

## Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 18 May 2021

### Officer's Report

#### Purpose of the Report

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

#### Authority Meetings

Any member of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum can attend Authority Meetings as a member of the public. Please contact Clare Tamea 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 2021:

Date	Venue	Time
29 June 2021	Yoredale, Bainbridge (tbc)	10.30
28 September 2021	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
14 December 2021	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00

#### Meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum for 2021

The following are the dates for meetings during 2021:

Tuesday 18 May 2021, 1.15 pm @ Lifesize meeting room

Tuesday 23 November 2021, 1.15 pm @ venue tbc

As you may be aware, new regulations have been issued to say that council meetings must be held in person, and not using a virtual platform, from 7 May 2021. For meetings of the YDNPA, this is relevant and hence all meetings will be held at Yoredale, Bainbridge (or other suitable venue) from that date.

For Local Access Forums the information is less clear. However, Reg 6(1) [of the 2007 LAF Regs] gives the LAF a discretion to hold the meetings remotely –

**6.—(1)** Save as provided in this regulation and subject to regulations 7, 8 and 10, the proceedings (including the quorum) relating to the meetings of a local access forum shall be such as the forum may determine.

This has been confirmed by Natural England who suggest members decide for themselves how meetings are conducted.

Members are asked to consider how they wish to carry out meetings in the future.

## Visitor Survey

After the first lockdown eased in May 2020, it soon became apparent that the National Park was seeing a different demographic to its 'traditional' visitors. To understand more about these changes, we asked our staff and volunteers to undertake a visitor survey as part of their engagement activities. The questions were aimed at better understanding the people visiting different areas of the National Park, their motivations for visiting and characteristics. The main summary of the findings was as follows:

- Of all visitors surveyed, 27% were first time visitors in 2020; telling us that '*Today is my first ever visit*' or '*I have visited before but my first ever time was earlier this year*'. This compares with 14% in 2017. There was variation across sites with half of the visitors to Aysgarth Falls, and a third to Malham, being first time visitors.
- We asked unprompted questions about aspects enjoyed, and if anything had spoiled their visit. Scenery and landscape was cited by 72% of all visitors as something they had enjoyed about their visit. 25% of visitors (36% first time visitors) said being by water was one of the things they enjoyed; this was an increase from 16% in 2017. The answers: peace and tranquillity 'getting away from it all', good walking were between 35 and 25% broadly the same for both 2020 and 2017 surveys.
- Almost a third (30%) of all visitors told us that they didn't use anything to plan their visit. Most popular information used was google search (23%, rising to 40% for first time visitors) followed by a map (20%); the latter is unsurprising given the popularity of walking. Our website [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk) was used by 10%. with recommendation of family and friends 7%, and social media used by 2% (Facebook was the most popular out of Instagram, Facebook twitter).
- For first time visitors 16% said they wouldn't have come to the Yorkshire Dales National Park that day if it was 'normal times' (i.e. no Covid restrictions).
- Visitor satisfaction was very high; 97% of all visitors were very satisfied or satisfied with their visit. Only 5 (out of 1200) visitors scored their visit as less than satisfied.
- 35% of visitors brought a picnic with them. Less than 1% of all visitors told us that they had brought alcohol or barbeques.

- The age demographic and ethnicity of our visitors was different in 2020 in comparison to 2017. In our 2017 visitor survey 56% of our visitors were age 55+; whereas in 2020 this reduced to 36%. 22% of all visitors in 2020 were in the 25-34 age group category - there were significant variations between sites. Overall our visitor profile in 2020 was younger and more diverse, and represented the demographic of the population as a whole.

A further in depth visitor survey is planned for the Summer of 2021. This will focus on new visitors to the National Park.

## **Revision of the Countryside Code**

A new, refreshed Countryside Code has been launched by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the creation of the founding booklet.

With more people enjoying the outdoors than ever before, the code has been revised to help people enjoy countryside in a safe and respectful way.

Changes include advice on creating a welcoming environment, for example by saying hello to fellow visitors; clearer rules to underline the importance of clearing away dog poo; staying on footpaths; and not feeding livestock. It also provides advice on how to seek permissions for activities such as wild swimming.

Key changes to the Countryside Code include:

- New advice for people to ‘be nice, say hello, share the space’ as well as ‘enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory’.
- A reminder not to feed livestock, horses or wild animals.
- To stay on marked footpaths, even if they are muddy, to protect crops and wildlife.
- Information on permissions to do certain outdoor activities, such as wild swimming.
- Clearer rules for dog walkers to take home dog poo and use their own bin if a there are no public waste bins.
- A refreshed tone of voice, creating a guide for the public rather than a list of rules – recognising the significant health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature.
- New wording to make clear that the code applies to all our natural places, including parks and waterways, coast and countryside.

The Countryside Code summary can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

Rachel Briggs  
Access and Recreation Officer  
May 2021

# The Countryside Code



## Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

### Respect everyone

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- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

### Protect the environment

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- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

### Enjoy the outdoors

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- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

# The Countryside Code



## Follow advice and local signs

In some cases, additional higher rights of access or permissive access could exist.

### Footpath



### Bridleway



### Restricted Byway



### Byway open to all traffic



### Permissive Path

Follow advice on local signs as landowners voluntarily provide access to these paths and those who can use them. Some open access areas are also made available in the same way.



### National Trail

National Trails are created for walking, with horse-riding and cycling possible on some trails or trail sections.

[www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)



### Open Access

You can walk and explore away from paths.

[www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk)

For further information visit [www.gov.uk/countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/countryside-code)