

**Date:** 29 May 2007

**Report:** MEMBER FEEDBACK – ATTENDANCE AT PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

Attached, as **Appendices** to this report is feedback from the following members who have represented the Authority at various meetings:

- Mrs D Millward – Appendix 1 – Local Access Forum
- SHK Butcher – Appendix 2 – Swinden Quarry Trust

**Richard Parkin**  
**Secretariat Officer**

Background documents: None

15 May 2007



**Report to Members on Local Access Forum Meeting 8.1.07**

This was the AGM of the YDLAF and the Chair, G. Wilson, was re-elected. Members failed to appoint a Vice Chair.

The bulk of the meeting was in the form of a workshop with members dividing into three groups and spending 30 minutes in each session answering a whole series of questions relating to current open access.

Session 1 looked at practical means of improving open access physically on the ground.

Session 2 examined ways of promoting opportunities for the enjoyment of open access.

Session 3 related to improving information for the public on regulations and restrictions.

Deborah Millward

*[Editorial note: The agendas, papers and minutes of each meeting are available on the website [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk)]*



**The overall objective of the workshop was to look at how should the National Park Authority as Access Authority continue to enhance and improve means of open access physically on the ground?**

**SESSION ONE**

**1. Should the National Park Authority continue to improve and enhance open access opportunities?**

- Yes but .....
- Not many people using open access
- People not using info already available
- Need to shift emphasis – use scoping, experience, to further enhance and improve opportunities.
- Careful assessment in relation to a perceived need from users/landowners/park/LAF.

**Conclusion**

Yes but... commitment and resources from the Authority should be at an appropriate level to the demands from any of the individual interests. This is a long term opportunity which should continue to develop over generations.

**2. What additional practical on the ground measures should be introduced?**

- Links/Access points
- New RoW to enhance access
- Promotion of transport links
- Stiles/signs/gates

**Conclusion**

Should seek to enhance and improve opportunities through a range of options including those listed but with an emphasis towards information and education.

### 3. Who else can feed into the process of identifying opportunities and how?

- Anyone via letter/website

#### Conclusion

Everyone.... But we should also seek to improve our own website where suggests, comments could be posted.

### 4. What else can be done to improve access on open access land?

- Some way of finding out about ... 28 day restrictions
- Access information in more villages/car parks
- Work with key local people
- Big education

#### Conclusion

Information, Information, Information was the general theme of improving people's opportunities to experience open access

### 5. Are there issues regarding activities on access land (such as climbing, caving, geocaching) that need addressing within the plan

- (Closed seasons – previous agreements ....how do these go forward?)
- Falling down/off things
- Canoeing – Access to water

#### Conclusion

Generally Yes the LAF and the Authority should continue to monitor and examine opportunities and take advantage of trends and developments within the countryside as a whole. A good example being Geocaching.

## SESSION 2

### How should the NPA, as Access Authority, continue to promote opportunities for the enjoyment of open access?

#### 6. Should the National Park Authority continue to seek to raise the profile of open access?

- |         |   |                                                           |
|---------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Group A | ( | Yes (with qualifications – should be slow, gradual)       |
|         | ( | Need for public info. On how dogs should be used.         |
|         | ( | Guided walks are a good thing.                            |
| Group B | ( | Yes, but be aware that open access areas are likely to be |
|         | ( | demanding on users to be able to access easily.           |
| Group C |   | Yes but a couple of sceptics.                             |

#### Conclusion

The overall general feeling was yes but this should be incremental and at an appropriate level in relation to resource input as a return on gain from the public experiencing the special qualities of the park through open access.

### 7. Walks have been developed on access land. Could there be other uses for these open access walk opportunities?

- |   |                                                     |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------|
| A | 1. Navigation training might be considered.         |
| B | 2. Is navigation training by non NPA staff allowed? |
| C | 3. The guided walks programme is a good idea.       |

## **Conclusion**

There was a strong feeling that navigation training may improve user levels and was generally a good thing anyway. The Authority should consider providing opportunities for navigation training and for people to experience open access in a safe environment and remove the unknown quality thus increasing confidence and understanding through opportunities for navigation training and accompanied walks.

## **8. How else should the NPA continue to raise the profile of open access?**

1. Outreach?
2. Reach groups who already lead walks – multiplier effect.

## **Conclusion**

General feeling is there are always further opportunities but getting access to information, peoples understanding and general education messages out there should be the current priority.

## **9. What other audiences could open access opportunities be promoted to?**

1. School groups via field centres.
2. Get at writers of walks for local papers.
3. Accommodation providers

## **Conclusion**

The outcome was very similar to the previous answer

## **10. How could others be used to promote open access? Limited time not answered**

## **11. How could the NPA go ahead and do this? Limited time not answered**

## **SESSION 3**

## **How can the NPA continue to improve information to the public in relation to regulations and restrictions?**

### **12. What are the main messages in relation to restrictions?**

- Information/communication
- Timing at time
- Mindset to check always
- How long before people do this
- QUICK RESPONSE ALL NPA SITES
- Map, compass, clothing, find if route useable
- NPA site (info) not computer links to restrictions
- Info points public transport
- More at non NPA car parks
- No restriction notices
- Automatic leaflets given out at equipment shops – why restrictions, how to find out about restrictions.
- Should 28 days restrictions be compulsory
- Signed with map
- Nature – no problems
- Fire – notices/local radio? Peat relevant, burning points, local knowledge

## **Conclusion**

This created probably one of the hottest topics to consider. Although overall restrictions are very few across the park discretionary restrictions in relation to dogs(all year), nesting birds(May/Jun) and Fire(as activated) pose an interesting problem for land managers, the Access Authority and the public. Every opportunity

should be taken as listed above to manage these on the ground however again it should be in relation to the level of use. The messages in relation to the three main areas dogs, birds and fire are key messages in their own right anyway for the NPA.

### **13. How can negative messages be made positive?**

- Explanation – problem length of notice
- 5 Big birds – good leaflet because it explains and gives information.
- Understanding What Goes on in the Countryside
- Dripping Information onto user

### **Conclusion**

There was a general feeling that visitors understanding of the countryside could be improved and there should be an ongoing drip effect in relation to Open Access messages. As the Authority's 2<sup>nd</sup> purpose of promoting understanding is key to the delivery of messages open access messages should go easily alongside.

### **14. What else could be done to provide information on regulations and restrictions?**

### **15. What should the role of the NPA be in relation to fire risk?**

- Fire Profiles for open access areas
- Not Our Responsibility
- Leave to NPA
- Leaflet What to Do?
- NP volunteers as fire watchers
- Rangers as liaison not fire fighter
- LAF offer our moral support and knowledge

### **Conclusion**

Fires pose a major threat to the conservation and recreational value of areas of the park not mentioning the possible economic impacts. The NPA already has a role through the designation of Open Access land in relation to the management of fire restrictions. It would therefore seem appropriate the NPA should have some role/input in overall management and planning of dealing with fires. This should be left to the NPA to decide on level of involvement but the LAF can offer advice and support if required.

### **16. Could the LAF be involved with Moorland Profiles?**

- No

### **Conclusion**

As above not specifically as the LAF but could offer assistance through knowledge or individuals on the LAF

### **17. What other organisation could be of assistance?**

- RAF
- Flying clubs
- MOD
- Fell Rescue Teams

### **Conclusion**

Suggestions of others who could be involved along with those already identified, Major Estates, Moorland Association, Country Land Owners and Business Association, NFU, National Trust, Natural England etc

### **18. Other points raised**

- Dogs – keep restating
- 28day/6week dogs restriction to be signed.

- Open access websites more user friendly
- Put information on NPA website
- Not just link to open access
- Code mostly OK
- Litter a problem from roads.

### **Conclusion**

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Best Value Performance Plan 07/08 has a target to:

32 c) produce a comprehensive Open Access Management and Development Plan

The comments from the workshop will feed into the plan which is due to be completed by October 2007. any further comments or thoughts can be forwarded to Alan Hulme at YDNPA, Colvend, Hebden Road, Grassington, N.Yorks. BD23 4DT, email [alan.hulme@yorkshiredales.org.uk](mailto:alan.hulme@yorkshiredales.org.uk) or direct line 01756 751647



## SWINDEN QUARRY TRUST

When planning permission was granted in 1996 for development at Swinden Quarry Tarmac, the quarry operator, undertook to make annual index linked payments into a trust fund. The purpose of this fund is to finance the long term management of the site after Tarmac has completed restoration works.

The Trust is a charity with six trustees that oversees the investment of the fund. Four of the trustees are nominated by the Authority, including two from the parish councils, and two are from Tarmac. Day to day investment is undertaken by stockbrokers following the strategy agreed by the trustees. The value of the fund at the end of March was approximately £345k.

At the recent meeting of the trust on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007, trustees discussed the performance of the portfolio and agreed that a reasonably defensive approach is sensible in the current financial climate.

Tarmac gave a brief description of their proposed planning application to extend the life of the quarry to 2030 and the trustees discussed how this may affect the future operation of the Trust, if permission is granted.

**Date: 29 May 2007**

**Report: MEMBER FEEDBACK – MEMBER CHAMPION FOR RECREATION  
MANAGEMENT**

***What part of Authority does my brief extend to?***

Essentially the Park Management Department – the largest in the Authority, with 35 staff (and currently 2 apprentices).

Most of the staff are divided into two teams:

the Ranger team (Ranger Manager and the Administrator, plus 8 Area Rangers and 8 Access Rangers and the Pennine Way Ranger)

the Access and Recreation team (Access and Recreation Manager and the Administrator, plus 4 in the Definitive Map Group, Access Project Officer, Access Development Officer, Transport and Visitor Management Officer, Pennine Bridleway Officer and 2 Access Technicians).

Outside these teams are the Head of Park Management and his Administrative Officer, the Volunteers Co-ordinator and the Contracts Manager.

***How have I learned about this area of responsibility?***

*Team meetings*

Each of the two teams holds a meeting in most months, and there is also a Departmental Management Team meeting, consisting of the Head of Department, the Heads of the two teams, the Volunteers Co-ordinator, the Contracts Manager and the Department Administrator.

I attend all these meetings whenever I can. I am pleased to say that the staff just seem to accept me as a colleague, and do not treat my contributions with any undue respect.

*In the field*

I have spent one day a month in the field with a Ranger (and sometimes the corresponding Access Ranger), gradually working my way round the 8 areas plus the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway Rangers. I have asked them just to let me see the sorts of work they are involved with on a day-to-day basis; in the case of Access Rangers, I have helped with the practical tasks they are engaged in.

I have also accompanied a Definitive Map Officer on a visit to a farmer who needs to regularise a footpath situation; I have accompanied officers carrying out surveys of green lanes; and I have been sure to attend site visits for committees which have involved the work in my area: e.g. the Pennine Bridleway; Access for All.

## *Briefings*

I have had individual briefing sessions with most members of staff apart from the Rangers, so that I can appreciate the sort of work they are involved with.

### ***What have I done to “champion” this area of work?***

As Champion I have been appointed to certain positions in addition to those I formerly held as a Member (such as the Access Committee): for example, I now sit on the Pennine Bridleway Steering Group and I chair the new Green Lanes Advisory Group. I have also attended (and spoken at) one of the twice-yearly gatherings of all 200+ Dales Volunteers.

When press releases have related to something within my area, e.g. changes to car park charges, damage to toilets, presentations to long-serving volunteers, it has sometimes been thought appropriate to include a quote from the Champion (whether he actually said it or not!).

More obvious “championing” has involved saying positive things in meetings, whether internal (e.g. setting of priorities) or external (e.g. discussions about proposals for new countryside access services in Cumbria).

But apart from “speaking up” for one’s area, I think it is important for a Champion just to let the staff know that someone is interested in and cares about what they do. The most recent “Climate Survey” among the staff seems to indicate an increase in those members of the Department who say they feel Members of the Authority understand and are interested in their work.

### ***Does this involve a greater time commitment than I had previously?***

Yes. My monthly commitment as a member of Planning Committee was up to two f.t.e. days: one day at the Committee plus the time spent reading papers and reports and perhaps attending a site visit. This would show up on my monthly expenses claim as not more than two items (Committee meeting and perhaps a site visit) in addition, of course, to my other NPA activities: Authority, Audit & Review, Access Committee, PDF etc. Now my claim may contain up to four or five Champion items – and obviously the amount of member time involved can be considerably greater.

Therefore though the Champion system does not involve any extra payments for the extra time commitment, it does cost the Authority more in mileage claims – at least as far as my Champion role is concerned.

### ***Do I think the Champion system should continue?***

Definitely. I do not think we have given it long enough yet to form a proper assessment of its value. And we have not given it the level of importance I believe it merits (see below on “turnover”).

From a purely selfish point of view, I find my present role much more interesting than devoting so much time to Planning issues (though I do still see all Planning Committee papers). It also accords more with what I feel I can offer to the Authority in terms of experience and enthusiasm (which was something the NPAPA review drew to our attention, and which was partly responsible for our introducing the Champion system).

Whatever else “championing” may come to involve, I believe officers appreciate that some Member is taking the trouble to get to know in some detail and appreciate what they are doing.

Otherwise it would be possible to sit on the Authority and the “expected” committees for years without having much idea about what is going on at the coalface – where the work of the National Park touches the experience of both local people and visitors.

***What about turnover of champions?***

This is a potentially serious matter. It takes time to build up trust on both sides, and an understanding by the Champion of what the staff in that area are doing. It probably takes at least six months to establish oneself, so I believe a Champion should not be forced to give up this role in less than two years.

The turnover which has taken place so far is partly a result of our reinforcing the common public perception (and the belief of some Members) about what the NPA is primarily concerned with – by giving priority to Planning, and insisting that we must have a “full” and balanced Planning Committee whatever the effect on other roles for our Members. I believe the system of Champions is of at least equal importance and should not be made subservient to our Planning role.

Malcolm Petyt  
May 2007