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.