Item No. 9

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 20 February 2024

Officer's Report

Purpose of the Report

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Access Forum (LAF) advises the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and other decision making organisations (such as the County Councils or Natural England) about making improvements to public access for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel. As an independent body the LAF can set its own priorities depending on local issues, and also respond to consultations and draft policy documents.

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

1. Yorkshire Dales Access Forum Membership

Recruitment for members to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum will begin in February to start in May 2024. Those members whose term comes to an end this year have been notified.

2. 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 2022/2023:</u>

Date	Venue	Time
26 March 2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
25 June 2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	10.30
1 October 2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
17 December 2024	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00

3. Meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum for 2024

The following are the dates for meetings during 2024:

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

4. Coast to Coast National Trail update

All members of the Coast to Coast Project team are now in post, Angela Hobson joined as Coast to Coast Project Manager in late November 2023 joining Sue Arnott Coast to Coast Senior Rights of Way Officer and Suzannah Barningham Coast to Coast Path Project Support Officer.

We continue to move forward the legal works with Cleasby, Crackpot and Rampsholme Diversion Orders scheduled to go out to consultation prior to the end of February 2024. A copy of the National Trail Proposal for the Coast to Coast Path and the accompanying maps are available at https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5224470032941056

The project team and access team have met to look at accessibility options for the route and the information gathered will feed into Natural England's wider accessibility audit which they are currently undertaking, this work has been sub-contracted out to the charity Leonard Cheshire. We will keep this meeting updated of the findings and recommendations of this work as further information becomes available. Early recommendations have included the revision of the design guidance for the signage to make it more accessible for those with visual or reading challenges.

Physical works:

- **Signage** is scheduled to start being installed from March onwards and will be a phased program depending upon the legal status of the individual sections of the path being signposted.
- **Swaledale, Swinner Gill**: improvements made to a cross drain on the low level route, replacing a metal drain to a stone water bar.
- **White Mossey Hill**: Physical works scheduled for autumn 2024.
- **Swinner Gill**, (below Crackpot) lower level route, replacement of rotten wooden footbridge, plus improvement to associated approach steps is scheduled for mid-February 2024."

5. Accessible Aysgarth

As part of the year 1 Defra Access Funding in 2023, a project was developed to increase access at Aysgarth Falls. Funding was used to:

- Provide a feasibility study for an accessible route from the National Park Centre.
- Purchase a Tramper for visitors to use on the site.

The Tramper has been available to hire since October 2023 and is being managed by Access the Dales. A full launch of the Tramper is expected to be later in the Spring.
The second phase of the project is to try to secure funding for the work to improve a 4 km circular route that would be suitable for people with limited mobility – to include those using the YDNPA Tramper. An application is currently being put together to apply for funding through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme. If successful, a contractor will work on the site later in 2024.

6. National Parks Partnerships (NPP) – Cycling Projects

National Parks Partnerships (NPP) has approached all NPAs to consider any cycling projects they have so that an aggregate project from at least five NPAs can be submitted as a package offer to potential partners. The YDNPA has worked with Sustrans to add to the project list submitted.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
January 2024