Meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum
To be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025 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. Terms of Reference
10. Public Rights of Way annual report Plan
11. Yorkshire Dales National Park Active Travel Plan
12. Officer's Report (items for note and consideration by Forum Members)
13. 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.

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Local Access Forum(LAF)
Tuesday 3 December 2024
Meeting held at the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes

Members present: Jon Beavan (JB) (in the Chair)
Hannah Gardner (HG) (Vice Chair), Peter Baggaley (PB) Leo Crone (LC), Neil Heseltine (NH), Alex Law (AL).

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) officers present: Rebecca Greenfield (RG), Rob Ashford (RA), Angela Hobson (AH), Rachel Briggs, (RB) and Rebecca Eslick (RE) (taking the minutes).

Member of the Public: Ruth Annison

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

24/26. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and all Members and Officers gave a brief introduction of themselves.

24/27. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jon Bucknall, Abby Day, Rachel Forsyth, Barbara Gravenor, Malcolm Petyt, Lizzie Bushby and Graeme Cowling.

24/28. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 7 December 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by items on the agenda.

24/29. Public Question Time

No public questions or statements had been received.

24/30. Future Forum Meetings

The next meeting will be held on

Tuesday 6 May 2025, 1.15 pm @ Yoredale, Bainbridge
Tuesday 9 December 2025, 1.15 pm @ Teams meeting

24/31. Future Agenda Items

None

24/32. Report back from Advisory Groups

An update report had been circulated prior to the meeting with minutes from both the Bridleways and Restricted Byways (BRBAG) and The Green Lanes advisory groups were included.
Members noted that several groups had not met for some time and those that had met the attendance was low. Some groups only meet when a matter arises.

AL suggested that there may be a new landowner who might be interested in joining HG agreed to contact them to join the BRBAG
AL mentioned that a few issues had occurred in the Arkengarthdale area and a date for the next meeting would be in the diary shortly.

NH noted that the Access for All group hadn't met for 4 years RB responded that a date had been pencilled in but was now being rearranged RB to find a new LAF member to lead the group.

24/33. Coast to Coast – Presentation by Angela Hobson

AH gave an updated presentation on the Coast to Coast. 3 Officers are involved alongside the Recreation and Access team, Rangers, Volunteers and the Legal staff.

16 Legal Orders will be made to tidy up the route in the form of Diversion Orders and Creation Agreements.

Completion of practical works for path surfacing, bridges and furniture infrastructures will be required. Working with wider partner organisations, for example,Natural England, the British Horse Society, cycling UK and landowners has been essential to implementation of the project..

The route is expected to be be mapped and available on the National Trails website. All current National trails can be downloaded as GPX file from this website.

The first sign has been installed on 1st October 2024, and it is expected that all signage/ way markers will be installed by Spring/Summer 2025, (except those on routes affected by legal works)

Sourcing the reclaimed flagstones has been a significant challenge, a new product that AH has sourced is from reclaimed large millstones that can be cut to order – known as 'reflamed'. This is manufactured from the large reclaimed stone blocks from mills, cut into flags then the surface is treated to give a 'natural' weather finished. All materials to complete works are now secured and deliver will commence in January 2025, with the airlift resuming Jan/Feb2025 prior to bird season.

Tapping boards will be fitted to newly installed boardwalks to facilitate accessimprove accessibility . The path will be 900mm wide along the whole section, passing places added where appropriate and extra materials allow
All the works have been completed by YDNPA Rangers. There have been separate contracts with the helicopter contractor etc..

Each Trail in England and Wales has a 'Trail Partnership', the partnership is made up of the local authorities that the national trail passes through. . Usually there is a dedicated National Trail Officer or Manager with responsibility for keeping the Trail up to the high standards set for National Trails

It is envisaged that a National Trail Partnership will be set up to manage the Coast to Coast Path post the completion of the capital works, this partnership is expected to receive funding from Natural England,. A local match contribution is required, equivalent to at least £1 for every £3 provided by Natural England.
.
Several Local Access Forum Members raised the issue of public conveniences along the route. AH responded that at the moment there isn't any funding for signposting the nearest toilets but recognised this was an issue and it has been raised with Natural England at the technical group meetings.

The official opening of the route will be April 2026. The presentation can be viewed here

24/34. Miles without Stiles survey – presented by Rachel Briggs

RB introduced this item and presented a summary of key results for each route and information about where respondents were interviewed for each route.

During the interview respondents were asked if they had any comments they would like to make about the route they were on.

They were also asked if they would like to share information about their experience after they had used the route, for example what they had enjoyed on the route and whether they had encountered any challenges. Respondents who wanted to do this were provided with a QR Code and a website link to give feedback online once they had used the route. A total of 32 respondents gave feedback online.
The presentation is available to view here

The LAF were asked for ideas for increasing use of these routes. After a discussion by the Members, Jon Beavan proposed and it was seconded by Hannah Gardner to make a recommendation to the Full Authority as follows:

Resolved: To recommend that the Authority considers allowing blue badge holders to be able to park for up to 4 hours for free at any Yorkshire Dales National Park car park.

The recommendation was approved by all Members present**.**

Action: All Members with any new 'Miles without Stiles' suggested routes to Rachel Briggs.

Action: Rebecca Greenfield to feedback the Recommendation to Alan Hulme (Head of Parks Services/Elliott Lorimer Director of Park Services

HG suggested the possibility of adding a 'street view' of the routes to the maps similar to 'The Disabled Rambler' RG agreed to discuss with the contractor.

Action: Rebecca Greenfield to raise with the mapping contractor adding street view to the MWS routes.

24/35. Officer's Report

Members were asked to look at the large scale events guidance which is under review
Large-scale events - Yorkshire Dales National Park : Yorkshire Dales National Park

Action: All Members were asked to send comments to Rebecca Greenfield by 14 January 2025 on the Large Scale Events Guidance

After the meeting of the YDAF on 14 May 2024, the Terms of Reference for the forum were circulated for comments. Thank you to those members that submitted comments. In order to establish a useful document, it was suggested that a small group of members meet to work through the document outside the full forum setting.

Members nominated themselves to the group and include Jon Beavan, Hannah Gardner and Alex Law.

Action: Rachel Briggs to recirculate the LAF Terms of Reference

RB agreed to update Members in the Officers Report about the Hawes to Garsdale route.

24/36. **Update on Members' Activities**

HG advised LAF Members that there was a consultation out from Active Travel England and the deadline was 16 December 2024.

AL had attended a Site Visit with Rangers and other cycling, walking and horse-riding representatives at bridleway 9 in Arkengarthdale.It was a very positive meeting

and all agreed on actions. Concerns were raised about making it accessible and a group of volunteers will be involved in widening and adding passing places.

LC had a ride out with Richmond Police Force looking at specific issues on Green Lanes in particular 4 x 4 vehicles damaging gates. He advised the group to ring him if they see a problem and take a photo of the registration plate if possible and he will pass on to the police.

AH Discussions were taking place with Maske Parish Council about specific issues with the Coast to Coast route possibly moving it off road at the point where it leaves the village.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:20pm.

Item No. 8

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 6 May 2025

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 e.g. 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.

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

- Water Sports Advisory Group e.g. canoeing, sailing.
- 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 2025

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	Users	2
Access for All Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Graeme Cowling John Bucknall Abby Day	Other interests Landowners Other interests	2
Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group	When an issue arises	Alex Law Hannah Gardner	Landowners Other interests	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.9

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 6 May 2025

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum Terms of Reference

Purpose of the report

To update members of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) on the reviewed terms of reference and to ask for comments.

Background

Local Access Forums (LAFs) are advisory bodies established under sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW).

In 2007 Defra published the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007. These came into force on 19th March 2007 with additional Guidance from the Secretary of State. These documents formed the basis of the terms of reference for the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF), which were last updated in 2009.

This document has been previously circulated to members of the YDAF for comments and a working group was established at the meeting on the 3rd of December 2025 to update the document. The working group consisted of the following:

- Rachel Briggs – YDNPA Access and Recreation Officer
- Jon Beavan - YDAF Chair
- Hannah Gardener – YDAF Vice Chair
- Alex Law – YDAF member

The updated Terms of Reference

The updated document can be seen in **Appendix 1.** When making amendments to the document the working group were required to be mindful of the CROW Act, the legislation under which LAFs were formed.

Comments from members of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum

YDAF Members are asked to comment on the terms of reference document before publication on the website.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2025

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, caves, crags and air 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.

(vii) Advising on the opportunities for under-served groups to enjoy the recreational benefits of the Yorkshire Dales.

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

1. The varied needs of land management, including the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Yorkshire Dales.
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.

Roles and Responsibilities of Local Access Forum Members

5. 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.

6. 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 between two and four annual meetings a year

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

f. Be expected to recognise the views of others and be willing to seek consensus.

Appointment and Termination of Membership

7. 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.

8. 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.

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

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

11. 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, a memberhas been absent from all meetings of the forum during a period of one year.

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

12. 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

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

14. 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.

15. 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 Reports

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

17. 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.

Item No 10

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 6 May 2025

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 2024 to March 2025, 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 2024/25 (**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 2024. Although the National Park Management Plan has a target of 90%, the Corporate Action target for 2024/25 was 88%. This was set to reflect the reduction in the capital budget allocated to Public Rights of Way, whilst negotiations continued with NYC for a contribution to maintenance works performed by the Authority.

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 27 grants to 11 different partners, and the partnership has overseen £399k 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 allocated £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 currently undertaking the legal and establishment work in the National Park through a project team consisting of a Project Manager, Senior Rights of Way Officer and an Administration Support Officer supported by officers across the Authority.

14. Enhancement works have commenced and will continue over the coming year with the upgraded path expected to be reading for opening by Mar 2026. 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 Trail 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 875 days of practical work, and 480 days of surveying, were undertaken by volunteers during the year. This equates to approximately 6.5 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 2024/25 we were successful in bringing in £1,539,838 of external funding, with individual contributions and contributions ‘in kind’ from various sources. We have also been successful in our ongoing discussions with North Yorkshire Council about a financial contribution towards us delivering their statutory purposes for a 5-year period commencing from April 2025. This adds to the contribution offered by W&F in 2023/24 for a 3-year period which commenced in April 2024.

Looking Forward

18. During 2024 a Member/Officer working group reviewed the Authority’s delegated statutory highway duties and reported back to the Audit and Review Committee

(November 2024). The report made the following recommendations which will be addressed in 2025/26

I. Conduct an internal exercise to further investigate the establishment of a new approach to management of Rights of Way, based on a hierarchy of routes.

II. Further investigate opportunities to raise additional external funds to support management and maintenance of Rights of Way through a donation scheme e.g. Donate-A-Gate.

III. Work with Communications team to develop information (both online and print) for landowners on their and the Authority's roles and responsibilities in management and maintenance of Rights of Way.

Conclusion

19. 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.

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

21. 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

29 April 2025

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

Performance Review of Delegated Statutory Highway Duties, Audit and Review Committee, 26 November 2024

Appendix

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Public Rights of Way
Delegated Highway Authority

Annual Report 2024/25

April 2025

Introduction

1. For the period of this report, April 2024 to March 2025, 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 and Lancashire County Council (LCC) 16km.

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 2024/25. 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)

Key Achievements 2024/25

Public Rights of Way Maintenance

6. During 2024/25 the following maintenance work was undertaken:

   - 794 improvements to rights of way infrastructure: stiles, gates and signposts;
   - 34 river crossings and 2 sets of stepping stones maintained or replaced;
   - 1.14km of new engineered paths constructed;
   - 1.4km of engineered paths repaired.

7. A total of **£1,539,838** 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
£ 33,400	Westmorland and Furness Council contribution
£ 250,000	Farming in Protected Landscapes, Cross Keys Bridge, Cautley
£ 94,255	National Trails Partnership Manager (inc £14,917 Lead Role income);
£ 33,734	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 2,108	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 8,221	Pennine Way,,Pen y Ghent, Miners Track works;
£ 21,711	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 2,100	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 29,455	Three Peaks Project (Friends Scheme, merchandise and donations);
£ 116,792	Freeholders Wood, Aysgarth, Access Improvements;
£ 853,016	Coast to Coast Path Implementation of route (inc £83,745 staff);
£ 23,208	Path Orders, (£23,208 staff);
£ 39,793	Works to Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads, (NYC) (inc £9.332 staff);
£ 2,500	Donation, Trail Riders Fellowship;
£ 2,500	Ramblers Association, Harrogate;
£ 18,900	Production of signs from workshop; (inc £14,000 staff) ;
£ 1,895	Donations various for projects across the park.
£1,533,588	**Total**

Contribution in kind:

£ 6,250	Brackenbottom Stone, Heidelberg (Stone blocks and 232t aggregate)
£1,539,838	**Grand Total**

8. Total funding secured for the Pennine Way, for 2024/25, was £44,063:

£ 33,734	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 2,108	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 8,221	Pennine Way, Pen y Ghent, Miners Track.

Pennine Bridleway

9. Total funding secured for the Pennine Bridleway, for 2024/25, was £23,811:

£ 21,711	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 2,100	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance.

Pennine National Trails Partnership

10. During 2024/25, 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 2024 to March 2025, 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 £398,763;
- Distributed 27 grants to 11 different partners;
- Total expenditure on the Pennine National Trails in 2024-25 was £399,015.

13. The Authority received £94,255 (100%) grant for the Partnership Manager post including £14,917 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 by March 2026.

15. Natural England are continuing to work 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 is being 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. To date 6 Path Orders have been completed and 7 creation agreements are nearing completions

17. During 2024/25 the work has commenced on flagging the route over White Mossy Hill to access 9 Standards Rigg. In addition, the Project Team consisting of a Project Manager, Senior Rights of Way Officer and an Administration Support Officer have implemented a number of minor enhancement projects, including signing of various sections of the route through the park.

Three Peaks

18. During 2024/25 implementation of the 3 Peaks Project has continued, including carrying out repairs to 464m of public footpath at Beecroft, Horton in Ribblesdale.

19. The Three Peaks Project raised £29,455 towards the cost of the Three Peaks Ranger. The main streams of income are through Donations £17,851 and App sales £6,405, merchandise generating another £5,199.

Path Orders and Definitive Map

20. During 2024/25 progress has continued on Public Path Orders. The following Orders were completed by the Authority:

Public Path Orders:

North Yorkshire Council	**Order Process**
Rampsholme, Reeth, Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed
Cleasby, Reeth, Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed
Crackpot, Muker Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed
Ney Gill, Muker, Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed
Lowanthwaite Mea. Melbecks, Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed
Westmorland & Furness Council	
Foxhole Rigg, Sedbergh. Town & Country Planning Act 1990	Confirmed
Crosby Hall, Crosby Ravensworth. Highways Act 1980	Confirmed
Bleaflatt, Ravenstonedale, Highways Act 1980	Confirmed
Castle Rigg, Sedbergh, Highways Act 1980	Confirmed
Bramhaw, Sedbergh, Highways Act 1980	Confirmed
Tarn Moor, Orton, Bridleway Creation Order, Highways Act 1980 (C2C path)	Confirmed

Temporary and Emergency Closure Orders:

North Yorkshire	**Order Process**
Aysgarth Falls Hotel, to allow for development	On-going
Freholders Wood, Aysgarth to allow for footpath improvements	Completed
Carlton Town, to allow for development	Completed
Cotterdale Bridge, to allow for replacement works	On-going
Riverside path, Kettlewell to allow for repair works	Completed
Hebden Suspension Bridge to allow for emergency repairs	Completed
Reeth & Arkengarthdale, multiple closures	Completed

Resources

21. In 2024/25 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 £114.4k a reduction of 16.6k on 2023/24.

22. 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 2023/24 collected £ through the Friends and Corporate Members, merchandise and event donations to fully cover costs for the coming year 2025/26.

Coast to Coast Path National Trail
The Authority received 100% funding from Natural England for the Coast to Coast 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)

23. The Authority is also supported by the Dales Volunteers and other volunteers. In total 875 days of practical work, and 480 days of surveying, were undertaken on the rights of way network by volunteers, in year. This equates to approximately 6.5 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 2024/25

24. The National Park Authority's Corporate Plan, 2024/25, 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 2024/25:

Performance Indicators	20/21 Actual	21/22 Actual	22/23 Actual	23/24 Actual	**24/25 Target**	**24/25 Actual**
% of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road	(98%)	(98%)	(99%)	(99%)	**96%%**	**98%**

% of rights of way that are easy to use but may not follow the definitive line	(88%)	(90%)	(91%)	(89%)	**88%**	**89%**

25. Specific Corporate Plan actions for 2024/25 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 88% of routes are 'easy to use'	**88%**	**98%**	**49**	**89%**	Yes
Maintain existing roadside signs so that the number of places where a right of way is signposted from a metalled road remains at 96%	**99%**	**97%**	**100%**	**98%**	Yes
Repair 1.4km of previously engineered routes, including repairs to footpath surfacing at Beecroft and Long Lane (BOAT), Horton in Ribblesdale	1400m				Yes
Install a bridleway bridge at Cautley/Cross Keys.					Yes

Performance Indicators by area

26. 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**	**NYC** In the park	**W&F** 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)	88%	88%	98%	49%	89%
% of Rights of Way that are signposted where they leave a road	96%	99%	97%	100%	98%
% of infrastructure - stiles gates and signs in 'condition 1'	95%	93%	92%	90%	93%
% of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability	266km				266km

Ease of Use results

27. The Authority's 2024/25 objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on the National Park Management Plan 2019/24. However, the objective for 2024/25 was 88% to acknowledge the reduction in the Public Rights of Way maintenance budget whilst negotiations continued with NYC:

    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 2024.*

28. 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.

29. Each year's survey selects, randomly, a number of paths making up a minimum of 5% of the overall network. In total, approximately 111km were surveyed (110km NYC, 22km W&F & 2km LCC) in the National Park in 2024. 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.

2024 Ease of Use Results	NYC In the Park	W&F 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	88	98	49	**89%**

Signing

Target. *Maintain at 96% the proportion of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road in 2024/25.*

30. The Authority's 2024/25 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.

31. The Access Recording System indicates that there were 2,312 places in the National Park requiring a signpost at the roadside. There were (98%) actually insitu with 36 (2%) missing. During 2024/25, 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.

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

	Total	**Present**	**Missing**	**% in situ**

YDNPA	2312	2276	**36**	**98%**
NYC	1468	1454	14	99%
W&F	816	794	22	97%
LCC	28	28	0	100%

General Maintenance

33. The following section provides a brief breakdown of the main areas of works carried out, during 2024/25, in relation to the maintenance of stiles, gates and signage along the rights of way network.

Infrastructure

Miles of River Crossings (includes stepping stones) Stiles without (access for those with limited ability)

Type	Total improved 2024/25
Ladder Stile	16
Timber Step Stile	46
Stone Step Stile	70
Stone Squeeze Stile	79
Fieldgate > 5ft	131
Handgate < 5ft	103
Kissing Gate	21
Boardwalk	8
Signpost (directional on route)	73
Waymarker post	44
Information Sign	8
Roadside Signpost Present	123
Steps	15
Culvert	14
Cross drains	43
Total	794

TYPE	W&F	NYC	YDNPA	
	repair/replaced/ erected	repair/replaced/ erected	Total improved	Total in Park
Bridges	16	18	34	906
Stepping Stones	0	2	2	35
Total	16	20	36	941

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. The length of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability is 266km,. Physical barriers along rights of way continue to be reduced by removing stiles and replacing with gates.

Major Projects

37. 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**
Beecroft, Horton in Ribblesdale (3 Peaks route)	460m surfacing repairs
Long Lane (BOAT), Horton in Ribblesdale	940m surfacing repairs and drainage
TOTAL	**1,400m**
North Yorkshire Council	**New Engineered Routes**
White Mossy Hill, (C2C path)	900m Flagging
Reeth Bottoms, (C2C path)	20m Flagging
Buckden Pike	220m Flagging
TOTAL	**1,140m**

Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads

38. 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.

39. 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. Four 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.

40. During 2024/25 the following projects, funded by NYC, have taken place in the National Park at a total cost of **£39,793**:

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

41. 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.

42. We continue to seek external income to help resource this priority work programme. During 2024/25 we were successful in being able to secure a total of £1,539,838 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 2025/26

43. The new (draft) Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan for 2025-30 seeks to establish the following objectives for Public Rights of Way and green lanes to:

    B1. Manage and maintain the standard of all public rights of way, so that, on average, 90% remain 'easy to use' and at least 10% are suitable for a diverse range of ages and abilities.

    B2. Manage and promote the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway and Coast-to-Coast National Trails and other established long-distance routes, and improve linkages from the Coast-to-Coast route to 5 nearby settlements by 2030.

B6. Enhance at least five ‘green lanes’ by 2030 and manage use by recreational motor vehicles and motorcycles - encouraging and supporting responsible use and enforcing

44. During 2024 a Member/Officer working group reviewed the Authority’s delegated statutory highway duties and reported back to the Audit and Review Committee (November 2024). The report made the following recommendations which will be addressed in 2025/26

    I. Conduct an internal exercise to further investigate the establishment of a new approach to management of Rights of Way, based on a hierarchy of routes.

    II. Further investigate opportunities to raise additional external funds to support management and maintenance of Rights of Way through a donation scheme e.g. Donate-A-Gate.

    III. Work with Communications team to develop information (both online and print) for landowners on their and the Authority’s roles and responsibilities in management and maintenance of Rights of Way.

45. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority continues to manage the entire network of 2,637km of rights of way in the National Park and secured funding during 2024/25 from W&F and NYC for a 3-year and 5-year period respectively which will aid delivery. The ease of use figure over the period of the current National Park Management Plan has averaged 90%, which is very pleasing and we will continue to seek to maintain this level for the future.

46. The confirmation of the Coast to Coast path to join the family of National Trails by the Secretary of State, comes with financial resources for implementation and future maintenance as well as for ‘wider benefit’ opportunities. We look forward to continuing to implement the route through the Yorkshire Dales over the coming year and prepare for the role of the Authority in the future maintenance of the route.

Further Information

Further information regarding the report is available from:

Alan Hulme,	email	Direct Line
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Colvend, Hebden Road		
Grassington BD23 5LB		

Item No. 12

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 6 May 2025

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 2025 a selection process took place for members to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

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

- Ian Clemmett representing land management.
- Mark Sutcliffe representing volunteering, nature conservation and walking.
- Charles Ecroyd representing open access and landowners.

We would also like to welcome back Alex Law and Barbara Gravenor for a further three year term.

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

3. Meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum

The following are the dates for meetings during 2025:

Tuesday 6 May 2025, 1.15 pm @ Yoredale, Bainbridge

Tuesday 9 December 2025, 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.

Authority Meeting Dates and Venues for 2025:

Date	Venue	Time
24/06/2025	Yoredale, Bainbridge	10.30
30/09/2025	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
16/12/2025	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00

5. Accessible Aysgarth

Some of the members of the YDAF attended a training session in July 2024 to look at the access improvements to the site at Aysgarth Falls. Using Defra funding through Farming in Protected landscapes (FiPL), a successful joint application provided funding for the following:

- The purchase of a second Tramper to be used on the site.
- The resurfacing and reprofiling of the tarmac footpath from the national park centre to the road crossing.
- Surfacing and drainage.
- Fencing of the public right of way to allow the landowner to farm in a sensitive way.

The work is now complete and an accessible 4km route is now available with fabulous view of Wensleydale, Bishopdale and Bolton Castle.

6. Accessible Malham

Utilising the funding from the Defra removing barriers fund, work has begun to make the National Park Centre at Malham more accessible. Improvements include a more accessible indoor space, a sensory corner and a new changing place facility. The third Tramper for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has also been purchased. This will be available to borrow in the near future.

Rachel Briggs
Access and recreation Officer
May 2025