

**North Yorkshire Local Access Forum****6 April 2017****Update on Working with Third Party Volunteer Groups to Assist With the Delivery of the Countryside Access Service**

- 1 The service has been running a pilot project to enable local volunteer groups to carry out work on the network legally, safely and to a high standard, without direct supervision from Countryside Access Service (CAS) staff.
- 2 The pilot project with Lower Wharfedale Ramblers (LWR) has been running since 3 December 2016 and the group are now carrying out maintenance tasks independently with support from the Field Officer, Catherine Smith. They tackle approx. two tasks a month which are usually gate/stile repairs and/or short sections of clearance.
- 3 The group were recently filmed by the BBC Sunday Politics Show (Yorkshire and Lincolnshire) as an example of a project where councils are involving new volunteer projects following cuts to council budgets.
- 4 A second pilot project has started with Burton in Lonsdale Parish Council. The initial preparation is completed and an agreement (based on the LWR agreement) is in place, ready to start carrying out practical maintenance tasks very soon.
- 5 Initial discussions have also been held with Potto Parish Council and they have begun some tasks working alongside staff. This is going well and differs in that they are willing to consider landowner liaison where appropriate. We hope to complete an agreement with them in April so that they can start working independently from May.
- 6 A further parish group has also been in touch and we are compiling a list of interested groups to contact over the next quarter.
- 7 A full review of the LWR pilot is about to begin with a view to rolling the project out to other groups across the county in 2017/18 to assist with delivery of public rights of way maintenance and enhancements.
- 8 In addition to this, consideration will be given to adopting this method of service delivery once the UUR Pilot project is concluded. Over the course of the pilot external stakeholders have expressed a keen interest in the project and the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) were especially supportive. They were keen to explore ways for their members to provide volunteer labour to assist with UUR maintenance as well as the potential to offer funding to support the project. Unfortunately, due to the timescales involved it was not possible to deliver an additional scheme within the scope of the UUR pilot but it is understood that the offer remains and is available should the project continue.