



Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum (YDAF)
Tuesday 2 June 2020
Meeting held remotely in the Lifesize meeting room

Members present: Jon Beavan (JB), Nick Cotton (NC), Barbara Gravenor (BG) (part only – video connection lost), Neil Heseltine (NH), Heather Hodgson (HH), Ken Humphris (KH), Alex Law (AL), Debbie North (DN) and Malcolm Petyt (MP).

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) officers present: Kathryn Beardmore (KB), Alan Hulme (AH), Rebecca Greenwood (RG), Rachel Briggs (RB) (moderator of meeting); Clare Tamea (CT) (taking the minutes).

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

20/01. Welcome and introductions

In the absence of a Chair, KB opened the meeting.

20/02. Apologies

Apologies were received from Leo Crone, Helen Pollard and John Richardson.

20/03. 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

20/04. Election of Vice Chair

Malcolm Petyt was nominated for the position of Vice Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

RESOLVED: that Malcolm Petyt be appointed Vice Chair of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

20/05. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 15th October 2019, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes

None

20/06. Question Time

No public questions or statements had been received.

20/07. Future Forum Meetings

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 November 2020, 1.15pm at Yoredale, Bainbridge (or by video conference if necessary).

Suggested agenda items for future meetings of the YDAF

Members suggested the following agenda items for future meetings, which were agreed:

- Training for members of the YDAF to maximise effectiveness;
- What3words;
- Exploring the options in regard to a car-free day every month in the National Park.

<p>Actions: RG/RB to re-arrange training for members JB to present What3words item at future meeting KB/RG to bring a report to a future meeting on options of a car-free day</p>
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20/08. Public Rights of Way Annual Report 2019-20

1. AH highlighted the key issues from this report and members were asked to comment prior to submission of the report to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority on 30th June 2020.
2. In response to questions from members, AH confirmed that a Delegation Agreement has been reached in principle under which Lancashire County Council will delegate maintenance of those public rights of way which fall within the National Park to YDNPA – the agreement is currently awaiting formal sign off.
3. Discussion included the following:

- Members were very pleased with the progress made by YDNPA on public rights of way over the past year;
- Members using rights of way in areas which had been brought into the National Park in 2016 specifically commented on the improvements they had personally witnessed since then;
- Volunteers, who provide practical work and also survey the rights of way, provide extremely valuable assistance. Members asked if the YDNPA could consider whether the number of volunteers could be increased, particularly in the western area. AH advised this was a balancing act, to ensure volunteers had sufficient work to do, and that volunteers were also required on other projects in the area such as the Lottery-funded Westmoreland Dales Project. AH confirmed that there was a target generally to increase volunteers;
- Members would welcome the opportunity to comment on Public Path Orders. AH confirmed that upcoming Public Path Orders would be circulated to members at the same time as they go out for public advertisement;
- The Pennine Bridleway, managed by YDNPA on behalf of Natural England, was largely accessible to wheelchair users and members felt this should be promoted more prominently and celebrated. AH indicated that the grant received by YDNPA from Natural England towards the Pennine Bridleway had been simply for maintenance in the past. Going forward the grant would include 5% towards promotion. A new officer with a marketing background had recently been appointed and was working closely with the Communications team. Currently, overnight stops could not be promoted due to the coronavirus restrictions. A new campaign to promote both the Pennine Bridleway and the Pennine Way as part of National Trails Day on 6th June 2020 was underway;
- In reply to members' questions, AH confirmed that external funding for the Three Peaks Ranger had been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Ranger had been furloughed. Large scale events had been cancelled and postponed and it was not currently known when the restrictions would be lifted to enable these to proceed. KB advised that car-parking income had also been impacted but, in general, the YDNPA was in a relatively secure position regarding overall resources and funding;
- A few minor typos in the report were spotted alongside a reference to "old National Park areas" - these would be corrected before the report was submitted to YDNPA.

4. Members congratulated AH and his team for all the achievements made during a successful year.

<p>Action: AH to ensure YDAF members receive notification of future Public Path Orders for comment</p>

20/09. Officer's Report

1. RG presented the Officer's report, which included a request for Members to comment on the consultation regarding fencing on Ravenstonedale Common, which was taking place under s38 Commons Act 2006.

2. In reply to questions from members, KB confirmed that the family friendly cycling route being investigated for Wensleydale was along the route of the old railway from Garsdale to Hawes. Three options regarding the family friendly cycle way were being considered, and the results of the feasibility study were expected shortly.
3. The results of the bid for the Tees-Swaledale bid were currently awaited.

20/10. Ravenstonedale Common – consultation on application for fencing

1. Members agreed to send a written response to Defra on the Ravenstonedale Common fencing project consultation, the application for fencing having been made to protect small trees and shrubs in order to “establish scattered scrub habitat”. Members referred to the principles they had agreed in 2015 regarding responses for woodland creation on open access land. Members noted that a number of public rights of way crossed this land and that one of the applications was to extend a period of temporary fencing, erected in 2010, for a further 10 years.
2. Members agreed that the response should include the following points:
 - The number of proposed gates (12) was not sufficient to permit continued public access to such a large area and should be increased;
 - The YDAF would recommend that all fencing should be non-barbed;
 - The applicants should be asked to explain the rationale for the proposal – what are they trying to achieve (eg increase wildlife, flood management...);
 - The YDAF was concerned about the application for an extension of the temporary fencing for a further 10 years. The applicants should be asked to explain the reason for requesting this extension (it being thought that trees and shrubs should have grown sufficiently during the past 10 years to no longer require fencing). Also, it should be made clear who will remove the fencing after a further 10 years if this part of the application is granted.
3. The YDNPA conservation team were also responding to the consultation and were asked to request as part of their submission (if not already covered) that tree guards should, where possible and practicable, be made from non-plastic biodegradable material and to ensure that the proposal to establish the scrubland did not conflict with other priorities such as peat conservation.
4. Members noted that the deadline for submitting responses was 15th June 2020 and were asked to prepare a response by 8th June if possible. This could be sent to the Conservation team - the latter would ensure it was submitted to the correct person / body.

<p>Action: JB and MP to draft a response on behalf of the YDAC to this consultation by 8th June.</p> <p>Conservation team to submit the Forum’s response to the correct body by the deadline of 15th June.</p>
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20/11. Update on Members' activities/other items

1. Since lockdown restrictions had been eased, the YDNPA had experienced a large surge of visitors, which members had not found surprising given other opportunities for recreation such as pubs remained closed. NH reported that a study of visitors to the Lake District National Park conducted over the last weekend had found that 70% were first time visitors to the park. On a positive note, many of the visitors included younger people and visitors from BAME backgrounds who traditionally have not visited the Park in great numbers. KH echoed the positive note that a number of people were now out walking on the fells and in the countryside who wouldn't have previously. As a result, NH suggested perhaps messaging needed to "go back to basics" – educating people about the Countryside Code and similar messages to when the parks first opened in the 1960s and 70s.
2. DN noted the problems with litter and fly-tipping – hopefully the latter would now decrease since the recycling centres had re-opened.
3. AL had noted that a number of signs asking people to keep their dogs on a lead / under control had been vandalised / removed. Some members had noticed more dog-walkers in their areas and others fewer, during the recent period. JB referred to a tragic incident last weekend in which cattle had attacked a couple walking their dogs. Members asked whether information was still displayed to educate people for example to let your dog off the lead if cattle become aggressive. This was possibly even more important with the many first-time visitors to the national park. AH confirmed that such information had been on the information boards until recently but had been displaced by signs about the need for social distancing and advice not to light BBQs due to the fire danger. AH advised that the NFU makes a very good narrow sign containing information for dog walkers in the countryside which fits on fingerpost signs – his team intended to carry out some work in this area over the next few months.
4. HG had experienced lots of motorbikes around the Askrigg area recently.
5. KB advised members about the proposed YDNPA bid for Dark Skies Reserve status, to be submitted by 24th July, and asked whether the Forum supported this as a different form of recreational experience. DN advised that, as one of the volunteers conducting light meter readings, it had been wonderful to see the brilliant stars over the past weeks and was fully supportive. HG was very much in favour and was keen to be involved. Members agreed that they did wish to support this bid and JB and MP agreed to put a letter of support together.
6. AH asked members for their advice on messaging around closing of gates. Usually, people would be asked to leave gates as they found them. However, there had been a few reports of gates being opened and then left open, causing problems with livestock for farmers. AH asked whether members felt, for a temporary period, whether the message should be to always close a gate. After discussion, members agreed this was the preferable message, for this temporary period.

Action: JB and MP to draft letter of support for Dark Skies Status Bid

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 14:53.