

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum –14 June 2022

Public Rights of Way Annual Report 2021/22

Purpose of the report

To receive comments from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) on the Rights of Way Annual Report for the period April 2021 to March 2022, prior to consideration to 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, Cumbria and Lancashire County Councils.

What the YDAF are being asked to do

YDAF Members are asked to comment on the Rights of Way Annual Report **Appendix 1** before submission to the Authority.

Alan Hulme
Head of Ranger Service

31 May 2022

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

**Public Rights of Way
Delegated Highway Authority**

Annual Report 2021/22

April 2022

Introduction

1. For the period of this report, April 2021 to March 2022, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the Authority) had delegated Highway Authority responsibilities for maintenance of the 2,624 km of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, and restricted byways) within the National Park area. The public rights of way Delegation Agreements are for: North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) 1898 km, Cumbria County Council (CCC) 710 km and since April 2021, 16 km in the Lancashire County Council (LCC) area of the National Park.
2. 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.
3. 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

4. This report identifies the key achievements for the year 2021/22. 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)
 - Flood damage.

Key Achievements 2021/22

Public Rights of Way Maintenance

5. During 2021/22 the following maintenance work was undertaken:

- 1,085 improvements to rights of way infrastructure: stiles, gates and signposts;
- 62 river crossings and 2 sets of stepping stones maintained or replaced;
- 2.9 km of engineered paths maintained;

6. A total of **£376,042** 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
£ 66,367	National Trails Partnership Manager and Lead Role;
£ 26,734	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 1,050	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 4,500	Pennine Way, Great Shunner Fell;
£ 8,000	Pennine Way, Charcoal Field, Hawes;
£ 31,000	Pennine Way, Whitber to Stallion Pasture;
£ 7,749	Pennine Way, Stockdale Lane, Thwaite;
£ 10,000	West Cam Bridleway, Hawes;
£ 19,553	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 1,050	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 3,900	Hale Lane, Feizor;
£ 1,100	Hell Gill Bridge, Mallerstang;
£ 750	High Stennerskeugh;
£ 1,500	British Horse Society contribution to Bridleway Projects
£ 33,054	Three Peaks Project (Friends Scheme, merchandise and donations);
£ 29,954	NYCC contribution to Starbotton Bridge;
	Kirkby Lonsdale Riverside Path
£ 10,000	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust contribution
£ 4,000	Christopher Robin Trust
£ 5,000	Cumbria County Council
£ 15,000	Kirkby Lonsdale Town Council
£ 4,901	Path Orders;
£ 45,880	Works to Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads, (NYCC);
<u>£ 25,000</u>	NYCC contribution to PRow
£356,042	Total

Contribution in kind:

£20,000 Hanson Ltd 600t of stone

£376,042 Grand Total

Pennine Way

7. Total funding secured for the Pennine Way, for 2021/22, was £84,533:

- £26,734 for Pennine Way Ranger post;
- £ 1,050 for general maintenance works to stiles, gates and river crossings;
- £ 8,000 additional flagging Charcoal Field, Hawes;
- £31,000 aggregate surfacing of section between Whitber to Stallion Pasture;
- £ 7,749 aggregate surfacing and drainage works Stockdale Lane, Thwaite;
- £10,000 aggregate surfacing West Cam Bridleway, Hawes.

Pennine Bridleway

8. Total funding secured for the Pennine Bridleway, for 2021/22, was £27,853:

- £19,553 for Pennine Bridleway Officer;
- £ 1,050 for general maintenance works for stiles, gates and river crossings.
- £ 3,900 aggregate surfacing Hale Lane, Feizor;
- £ 1,100 repairs to Hell Gill Bridge, Mallerstang;
- £ 750 repairing culverts, High Stennerskeugh;
- £ 1,500 British Horse Society contribution to above Bridleway Projects.

Pennine National Trails Partnership

9. During 2021/22, the Authority was the Lead Partner for the Pennine National Trails partnership and is expected to continue performing the role for the foreseeable future.

10. 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.

11. Over the last year, between April 2021 to March 2022, the partnership has met on 2 occasions once by video conference and once face to face. The Authority through the partnership has:

- Received from NE an initial grant of £327,244;
- Distributed 32 grants to 12 different partners;
- Secured an additional £112,530 from NE and distributed this to 5 partners;
- Received an additional £3,200 from smaller grants and donations which have contributed towards 4 projects (£1,500 from BHS, £1,100 from the Peak and Northern Footpath Society, and £600 remaining from the Spine Race donation in the previous year);
- With funding from NE, updated the people counter at Malham Cove.
- Total expenditure on the Pennine National Trails in 2021-22 was £557,380;

12. The Authority received £66,367 (100%) grant for the Partnership Manager post and £16,208 income for hosting of the Partnership Manager and its role as Lead Partner.

Coast to Coast route

13. The Government has made a commitment for the Coast to Coast walking route to become a National Trail by 2025. Over the past year, Natural England (NE) has identified the line and legal and physical work required, prior to submission to the Secretary of State (SoS) for designation as a National Trail.
14. The Authority was contracted by NE to scope and produce a report on the 'wider benefits' of National Trail designation. The Coast-to-Coast has not benefited from the promotion and the status of a member of the National Trail family
15. A key part of this work has been auditing the route, including surveying businesses and collating the plethora of existing information before identifying gaps and summarising the 'Wider Benefits'. As the announcement of the route was linked to the launch of the national Disability Strategy, an expectation has been raised that it will be suitable for people with limited mobility, and the challenges and opportunities this creates are considered within the report. This work also includes but is not limited to: opportunities to develop link routes and circular routes; engagement with local communities and businesses; information provision; and tourism opportunities.
16. The Authority has collated this information together on behalf of, and in collaboration with the local authorities along the route. Specifically: Lakes District and North York Moors National Park Authorities, Cumbria and North Yorkshire County Councils, as well as other interested bodies.
17. The report was completed at the end of April and NE will decide how the report will be used, but it is hoped it will sit alongside their submission to the SoS. The delivery of these wider benefits would be complimentary to the designation of the route, but would be subject to securing additional funding.

Three Peaks

18. During 2021/22 implementation of the 3 Peaks Project has continued, including carrying out further works relating to the Ingleborough Access Project with the completion of a further 871 m of grass gravel and flagging on the Sulber Nick footpath, funded by Natural England.
19. The Three Peaks Project raised £33,054 towards the cost of the Three Peaks Ranger. The numbers of Friends (386) and Corporate Members (115) have remained constant during the year.

Path Orders and Definitive Map

20. During 2021/22 progress has continued on Public Path Orders. The following Orders were completed by the Authority:

Public Path Orders:

North Yorkshire	Order Process
Green Gates, Long Preston, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Craven Lime Works, Langcliffe, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Slei Gill, Arkengarthdale, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed

Temporary and Emergency Closure Orders:

North Yorkshire/Cumbria	Order Process
7 Emergency Closures	Completed
10 Temporary Closure for 6 months	Completed
7 Further extensions on current Temporary Closure	On-going

Resources

21. In 2021/22 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.

22. In addition, there were a further 2.4 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 2021/22 collected £33,054 through the Friends and Corporate Members, merchandise and event donations to fully cover costs for the coming year 2022/23.

23. The Authority is also supported by the Dales Volunteers and other volunteers. In total 1186 days of practical work, and 713 days of surveying, were undertaken on the rights of way network by volunteers, in year. This equates to approximately 9 full time staff equivalents, (a significant increase on the 4 full time equivalents from the previous, Coronavirus-affected year). This is a fantastic achievement and nearly back to pre-Coronavirus levels of volunteering of 10 full time equivalents. The surveying of all the PRoW 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 2021/22

24. The National Park Authority's Corporate Plan, 2021/22, 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 2021/22:

Performance Indicators	17/18 Actual	18/19 Actual	19/20 Actual	20/21 Actual	21/22 Target	21/22 Actual
% of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road	(95%)	(97%)	(97%)	(98%)	98%	99%
% of rights of way that are easy to use but may not follow the definitive line	(85%)	(90%)	(90%)	(88%)	89%	90%

25. Specific Corporate Plan actions for 2021/22 were:

Action	NYCC In the park	CCC In the park	Total	Achieved
Carry out engineering works to 130m of public rights of way on the riverside footpath at Kirkby Lonsdale.		130m	130m	Yes
Maintain existing roadside signs so that the number of places where a right of way is signposted from a metalled road remains at 98%			99%	Yes
Repair 2.9km of previously engineered routes.				Yes
In conjunction with Natural England conduct further flagging and surfacing of a section of Sulber Nick footpath				Yes
Implement a programme of flood recovery work in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale including works at Reeth bottoms, Slei Gill, Langthwaite, Paradise, Low Row and Birk Park/Barney Beck, Heaulaugh				Yes
Assist NYCC in reinstating 3 significant bridges at Studfold, nr Helwith Bridge, Low Faggergill and Wood House Bridge, Arkengarthdale				No
Install a new bridge at Haw Beck, Thoraby and repair 5 bridges including the listed stone arch Waterfall Bridge, Burton cum Walden				Yes
Replace two sets of stepping stones in Austwick and Horton in Ribblesdale				No
		Outstanding due to problems with sourcing of suitable stones (type, size and dimensions).		

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	NYCC In the park	CCC 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)	90%	91%	92%	30%	90%
% of Rights of Way that are signposted where they leave a road	98%	99%	98%	100%	99%
% of infrastructure - stiles gates and signs in 'condition 1'	94%	97%	92%	83%	95%
% of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability	231km				231km

Ease of Use results

27. The Authority's 2021/22 objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on the new National Park Management Plan 2019/24. The objective for 2021/22 was 89%:

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 2023.*

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 5% of the overall network. In total, approximately 121km were surveyed (90km NYCC, 27km CCC and 4km LCC) in the National Park in 2021. 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.

2020 Ease of Use Results	NYCC In the Park	CCC 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	91%	92%	30%	90%

Signing

Target. *Maintain at 97% the proportion of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road in 2020/21.*

30. The Authority's 2021/22 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 2,309 places in the National Park requiring a signpost at the roadside. There were (99%) actually in situ with 30 (1%) missing. During 2021/22, 139 directional signs were replaced or repaired where they leave metalled roads, indicating designation (footpath/bridleway), distance and destination. In addition, 126 signposts have been replaced or repaired indicating 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	2309	2,279	30	99%
NYCC	1470	1461	9	99%
CCC	813	792	21	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 2021/22, in relation to the maintenance of stiles, gates and signage along the rights of way network.

Infrastructure

Type	Total improved 2021/22
Ladder Stile	9
Timber Step Stile	56
Stone Step Stile	74
Stone Squeeze Stile	164
Fieldgate > 5ft	220
Handgate < 5ft	117
Kissing Gate	18
Boardwalk	5
Signpost (directional on route)	126
Waymarker post	88
Information Sign	15
Roadside Signpost Present	139
Steps	18
Culvert	36
Total	1085

River Crossings (includes bridges and stepping stones)

TYPE	CCC	NYCC	YDNPA	
	repair/replaced/ erected	repair/replaced/ erected	Total improved	Total in Park
Bridges	8	50	58	910
Stepping Stones	0	2	2	31
Total	8	52	60	

Miles without Stiles (access for those with limited ability)

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 231km, an increase of 16km on the previous year. Physical barriers along rights of way

continue to be reduced by removing stiles and replacing with gates. There has also been some initial work to identify and test, practically, routes for less mobile visitors in the new area of the National Park with the hope of adding these this coming year.

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 County Council	
Maintain Previously Engineered Routes	
Hudswell Woods, Hudswell	250m aggregate surfacing
Cogden Gill, Grinton	30m replacement of steps
Redmire, West Witton	20m replacement steps
Brackenbottom, Horton in Ribblesdale	350m aggregate surfacing and profiling
Sulber Nick, Ingleton	871m grass gravel and flagging
Dales Way, Burnsall	200m aggregate surfacing
Ravenseat, Keld	165m flagging
Snaizeholme	40m flagging
Stockdale Lane, Thwaite	500m aggregate surfacing and drainage
Hale Lane, Feizor	400m aggregate surfacing and drainage
Cumbria County Council	
Treasonfield Ford, Middleton	15m aggregate surfacing
Hazel Bottom Boardwalk, Dent	35m boardwalk replacement
Shoregill additional Mallerstang	40m revetment works
TOTAL	2.916km

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 NYCC or CCC. 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 NYCC) on a number of these routes because of their significance. Two years ago more formal working relationship was established with the appointment of a UUR Officer at NYCC. This has led to the Authority receiving funding for works to help maintain these routes this year and it's expected to continue in future years for routes across North Yorkshire.

40. During 2021/22 the following projects, funded by NYCC, have taken place in the National Park at a total cost of **£45,880**:

UUR Code	UUR Name	Location	Description or work
U1946/2/60	Edge Lane/Mitchell Lane	Long Preston	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U8041/9/50	Banks Lane	Settle	Drainage works
U431/1/50	Skell Gate	Reeth	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U7028/9/90	West Cam Road	Ten End	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U255/9/70	Dubbing Garth Lane	Multiple sites	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U254/9/30	Low Lane	Multiple sites	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U232/1/60	Stake Road	Bainbridge	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U228/1/40	Roman Road - Cam High Road	Bainbridge	Aggregate surfacing and drainage works
U230/1/30	Busk Lane	Marsett bottoms	Drainage & concrete surface.

Flood Damage

41. On the 30 July 2019 a significant cloud burst occurred resulting in 113mm (4.45 inches) falling in just 3 hours in the north east corner of the park. This caused significant damage around Arkengarthdale, Reeth and Grinton which was reported in detail last year. All works have now being completed, with only the following works outstanding:

PARISH	NAME	LENGTH	DESCRIPTON	Progress
Arkengarthdale	Green Bank/Wood House Bridge	12m	Footbridge	NYCC due to complete Aug 2022
Arkengarthdale	Low Fagnergill, Whaw	14m	Footbridge	NYCC due to complete Aug 2022

42. Work commenced at both of these sites during 2021/22, but due to adverse weather conditions causing access problems NYCC suspended the contracts. It is now recommissioned to be completed in August 2022.

Conclusion

43. 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.

44. Through this past year and despite its difficulties, the Authority has still been able to secure a total of £376,042 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 all the rights of way in the National Park surveyed by volunteers.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

45. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan for 2019-24 established an objective for Public Rights of Way to:

B1 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.

46. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority now manages the entire network of 2,624km of rights of way in the National Park. The ease of use figure for 2021 was 90%, which is pleasing. This is the third time in the last 4 years that we have reached 90%. It means despite the difficulties faced over the last couple of years the Authority remains on-course to reach the 2023 target of 90% ease of use for the National Park. However, there is a note of caution the 'ease of use' indicator measures a 5% random sample of rights of way across the network and figures can fluctuate.

47. Wainwright's Coast-to-Coast route has been long established (1973) and well-loved and used by walkers for all of this time. Natural England is developing a proposal to the Secretary of State for route to become a National Trail. The intention is that the proposal is submitted to the SoS before the summer recess of Parliament (July 2022). It is expected that a 3-year programme to establish the route as a National Trail will follow, commencing in April 2023 or possibly sooner.

Further Information

Further information regarding the report is available from:

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