Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum(YDAF)
Tuesday 23 May 2023
Meeting held at the Yoredale, Bainbridge

Members present: Jon Beavan (JB) (in the Chair following his re-election), Hannah Gardner (HG) (Vice Chair following election), Peter Baggaley (PB) John Bucknall (JBu),Lizzie Bushby (LB), Graeme Cowling (GC), Leo Crone (LC), Rachel Forsyth (RF), Barbara Gravenor (BG) 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 Hill (RH) (taking the minutes).

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

23/01. Welcome and introductions

Pending the election of a Chair, RG opened the meeting.

The meeting welcomed new members Graeme Cowling and Lizzie Bushby to their first meeting, and each member shared information about their background and interests as relevant to the Forum.

23/02. Election of Chair

Jon Beavan was nominated for the position of Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

RESOLVED: that Jon Beavan be appointed Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

Jon Beavan in the chair

23/03. Election of Vice Chair

Hannah Gardner was nominated for the position of Vice Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

RESOLVED: that Hannah Gardner be appointed Vice Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

23/04. Apologies

Paul Mc Gee's notice of resignation had been received.

23/05. Approval of Minutes

Subject to the correction of the spelling of Forsyth without an 'e' and correction of John Bucknall not Paul on Page 1, the minutes of the last meeting, held on 7 December 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes: There were no matters arising that were not already covered by items on the agenda.

23/06. Public Question Time

No public questions or statements had been received.

23/07. Future Forum Meetings

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 10:00 a.m.by virtual meeting.

23/08. Future Agenda Items

Fencing
JB raised fencing and its place within consultations relating to wilding projects and planting on open access land in particular the removal of fencing. Secondly where possible the use of single strand wire not barbed wire as best practice.

RF provided information about 'invisible fencing' based on GPS which can be mapped colour coded with electronic tags on livestock. Thus removing the need for physical fencing.
Farms in Upper Wharfedale are using it and the Chatsworth Estate.
AL said it would be an alternative to fencing that gets washed away every few years near water courses. He also suggested that any fencing not removed should be reviewed after 10 years.
It was agreed this is a future topic for the Access Forum.

Latches and Gates PROW- Best Practice - JBu supported this.

Removal of Plastic Tree Guards (JB)
RF - Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust are removing guards

23/09. Review of nominated LAF members on groups linked to the Forum

RB introduced this item with an explanation of the remit of each of the seven advisory groups and RG provided additional detail regarding membership of the Green Lanes Advisory Group. RB asked for expressions of interest from members.

The following expressions of interest were made:

- Access on Foot – Barbara Gravenor & Rachel Forsyth
- Access for All – Graeme Cowling
- Bridleways and Restricted Byways – Alex Law, Hannah Gardner & Peter Baggaley

- Cave and Crag Access – Jon Beavan and Barbara Gravenor asked to join
- Green Lanes – Jon Beavan, Malcolm Pettyt,.
  Hannah Gardner to come off this group (RB will check for required balance and confirm membership). It was noted that three other LAF members sit on this group, but not in their capacity as LAF members [Lizzie Bushby as the Authority's Member Champion for Recreation Management is the group's Chair; NH sits on this group as a co-opted member as landowner, and Leo Crone sits on this group as a recreational motor vehicle user].
- Yorkshire and Humber Regional LAF – Jon Beavan and Hannah Gardner to cover the meetings.

As the Air Sports and Water Sports advisory groups only meet when an issue arises, expressions of interest would be invited at that point.

JB advised the meeting that he also attends the Cumbria and North-West Regional LAF. Minutes of the Cave and Crag Advisory group were noted.

Members were invited to let JB know if they hear of any future meetings to which they felt it would be beneficial for a member of the LAF to attend.

Action: RB to confirm which LAF members to join the Green Lanes Advisory Group.
All members to let JB know of any additional meetings to which they feel a member of the LAF should attend.

23/10. Public Rights of Way Annual Report 2021-22

AH introduced this report and gave a presentation.
In 2022/23 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 £161k.. Highlighted in the report was the lack of financial contribution to the Public Rights of Way network from the Local Authorities who ultimately hold responsibility. Negotiations are underway with both North Yorkshire Council and Westmorland and Furness to explore future funding or consider alternative options.

Particular focus was given to the change in trends of the car park sales extending in to the shoulder months and the impact on the wear and tear of the footpaths. The demographic of visitors has also changed.
The footpaths within the Yorkshire Dales National park are the most accessible compared to other National Parks and 9 out of 10 are classed with 'Ease of Use'.

JB asked what do other National Parks receive from Local authorities.
JB requested that data for Miles without Stiles could in future include the number of ladder stiles and any furniture changes in the report.

Action: AH to advise what other National Parks receive in terms of funding from Local Authorities towards the path network.
AH to include data about no. of Ladder Stiles and any furniture changes over the year for inclusion in the next report.

Discussion on the issues surrounding large groups not closing gates and use of mobile phones and apps meaning that the visitors are 'countryside illiterate'.
A suggestion was made that the Countryside Code be relaunched/refreshed

23/11. **Coast to Coast**

AH gave a presentation on the Coast to Coast which was designated by the Secretary of State in October 2022. 16 Legal Orders were 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. This will contribute to the wider benefits for the project. Coordination between Natural England, the British Horse Society and Cycling UK is essential to the project.

23/12. External Funding Bid for Accessibility

As part of the cultural shift, an increase in external funding is required. There is an opportunity to make a bid for £65k to BMW under their 'Recharge in Nature' Fund. The Authority are looking at a project to improve access to the outdoors and support health and well-being. The project would start May 2024 for 12 months. Views from the YDAF were sought on the following output from officers.

- YDNPA staff led activity groups enabling people with disabilities and their families to access the National Park.
- Improved information and interpretation at key sites to make a more accessible welcome, including a 3D model to help people with visual impairments understand the landscape.
- More resting places at key sites
- Improvements to the Access area of the YDNPA website with new resources and tools to help people with disabilities access key sites in the YDNP, find accessible routes, accommodation, toilets, changing places etc. (interactive map, Sensory stories, easy read guides, photo trails)
- Improvements to the volunteer service to make it more open to people with disabilities.

JB Suggested that there should be the creation of adventure for people with disabilities e.g. Provide opportunities for the visually impaired to go caving – don't sanitise it.
GC Advocated the use of apps to increase interpretation and show the routes and educate visitors to the countryside code.
HG 'Cycling UK' use a QR Codes to provide information about nature and the routes. She also suggested was to make signage more positive and possibly introduce an outdoor code rather than countryside code.
'Adventure Smart.co.uk is a safety campaign started in Wales and in use in the Lake District accessed on your phone and downloadable.
John Bu – Access to routes via public transport – are there any examples in the National Park that could be used? Can one area be used as a pilot to get it right?
BG- Bikes on buses or Train station to Train Station with walks.

23/13 Officer's Report

RB expressed thanks to Paul McGee following his resignation.
After discussion it was agreed to hold the next meeting virtually on
Tuesday 28th November at 10:00 a.m.
JB recommended that the meeting in person next year be out in the Park either training based or issue based.
RB also added to the report with details of the possibility of a TRAMPER (an all terrain wheelchair) at Aysgarth Falls.

Action: All LAF members please take expenses forms and complete and return.

23/14. Update on Members' Activities

JB had attended the regional LAF meetings (held online). Most of the agenda items were of little relevance to the YDAF, being of a more urban nature.
NH Attended the Local Access panel of FiPL
HG attended the Cycling UK meeting regarding the Coast to Coast partnership between natural England and Cycling UK.
MP – The Westmorland Dales project is coming to an end- is it possible to receive a report on that when ready?
AH will be presenting to the AGM in June and there will be a slide show presentation to share, which can be arranged via Teams.

AH to arrange a presentation via Teams to LAF members on the completion of the Westmorland Project

LB attended a conference on the 'safety of women and girls in Parks'. It would be interesting to find out if there was any data on numbers of women and girls visiting the Park and how safe they felt.

JB highlighted the recent Parliamentary debate about 'Access in the Future' to Green and Blue Spaces
https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-05-18/debates/72C37494-B6BC-43E5-8026-8F4EC4EC60CA/PublicAccessToNature

Action: JB's email address if LAF members want to raise or discuss anything

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:45pm.