



North York Moors

Local Access Forum

North York Moors National Park Authority, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate,
Helmsley, York, YO62 5BP

Public Minutes of the meeting held at The Old Vicarage, Helmsley on Tuesday 7 December 2010.

Present: J Bateman, P Cody, Mrs C Cook, Lady E Kirk, Ms A Peacock, S Scoffin, Mrs N Taylor, G Winn Darley

Apologies: J Batt, J Cavana, Mrs C Cussons, G Dawson, P Hay, Mrs J King, Mrs M Mitchell

Officers in Attendance: Richard Gunton (Director of Recreation and Park Management), Karl Gerhardsen (Head of Recreation and Access), Andy Wilson (Chief Executive), Sue Wilkinson (Education Manager), Fiona Farnell (Committees Officer), Sarah Blakemore (Access Officer)

Copies of All Documents Considered are in the Minute Book

48/10 Election of Chairman

Resolved:

That Mrs Norman Taylor be elected Chair of the Local Access Forum, to take office until the next Annual General Meeting of the Local Access Forum.

The Chair thanked Members for their support and welcomed the Chief Executive to the meeting.

49/10 Election of Deputy Chairman

Resolved:

That Mrs Catriona Cook be elected Deputy Chair of the Local Access Forum, to take office until the next Annual General Meeting of the Local Access Forum.

50/10 Minutes

Resolved:

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

51/10 Matters Arising

- The Chair of the England Access Forum had sent a letter to Natural England but a response had not been received to date, a copy of the letter had been circulated to Local Access Forums.
- The Director informed Members that the National Park Authority Performance Assessment had taken place the previous week and that a draft report of their findings should be received at the end of this week. Initial feedback was positive.

- The Chair noted that the closing date for the current LAF vacancy was the 10 December.

52/10 **Annual Report**

A Member noted that David Leyshon had been missed from the membership table.

53/10 **Performance Indicators**

The Head of Recreation showed a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

The Head of Recreation noted that surveys were carried out in May and November and Members were welcome to go with Officers doing surveys.

Members made the following comments:

- A reliable methodology is required for all National Parks to use and this National Park should lead the way.
- When paths are surveyed are they looked at from the point of view of the highest user?
- When on horse back some gates cannot be opened with one hand.
- I support the requirement for people to have a compass when using moorland paths.
- What status are dual status routes surveyed as?

In answer to the above questions the Head of Recreation answered as follows:

- Paths are surveyed from a highest user point.
- Dual routes are surveyed as what they are stated as on the definitive map.

54/10 **Mosaic – Connecting People through Iconic Landscapes (Verbal presentation by Sue Wilkinson, Education Manager)**

The Education Manager presented this item and showed a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

Members made the following comments:

- The Community Champions were a positive group of people who were currently targeting their own communities.
- Why had the project not been rolled out to York, Leeds and Hull?
- Are details available of young people who are not accessing the park and need targeting?

The Education Manager answered that York and Hull had fewer BME communities and that Leeds was being targeted by the Yorkshire Dales National Park; young people between 16-25 also needed targeting.

55/10 **Protected Areas, Localism and the Big Society (Verbal presentation by George Winn-Darley)**

Mr Winn-Darley presented this item and informed Members that due to the weather conditions the event in Hexham had been cancelled on the 1 December 2010. However the agenda had contained items on Protected Areas, Localism and the Big Society.

He reported that correspondence since the date had focussed on the possibility of National Park Authorities being given a 3rd purpose to promote social and economic well being.

The Chief Executive noted that a good debate on protected areas and their management worldwide was needed; National Parks were owned by individuals and this should not be seen as an inconvenience but a reason why the Parks succeed; moorland regeneration is helped by grouse shooting; the improvement plan helps us work with partners and the community. The Authority is currently considering how to further empower and assist local communities.

Members supported the Chief Executive's view.

One Member noted that a lot of organisations were to be abolished and that RDPE money was very much needed in the area.

56/10 Stake Holders Working Group in ROW (Verbal presentation by Karl Gerhardsen, Head of Recreation and Access)

The Head of Recreation presented this item and showed a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

Members made the following comments:

- What is a quality application?
- Some councils have stopped processing definitive map orders.
- The Government promised to move forward with unrecorded rights of way, what is the Authority's thoughts on this?

The Head of Recreation answered the first question that good evidence made a quality application.

The Director answered the second question, that the Authority was focussing their efforts on managing the existing network to a high standard but was also considering the issue of unrecorded rights where they made a positive contribution in terms of filling gaps in the network. He stated the rights of way management would be considered as part of a prioritisation exercise in 2011 to establish a way forward on delivery of services in light of lower levels of funding.

57/10 Volunteer Research in Recording ROW (Verbal presentation by Catriona Cook)

Mrs Cook presented this item and noted that if local history groups and parish councils targeted their parish and this was done across the Park as a co-ordinated approach or that land owners could do their own areas, the work could be carried out efficiently.

A Member noted that perhaps a forward looking approach should be taken to have a modern network for modern times.

The Chair noted this.

58/10 Level Crossings – Law Commission Consultation

Mrs Cook presented this item and noted that a review of the law relating to level crossings was taking place and asked if the Authority had responded to the consultation.

The Head of Recreation informed Members that the Authority had not responded to the consultation but the Authority would watch the situation closely.

59/10 Financial Update (Verbal presentation by Richard Gunton, Director of Recreation & Park Management)

The Director of Recreation and Park Management verbally updated Members on the current financial situation of the Authority which is that the Authority has not yet received information about its budget settlement, but it is anticipated that it would be known before Christmas.

A Member asked if it would help if the Forum reduced its meetings to 3 a year. The Chair noted that if this were to happen, with the agenda for today, meetings could end up being all day meetings. Members therefore agreed that Officers needed to be more selective about what items were put on the agenda and this was noted.

60/10 HLS Access Payments

The Head of Recreation presented this item and noted that currently over £26k per year is being given to landowners in the park for concessionary access but that this is now coming to an end.

Members made the following comments:

- A great shame that the payments are going to stop.
- National Parks and Access Authorities have a role to play and need to make their voice heard at European level.
- Higher right users were not acknowledged.

Members agreed that a general letter of regret should be sent to MEP's with regards to access and better targeting in the future.

Action – The Director of Recreation and Access to write a letter to MEP.

61/10 Decadal Review of Open Access Land Boundaries (Verbal presentation by Karl Gerhardsen, Head of Recreation and Access)

The Head of Recreation informed Members that 2015 is the date for a review of Open Access Land boundaries, but Natural England had been asked by the Government that this be delayed for a further two years.

62/10 Implementing the Access & Recreation Strategy

Considered:

The report of the Director of Recreation and Park Management.

The Chair noted one action 'eliminate off-road parking in visually prominent, vulnerable or locally important locations' and noted that Farndale was an example and could a farmers field be used when the daffodils are out. The Head of Recreation confirmed that a little more work is done every year to reduce congestion. Noted that roadside parking from Osmotherly to Sheep Wash has been reduced with a Clearway Order.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

63/10 Public Rights of Way User Survey (Verbal presentation by Richard Gunton, Director of Recreation and Park Management)

The Director of Recreation and Park Management stated that this years survey results showed very positive progress. He showed a powerpoint presentation, a copy of which appears in the minute book.

A Member asked if bridges were the Authorities responsibility to maintain. The Director answered that it was dependent on the bridge as some were jointly shared.

In answer to a question from a Member, another Members answered that the reason why many rights of way across farmland were being ploughed up was due to more farmers using contractors to carry out the work.

64/10 Access all Areas

Mr Bateman presented this item and referred to the two publication extracts from a mountain bike magazine circulated with the agenda regarding some riders' view that responsible cycling on footpaths is acceptable.

Members noted that people needed to be educated from an early age on how to ride a mountain bike correctly in the countryside; conservation issues needed to be taken into account; linked routes would be an idea; mountain bikes cause more erosion in certain places however they do not disturb the wildlife as much.

65/10 Forestry Commission Woodland (Verbal presentation by Paul Cody)

Mr Cody verbally updated Members on the current situation at the Forestry Commission as follows:

- The Forestry Commission understands that there is to be a significant reduction in their future budget.
- A significant sale of land is to take place – 40,000 ha
- A proposed consultation is to take place in 2011 around the possibility of taking the Forestry Commission out of public ownership.
- The outcome of the Public Bodies bill is likely to be a repeal of the Forestry Act.

Mr Cody was asked to keep Members up to date as appropriate.

A Member asked if public access rights with regard to the CROW Act would be affected. Mr Cody noted that if a new land owner was to take over these should not be affected and concessionary access for riders and cyclists would possibly be withdrawn.

66/10 Yorkshire & Humberside Regional LAF Minutes of 13 September 2010 Responses from Members on training also attached

The Chair noted that a number of training opportunities have been circulated to Members. The Chair informed Members that any Member who wanted to attend the Yorkshire and Humber Regional training day in York on the 9 February 2011 should contact the Secretary.

The Chair also noted that the Head of Recreation and Access and the Chair were hoping to arranged some training next year based at Helmsley.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

67/10 **Regional Green Exercise Group Minutes of 10 June 2009**

Resolved:
That the minutes be noted.

68/10 **Coastal Access Programme Statement**

Resolved:
That the document be noted.

69/10 **SUSTRANS Meeting Note of 20 August 2010**

Resolved:
That the minutes be noted.

70/10 **Access Newsletter Issue 47**

Resolved:
That the document be noted.

71/10 **North East Regional LAF Minutes**

Resolved:
That the minutes be noted.

72/10 **Dates of meetings for 2011**

Members agreed the meeting dates of next year

Resolved:
That the meeting dates for next year were agreed.

Tuesday 8 March 2011
Tuesday 7 June 2011
Tuesday 6 September 2011
Tuesday 6 December 2011

73/10 **Items for future meetings**

Resolved:
That the items for future meetings be noted..