

North Yorkshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 10 April 2019, commencing at 10 am

Present

Paul Sherwood (Chair), Roma Haigh (Vice Chair), Michael Bartholomew, Doug Cartwright, Rachel Connolly, County Councillor David Jeffels, Barrie Mounty, Carol Murray, Paul Sheard and Judith Turner.

Apologies: County Councillor Robert Heseltine, Richard Smith & Helen Soutar

Officers: Ian Kelly - Countryside Access Manager (Business and Environmental Services, North Yorkshire County Council), Kerry Green – Waste & Countryside Service (BES NYCC), Ben Jackson – NYCC PROW Officer and Melanie Carr (Legal & Democratic Services - Secretary to the Local Access Forum)

271 Election of a Chair

Resolved - That Paul Sherwood be elected Chair of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum until 25 March 2020.

Paul Sherwood took the Chair

272. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Robert Heseltine, Richard Smith and Helen Soutar.

273. Election of a Vice-Chair & District Council Liaison Representatives

Resolved - That Roma Haigh be elected as Vice-Chair of the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum until 25 March 2020.

In addition, the following members indicated they would be willing to take on specific roles:

- County Councillor David Jeffels – Scarborough District Council
- Rachel Connolly - Richmondshire District Council
- Barrie Mounty - Selby District Council
- Michael Bartholomew - Craven District Council
- Roma Haigh - Ryedale District Council
- Paul Sherwood & Cllr David Jeffels – Regional Access Forum Representatives

274. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019

In regard to Minute 269, paragraph 5, it was agreed the final sentence should be amended to read 'He declined to discuss the matter further as he was in the process of replying to the BHS contact who was pursuing the matter on behalf of NMUs.'

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the above change.

275. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

276. North Yorkshire Local Access Forum Draft Terms of Reference

Considered –

The report of the Secretary presenting draft Terms of the Reference for the Forum.

The following minor amendments were identified and agreed:

- Paragraph 1.1 – In regard to the reference to Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the word ‘Upper’ to be removed.
- Paragraph 2.1, Footnote 1 – a comprehensive list of the specified bodies to be attached as an annex to the Terms of Reference
- Paragraph 5.4 – to be revised to read ‘Members will be appointed for a period **‘up to’** three years...’
- Paragraph 5.6 – The words ‘through consultation’ to be removed.
- Paragraph 5.6, second bullet point – to be revised to read ‘Owners and occupiers of land which **‘may have’** a public right of way’
- Paragraph 6.1 – The wording to be revised to read ‘The Chair and Vice Chair will be drawn **‘from’** NYLAF members.’
- Paragraph 7.7 – The words ‘With the exception of voting for Chair or Vice Chair’ to be removed.
- Paragraph 12.3 – An additional bullet point to be added to read ‘A formal response has to be provided before the next formal meeting.’
- Paragraph 12.4 – The reference to paragraph 4.5 to be amended to instead reference paragraph 5.6.

In regard to the Principles shown at page 1 of Annex A to the report, Members agreed the following changes:

- Bullet Point 1 – Amended to read ‘Any new access should be at the highest rights appropriate for non-motorised users.’
- The words ‘non-motorised’ to be removed from the summary paragraph shown in bold at the bottom of the page.

In regard to the ‘Advice to District Councils’ shown at page 2 of Annex A to the report, Members agreed to remove the word ‘paths’ from the last bullet point and replace it with ‘rights of way’.

Resolved -

That:

- i. The introductory report be noted
- ii. The draft Terms of Reference be agreed subject to the changes listed above.

277. Update on the Management of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UURs)

Considered -

The report of the Countryside Access Manager providing a progress update following the transfer of management responsibility for UURs from Highways & Transportation to the Countryside Access Service.

Ben Jackson, NYCC PROW Officer presented the report and Forum Members noted the close working relationship with the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Park and the work programme that had been delivered since July 2018.

Michael Bartholomew drew attention to the case studies provided, and questioned the engagement with Users Groups referred to in paragraph 4.1. He also gave examples of his unsuccessful attempts to arrange a meeting with CAS to discuss a number of issues, and the lack of response to a number of questions he had posed via email.

Members also discussed water damage to TRO routes and the potential damage caused by motorised vehicles, which led to further discussion about providing access for as many as possible, over restricting access to some.

Paul Sheard questioned the quantity of maintenance required, how the works were prioritised and the associated costs. In response it was confirmed that safety was the first priority - throughout the first year the work had been guided by the end of temporary closures and the re-opening of routes that were not fit for purpose. Improving connectivity and accessibility were also deciding factors i.e. how a route would fit into the existing network.

Ian Kelly re-confirmed the primary aim of the Service was to maintain access for all and that the work undertaken in the first year had been positively received by users, indicating that the move from Highways had been beneficial.

In regards to the costs involved, Ian Kelly confirmed there was 700km of UURs in North Yorkshire and capital funding for maintenance works was only available for existing routes. As there was scarce resources available it was therefore about balancing the costs against the benefits.

Members questioned whether those accessing a route for private purposes or agricultural purposes could be asked to contribute to the cost of maintenance and Ben Jackson confirmed it was a possible option.

Ian Kelly confirmed that CAS would welcome strategic advice from NYLAF on how the funding was spent in the future and how routes were to be prioritised.

Members thanked officers for the update on works completed during 2018-19. They also requested sight of the work programme for 2019-20 once developed, and a further update in a year's time.

Resolved - That:

- i. The update be noted.
- ii. The 2019-20 UUR Work Programme be circulated to NYLAF members in due course.
- iii. A further update be provided in a year's time - the Forum's work programme to be updated accordingly.

278. District Council & LAF Project Updates

Considered -

The report of the Secretary giving LAF members the opportunity to update the Forum on District Council liaison and other LAF representative project activity since the last meeting.

Members noted the verbal update on the possible blocking of PROWs at Summerstone Estate in Upper Nidderdale, provided by Richard Smith, which confirmed there was no PROW concerns as a result of the Forestry work undertaken.

Members noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Highways England Trans-Pennine A66 Route Non-Motorised User Group held on 13 March 2019, and Paul Sherwood and Paul Sheard agreed to attend the consultation events on 22 May and 21 June respectively, and report back to the Forum. Rachel Connolly highlighted a concern raised by horse riders regarding the A66 crossings (corrals) in the centre of the highway i.e. getting stuck in the centre of the A66 due to heavy, fast flowing traffic and not being able to get across both sides of the road. Rachel Connolly confirmed that she would be submitting a consultation response.

Rachel Connolly also informed Members of feedback she had received on her comments on a recent planning application in Stokesley, submitted on behalf of NYLAF. As the feedback had come direct from the applicants, it was agreed that no further response should be sent.

County Councillor David Jeffels provided a verbal update on his continuing work on the GOAT Scheme (Going Out & About), which confirmed recent meetings with Ian Kelly - NYCC's Countryside Access Manager, Adam Pritchard-Jenkins - NYCC's Head of Outdoor Education, and a number North Yorkshire organisations who aspire to encourage primary age children to take an interest in their communities from a point of view of their health, the environment, heritage, culture and civic life. He agreed to provide a formal report for a future meeting. Members discussed the funding of the GOAT scheme if it were to go ahead.

Ian Kelly reiterated it was not within the gift of NYLAF to proceed with the GOAT Scheme, it could only recommend that the Scheme be implemented. He also suggested that it was outside of NYLAF's remit of giving strategic advice to Section 94(4) Bodies, but confirmed that the previous work by NYLAF on the GOAT Scheme had successfully informed the County Council's Pathways to Health Programme.

Resolved -

That:

- i. The updates on the various projects be noted.
- ii. That County Councillor David Jeffels provide a final report on the GOAT Scheme for the next meeting of NYLAF on 17 July 2019

279. Secretary's Update Report

Considered -

The report of the Secretary which updated on developments since the last meeting.

Forum members noted the notifications received on discretionary restrictions since the last meeting.

Rachel Connolly questioned why the issue at Bedale Bypass had not been progressed and why the British Horse Society had not yet received any response to the letters they had submitted to the Countryside Access Service (CAS). Ian Kelly, NYCC's Countryside Access Manager he was not in a position to discuss the matter with NYLAF at this stage as the process for considering a creation order for a NMU route was underway and he could not assume the outcome. Once the outcome was known, CAS would consider what if any next steps were required.

In regard to the proposed LAF website, Roma Haigh confirmed she had ideas on what was required. The Secretary questioned the need for a separate website given the LAF content already present on NYCC's website. Paul Sherwood confirmed the LAF information on the Council website was adequate but hard to find, and the Secretary agreed to contact the web team about making it easier to navigate to.

Finally, Ian Kelly introduced Kerry Green who as a result of his secondment into another role at NYCC, would be back filling his post as Countryside Access Manager. It was confirmed that Kerry would be therefore attending future NYLAF meetings.

Resolved -

That:

- i. The update report be noted.
- ii. The Secretary contact NYCC web team regarding improving navigation to the LAF webpages.

280. Forward Plan

Considered -

The Secretary drew members' attention to the draft Forward Plan provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and invited members to identify any additional items of business to be added outside of those already identified earlier in the meeting.

In order to inform future work planning, the Secretary confirmed she had undertaken some research to consider the type of business being undertaken by other LAFs across the country, and made members aware that many of those LAFs had a number of position statements in place which they issued in response to associated issues in their areas or with formal consultation responses e.g.:

- Areas of Outstanding Beauty – Access & Restriction
- Planning Related Priorities for PROW & Access
- Disability Access
- Access to Water
- Mechanically Propelled Vehicles
- Surfacing of New, Permissive (non-statutory) Paths & Routes
- Volunteering
- Shared Paths

The Secretary suggested that in light of the previous request from Ian Kelly for strategic advice from NYLAF on how funding for UUR maintenance was spent in the future and how routes were prioritised, it would be an appropriate issue for NYLAF to introduce a position statement on.

Members discussed whether to introduce a set of Position Statements. In order to identify what position statements may be of benefit, Paul Sheard suggested it would be useful first to consider a number of County Council policies and strategies. For example:

- LTP & Delivery Plans e.g. sustainable travel
- TAMP e.g. maintenance of adopted footways, cycleways and UURs
- ROWIP e.g. condition of network, usage, priorities
- Walking and Cycling Strategies e.g. cycle network plans
- Transport Requirements for New Development e.g. connectivity to employment and schools

Members agreed it would be useful and agreed to consider the County Council's cycling strategy at their next meeting in July 2019.

Paul Sheard also suggested NYLAF should consider adding items to the 2019-20 Work Programme around the following:

- Promotion and Publicity to increase use of the ROW network
- Opportunities for additional funding
- Working with Volunteers

Resolved -

That:

- i. The Forward Plan for 2019 be updated in line with the decisions taken at the meeting.
- ii. An overview of the County Council's Cycling Strategy be added to the Forward Plan for the next meeting of NYLAF in July 2019

The meeting concluded at 13:01
MC