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# YORKSHIRE DALES ACCESS FORUM

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**Held on Tuesday 4 October 2005**  
**Ingleton Community Centre**

Present: Jon Beavan, Chair (JB), Veronica Boulton (VB), Wilf Fenten (WF), Bill Foster (BF), Gerald Light (GL), Michael Bartholomew (MB), Roger Harrison-Topham (RHT), Richard Johnson (RJ), Geoff Wilson (GW), Phil Woodyer (PW), David Gibson (DG), Adrian Pickles (APi), Mark Sandamas (MS), John Sayer (JS), Richard Spensley (RS), John Goss (JG), Kathryn Beardmore (KB), Alan Hulme (AH), Andy Long (AL).

The meeting started at 1.20pm.

**1. Welcome**

JB welcomed the following observers to the meeting:

Janet Kitching – Ilkley and District Motor Club  
Brian Lewis – ANDC and GLASS  
Patricia Whelan – British Driving Society  
David Ashforth – Council for the Protection of Rural England  
Pam Brooks – Northumberland Local Access Forum  
Sarah Glover – North Yorkshire County Council  
Ken Miller – North Yorkshire Access Officer, Ramblers Association

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ben Heyes (BH), Anne Purbrick (AP), Graeme Hall (GH), Philip Woodyer (PW), Rachel Mozley (RM).

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Members agreed the minutes from the previous meeting (28<sup>th</sup> June 2005) with no amendments.

**4. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions presented to the Chair prior to the start of the meeting.

**5. YDAF Members Handbook**

This was covered by KB / JB in the absence of RM.

JB explained that a hand book is seen as good practice by other Access Forums around the country. The paper which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting,

outlined what was proposed for each section of the YDAF Handbook. The Handbook has been designed to be both informative and user friendly for Members to use.

KB asked the LAF if Members had any feedback or suggestions on anything which had been overlooked, or could be improved in the draft of the YDAF Handbook.

The LAF discussed the format of the handbook, and a number of specific points were made, these included:

- Seeking guidance with regard to the contents of handbooks produced by other forums, to ensure that nothing essential had been missed out.
- A full list of references should be included.
- A section dedicated to Access for All should be included in the new handbook.
- An electronic online version would be ideal, in a format which could be easily printed, and it could also include live links to other relevant websites. A paper version should also be available for those who did not want to rely on an electronic version.
- Orienteering should be added to the activities listed in section 5.2.
- In the 'Contact List' section, the 'position' of the person should be included, and it should also include representatives from the various public transport groups.
- A list of contact telephone numbers and emails for YDNPA Officers relevant to the YDAF, together with a departmental structure would also be helpful.
- RJ noted that The Ramblers Association were listed twice on the contact list. KB explained that this was because there were more than one area representative. KB added that this would be the case for a number of the organisations on the full contact list.
- Where there were one or more organisations with representatives for different areas of the park, all should be listed together by organisation, with the area covered listed also.

<p>It was agreed that a PDF and a paper version of the handbook be produced, both showing clearly the date of any updates and changes made to the document. Contact details for organisations would only be included for LAF members.</p>
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## **6. Appointment of Members to the YDAF**

KB ran through the paper outlining the current process for selecting members of the LAF.

The advertisement for membership recruitment will be appearing in the local and regional newspapers at the end of October. The first meeting of the LAF including the new members will be 17<sup>th</sup> January. KB explained that existing members can ask RM for the application pack ahead of the advert. Any members not intending to re-stand were asked to inform Rachel Mozely as soon as possible. JB said he felt that the current procedure was both well managed and fair, however the LAF were asked if there were any changes they would suggest.

KB briefly explained that the application form remained the same but there had been a change to the 'Interests' section, in that applicants were asked to state the interest(s) they wanted to represent.

GW asked if there is a going to be a possibility of a break between the election of a new Chairman and the end of JB's current Chairmanship. KB explained that the election of a new Chairman was the first item on the agenda for the January meeting of the LAF. JB reminded everyone to think about the future chair of the LAF as he would be standing down as chair at the end of December.

## **7. North Yorkshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update – Sarah Glover NYCC**

JB introduced Sarah Glover (NYCC) to the LAF.

SG explained her role with NYCC and said that information on progress of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was in the briefing paper which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. SG gave an overview of the work she has been undertaking for NYCC in relation to the ROWIP covering the YDNPA.

JG asked for clarification of the term 'Service Centre'. SG and KB clarified that this was the term being used for main settlements, such as Hawes, Skipton, Grassington and Sedbergh, and was in the Local Plan and LTP.

SG had consulted all the Area Rangers on possible improvements as part of the ROWIP as well as gathering data from many other sources eg. Area Actions. The LAF would need to be consulted on these to make sure nothing had been missed.

MS asked how the list of suggested improvements will be prioritised. SG explained that when all the information is gathered, a progress plan will have to be produced. KB added that there will need to be some discussion as to prioritisation and resources – some funding could possibly come from the LTP for some improvements, however at this stage it is too early to say.

JG asked what type of surfacing would be used in any improvements and if they will all be uniformly accessible, or would NYCC and YDNPA use different surface types. JG added that he would like to see a countrywide or graded standard of footpath surfacing.

AH replied that there was a national standard produced by the Countryside Agency and everyone should be working to this across the country. The ROWIP would look at 'access for all' improvements in line with these principles.

VB asked about routes which were not National Trails, but were well known and well used, and how they would be prioritised. SG said that these routes had been acknowledged as being well used promoted routes, and would expect them all to be prioritised accordingly.

RS asked if the Parish Councils had been consulted as part of the research process. KB explained that, all of the Parish Councils had been sent a questionnaire by NYCC and had been consulted last year. RS said that it had not been passed down as far as him if his Parish Council had been consulted. KB said that the Authority can check to see exactly when RS's Parish were consulted. RS also said he would like to see Area Rangers attend Parish Council meetings as once was the case. AH said that Rangers still offer to attend PC meetings, however the offers are not always taken by the PCs.

JB explained that the LAF were still involved with the Cumbria ROWIP, and that GW had attended that last Cumbria LAF meeting. GW updated the YDAF on the progress with the Cumbria ROWIP. The next meeting of the Cumbria LAF is on 20<sup>th</sup> October. JB said he hoped to attend, and one other YDAF Member would be welcome to attend if they so wished.

A list of responses from Parish Councils to be made available to the LAF by NYCC.

## **8. Recreational Charter**

KB explained the work that was being undertaken by Mark Allum on producing a Recreational Charter for the Yorkshire Dales. This had been agreed following the Best Value Performance Plan Review of the Authority's 2<sup>nd</sup> Purpose.

KB explained she hoped that the Recreational Charter could be produced with help from the YDAF and explained that the purpose was to produce a database of all recreational activities which take place within the YDNP. Some of these activities the YDNPA already had knowledge of, however there are many recreational activities which take place within the Park, that YDNPA has very little knowledge, and it would be helpful to have more information on these, particularly as the YDNPA were increasingly being asked for this information as part of the national and regional research into opportunities for outdoor recreation. Therefore KB asked the LAF to supply her with any activities which they may know of, which could be included in the charter.

Some members expressed concern about holding such a database, and if the information would be made public. KB said that the database would not be made public, and would be for the YDNPA only, and there was no intention to 'promote' sites.

JB said he felt that there was a large amount of access for recreational activities, which have no formal arrangements, and therefore users were unsure of the legal status of these activities, and often unwilling to provide details because of it.

WF asked that the brief state the recreational charter should be in the context of the Authority's 2<sup>nd</sup> Purpose, which states 'enjoyment of the special qualities'. In order to

preserve these natural assets, there is a need to provide a constant investment, and the government should realise that this is the case.

GW said that people would feel that if these activities are taking place and the Authority and YDAF were not aware they were taking place, this was a good thing, as they could do them without fear of interference. KB agreed that these activities do take place without interference, however YDNPA should still be aware that they are taking place and cited by way of example, that this was no different to knowing where the location of the species rich hay meadows are. GW added that there was work to be done by YDNPA to put the various clubs and activity clubs at ease that they will be allowed to continue with their activities without fear of interference by the Authority. GW said that he felt the information should be gathered by the YDNPA, and then the process should stop at this point, and that user groups etc. should be made aware of this. KB stressed that YDAF members were very keen to use their 'expertise' to help the YDNPA, and that there was a very useful role here for the YDAF members.

AP said he felt the type of information which was being asked for was now much clearer. However he asked if activities such as 'Field Work' should be classed as a recreational activity. KB said that the brief could be changed to incorporate such activities.

JB suggested that in the next few weeks MA contact the members of the YDAF and ask for assistance.

## **9. National Park Management Plan Update**

MB updated the LAF on the work which was done on the Access and Recreation section of the review of the National Park Management Plan.

AH clarified how the preliminary consultation had been undertaken. It was not a full consultation of a large group of organisations and individuals – the consultees were specifically chosen to help provide a 'sounding' board at this early stage.

JA said that he hoped that there will be a paper outlining all the proposals ready to approve at the next LAF meeting, but this all depends on the timescale of the work on the NPMP Review.

## **10. DEFRA Consultation relating to the amendment of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002**

JB explained the details of the latest consultation from DEFRA regarding amendment to the Regulations governing Local Access Forums. JB asked the LAF to put together a response to DEFRA, and went through the consultation page by page, discussing and agreeing each separate proposal.

### **Proposal 1:**

Proposal 1 was unanimously agreed by the YDAF.

### **Proposal 2:**

VB said that having flexibility on this was a good thing. Pam Brookes (Northumberland LAF) was invited to comment. PB explained that this had been attempted for the whole of the North Pennines, but it had failed, and was discarded without any consultation.

GW said he too was slightly concerned with the lack of process and consultation abandoning this.

JB said he felt this proposal should be allowed, but with consultation and support from the appointing Authority. Proposal 2 was agreed by the LAF on this basis.

### **Proposal 3:**

Proposal 3 was approved as per the above discussion notes on Proposal 2.

### **Proposal 4:**

VB commented that this was a sensible policy to adopt. GW said he was concerned that Members appointments could end up over the same period.

Proposal 4 was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal 5:**

Proposal 5 was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal 6:**

Proposal 6 was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal 7:**

This was difficult to comment on as it applies to mainly urban LAF's. However DG said he felt that if Member numbers dropped as low as 8, the YDAF should join up with another LAF. This was discussed. VB said she disagreed as it would not be useful teaming up with a LAF from an urban area.

The LAF felt they were unable to comment on Proposal 7, as it applied mainly to urban areas.

### **Proposal (A)**

RHT said that the YDAF should be writing to these 'additional bodies' to make themselves 'known' and provide 'advice', and that there should be some protocol for this.

KB explained that ANPA have suggested that external bodies must be made to seek the advice of the LAF through legislation, but there had been reluctance to do so. RHT said he understood this and added that there should be onus on these bodies to respond to the

LAF's requests. DG agreed with this, and asked that YDNPA officers draw up a list of the organisations which would need advice and should be taking advice from the LAF. KB said this list was outlined in the LAF annual report.

Proposal (A) was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal (B)**

DG suggested that this should include all 'recreational use', however RHT noted that the term 'recreational use' was covered within the actually Act.

Proposal (B) was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal (C)**

Proposal (C) was agreed by the LAF.

### **Proposal (D)**

JB said he felt there was a lack of clear guidance on the balance between users, landowners and other interests. JB added that the categories need greater clarification.

RS felt that the spirit of the LAF was important. JB agreed and that it should be said that it is important to have a full range of members. JS said that whilst this was a good thing, however it could cause a problem when there are a number of apologies for meetings, but added that if all the members are working for the good of the LAF and not as individuals, this is not so much of an issue.

DG asked that DEFRA provide grants to assist the LAFs. RHT added that if there was a possibility of additional funding, the LAF should be trying hard to try and secure it.

Proposal (D) was agreed including the comments outline above.

## **11. YDAF Action Plan**

JB explained the paper that had been circulated, and went through point by point.

JS asked for clarification on what was meant by an 'attractive body'. JB clarified that it meant that the YDAF was a desirable organisational body to be a part of. RHT added that many other LAF's struggle to recruit members.

No further comments or suggestions were made by the YDAF on the paper.

JB said that for the next meeting, he would produce a list of the work and issues the LAF are likely to, or could possibly be involved in over the coming year. JB added that this should be a standard agenda item at the first YDAF meeting of each year.

## **12. CRoW Act Applications for Restrictions and Exclusions**

AH updated the LAF on restrictions and exclusions in relation to the paper circulated.

AH explained that the Authority shall now be informed directly by the Open Access Contact Centre of 28 day restrictions (This had been raised at a previous meeting and YDAF had written to CoAg asking for this).

The Authority has dealt with 20 cases to date. There have been a total of 372 national applications. However not including the 99 from the Forestry Commission and the 116 'non-applications' for Fire Restrictions from Authorities such as YNDPA, the actual figure is 157, which is significantly less than anticipated.

AH asked if members would like to see all the national figures in the actual report.

The YDAF agreed that this would be useful to have alongside the authority's figures in each report.

Members asked about dedications of access land.

KB added that there have been 7 dedications within the National Park, for Open Access and these had all been YDNPA property. GW asked how the public gets to know how the land has been dedicated. AH said that this could be done via the Open Access Website.

GW added that he felt that DEFRA / CoAg could be using a similar method to give the public details of TRO's etc. which are currently in force.

On the point of Access Information, JB said that the YDNPA JPI website was using the term 'Access Information Points' to describe Tourist Information Points such as Bed and Breakfast's and village shops – this could be very misleading. JB to forward the website links to KB.

The LAF asked that all YDNPA websites are up to date with regard to Open Access information.

## **13. National Park Authority Update**

### **• Development of YDAF Logo**

KB explained that a logo for the YDAF was under development. KB showed the LAF some examples which had been provided by one particular design company and asked members for comments. RHT felt that the chosen logo should have a Zen like simplicity and should be 'printer friendly'.

KB said that these designs were just a start. KB left the sheet for members to 'tick' which design style they preferred at the close of the meeting.

The LAF were asked to give KB any suggestions for either the design or design companies by the end of October so that the logo could be produced before the next meeting.

- **Fire Restrictions**

DG asked for clarification on how big the closures would be for fire restrictions. AH explained the process and how it had been adopted, and added that the non application fire restrictions for the Park were based on 20 blocks of Open Access land. AH said that nationally there had only been one case of a warning reaching '5', and this was near Guildford, Surrey, (5 being the level at which Open Access land can be closed for fire risk). This was part of the national system used throughout the country.

RHT said that he was concerned that fires cause long term destruction to the ecology and the peat layer. RHT asked for confirmation that the basics of conservation had been worked into the model used to determine when '5' was reached, and that the dampness of the peat in each area had also been considered when determining the levels of the fire index.

AH said that a paper outlining the methodology was to be posted on the website. AH agreed to email members the link. The 20 blocks of non-application Fire Risk Areas to be shown on a map at the next LAF meeting.

- **Hubberholme Long Term Closure**

JB asked about the situation with the long term closure at Hubberholme, and if there had been any progress on the negotiations for a footpath there. AH said that discussions were continuing and there were no new developments to report at this time.

#### **14. Update on Members Activities**

JG – Attended the joint LAF meeting in York. The meeting was useful although there was nothing specific to report back on.

AP – Has been in discussions regarding a disputed right of way and asked if the LAF can be kept informed about these issues. KB said all these issues are covered by the Access Committee. Papers for Access Committee meetings can be obtained via Rachel Mozley should members wish to have these.

BF – Has been monitoring the Dales Way and other routes in his area, and felt that usage seemed to be down from last year. RS said that he has been doing the same, but felt that there had been an increase in use of these routes.

VB / RJ – Had attended a meeting at Dales Countryside Museum which had organised by the Audit Office looking at Open Access implementation. This was a constructive meeting, and a full report outlining the Audit Commission's findings would be circulated in due course.

## **15. Any Other Business**

- JB took the opportunity to thank GL for his help and input, as this was his last meeting as a member of the YDAF.
- JB also added that this shall be his last meeting as Chairman, and also this would be the same for BH in his role as Vice Chairman.

## **16. Future Forum Meetings**

The next meeting of the LAF is on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2005 at Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes. Any agenda items to be passed to RM.

AL circulated a 'tick list' for members to state which dates they would prefer for meetings of the YDAF over the next 12 months.

The meeting closed at 16.15.