinate volunteers to help with litter picking.

DG asked about the concern from landowners regarding people straying from the paths. He added that people are allowed to stray from the path if on open access land and wondered if this was part of the survey. KB said that there would need to be follow up work to find out this kind of detail. It was noted that most landowners had both open access land and rights of way so it was difficult to distinguish when respondents regarded this as a problem.

In sum, the results of the survey bring home, yet again, the need to persuade walkers to leave no litter (and maybe to pick up other people's litter that they encounter), to close gates, not to stray from rights of way, and to keep dogs under control.

AT thought that it would be a good idea to do the survey again in a few years time to see if there has been an improvement. JB agreed with this and said that these results should be used as the benchmark with a further survey being carried out in five years time.

<b>Members of the YDAF advised the YDNPA that a further landowner survey be carried out in 2015.</b>
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## **7. North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan**

AR presented the paper on the North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) and asked members for comments.

MB stressed the importance of keeping a focus on what is happening in the YDNP and not considering areas of North Yorkshire that do not concern the YDAF.

MB thought that Q4 was an area that the YDAF could make a positive contribution. He felt that the proposal to set up a small number of local transport forums was admirable and one that the YDAF should be involved with. He added that the YDNPA should be partnered with Nidderdale AONB for this purpose as they both have similar transport issues. Members supported this idea.

AT was concerned that there was no mention of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) within the summary document although it was supposed to be an integral part of the document. Members agreed that this was an important issue to be raised and should go under Q7 of the questionnaire.

It was agreed that MB would submit a response to NYCC taking these comments on board.

**MB to complete the LTP questionnaire on behalf of the YDAF and submit the response to NYCC.**

## **8. Public Rights of Way Annual Report 2009/10**

AH circulated the paper at the meeting and apologised for its lateness. AH explained that the paper had been to Access Committee for approval in April and that any comments from members of the YDAF would help with points for clarification or suggestions for future reports. It was suggested that members take the paper away and that it be included on the agenda for the October meeting.

**All members to read the Public Rights of Way Annual Report and bring comments to the October meeting of the YDAF.**

AC asked KB for a update on the Pennine Bridleway. KB told members that the YDNPA had received funding for the Selside section and that by the end of the year the route would be 99.9% complete. The only section left to complete will be the road crossing at Long Preston.

AT informed members that he had received some positive feedback on the footpath improvements on Plover Hill. AH said the funding for this route had come from HF Holidays and that he would pass on the comments.

## **9. Signing of 'other routes with public access'**

MB presented the paper to members on how other routes with public access (ORPAs) should be signed considering the legal status is unclear.

MB began the discussion by reading out a statement from SM, who was absent from the meeting. His suggestion was that these routes should be signed as 'Unclassified County Roads'. JB didn't think that the general public would know what this means and so suggested 'access track' or 'public track' as an alternative.

KB told members that the County Surveyors Society agreed wording nationally is 'public way'. MB asked if the YDNPA would accept different wording if the YDAF suggested it and KB said that the decision would lie with the county councils who have responsibility for these routes.

JB thought that only the priority routes should be signed and asked if there had been any assessment of the ORPAs in the YDNP. KB said that 12 routes are already signed with

the destination only and that there were another 30 possible routes that could be signed, because of their significance to the rights of way network.

JP suggested that no signage be used at all as once you use the words 'way' or 'track' there will be the perception that motorised vehicles can use them. AC agreed with this and said a finger post with the direction and destination of travel would suffice.

Members agreed that this was the best way forward. It was noted that as these routes were the responsibility of the county council, they could be signed only with their agreement.

**The YDAF advised the YDNPA that the signage of 'other routes with public access' could be achieved with a fingerpost displaying direction and destination.**

## **10. Report back from Advisory Groups**

### Access on Foot Advisory Group

DG presented the minutes of the Access on Foot Advisory Group.

DG asked members to look at the annex to the minutes and asked for them to endorse the plan for improved use of access land written by the Ramblers' Association.

JP questioned the cost implications of providing facilities for printing out maps. KB said that the National Park Centres all have computers with the open access information displayed on them and that this information can be transferred to individuals' own paper maps but could not be printed out. MB asked for the wording of this section to be changed to the following before the paper is endorsed by the YDAF: 'At the Information Centres there should be facilities for viewing maps and for users to transcribe the information on to their own maps'.

**DG to report back to the Access on Foot Group on the YDAF's view of the Ramblers' Association's paper on improved use of access land.**

### Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group

KM presented the minutes from the Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group.

MB asked about the mountain bike challenge due to take place in Grassington during July. KB told members that the YDNPA are not in support of the event because of the way it had been organised which was unfortunate since an event of this type has the potential to be beneficial to the participants and the local community. However, it was felt that the current plans for the event have not adequately satisfied or demonstrated it could be delivered in a sufficiently safe way for the public or participants.

MB asked for large scale events to be an agenda item at a future meeting.

**Large scale events to be an agenda item at a future meeting.**

## Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group

JB presented the minutes of the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group.

There was a discussion regarding the signage proposed at Arncliffe Cote given that its status changes from BOAT to bridleway 800 metres from Street Gate. There had been some confusion as to the rights of vehicular users and MB said that suitable wording was being considered. RB agreed to circulate the signage information to members.

**RB to circulate the details of the proposed signage for Arncliffe Cote to members.**

### **11. Secretary's Report**

RB presented a report of items for Members' consideration and information. These were:

- Access Committee Dates and Venues.
- Cumbria Countryside Access Partnership.
- English Access Forum
- Cumbria Rights of way Improvement Plan Newsletter
- Yorkshire and Humberside regional LAF
- CRoW Act 2000 Restrictions and Exclusions Update.

### **12. Update on Members Activities**

Members had nothing to add to the meeting.

### **13. Any Other Business**

#### Neighbouring LAFs

DG informed members that the North Yorkshire LAF receives minutes of the YDAF and the North York Moors LAF and that these are included in their papers. DG asked if members would see the benefit of receiving the minutes from neighbouring LAFs. It was agreed that rather than circulate the minutes DG should feedback on any points of interest from the North Yorkshire LAF and that MP, as a member of the Lake District LAF, could feedback from that forum. This would keep the number of papers to a minimum.

#### YDAF Annual Report

MB asked members to formally approve the YDAF annual report which had been circulated in April. Members approved the report.

#### Yorkshire Dales National Park Logo

A paper was circulated showing a number of proposed logos to be used by businesses in their marketing and promotional material.

JB felt that businesses were already expected to use a plethora of logos and that another was not necessarily a good thing. However, he suggested that option 2 was the preferred option and that this should be a partnership between the YDNPA and local businesses and not a money making scheme. Members agreed with this.

**RB to pass on comments from the YDAF to Kathryn Storey, Sustainable Tourism Officer.**

#### Yorkshire and Humberside Regional LAF

MB informed members that the next meeting of the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional LAF would be on 13 September. Volunteers were sought to attend this meeting.

**Members to inform RB if they are interested in attending the next meeting of the Yorkshire and Humberside regional LAF.**

#### Dedication of Access Land

AH told members that Castlebergh in Settle had recently been dedicated as access land.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm