Meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum
To be held on Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 1:15pm
Yoredale, Bainbridge

Meeting to commence at 1.15pm

1. Election of a Chair
2. Election of a Vice Chair
3. Welcome and introductions
4. Attendance and apologies
5. Approval of minutes, and matters arising (not on the agenda)
6. Public Question time
7. Future Forum Meetings
   - Agenda Items
   - Dates
8. Review of nominated LAF members on groups linked to the Forum
9. No fence collars presentation on Teams
10. Public Rights of Way annual report Plan
11. Yorkshire Dales National Park Active Travel Plan (verbal update)
12. Coast to Coast
13. Officer's Report (items for note and consideration by Forum Members)
14. Update on members' activities (brief reports of activities relating to the Forum)

Statutory Function: To provide advice on the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area, and to provide advice on the improvement of public access to land in the area for any other lawful purpose.

Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum(YDAF)
Tuesday 20 February 2024
Meeting held via MS Teams

Members present: Jon Beavan (JB) Hannah Gardner (HG) (Vice Chair, Peter Baggaley (PB) John Bucknall (JBu), Lizzie Bushby (LB), Leo Crone (LC), Rachel Forsyth (RF), Neil Heseltine (NH), Alex Law (AL) and Malcolm Petyt (MP).

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) officers present: Rebecca Greenfield (RG), Alan Hulme (AH), Rachel Briggs, (RB) and Rebecca Eslick (RE) (taking the minutes). Helen Kellar (Sustrans),
Members of the Public: Ruth Annison (RA).

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

24/01. Welcome and introductions

24/02. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Barbara Gravenor and Debbie North.

23/03. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 23 May 2023, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

24/04. Public Question Time

Ruth Annison read out a public statement see attached (Appendix A) and Jon Beavan (Chair) thanked RA and responded with a 2 points.

- The YDAF's appointing authority, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, is not a local transport authority in its own right. There are three other three local transport authorities covering the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Lancashire, Westmorland and Furness, and North Yorkshire.

- YDAF's main decisions are around Outdoor recreation and Access to the countryside as defined in the Countryside Rights of Way Act. This doesn't cover public transport.
  In the last 12 months the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has published.
  a statement on public transport in order to try and advise those local transport authorities.

AH was able to advise that there is a survey open to the 26 February asking residents about the management plan for the park and that's where you can raise these issues around public transport. The survey has a specific question on public transport and asks you to rate its importance to you.

23/05. Future Forum Meetings

The next meetings will be held on the following dates: -

Tuesday 14 May 2024, 1.15 pm at Yoredale, Bainbridge
Tuesday 3 December 2024, 1.15 pm on Teams

Future Agenda items suggested included -

- Review of boundary fences will be taken away after 10 yrs. – how is this monitored or enforced?
- Draft Annual Report on Rights of Way
- Open Access Land – Mass trespass on Dartmoor where there are open access islands surrounding by private land.
  JB and AH stated that YDNPA only have 1 where access was requested and Natural England are considering re mapping access land.
- Coast to Coast Presentation

24/06. Yorkshire Dales Management Plan

RG advised the forum that the National Park Management Plan has been published and is in it the 1st Stage of consultation for 2025-29. There is a short survey with a deadline of 26 February details are available on social media and the website.

Members of the forum discussed the possibility of completing as a forum but concluded that individual responses carried more weight.

A short promotional video was played for members -

Special Qualities Film - https://youtu.be/b_g02d97idw

24/07. Lune Valley cycle access

Helen Kellar (Sustrans) gave a presentation to the forum om the Lune Valley Greenway which is a multi-user route
In late 2018 Sustrans were approached by a private donor about the potential of establishing an extension to the existing Lune Valley Greenway in Lancashire.
The Lune Valley Programme is now made up of 6 defined projects covering 3 counties. Each project has a project manager, funding and defined outputs they want to achieve. The aim is to construct it all by 2035.
To view the presentation click here see Item 7 - Lune Valley Greenway.

The particular area that the forum would be interested in is the Kirkby Lonsdale to Cowan Bridge.

HG raised concerns about the lack of mention of equestrian use and also that inclusive language should include ‘multi user’ and walking, wheeling riding’ as examples, so that everyone is involved.

JB queried the lack of any mention of legal dedication- Helen Kellar explained that Memorandums of Understanding were being looked at, in discussion with Kathryn Beardmore (Director of Park Services at YDNPA).
JBu made a request that an extension from Kirkby Lonsdale to Tebay be looked at and echoed HG’s concerns about making the routes truly multi user.

LB asked what consideration had been given for climate change and design for nature.HK was able to reassure the forum that all routes will take into consideration these matters in consultation with their ecologists.

JB thanked HK for the presentation and asked that the YDAF be kept informed and if possible a YDAF member could join the Lune Valley Greenway group for consultation purposes.

24/08. Officer’s Report (items for note and consideration by Forum Members)

RB introduced her report and provided an update on the Coast to Coast (C2C) National Trail and advised that there will be a presentation as a future Agenda item.
JB attended 2 meetings online of the C2C forum.
NH asked how was the installation going for the Changing Places facilities. RB advised that the one at Dales Countryside Museum was actually being installed this very moment in time and the one at Leyburn was in the planning stages. Settle have a changing places facility at Limestone View Library and Community Centre.
NH would like to see Malham more accessible – RG was able to advise that Julie Barker is looking into a feasibility study how to make Malham more accessible, and the National Park has submitted a list of potential cycle projects to NPP.

Action - RB requested that members of the forum submit any expenses incurred asap before the year end.

RB also announced that Kathryn Beardmore will be retiring from the Authority at the end of March and thanked her for all the hard work over the many years.

Action – Jon Beavan to write to KB on behalf of the Access Forum to thank her for her work over the years.

24/09. Update on members’ activities (brief reports of activities relating to the Forum)

HG has been involved in the Joint National Park Cycling Project and asked if there is a way to persuade other NPA’s to use ‘multi user’ and other inclusive words in the published material.

She has also been involved in Multi user Coast to Coast route – the draft route has been submitted to Natural England.

JBu – Question about some manors do have special tax arrangements with HMRC yes it does apply to some landowners and carries some obligations.

AL – Queried the way in which some of the consultations had been received relating to planting schemes and fencing. RB reassured the form that they are being received even though it may be within a short timescale.

NH – Access Forum should be a consultee on planting but only where access is required and relevant.

JB - Made a request that if consultations are circulated please do respond and if any specific views or local knowledge please include.

PB – Questioned if the wording had been changed on the standard statement relating to the use of barbed wire – RB confirmed that has that been done.

Action – Rachel Briggs to recirculate the updated statement to members.

There be no further business the meeting closed at 14:47 p.m.

Appendix A

Statement Ruth Annison

I have lived in Upper Wensleydale since 1975, moving here for work. I gave up driving eleven years ago and am entirely dependent on public transport i.e. main line railways, local bus services and the very occasional taxi.

The Officer's Report for this meeting notes that the role of the Local Access Forum is to advise the YDNPA - and other decision-making bodies -*"about making improvements to public access and sustainable travel."*

Conservation and Access are the complementary, yet all too often competing, statutory responsibilities of the National Park. However, the success of the Yorkshire Dales in attracting large numbers of visitors - especially to the popular 'honeypot spots' - is also a threat to many aspects of conservation. More positively, visitors contribute significantly to the local economy of dales villages and market towns, including the YDNPA's visitor centres and car parks.

Most visitors arrive by car - whether for a day out or for a longer stay. It's convenient; it's door to door (home to booked accommodation); and for family groups and friends it may be cheaper to travel together than a long rail journey paying individual fares. However, the vast number of cars now being brought into the National Park by visitors is causing serious - and well-recognised - problems. Yet the National Park, like many other businesses, relies in part on tourism spend.

The Authority's statutory duties regarding Access and Recreation cannot now be met - either realistically or sustainably - without addressing the present dominance of the private car. The phrases greenhouse gases, climate change, carbon reduction, net zero and sustainable travel are now part of our everyday language - but it seems hard to know where to begin!

I would like to suggest that we start *where we are now*, in order to make some progress during 2024 in addressing the dominance of the private car within this National Park - and thereby learn some useful lessons for future planning. Well-established and experienced voluntary organisations already bring together transport operators and users of bus and rail services, to promote and advise on bus and rail services. Is some collaboration with the Authority feasible for these organisations, to maximise the potential benefits of consultation and possibly joint working?

The extension of the government's £2 cap on adult single bus fares to December 2024 offers real opportunities for encouraging non-car access this season - notably, for example, via the stations on the Settle-Carlisle line which have established rail/bus connections - and other existing
public transport routes into and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Item No. 8

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 14 May 2024

Review of nominated LAF members on Advisory Groups linked to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to:

(a) remind members of the advisory groups that the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) contribute towards, through a representative(s) of the YDAF attending meetings, and

(b) seek representative(s) from the YDAF on these groups for the current year.

Background

There are several different types of meeting where the YDAF are asked to provide a representative. These can be:

- Meetings looking at a specific project or idea,
- Meetings looking at specific recreation activities with user groups,
- Meetings with other organisations eg the Highway Authorities.

From time to time, other groups and meetings also require members from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum. A full list of YDAF representatives on each group can be seen in the **Appendix**.

At the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum on 22 May 2007[1] a paper was discussed on the formation of Advisory Groups. The remit of these groups is to:

- exchange information, and provide a formal mechanism for communication and raising issues of concern on specific areas of interest;
- advise on the management of specific matters.

There are currently seven Advisory Groups:

- Access on Foot Advisory Group e.g. open access, footpaths.
- Bridleway and Restricted Byway Advisory Group e.g. bridleways, restricted byways.
- Air Sports Advisory Group e.g. paragliding, hang gliding.
- Water Sports Advisory Group e.g. canoeing, sailing.

[1] http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/lookingafter/caringfor/managingaccess/ydaf/ydlaf-meetings/ydlaf-archive/ydlaf-may2007

- Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group e.g. caving, climbing.
- Access for All Advisory Group e.g. access for people with limited mobilities.
- Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group (recreational motor vehicular use of green lanes, up to four members appointed from YDAF).

Who should represent the YDAF?

The Annual General meeting of the YDAF gives members of the forum the opportunity to revisit who sits on each group and decide whether representation should be changed in any way. This is to take into account new members of the Forum, together with any vacancies that may have occurred due to members resigning from the Forum.

Ideally, where more than one member is required on a group, YDAF membership to the groups should be balanced. That is to say, if there are three vacancies for members, one should be a user, one a landowner/manager and another to represent those with other interests - as far as practical. This ideal situation may not always occur as members are volunteers and cannot always commit time in this way. The reality is that the YDAF may wish to consider appointing a representative based on their ability and willingness to attend a meeting rather than the particular interest they represent.

Vacancies during the year

The list of groups and membership is brought to the Forum once a year at the first meeting of the year. If any vacancies arise during the year, these will be considered in the Chair/Officers report as appropriate.

Action for the Forum

The Forum is asked to nominate and agree a representative(s) for membership of each of the groups listed in the **Appendix**.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2024

Appendix

Forum Members Attendance at Other Groups and Meetings

WHAT?	WHEN?	WHO CURRENTLY?	REPRESENTING?	NUMBER OF SPACES
Access on Foot Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Barbara Gravenor Rachel Forsyth	Users Landowners	2
Access for All Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Graeme Cowling John Bucknall	Other interests Landowners	2
Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Alex Law Hannah Gardner Peter Baggaley	Landowners Other interests Users	2
Air Sports Advisory Group	When an issue arises	All members to be informed when an issue arises.		
Water Sports Advisory Group	When an issue arises			
Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Jon Beavan Barbara Gravenor	Other Interests Users	2
Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Jon Beavan Malcolm Petyt Hannah Gardner	Other Interests Users Other interests	
Yorkshire and Humber Regional LAF	Twice a year	Chair or Vice Chair attends and minutes reported back to the YDAF.		
Other meetings that require attendance	All members to be informed when a member of the YDAF is asked to attend other meetings of interest.			

Item No 10

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 14 May 2024

Public Rights of Way Annual Report

Purpose of the report

1. To receive comments from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) on the Rights of Way Annual Report for the period April 2023 to March 2024, prior to consideration of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The annual report identifies progress made on public rights of way maintenance against our own targets under the delegation agreements with North Yorkshire, Westmorland and Furness and Lancashire County Councils.

What the YDAF are being asked to do

2. YDAF Members are asked to comment on the Rights of Way Annual Report **Appendix 1** before submission to the Authority.

3. To provide Members of the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum with the opportunity to comment on the Rights of Way prior to submission to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in June.

Strategic Planning Framework

4. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

    - **Corporate Plan Objective**
      7. Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023

Background

5. The Rights of Way annual report for 2023/24 (**Appendix**), identifies progress made by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) on public rights of way maintenance against our Corporate Plan actions and targets. This work is undertaken through delegation agreements on behalf of the three Highway Authorities - the councils that cover parts of the National Park. As part of the agreements, the YDNPA is required to submit a report to the councils each year.

6. The Authority has taken on responsibility for rights of way maintenance functions because a well-managed rights of way network is considered important for the delivery of the YDNPA's statutory purposes. A network that can be used with confidence is beneficial to visitors, land managers and residents alike. Businesses, inside and outside of the National Park benefit because access to the area's special qualities underpins the visitor economy. The park-wide visitor survey conducted in 2022,

continues to show the importance of the rights of way network with approximately two out of every three visitors (61%) undertake a walk of an hour or more during their visit.

Ease of Use Target

7. The Authority's current objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on National Park Management Plan objective B1 which states:

   Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023

8. 'Ease of use' in this context is based on a nationally established performance indicator for rights of way and is defined as:

   I. signposted or waymarked where the right of way leaves the metalled road and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path;
   II. free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation);
   III. surface and lawful barriers (e.g. stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

9. In simple terms, a member of the public should be able to follow a route easily and not encounter anything that detracts from the enjoyment of the route whether on foot, horse, bicycle or using a mobility scooter.

10. There is a note of caution, as the 'ease of use' indicator measures a 5% random sample of rights of way across the network, as such figures will fluctuate year on year. Results over several years are required to average out any sampling variation and determine the figure which is a true reflection of the network. At the time of writing the report the initial indication is that the figure will be around 89% for 2023 which although disappointing, perhaps reflects both the recent weather conditions during 2023 and the continued high levels of use. However, the average over the five year period of the National Park Management Plan remains at 90% 'easy to use'.

National Trails

11. The Authority continues to perform the 'lead partner' role for management of the Pennine National Trails Partnership, which oversees the management of the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway. During the past year the Authority has distributed 34 grants to 14 different partners, and the partnership has overseen £473k of expenditure.

12. The Secretary of State, in August 2022 announced that the Coast to Coast route will become a new National Trail. The 197-mile path stretching from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hoods Bay in the North York Moors National Park passes through the Yorkshire Dales National Park. National Trail status achieves the National Park Management Plan objective B2 in relation to the Coast to Coast route:

    Maintain and promote the Pennine Trails and other recognised long-distance routes, identify opportunities for new multi-user routes, and campaign for the Coast-to-Coast path to become a National Trail by 2024.

13. Natural England have been given £5.6 million of Government funding to improve the route. It is working alongside partners to ensure the path meets the National Trail Quality Standards and is fully open and available for public use. The YDNPA is undertaking the legal and establishment work in the National Park and has recruited a project team during 2023 consisting of a Project manager, Senior Rights of Way Officer and an Administration Support Officer.

14. Enhancement works will be undertaken over the next two years with the upgraded path expected to be reading for opening by Dec 2025. It is intended that the new National Trail will closely follow the existing route. The Coast to Coast route has existed for many years, but has not benefited from the promotion and status of a member of the National Trial family. Natural England and partners are also looking at the wider benefits of designation, including opportunities to develop link routes and circular routes; engage with local communities and businesses; improving nature connectivity; information provision; and tourism opportunities.

Volunteers

15. Volunteering opportunities to help survey and maintain public rights of way continued throughout the year - adapting to the changes in restrictions. In total 1193 days of practical work, and 470 days of surveying, were undertaken by volunteers during the year. This equates to approximately 8 full time equivalent staff.

16. The surveying of all the 2637km rights of way in the National Park is a significant achievement, and helps the YDNPA plan the work required for the coming year. The survey work includes:

- Conducting both 'ease of use surveys and Parish Path surveys for the entire network of the National Park;
- A visual inspection and report on each bridge in the National Park;
- Inputting all survey information into Authority's IT database.

Funding

17. We continue to seek external income to resource this work programme. During 2023/24 we were successful in bringing in £387k of external funding, with individual contributions and contributions 'in kind' from various sources. We are also in ongoing discussions with North Yorkshire Council about a financial contribution towards us delivering their statutory purposes.

Conclusion

18. The importance placed on rights of way maintenance and access is often cited as one of the advantages of being in a National Park. With the lengthening of the season and increasing importance placed on individual health and well-being, this year's visitor numbers have remained high.

19. The Coast to Coast path has started to be implemented after being confirmed as a National Trail, and comes with financial resources for implementation and future maintenance as well as for 'wider benefit' opportunities.

20. Rights of way maintenance and volunteering continue to make an important contribution to the work of the YDNPA and specifically our second purpose. As a priority programme our aim is to ensure the National Park has one of the best maintained rights of way networks in the country. This work is undertaken on behalf of the Councils who retain the statutory responsibility.

Alan Hulme
Head of Park Management

5 May 2023

Background documents
Public Rights of Way Maintenance Plan (approved by the Authority in September 2018)

Appendix

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Public Rights of Way
Delegated Highway Authority

Annual Report 2023/24

May 2024

Introduction

1. For the period of this report, April 2023 to March 2024, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the Authority) had delegated Highway Authority responsibilities for maintenance of the 2,637km of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, and restricted byways) within the National Park area.

2. The public rights of way Delegation Agreements are for: North Yorkshire Council (NYC) 1922km and Westmorland & Furness Council (W&F) 710 km. In addition, since April 2021 delegated responsibilities also applies to the 16 km in the Lancashire County Council (LCC) area of the National Park.

3. The Delegation Agreements cover a broad range of functions that allow for the management of public paths on the ground. These functions can be summarised as:

    - Signposting of public paths
    - The maintenance and improvement of public paths
    - The maintenance of river crossings
    - Traffic Regulation Orders and Temporary Closure Orders
    - Enforcement and protection of public rights.

4. The Authority has taken on these responsibilities because it recognises that a well-maintained rights of way network is fundamental to the achievement of its statutory purposes, particularly its second purpose - promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

About this Report

5. This report identifies the key achievements for the year 2023/24. It considers the Authority's corporate actions, targets and progress relating to the following areas:

    - General maintenance
    - River crossings
    - Major projects
    - Path Orders and Definitive Map
    - Pennine National Trails Partnership Management
    - Development of the Coast to Coast as a National Trail
    - Unclassified Unsurfaced Roads (North Yorkshire)
    - Flood damage.

Key Achievements 2023/24

Public Rights of Way Maintenance

6. During 2023/24 the following maintenance work was undertaken:

- 815 improvements to rights of way infrastructure: stiles, gates and signposts;
- 62 river crossings and 3 sets of stepping stones maintained or replaced;
- 800m of new engineered paths constructed;
- 2.5km of engineered paths repaired.

7. A total of **£386,682** of external funding and in-kind contributions were secured for rights of way projects in the National Park. The breakdown is as follows:

Value	Description
£ 84,165	National Trails Partnership Manager (inc £16,159 Lead Role income);
£ 31,275	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 2,164	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 14,148	Pennine Way,Pen y Ghent, Miners Track works;
£ 21,901	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 2,006	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 1,303	Pennine Bridleway, update & reprint Settle Loop leaflet;
£ 27,282	Three Peaks Project (Friends Scheme, merchandise and donations);
£ 26,000	Three Peaks Legacy Donations;
£ 4,803	Tees Swale, Naturally Connected, Access Enhancements
£ 94,916	Coast to Coast Path Initial implementation of route
£ 11,163	Path Orders;
£ 45,740	Works to Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads, (NYC) (inc £8,142 staff);
£ 2,500	Donation, Trail Riders Fellowship;
£ 7,650	Production of signs from workshop;
£ 980	Donation, Kettlewell;
£ 686	Donations various, Swaledale and Wensleydale.
£378,682	**Total**

Contribution in kind:

£ 8,000	Brackenbottom Stone, Hansons
£386,682	**Grand Total**

Pennine Way

8. Total funding secured for the Pennine Way, for 2023/24, was £47,587:

£ 31,275	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 2,164	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 14,148	Pennine Way, Pen y Ghent, Miners Track.

Pennine Bridleway

9. Total funding secured for the Pennine Bridleway, for 2023/24, was £25,210:

£ 21,901	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 2,006	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 1,303	Pennine Bridleway, update & reprint Settle Loop leaflet.

Pennine National Trails Partnership

10. During 2023/24, the Authority was the Lead Partner for the Pennine National Trails partnership and is expected to continue performing the role for the foreseeable future.

11. Functions of the Lead Partner include to:

- Accept the grant offer from Natural England (NE) and claim and receive payments;
- Have an oversight of delivery and report to NE about how our financial support has been used by the partnership and what has been; achieved;
- Ensure that partners have the opportunity to participate in the management and development of the maintenance of the trails.

12. Over the last year, between April 2023 to March 2024, the partnership has met on two occasions once by video conference and once face to face. The Authority through the partnership has:

- Received from NE an initial grant of £425,678;
- Distributed 34 grants to 14 different partners;
- Secured an additional £47,727 from NE underspend;
- Total expenditure on the Pennine National Trails in 2023-24 was £473,405.

13. The Authority received £84,165 (100%) grant for the Partnership Manager post including £16,159 income for hosting of the Partnership Manager and its role as Lead Partner.

Coast to Coast path

14. On 12 August 2022 it was announced by the Secretary of State that the Coast to Coast path stretching from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hoods Bay in the North York Moors National Park passing through the Yorkshire Dales National Park would become a new National Trail.

15. Natural England are working alongside partners to improve the popular route, with £5.6 million committed to upgrade the 197-mile path. The announcement, which delivered on a Government commitment to develop the route, will also ensure long-term support for the National Trail and achieves the National Park Management Plan objective B2 and specifically in relation to the Coast to Coast route:

Maintain and promote the Pennine Trails and other recognised long-distance routes, identify opportunities for new multi-user routes, and campaign for the Coast-to-Coast path to become a National Trail by 2024.

16. The necessary legal and establishment work will be undertaken by the YDNPA to ensure that in due course the path is fully open through the Dales and available for public use, and meets the National Trail Quality Standards has commenced.

17. Natural England and partners have engaged with local communities as work begins on the path. Further enhancements will be undertaken over the next two years with the upgraded path expected to be fully open by Dec 2025. It is intended that the new National Trail will closely follow the existing route.

18. In addition to the implementation and enhancement of the route, the Authority was contracted by NE to scope the 'wider benefits' National Trail designation could bring. The Coast to Coast path has existed for many years, but has not benefited from the promotion and status of a member of the National Trial family. Natural England and partners are in the process of implementing; opportunities to develop link routes and circular routes; engagement with local communities and businesses; improving nature connectivity; information provision; and tourism opportunities for which funding has been secured.

19. During 2023/24 the Authority appointed a Project Team to implement the Coast to Coast path within the National Park. The team consists of a Project Manager, Senior Rights of Way Officer and an Administration Support Officer.

Three Peaks

20. During 2023/24 implementation of the 3 Peaks Project has continued, including carrying out further works at Brackenbottom, Horton in Ribblesdale by extending the pitching a further.

21. The Three Peaks Project raised £27,282 towards the cost of the Three Peaks Ranger. The main streams of income are through Donations £13,134 and Merchandise £7,782, with Membership of the Friends of the Three Peaks and App Sales generating another £6,366. In addition the project received £26,000 in legacy donations

Path Orders and Definitive Map

22. During 2023/24 progress has continued on Public Path Orders. The following Orders were completed by the Authority:

Public Path Orders:

North Yorkshire Council	**Order Process**
Hetton, Diversion Town and Country Planning Act	Confirmed
Dry Rigg Quarry, Helwith Bridge, Diversion Town and Country Planning Act	Conifmed
Reeth Bottoms, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Marrick Park, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Marrick Park, Bridleway Creation Agreement	Confirmed
Westmorland & Furness Council	
Tebay Footpath Creation Order	Confirmed

Temporary and Emergency Closure Orders:

North Yorkshire/Cumbria	Order Process
1 Emergency Closures	Completed
4 Temporary Closure for 6 months	Completed
1 Further extensions on current Temporary Closure	Completed

Resources

23. In 2023/24 there were 8.2 full time equivalent (FTE) members of staff working on rights of way maintenance, and 1 Rights of Way Officer undertaking Path Orders. The Authority's rights of way maintenance budget was £131k a reduction of 30k on 2022/23.

24. In addition, there were a further 4.2 FTE externally funded posts. These were:

Pennine Way Ranger (1.0 FTE)
The Authority received 63% funding from Natural England for the Pennine Way Ranger.

Pennine Bridleway Project Officer (0.6 FTE)
The Authority received 63% funding for their maintenance role.

Three Peaks Ranger (0.8 FTE)
The Three Peaks Ranger post, during 2022/23 collected £28,908 through the Friends and Corporate Members, merchandise and event donations to fully cover costs for the coming year 2023/24.

Coast to Coast Path National Trail
The Authority received 100% funding from Natural England for the Coat to Coat Project Team.

Coast to Coast Path, Project Manager (0.6 FTE)

Coast to Coast Path, Senior Rights of Way Officer (0.6 FTE)

Coast to Coast Path, Administration Support Officer (0.6 FTE)

25. The Authority is also supported by the Dales Volunteers and other volunteers. In total 1193 days of practical work, and 470 days of surveying, were undertaken on the rights of way network by volunteers, in year. This equates to approximately 8 full time staff equivalents. The surveying of all the rights of way in the National Park is a significant achievement, and means the Authority is in an excellent place to know exactly what work is required for the coming year.

Corporate Plan 2023/24

26. The National Park Authority's Corporate Plan, 2023/24, sets out a programme of works and measures to assist in achieving the aims of the National Park Management Plan.

    Specific performance indicators identified for 2023/24:

Performance Indicators	19/20 Actual	20/21 Actual	21/22 Actual	22/23 Actual	**23/24 Target**	**23/24 Actual**
% of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road	(97%)	(98%)	(98%)	(99%)	**98%**	**99%**
% of rights of way that are easy to use but may not follow the definitive line	(90%)	(88%)	(90%)	(91%)	**90%**	**89%**

27. Specific Corporate Plan actions for 2023/24 were:

Action	**NYC** In the park	**W&F** In the park	**LCC** In the park	**Total**	**Achieved**
Conduct repair works across the National Park so that 90% of routes are 'easy to use'	**Initial indications are at 89% but some surveys are outstanding at the time of writing the report**				
Maintain existing roadside signs so that the number of places where a right of way is signposted from a metalled road remains at 98%	**99%**	**97%**	**100%**	**99%**	Yes
Carry out engineering works to 800m of public rights of way, including landscaping and drainage works along the bridleway at Bowderdale.	200	600	0		Yes
Repair 2.5km of previously engineered routes, including repairs to footpath surfacing at Havera, Sedbergh and Gunnerside Bottoms	2375	130	0		Yes
Review with Unitary Authorities the delegated statutory duties provided by the Authority					Ongoing

Performance Indicators by area

28. The table below breaks down the performance indicators further. The individual county figures are given in relation to the network of rights of way within each individual area. (Results are taken from the Yorkshire Dales Access Recording Database, rather than field survey, and for the whole National Park area unless stated).

Performance Indicator	**Target**	**NYCC** **In the park**	**CCC** **In the park**	**LCC** **In the park**	**YDNPA**
% of Rights of Way that are Easy to Use by members of the public (but may not follow the definitive line) (Field Survey)	90%	Initial indication are 89% across the park but some surveys are outsanding			89%
% of Rights of Way that are signposted where they leave a road	98%	99%	97%	100%	99%
% of infrastructure - stiles gates and signs in 'condition 1'	95%	94%	92%	91%	94%
% of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability	266km				266km

Ease of Use results

29. The Authority's 2023/24 objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on the National Park Management Plan 2019/24. The objective for 2023/24 was 90%:

    Target *Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023.*

30. In 2013, the English National Park Authorities Joint Improvement Group (JIG) agreed to collect one indicator, across all the English National Parks. The indicator for 'Ease of Use' for the English National Parks is:

    - % Percentage of rights of way that are 'Easy to Use' but may not follow the exact definitive line.

31. Each year's survey selects, randomly, a number of paths making up a minimum of 5% of the overall network. In total, approximately 138km were surveyed (106km NYC, 30km W&F & 2km LCC) in the National Park in 2023. The 'Ease of Use' figure is then calculated from the length of routes which pass the 'Ease of Use' definitions as agreed by the English National Parks Joint Improvement Group.

2023 Ease of Use Results	NYCC In the Park	CCC In the Park	LCC In the park	YDNPA
% Percentage of rights of way that are 'Easy to Use' but may not follow the exact definitive line in the National Park	Initial indications are at 89% but some surveys are outstanding			**89%**

Signing

Target. *Maintain at 98% the proportion of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road in 2023/24.*

32. The Authority's 2023/24 objective for 'signing' is based on the whole of the National Park and the 5 Year Maintenance Plan 2019/24 and Corporate Action Plan targets. The calculations below give a true picture of the situation across the National Park.

33. The Access Recording System indicates that there were 2,309 places in the National Park requiring a signpost at the roadside. There were (99%) actually insitu with 33 (1%) missing. During 2023/24, 134 directional signs were replaced or repaired where they leave metalled roads, indicating designation (footpath/bridleway), distance and destination. In addition, 77 signposts have been replaced or repaired indicting direction, distance or status along public rights of way in the National Park.

34. Signposts from a Metalled Road based on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Access Recording System:

	Total	**Present**	**Missing**	**% in situ**
YDNPA	2309	2276	**33**	**99%**
NYCC	1469	1458	11	99%
CCC	812	790	22	97%
LCC	28	28	0	100%

General Maintenance

35. The following section provides a brief breakdown of the main areas of works carried out, during 2023/24, in relation to the maintenance of stiles, gates and signage along the rights of way network.

Infrastructure

Type	**Total improved 2023/24**
Ladder Stile	20
Timber Step Stile	69
Stone Step Stile	76
Stone Squeeze Stile	87
Fieldgate > 5ft	144
Handgate < 5ft	104
Kissing Gate	10
Boardwalk	4
Signpost (directional on route)	77
Waymarker post	43
Information Sign	12
Roadside Signpost Present	134
Steps	14
Culvert	21
Total	815

River Crossings (includes bridges and stepping stones)

TYPE	W&F	NYC	YDNPA	
	repair/replaced/ erected	repair/replaced/ erected	Total improved	Total in Park
Bridges	16	33	49	906
Stepping Stones	0	0	0	35
Total	16	33	49	941

Miles without Stiles (access for those with limited ability)

36. Wherever an existing right of way is being maintained, every opportunity to replace difficult barriers with more accessible features will be considered, e.g. replacing a ladder stile with a gap or gate. The less remote a route, the more stringently this criterion will be applied.

37. The Authority also continue to measure two 'access for all' indicators against very strict criteria as laid out by The Sensory Trust in its document 'By All Reasonable Means'. The first was originally based on the Countryside Agency 'Zone A' national standard (equivalent to BT Access for All Standard 3), that is routes designed for wheelchair users. The second was more challenging routes capable of being used by wheelchair users with a strong pusher.

38. The length of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability is 266km, an increase of 18km on the previous year. Physical barriers along rights of way continue to be reduced by removing stiles and replacing with gates.

Major Projects

39. Under the Delegation Schemes the Authority has responsibility for the surface condition of rights of way. Each year projects are identified, by Rangers, for specific works which either improve 'Ease of Use' or enhance a route. The projects listed below are those with a capital expenditure greater than £1,000, and in most cases significantly more.

Route	Works Undertaken
North Yorkshire Council	**Maintain Previously Engineered Routes**
Stubbins, Healaugh	135m
Buckden Pike	220m
Swale Trail, East Gill to Swinner Gill	1500m
Linton Moor, Bridleway	440m
Gunnerside,	80m
Westmorland & Furness Council	
Havera, Sedbergh	130m
TOTAL	**2,505m**
North Yorkshire Council	**New Engineered Routes**
Brackenbottom, Three Peaks, Horton	200m of stone pitching
Westmorland and Furness Council	
Bowderdale, Sedbergh	600m of landscaping and drainage
TOTAL	**800m**

Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads

40. In the National Park there is a significant network of unsurfaced unclassified roads (UUR) these routes often provide connections into and within the existing network of footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). This network consists of over 120km of routes that are available to a wide range of users. However, these are not recorded on the Definitive Map and are therefore not part of the delegation agreements with NYC or W&F. They are however, recorded on the 'list of streets' which the county councils have responsibility for maintaining.

41. Over the years, the Authority has worked in an ad-hoc manner (mainly with NYC) on a number of these routes because of their significance. Three years ago more formal working relationship was established with the appointment of a UUR Officer at NYC. This has led to the Authority receiving funding for works to help maintain these routes.

42. During 2023/24 the following projects, funded by NYC, have taken place in the National Park at a total cost of **£45,740**:

UUR Code	UUR Name	Location	Description or work
Craven			
U1946/2/60	Edge Lane/ Mitchell Lane	Long Preston	Surface repairs
Richmondshire			
U228/9/30	Cam High Road	Bainbridge	Surface repairs
U3577/9/30	Gale Lane, Swaledale	Low Row	Surface repairs
U230/9/70	Busk Lane, Marsett	Marsett	Concrete flagging extension
U230/9/70	Busk Lane, Stalling Busk	Stalling Busk	Resurfacing aggregate

Conclusion

43. Rights of way maintenance continues to be a 'priority programme' and an area of work where the Authority makes a clear visible difference to the National Park. The Authority helps farmers and landowners maintain their stiles and gates, whilst users of the network (both visitors and residents) have certainty about where they can go, and an enjoyable experience of the area. Businesses benefit because access to the area's special qualities, through the rights of way network, underpins the local tourism economy.

44. Through this past year and despite the difficulties experienced in discussions with NYC regarding a financial contribution towards the work of the Authority which are ongoing. The Authority has still been able to secure a total of £386,682 external funding and in-kind contributions to support rights of way work across the National Park. In addition, the work with Dales Volunteers and other volunteers goes from strength to strength, with once again all the rights of way in the National Park surveyed by volunteers.

Looking ahead to 2023/24

45. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan for 2019-24 established an objective for Public Rights of Way to:

> B1 Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023.

46. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority now manages the entire network of 2,637km of rights of way in the National Park. The ease of use figure over the period of the National Park Management Plan has averaged 90%, which is very pleasing.

47. The confirmation of the Coast to Coast path to join the family of National Trails by the Secretary of State, is welcomed and comes with financial resources for implementation and future maintenance as well as for 'wider benefit' opportunities. We look forward to implementing the route through the Yorkshire Dales over the next 2 years.

Further Information

Further information regarding the report is available from:

Alan Hulme,	email	Direct Line
Head of Pak Management	alan.hulme@yorkshiredales.org.uk	01756 751647
Colvend, Hebden Road		
Grassington BD23 5LB		

Item No 12

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 14 May 2024

Coast to Coast update and progress

Purpose of the report

In August 2022 the Secretary of State approved Natural England's proposals to upgrade the Coast to Coast to a National Trail. Natural England are working with partners, including the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), to bring the route to National Trail standard by 2025.

Staffing

The full project team have been in place since November 2023. The team consists of:

- Angela Hobson, Coast to Coast Project Manager;
- Sue Arnott, Coast to Coast Path Senior Rights of Way Officer;
- Suzannah Barningham Coast to Coast Path Support Officer.

Legal work

Legal work to date includes:

- **Reeth Bottoms:** Diversion order confirmed on 12 March 2024 and works now in hand
- **Three key creation agreements:** to be signed within next few weeks.
- **Crack Pot, Rampsholme and Cleasby**: Informal consultations on proposed diversion orders completed, no objections received. Orders to be drafted shortly.
- **Ney Gill:** Diversion Order, informal consultation due to commence soon.

Other legal diversions/orders are continuing to be prepared and discussed with key stakeholders

Practical work

Practical work to date includes:

- **Swaledale, Swinner Gill**: replacement footbridge installed in February 2024 plus improvement to associated approach steps. Social media post: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/yorkshire-dales-national-park-authority_wharfedale-wensleydale-nationaltrail-activity-7174011451513151490-PFnV
- **White Mossy Hill**: Project meetings held between Coast to Coast project team and rangers team in January and April – tenders for purchase of materials/haulage in preparation, arrangements for temporary work site being

negotiated, project delivery timescales and risks being monitored; practical works planned for August/September 2024. Flagstones tender returns are expected 29th of May. Airlifts planned for August 2024

- **Signage:** Materials purchased for the manufacture of signs and production underway
- **Reeth Bottoms:** new footbridge and associated works scheduled for completion May 2024
- Ongoing 'maintenance' of the Coast to Coast Path in YDNP continues.

Accessibility of the route

Natural England has commission Leonard Cheshire to undertake an independent review of the accessibility of the Coast to Coast route for users. The report is due in May 2024. The YDNPA has been providing information to the appointed consultants as part of this process.

One early outcome of this work is the design of the signs which has been amended to improve accessibility for those that have sight loss or reading challenges, for example Dyslexia. This included changing the typeface, and the addition of a directional chevron.

Angela Hobson
Coast to Coast Project Manager
May 2024

Item No. 14

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 14 May 2024

Officer's Report

1. Purpose of the Report

The following report brings together, in one place, a collection of items for Members consideration and information.

2. Yorkshire Dales Access Forum Membership

At the beginning of 2024 a selection process took place for members to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

We would like to welcome the following new member to the Forum:

Abby Day representing recreational users of the countryside with a specific interest in access for people limited mobility.

We would also like to welcome back Rachel Forsyth and Hannah Gardner for a further three year term.

Debbie North has resigned from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum. On behalf of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority we would like to thank Debbie for her commitment to the work of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum and Advisory groups and wish her well for the future.

3. Meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum for 2024

The following are the dates for meetings during 2022:

Tuesday 14 May 2024, 1.15 pm @ Yoredale, Bainbridge

Friday 5 July 2024, time tbc, Access training, Aysgarth Falls National Park Centre

Tuesday 19 November 2024, 1.15 pm on Teams

4. Authority Meetings

Any member of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum can attend Authority Meetings as a member of the public. Please contact Rebecca Eslick for a copy of the agenda and supporting papers. Please note, it is not a requirement for members of the YDAF to attend Authority meetings, so it is not an 'approved duty' and LAF members cannot claim expenses for attending such meetings.

<u>Authority Meeting Dates and Venues for 2024:</u>

Date	Venue	Time
25/06/2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	10.30
01/10/2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
17/12/2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00

5. Yorkshire Dales Access Forum Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum are under review. The current version, as seen in Appendix 1, was written over ten years ago and no longer reflects the range of advice the forum can offer. Comments are requested on the document to be sent to Rachel Briggs by the 23rd of July 2024. The draft, updated terms of reference will then be presented to the YDAF at the November meeting.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2024

Appendix 1



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES ACCESS FORUM

The Purpose of the Forum

1. In accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Local Access Forums (LAFs) are statutory advisers to local highway, National Park Authorities and to other bodies having duties under Part I of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act about the improvement of public access to land for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.

Terms of Reference

2. The Yorkshire Dales Access Forum therefore has the following terms of reference:

> "To be a statutory advisory body to provide guidance and advice to public bodies on the improvement of public access within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and to contribute to opportunities for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area."

3. This involves:

(i) Being consulted on and advising on issues relating to open access land, exclusions, restrictions and the appointment of access wardens on land where a new right of access exists.

(ii) Contributing (as a statutory consultee) to the development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans which cover any part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, together with any other strategies or plans relating to rights of way, open air recreation and access (in an advisory capacity).

(iii) Advising on all other aspects of public access to land in the Yorkshire Dales for the purposes of open air-recreation.

(iv) Advising on issues relating to public access to water in the Yorkshire Dales for the purposes of open air-recreation.

(v) Advising on the promotion and appropriate use of opportunities for all types of user to enjoy the countryside.

(vi) Promoting closer liaison and understanding between the various interest bodies and organisations which have an interest in access and recreation in the Yorkshire Dales.

4. In providing advice, the forum will have regard to:

1. The needs of land management.
2. The conservation of the natural beauty of the area including its flora, fauna, and geological and physical features.
3. The management and maintenance of recreational access whilst balancing this against the needs of nature conservation, agriculture, the interests of landowners and managers and countryside management projects within the Yorkshire Dales.

5. The Forum should also have regard to:

(i) the Authority's statutory purposes and the requirement to conserve the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Dales and promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public (which affords opportunities for open-air recreation).

(ii) The desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Yorkshire Dales from damage.

(iii) The needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Yorkshire Dales.

Roles and Responsibilities of Local Access Forum Members

6. LAF membership should be widely representative and balanced between the following groups:

a. Recreational users of the countryside. (RoW and access land).
b. Landowners, occupiers and land managers.
c. Other interest groups relevant to the area and with access to it.

7. The Local Access Forum may occasionally need to discuss difficult and controversial issues, and the advice given will help guide policies and actions of the National Park Authority and other relevant authorities. To this end it is vital that a wide cross section of interests are represented on the LAF, and that

a balance is struck between access and recreation, and the need to protect the landscape, ecology, cultural heritage, and the wider social and economic use of this area.

8. It is also essential that each member of the Forum recognises the validity of the views of others and is willing to seek consensus and be independent of the views of a particular organisation.

9. Members of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum should:

a. Be representative of landowners/managers, recreational users or other interests relevant to the Yorkshire Dales.

b. Provide an <u>independent</u> view rather than reflect the views of any particular organisation.

c. Support and pursue opportunities to publicise the work of the LAF, obtain feedback from their own organisations and the general public.

d. Be expected to attend up to four meetings a year

e. Be willing to serve for up to three years.

Appointment and Termination of Membership

10. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is the appointing body, and Members are appointed to the LAF through a YDNPA Members panel. The selection of members to the Forum is based on the following criteria:

- **Committed to improving public access in the Yorkshire Dales.**

- **A good knowledge of the geography of the Yorkshire Dales and ideally, but not necessarily, some knowledge of rights of way legislation.**

- **Knowledge or experience of an area of interest identified for representation on the LAF and be able to represent and advise on its needs and aspirations. A wider knowledge or experience would be desirable, particularly of the interaction between interest groups.**

- **Be able to clearly express ideas and opinions, and listen to those of others.**

- **Be able to work towards reaching agreement on controversial issues.**

- **Be willing to commit to attending most of the LAF meetings per year, and be willing to attend occasional training if necessary.**

- **Understand the broad principles of the Disability Discrimination Act and Equal Opportunities.**

11. The appointment of a member of the Forum shall be determined by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and notified to him/her in writing.

12. Members of the Forum shall be appointed for not less than one year and not more than three years.

13. A member of the Forum may resign by notice in writing to the National Park Authority.

14. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority shall terminate the appointment of a member of a Local Access Forum if they are satisfied that he or she has become a member of a District or County Council or National Park Authority and, as a result, regulation 4(2) of the Local Access Forms (England) Regulations 2002 is not complied with, and may terminate the appointment of a member of a Forum if:

(i) Without the consent of the Authority, he or she has been absent from all meetings of the forum during a period of one year.

(ii) He or she has a direct or indirect interest in any matter brought up for consideration at the Local Access Forum and fails to disclose it.

15. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority may re-appoint a person who ceases to be a member of the Local Access Forum.

The Role of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in Supporting the Forum

16. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority supports the Local Access Forum by providing secretariat support.

17. The secretariat has the following functions:

a. **Arranging a venue for LAF meetings.**
b. **Organising and advertising meetings.**
c. **Preparing the agenda and commissioning and distributing papers amongst Members of the Forum.**
d. **Assisting the chair in conducting meetings.**
e. **Producing draft minutes of meetings.**
f. **Reimbursing members expenses for travel, subsistence and care of dependents where appropriate.**
g. **Organising and providing training for members if deemed appropriate.**
h. **Liaising between the LAF and the appointing authority and neighbouring LAFs.**

18. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority will also support the LAF by:

a. **Communicating the LAFs advice to the relevant committees, authorities and bodies.**
b. **Providing on-going support and advice to the LAF and its members.**
c. **Promoting the LAFs work through press releases and on its website.**

Agenda Items and Annual Report

19. Where practicable a draft agenda will be circulated, by the Secretary, in advance of a Forum meeting.

20. Any Member of the Forum can place items on the Forum's agenda following agreement with the Chair and Secretary.

21. The LAF will produce an annual report at the end of each financial year, which will be published by the National Park Authority. The annual report will:

(i) Set out the occasions and issues on which the Forum has provided guidance in the preceding year, and indicate to whom advice was given.

(ii) Include such information as the Forum thinks fit.