



**Meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum
To be held on Tuesday 22 May 2023 at 1:15pm
Yoredale, Bainbridge**

Meeting to commence at 1.15pm

1. Election of a Chair
2. Election of a Vice Chair
3. Welcome and introductions
4. Attendance and apologies
5. Approval of minutes, and matters arising (not on the agenda)
6. Public Question time
7. Future Forum Meetings
 - Agenda Items
 - Dates
8. Review of nominated LAF members on groups linked to the Forum
9. Report back from Advisory Groups
10. Public Rights of Way annual report
11. Coast to Coast
12. External funding bid for accessibility
13. Officer's Report (items for note and consideration by Forum Members)
14. Update on members' activities (brief reports of activities relating to the Forum)

Statutory Function: To provide advice on the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area, and to provide advice on the improvement of public access to land in the area for any other lawful purpose.



Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum (LAF)
Tuesday 7 December 2022
Meeting held virtually, by Zoom

Members present: Jon Beavan (JB) (in the Chair), Peter Baggaley (PB), Leo Crone (LC), Rachel Forsythe (RF), Hannah Gardner (HG), Barbara Gravenor (BG), Neil Heseltine (NH), Alex Law (AL) and Malcolm Petyt (MP).

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) officers present: Kathryn Beardmore (KB), Rebecca Greenfield (RG), Rachel Briggs (RB) and Clare Tamea (CT) (taking the minutes).

David Lepper (North Yorkshire LAF) joined the meeting as an observer.

The meeting started at 1.15pm.

22/15. Welcome and introductions

JB opened the meeting.

Members welcomed Rachel Forsyth to her first meeting, who shared information about her background and interests as relevant to the Forum.

22/16. Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul Bucknall, Nick Cotton, Debbie North and Paul McGee.

22/17. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 14 June 2022, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising which were not already covered by items on the agenda.

22/18. Question Time

i) **Ruth Annison's Public Statement**

Ruth Annison read out a statement related to public transport, noting some of the current limitations and expressing concern about the uncertainty of future public transport services. Mrs Annison asked whether the Forum could have a role in encouraging and promoting the development of good transport networks across the National Park, particularly in the light of an ambitious target to reduce private car usage by 48% by 2030 contained in the "Routemap to Carbon Net Zero" developed by the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

It was acknowledged that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is not a statutory transport authority.

JB read out the statutory remit of the LAF, set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. He explained that, although the LAF could make representations to whoever it saw fit, the transport authorities were not under any statutory duty to consider or act upon that advice under the CROW Act.

Discussion included the following:

- In terms of reducing private car travel, members commended routes such as the Coast to Coast route, which not only provide a sustainable means of journeying through the National Park but also bring wider benefits to the area;
- The new multi-user route from Hawes to Garsdale was also commended and a suggestion made that more multi-user routes could be investigated;
- Other measures could also be considered in tandem with routes designed for active travel into and around the National Park, such as ensuring sufficient places to securely park a cycle to allow a rider to walk around a town or visit a place of interest once they had arrived at that destination;
- The shortage of accommodation in some areas has led to the use of taxis and shuttles to take long-distance walkers back to their evening accommodation; and
- The LEP's goal to reduce private car usage by 48% by 2030 to help tackle climate change is very ambitious and a lot needs to be done if it was to be achieved.

JB thanked Mrs Annison for raising this issue.

Action: Members to email their suggestions to JB as to how more sustainable travel can be promoted.

ii) Tim Allen's Public Statement

CT read out a public statement received from Tim Allen, local resident caver and access campaigner, to the meeting. Mr Allen highlighted the landowner's decision to prevent access over their land to the caves at High Birkwith Farm, which had impacted on introductory and novice caving trips and groups. Mr Allen indicated that the Council of Northern Caving Clubs had tried to work with the new landowner without success. He asked whether the LAF could give any advice or help on what might further be done.

JB declared an interest in this item as a caver and former caving instructor.

JB was well aware of this issue and had met with RG and RB to discuss the matter. He explained that access to the caves was not over open access land nor did a public footpath lead to their entrance although there was one fairly close by. The previous landowner had permitted access, with a small charge for parking. JB suggested that the Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group would be the right venue to discuss this issue at length. Part of their decision may be to ask the LAF to provide formal advice to the YDNPA, should this be thought appropriate.

JB also advised members that there were a few spaces on the Cave and Crag Advisory Group and invited anyone interested in joining the group for their next meeting to let him know.

**Action: The LAF to ask the Cave and Crag Advisory Group to consider this issue.
Members interested in joining the Cave and Crag Advisory Group meeting should inform JB.**

22/19. Report back from Advisory Groups

Members noted the report from the Access Officer, who had circulated the draft minutes from the relevant groups.

AL provided further detail from the meeting of the Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group held on 30 November 2022, including that the Group had asked for signage for bridleway users about the obstacle at Marrick Priory, that the Lickber Lane issues had been resolved, and that it would be useful to have additional parking during busy times for those wishing to use the popular Swale Trail. There was a wider move to promote horse riding in the National Park. The Group had considered latches for horse riders. LAF members noted the risks to horse riders from sprung self-closing gates. The Group's advice is that the hunter type of latch closing was the preferred gate latch for horse riders.

MP provided further detail from the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group held on 1 December 2022. The Group commended the positive news that, over the last three years, most people were obeying the Traffic Regulation Orders which were generally working well. The Group continued to monitor the condition of Long Lane, Helwith Bridge and the Ravenstonedale Moor bridleway. The North Yorkshire Path Keepers Scheme was working well – users work with rangers to deal with minor issues such as potholes and washouts and funding had been made available for this.

22/20. A New Coast to Coast Bridleway Route?

KB's report provided further detail on the feasibility of the "orange route" as a coast to coast bridleway route, as requested by the LAF at their last meeting.

Members thanked KB for her report. Discussion included the following issues:

- A braided route, providing different levels of challenge for users, would be the ideal;
- There had been an increase in cycle touring and gravel bikes since the report in 2008 and it was felt a bridleway route would become very popular;
- Some members preferred a bridleway route to have the same start and end points as the Coast to Coast walking route;
- The chosen route(s) would need to have suitable overnight accommodation to include stabling of horses and places to re-charge electric bikes;
- It would be helpful to join with the LAFs of Cumbria and North Yorkshire to agree the preferred route(s) to put to Natural England; and
- Natural England had not yet confirmed its proposals for the A19 crossing.

AL suggested that members of the Bridleways and Restricted Byways Access Group could work on developing a proposal for Natural England. AL would co-ordinate with those interested and both JB and BG expressed an interest.

Action: AL to work with relevant parties and RB to set up a group to consider the different routes and put forward a proposal to Natural England with preferred route(s) for a Coast to Coast bridleway. Such group to liaise with the LAFs of North Yorkshire and Cumbria in developing these proposals.

22/21. Officer's Report

Members noted the dates for the next meetings of the Forum. A suggestion was made that the spring meeting be face to face, possibly after a training event, and that the autumn meeting be held virtually.

Members were aware of a growing campaign for "Freedom to Roam", primarily in the south of England (which does not have as much open access land as in the north).

Members commended the Access to Eden Project, which would identify 20 walking routes within the Eden Valley project area, 5 of which to be accessible to all plus 1 sensory trail.

22/22. Update on Members' Activities

JB and HG had attended the Pennine Bridleway anniversary event.

JB had attended the regional LAF Chairs meetings.

22/23. Any other business

NH advised the Forum that Malham Parish Council had been looking into ways to improve access for all, including whether a circular route could be designed. Trampers would soon be available for hire.

There was some discussion on the wording of the LAF's fencing advice, to ensure plain rather than barbed wire was used where possible.

Action: JB to work with RB to formulate different wording for the fencing advice and circulate to members for agreement.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:15pm.

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 23 May 2023

Review of nominated LAF members on Advisory Groups linked to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to:

- (a) remind members of the advisory groups that the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) contribute towards, through a representative(s) of the YDAF attending meetings, and
- (b) seek representative(s) from the YDAF on these groups for the current year.

Background

There are several different types of meeting where the YDAF are asked to provide a representative. These can be:

- Meetings looking at a specific project or idea,
- Meetings looking at specific recreation activities with user groups,
- Meetings with other organisations eg the Highway Authorities.

From time to time, other groups and meetings also require members from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum. A full list of YDAF representatives on each group can be seen in the **Appendix**.

At the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum on 22 May 2007¹ a paper was discussed on the formation of Advisory Groups. The remit of these groups is to:

- exchange information, and provide a formal mechanism for communication and raising issues of concern on specific areas of interest;
- advise on the management of specific matters.

There are currently seven Advisory Groups:

- Access on Foot Advisory Group e.g. open access, footpaths.
- Bridleway and Restricted Byway Advisory Group e.g. bridleways, restricted byways.
- Air Sports Advisory Group e.g. paragliding, hang gliding.
- Water Sports Advisory Group e.g. canoeing, sailing.

¹ <http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/lookingafter/caringfor/managingaccess/ydaf/ydlaf-meetings/ydlaf-archive/ydlaf-may2007>

- Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group e.g. caving, climbing.
- Access for All Advisory Group e.g. access for people with limited mobilities.
- Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group (recreational motor vehicular use of green lanes, up to four members appointed from YDAF).

Who should represent the YDAF?

The Annual General meeting of the YDAF gives members of the forum the opportunity to revisit who sits on each group and decide whether representation should be changed in any way. This is to take into account new members of the Forum, together with any vacancies that may have occurred due to members resigning from the Forum.

Ideally, where more than one member is required on a group, YDAF membership to the groups should be balanced. That is to say, if there are three vacancies for members, one should be a user, one a landowner/manager and another to represent those with other interests - as far as practical. This ideal situation may not always occur as members are volunteers and cannot always commit time in this way. The reality is that the YDAF may wish to consider appointing a representative based on their ability and willingness to attend a meeting rather than the particular interest they represent.

Vacancies during the year

The list of groups and membership is brought to the Forum once a year at the first meeting of the year. If any vacancies arise during the year, these will be considered in the Chair/Officers report as appropriate.

Action for the Forum

The Forum is asked to nominate and agree a representative(s) for membership of each of the groups listed in the **Appendix**.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2023

Appendix

Forum Members Attendance at Other Groups and Meetings

WHAT?	WHEN?	WHO CURRENTLY?	REPRESENTING ?	NUMBER OF SPACES
Access on Foot Advisory Group	Twice a year	Malcolm Petyt	Users	2
Access for All Advisory Group	Once a year	Debbie North John Bucknall	Other interests Landowners	2
Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group	Once a year (evenings)	Alex Law Hannah Gardner Peter Baggaley	Landowners Other interests Users	2
Air Sports Advisory Group	When an issue arises	All members to be informed when an issue arises.		
Water Sports Advisory Group	When an issue arises			
Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group	Once a year	Jon Beavan	Other Interests	2
Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group	Once a year	Jon Beavan Malcolm Petyt Hannah Gardner	Other Interests Users Other interests	
Yorkshire and Humber Regional LAF	Twice a year	Chair or Vice Chair attends and minutes reported back to the YDAF.		
Other meetings that require attendance	All members to be informed when a member of the YDAF is asked to attend other meetings of interest.			

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 23 May 2023

Report Back from Yorkshire Dales Advisory Groups

Advisory Group Meetings

At the May 2007 meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum, a paper was presented on the establishment of advisory groups to look at individual recreational activities. The remit of these groups is to:

- exchange information, and provide a formal mechanism for communication and raising issues of concern amongst users, the YDAF, and other interests;
- advise on the management of specific matters.

The following arrangements have been made for the meetings of the groups:

Access on Foot Advisory Group

The last meeting of the Access on Foot Advisory Group was 10 March 2018. The next meeting of the Access on Foot Advisory Group has yet to be confirmed.

Access for All Advisory Group

The last meeting of the Access for all Advisory Group was on 6 November 2020. The next meeting of the Access for All Advisory Group has yet to be confirmed.

Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group

The last meeting of the Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group was on 30 November 2022. The next meeting of the Bridleways and Restricted Byways Advisory Group has yet to be confirmed.

Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group

The last meeting of the Cave and Crag Advisory Group was 9 February 2023. The minutes can be seen in **Appendix 1** The next meeting of the Cave and Crag Access has yet to be confirmed.

Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group

The last meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group was on 1 December 2022. The next meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Green Lanes Advisory Group has yet to be confirmed.

Air Sports Advisory Group

The next meeting of the Air Sports Advisory Group will convene when a matter arises.

Water Sports Advisory Group

The next meeting of the Water Sports Advisory Group will convene when a matter arises.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2023

Appendix 1

Unapproved minutes of the Cave and Crag Access Advisory Group 9 February 2023, 10.00am, Colvend, Grassington

Jon Beavan (JB) - Chair	Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF)
John Fullwood (JF)	British Mountaineering Council (BMC)
Tim Allen (TA)	Caving interest
Andrew Hinde (AH)	Natural England (NE)
Ian Court (IC)	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)
Rachel Briggs (RB)	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)
Rebecca Greenfield (RG)	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)
Kate Hilditch (KH)	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)
Helen Keep (HK)	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA)

1. Welcome and apologies

John Fullwood, Access Officer from the BMC, was welcomed to his first meeting.
New to the meeting.
Everyone introduced themselves.
Adele Ward should be invited. Access Officer from the CNCC.
Dave Musgrove needs to be invited.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

2. And 4. Review of bird breeding and bird nesting restrictions.

IC to send the raven and peregrine nesting sites (see appendix 1). Still struggling to get monitoring since Covid. Incomplete data for last few years. No real change.
AH – cave diving group planning to do some work on the ground this year. Assume this won't interrupt the birds. IC confirmed this would be ok as long as they don't use bolt drilling equipment.

IC – not aware of any bat issues.

5. CROW Act and Caving

TA updated the group on the legal position with regards to caving as a permitted activity on CROW land. Unfortunately, cavers remain in a situation where access is still not clear.

6. Land Owner indemnity

AH informed members that the insurance market is starting to affect how landowners are insured for recreation activities. Fewer insurers offering cover due to a recent

BMC claim on an indoor climbing wall. Will only insure members of the BCA, BCA groups or people with 2 years' experience.

7. Climbing

JF – no issues from the Yorkshire Dales since September (when in post). Local reps are Mick Johnson/Paul Clarke.

If short of people monitoring sites, would IC accept the word of climbers. IC – in principle yes, but often get peregrine sightings when they are kestrels. Climbers have a positive sighting of peregrines then it would be good to know about it.

8. Caving

Cod Bank

JB – access along the track to little Ingleborough. Not technically a PROW but it is access land and common land. Traditionally access has been via a gate with a stile built in. New caves have been discovered and so the area is becoming more popular. Now, the gate does not have the stile arrangement. Just a locked gate. This is a popular desire line and so needs a better form of access.

AH – absent landowner. Assume graziers don't want dogs on the fell. KH – will look into it. KH – discuss with landowner as access authority. We have a role in putting in infrastructure on access land. We can't insist on it. Rob Ashford will go to the commoner's association meeting if there is an issue. AH – one coming up in a few weeks.

TA – also an issue with parking. Used to be access along the tarmac road for access parking.

KH to investigate access to Cod Bank

High Birkwith

Change of land ownership 3-4 years ago.

AH – concern that we have got to the point where access has diminished. Started with parking. Made alternative arrangements so that cavers would park at Low Birkwith. Landowner doesn't seem to have an issue with cavers but other experiences appear to have put them off all visitors.

TA – Understand that there is no statutory right of access to the land. However, the landowner gets an incredible amount of public support for land that people can't access. Cavers have made all the approaches they can.

TA - emphasise the importance of these caves. Free and open access for as long as anyone can remember. Great starter cave. University clubs have used it for 50 years. Significant number of visitors. Putting more pressure on other caves e.g. Long Churn. Worrying about what the access situation could happen there too.

HK explained what payments are available to landowners for access:

Educational access through Countryside stewardship is limited to under 18 years of age and the landowner has to be on site for 2 hours. Conditions for agreement

through higher tier payments include nothing for access other than for PROW. FiPL could be an option but it is time limited until the end of march 2025 and is 2 years of funding only. Therefore, a long term plan for the continuation of access would be needed. ELMs has changed significantly in the last 12 months with very little on access. Access may be included in the future.

RG explained that she is trying to get a meeting organised to talk about the issues with Alan Hulme Head of Park Management), herself and Rob Ashford (Area Ranger). Rob Ashford has a good relationship with the landowner. TA was pleased that the YDNPA are trying to organise a meeting.

RG wondered if trying to remove the problem of mountain bikers on the footpath would help. KH said that we could try to offer more signage but that it offers its own difficulties. A conversation with the landowner is a good start.

JB asked if the YDNPA has an agreement with landowner for the 3 peaks route that's not on PROW? KH – no.

JB – is there anything else the YDAF or YDNPA can do to help? AH – best way forward to get a discussion going.

RG – also need to future proof other sites. What can we do to safeguard Allum Pot.

AH – thanks for help so far with the correspondence.

TA asked whether any information on the subsidy the landowner receives is available to the public. HK confirmed that it is available on MAGIC (www.magic.defra.gov.uk)

9. Any other business

No other business.

Next meeting to be held in one years' time.

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 23 May 2023

Public Rights of Way Annual Report

Purpose of the report

1. To receive comments from the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum (YDAF) on the Rights of Way Annual Report for the period April 2022 to March 2023, prior to consideration of 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

2. YDAF Members are asked to comment on the Rights of Way Annual Report **Appendix 1** before submission to the Authority.
3. To provide Members of the Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum with the opportunity to comment on the Rights of Way Annual Report prior to submission to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in June.

Strategic Planning Framework

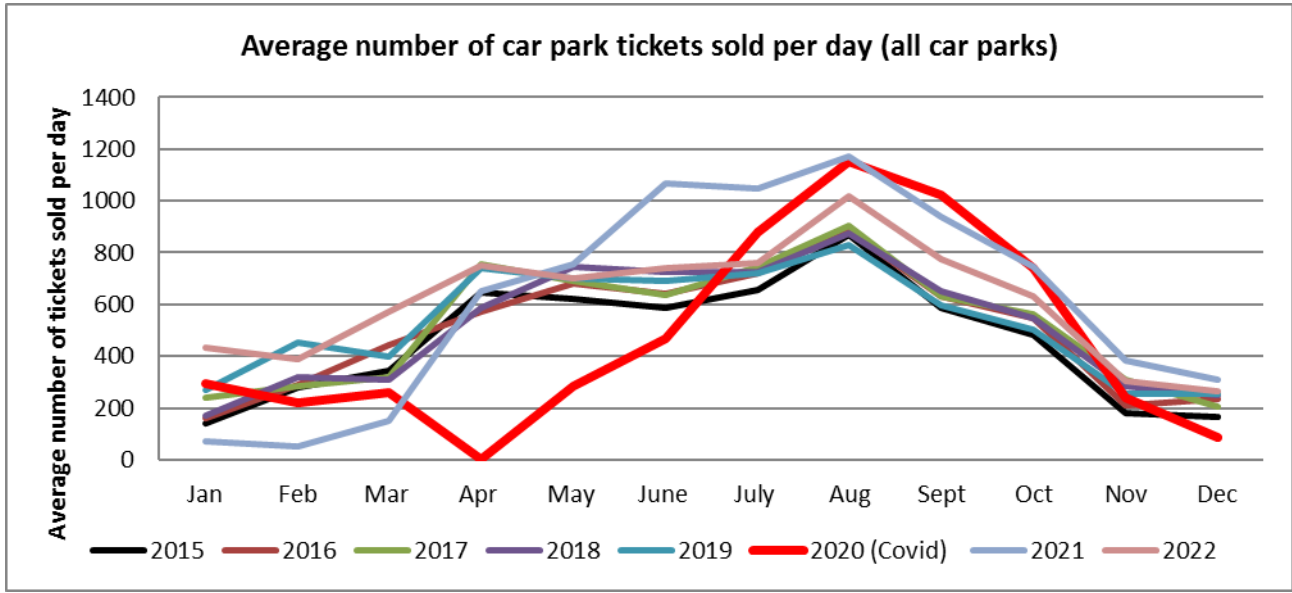
4. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:
 - **Corporate Plan Objective**
7. Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are 'easy to use' by 2023

Background

5. The Rights of Way annual report for 2022/23 (**Appendix**), identifies progress made by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) on public rights of way maintenance against our Corporate Plan actions and targets. This work is undertaken through delegation agreements on behalf of the three Highway Authorities - the councils that cover parts of the National Park. As part of the agreements, the YDNPA is required to submit a report to the councils each year.
6. The Authority has taken on responsibility for rights of way maintenance functions because a well-managed rights of way network is considered important for the delivery of the YDNPA's statutory purposes. A network that can be used with confidence is beneficial to visitors, land managers and residents alike. Businesses, inside and outside of the National Park benefit because access to the area's special qualities underpins the visitor economy. The park-wide visitor survey conducted in 2022,

continues to show the importance of the rights of way network with approximately two out of every three visitors (61%) undertake a walk of an hour or more during their visit.

7. Since the pandemic user numbers remain high, a good gauge of the scale of activity across the National Park is shown by the average number of car park ticket's sold at YDNPA's car park each day (see graph). The increase in use is also resulting in additional erosion and an increase in general wear and tear on infrastructure.



Ease of Use Target

8. The Authority's current objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on National Park Management Plan objective B1 which states:

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

9. 'Ease of use' in this context is based on a nationally established performance indicator for rights of way and is defined as:

- I. signposted or waymarked where the right of way leaves the metalled road and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path;
- II. free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation);
- III. surface and lawful barriers (e.g. stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

10. In simple terms, a member of the public should be able to follow a route easily and not encounter anything that detracts from the enjoyment of the route whether on foot, horse, bicycle or using a mobility scooter.

11. For 2022/23 the 'ease of use' figure for the National Park is 91%. This exceeds the target for 2022/23, set at 89% in the Public Rights of Way Maintenance Plan. This is in line with our ambition to have the whole National Park at 90% ease of use by 2023.

Last year's result is particularly pleasing because of the levels of use on the network. There is a note of caution, as the 'ease of use' indicator measures a 5% random sample of rights of way across the network, as such figures will fluctuate year on year. Results over several years are required to average out any sampling variation and determine the figure which is a true reflection of the network. This is the fourth time in the last five years the target of 90% has been reached or exceeded, but due to the random nature of sampling it still fluctuates. However, the Authority remains on-course to meet the National Park Management Plan target this year.

National Trails

12. The Authority continues to perform the 'lead partner' role for management of the Pennine National Trails Partnership, which oversees the management of the Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway. During the past year the Authority has distributed 29 grants to 11 different partners, and the partnership has overseen £570k of expenditure.
13. The Secretary of State, in August announced that the Coast to Coast route will become a new National Trail. The 197-mile path stretching from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hoods Bay in the North York Moors National Park passes through the Yorkshire Dales National Park. National Trail status achieves the National Park Management Plan objective B2 in relation to the Coast to Coast route:

Maintain and promote the Pennine Trails and other recognised long-distance routes, identify opportunities for new multi-user routes, and campaign for the Coast-to-Coast path to become a National Trail by 2024.

14. Natural England have been given £5.6 million of Government funding to improve the route. It is working alongside partners to ensure the path meets the National Trail Quality Standards and is fully open and available for public use. The YDNPA is undertaking the legal and establishment work in the National Park. Enhancement works will be undertaken over three years with the upgraded path expected to open in 2025. It is intended that the new National Trail will closely follow the existing route. The Coast to Coast route has existed for many years, but has not benefited from the promotion and status of a member of the National Trail family. Natural England and partners are also looking at the wider benefits of designation, including opportunities to develop link routes and circular routes; engage with local communities and businesses; improving nature connectivity; information provision; and tourism opportunities.

Volunteers

15. Volunteering opportunities to help survey and maintain public rights of way continued throughout the year - adapting to the changes in restrictions. In total 1256 days of practical work, and 545 days of surveying, were undertaken by volunteers during the year. This equates to approximately 8 full time equivalent staff. This is good news as we are nearly back to the pre-Covid levels of volunteering.
16. The surveying of all the 2637km rights of way in the National Park is a significant achievement, and helps the YDNPA plan the work required for the coming year. The survey work includes:

- Conducting both 'ease of use surveys and Parish Path surveys for the entire network of the National Park;
- A visual inspection and report on each bridge in the National Park;
- Inputting all survey information into Authority's IT database.

Funding

17. We continue to seek external income to resource this work programme. During 2022/23 we were successful in bringing in £407k of external funding, with individual contributions and contributions 'in kind' from various sources. This is a significant achievement and at a similar level of income to pre-Covid.

Conclusion

18. The 2022 'ease of use' target of 89% has been exceeded; however, there is a note of caution because this figure is measured from a 5% random sample of rights of way across the network. The importance placed on rights of way maintenance and access is often cited as one of the advantages of being in a National Park. With the lengthening of the season and increasing importance placed on individual health and well-being, this year's visitor numbers have remained high.

19. The Coast to Coast path has been confirmed as a National Trails, and comes with financial resources for implementation and future maintenance as well as for 'wider benefit' opportunities.

20. Rights of way maintenance and volunteering continue to make an important contribution to the work of the YDNPA and specifically our second purpose. As a priority programme our aim is to ensure the National Park has one of the best maintained rights of way networks in the country. This work is undertaken on behalf of the Councils who retain the statutory responsibility.

Alan Hulme
Head of Park Management

24 April 2023

Background documents

[Public Rights of Way Maintenance Plan \(approved by the Authority in September 2018\)](#)

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

**Public Rights of Way
Delegated Highway Authority**

Annual Report 2022/23

April 2023

Introduction

1. For the period of this report, April 2022 to March 2023, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the Authority) had delegated Highway Authority responsibilities for maintenance of the 2,637km of public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, and restricted byways) within the National Park area.
2. The public rights of way Delegation Agreements were for: North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) 1922km and Cumbria County Council (CCC) 710 km (from April 2023 these are known as Westmorland and Furness Council (W&FC) and North Yorkshire Council (NYC) respectively). In addition, since April 2021 delegated responsibilities also applies to the 16 km in the Lancashire County Council (LCC) area of the National Park.
3. 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.
4. 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

5. This report identifies the key achievements for the year 2022/23. 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 2022/23

Public Rights of Way Maintenance

6. During 2022/23 the following maintenance work was undertaken:

- 994 improvements to rights of way infrastructure: stiles, gates and signposts;
- 53 river crossings and 3 sets of stepping stones maintained or replaced;
- 1.6km of new engineered paths constructed;

7. A total of **£407,607** 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
£ 83,732	National Trails Partnership Manager and Lead Role;
£ 27,394	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 3,015	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 2,340	Pennine Way, Pen y ghent, data logger;
£ 20,116	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 609	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 5,586	Pennine Bridleway, Cattle Creep repair, Lambert Lane, Settle;
£ 8,247	Contract work for Nidderdale AONB
£ 1,500	Bridleway, Winterburn, HF Holiday Fellowship;
£ 28,908	Three Peaks Project (Friends Scheme, merchandise and donations);
£ 35,000	Three Peaks Legacy;
£ 54,820	Tees Swale, Naturally Connected, Access Enhancements
£ 11,847	Westmorland Dales, Discovering Westmorland, Access Enhancements
£ 37,844	Tebay Footpath Creation
£ 20,000	Coast to Coast Path Wider Benefits contract;
£ 16,909	Coast to Coast Path Initial implementation of route (Nov to Mar)
£ 4,553	Path Orders;
£ 37,300	Works to Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads, (NYCC);
£ 2,500	Donation, Trail Riders Fellowship;
£ 1,425	Production of signs;
£ 250	Donation, Dales Way;
£ 397	Donations various, Swaledale and Wensleydale;
£ 275	Contract work Area Ranger, Swaledale.

£ 404,567 Total

Contribution in kind:

£ 2,500 Railway Stone

£ 407,067 Grand Total

Pennine Way

8. Total funding secured for the Pennine Way, for 2022/23, was £32,749:

£ 27,394	Pennine Way Ranger;
£ 3,015	Pennine Way, maintenance;
£ 2,340	Pennine Way, Pen y Ghent, data logger.

Pennine Bridleway

9. Total funding secured for the Pennine Bridleway, for 2022/23, was £26,311:

£ 20,116	Pennine Bridleway Officer;
£ 609	Pennine Bridleway, maintenance;
£ 5,586	Pennine Bridleway, Cattle Creep repair, Lambert Lane, Settle.

Pennine National Trails Partnership

10. During 2022/23, the Authority was the Lead Partner for the Pennine National Trails partnership and is expected to continue performing the role for the foreseeable future.

11. 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.

12. Over the last year, between April 2022 to March 2023, the partnership has met on two 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 29 grants to 11 different partners;
- Secured an additional £78,125 from NE of which £63,668 was specifically for access enhancement projects;
- Received an additional £35,000 from grants and donations, including £30,000 from the Lancashire Environment Fund and £5,000 from the British Mountaineering Council;
- Total expenditure on the Pennine National Trails in 2022-23 was £570,000.

13. The Authority received £83,732 (100%) grant for the Partnership Manager post including £16,731 income for hosting of the Partnership Manager and its role as Lead Partner.

Coast to Coast path

14. On 12 August 2022 it was announced by the Secretary of State that the Coast to Coast path stretching from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hoods Bay in the North York Moors National Park passing through the Yorkshire Dales National Park would become a new National Trail.

15. Natural England are working alongside partners to improve the popular route, with £5.6 million committed to upgrade the 197-mile path. The announcement, which delivered on a Government commitment to develop the route, will also ensure long-term support for the National Trail and achieves the National Park Management Plan objective B2 and specifically in relation to the Coast to Coast route:

Maintain and promote the Pennine Trails and other recognised long-distance routes, identify opportunities for new multi-user routes, and campaign for the Coast-to-Coast path to become a National Trail by 2024.

16. The necessary legal and establishment work will be undertaken by the YDNPA to ensure that in due course the path is fully open through the Dales and available for public use, and meets the National Trail Quality Standards.

17. Natural England and partners will engage with local communities as work begins on the path. Enhancements will be undertaken over three years with the upgraded path expected to be fully open in Oct 2025. It is intended that the new National Trail will closely follow the existing route.

18. In addition to the implementation and enhancement of the route, the Authority was contracted by NE to scope the 'wider benefits' National Trail designation could bring. The Coast to Coast path has existed for many years, but has not benefited from the promotion and status of a member of the National Trail family. Natural England and partners will be implementing; opportunities to develop link routes and circular routes; engagement with local communities and businesses; improving nature connectivity; information provision; and tourism opportunities for which funding has been secured.

Three Peaks

19. During 2022/23 implementation of the 3 Peaks Project has continued, including carrying out further works at Brackenbottom, Horton in Ribblesdale by extending the pitching a further 100m and the replacement of the boardwalk at Humphrey Bottom, Ingleborough.

20. The Three Peaks Project raised £28,908 towards the cost of the Three Peaks Ranger. The main streams of income are through Donations £14,557 and Merchandise £11,731, with Membership of the Friends of the Three Peaks and App Sales generating another £2,620. This year a significant legacy of £35,000 was also gifted.

Path Orders and Definitive Map

21. During 2022/23 progress has continued on Public Path Orders. The following Orders were completed by the Authority:

Public Path Orders:

North Yorkshire	Order Process
Cogden Hall, Grinton, Diversion Town and Country Planning Act	Confirmed
Melbecks, Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Cumbria County Council	
Broadfell, Orton Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Casterton Grange Diversion Highways Act	Confirmed
Tebay Footpath Creation Agreement	Completed

Temporary and Emergency Closure Orders:

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

Resources

22. 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.

23. 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 2022/23 collected £28,908 through the Friends and Corporate Members, merchandise and event donations to fully cover costs for the coming year 2023/24.

24. The Authority is also supported by the Dales Volunteers and other volunteers. In total 1256 days of practical work, and 545 days of surveying, were undertaken on the rights of way network by volunteers, in year. This equates to approximately 8 full time staff equivalents. This is a fantastic achievement and nearly back to pre-Covid levels of volunteering. The surveying of all the rights of way 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

25. The National Park Authority's Corporate Plan, 2022/23, 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 2022/23:

Performance Indicators	18/19 Actual	19/20 Actual	20/21 Actual	21/22 Actual	22/23 Target	22/23 Actual
% of public rights of way that are signposted where they leave a metalled road	(97%)	(97%)	(98%)	(98%)	98%	99%
% of rights of way that are easy to use but may not follow the definitive line	(90%)	(90%)	(88%)	(90%)	89%	91%

26. Specific Corporate Plan actions for 2022/23 were:

Action	NYCC In the park	CCC In the park	LCC In the park	Total	Achieved
Conduct repair works across the National Park so that 89% of routes are 'easy to use'	96%	76%	No routes selected	91%	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%	97%	100%	99%	Yes
Carry out engineering works to 1.5km of public rights of way, including 600m of new footpath at Tebay and 300m of access improvements at Hartlakes, Muker	900	680		1580m	Yes
Repair 250m of previously engineered routes, including the re-placement of the boardwalk at Humphrey Bottom on the 3 Peaks route.	250m			250m	Yes
Replace Ellers Bridge in Dent and repair six other bridges, including the re-decking of Ramps Holme and Linton Falls bridges and repairing the stepping stones at Slatestones, Wath					Yes
Assist NYCC in reinstating 2 bridges at Wood House Bridge and Low Fagnergill, Arkengarthdale (p)					Yes
Conduct enhancement works on 2 'promoted walks', as part of Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected					Yes
Complete the replacement of two sets of stepping stones in Austwick and Horton in Ribblesdale (p)				Austwick Stepping Stones completed Horton require additional works.	No
Confirm a Permissive Path agreement at Crackpot, Swaledale and a footpath creation with the Lonsdale Estate, Tebay (p)					Yes

Performance Indicators by area

27. 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%	96%	76%	No routes selected	91%
% of Rights of Way that are signposted where they leave a road	98%	99%	97%	100%	99%
% of infrastructure - stiles gates and signs in 'condition 1'	95%	95%	90%	91%	95%
% of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability	248km				248km

Ease of Use results

28. The Authority's 2022/23 objective for Rights of Way maintenance is based on the new National Park Management Plan 2019/24. The objective for 2022/23 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.*

29. 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.

30. Each year's survey selects, randomly, a number of paths making up a minimum of 5% of the overall network. In total, approximately 149km were surveyed (111km NYCC, 38km CCC, no paths were selected for LCC) in the National Park in 2022. 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.

2022 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	96%	76%	No routes selected	91%

Signing

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

31. The Authority's 2022/23 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.

32. The Access Recording System indicates that there were 2,315 places in the National Park requiring a signpost at the roadside. There were (99%) actually insitu with 34 (1%) missing. During 2022/23, 142 directional signs were replaced or repaired where they leave metalled roads, indicating designation (footpath/bridleway), distance and destination. In addition, 94 signposts have been replaced or repaired indicating direction, distance or status along public rights of way in the National Park.

33. Signposts from a Metalled Road based on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Access Recording System:

	Total	Present	Missing	% in situ
YDNPA	2315	2,281	34	99%
NYCC	1477	1466	11	99%
CCC	810	787	23	97%
LCC	28	28	0	100%

General Maintenance

34. The following section provides a brief breakdown of the main areas of works carried out, during 2022/23, in relation to the maintenance of stiles, gates and signage along the rights of way network.

Infrastructure

Type	Total improved 2022/23
Ladder Stile	28
Timber Step Stile	52
Stone Step Stile	77
Stone Squeeze Stile	166
Fieldgate > 5ft	173
Handgate < 5ft	116
Kissing Gate	17
Boardwalk	9
Signpost (directional on route)	94
Waymarker post	71
Information Sign	12
Roadside Signpost Present	142
Steps	17
Culvert	20
Total	994

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)

35. 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.
36. 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.
37. The length of rights of way that are accessible for people with limited ability is 248km, an increase of 17km on the previous year. Physical barriers along rights of way continue to be reduced by removing stiles and replacing with gates.

Major Projects

38. 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
Humphrey Bottom, Three Peaks, Ingleton	100m Replacement of Boardwalk
Bridleway, Winterburn	150m Surfacing
TOTAL	250m
North Yorkshire County Council	New Engineered Routes
Brackenbottom, Three Peaks, Horton	100m of stone pitching
Hartlakes, Muker	300m of surfacing
Bridleway, Dubbing Garth Lane, Low Row	500m of surfacing
Cumbria County Council	
Tebay Footpath Creation	680m surfacing, 3 bridges and 1 gate
TOTAL	1580m

Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads

39. 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.
40. 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. Three 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.
41. During 2022/23 the following projects, funded by NYCC, have taken place in the National Park at a total cost of **£37,300**:

UUR Code	UUR Name	Location	Description or work
<u>Craven</u>			
U1913/2/70	Haw Lane	Gargrave	Resurfacing 500m and drainage
U808/9/60	Mastilles Lane (East)	Kilnsey	Surfacing 200m
U2279/2/80 U2279/2/60	Black Hill/ Forest Road	Appletreewick	Surfacing 350m
U232/1/20	Gilbert Lane (Stake Road)	Buckden	Surfacing 100m
<u>Richmondshire</u>			
U255/9/70	Dubbing Garth Lane	Low Row	Surfacing 500m
U232/1/40	Stake Road	Bainbridge	Surfacing 100m
U448/1/30	Watery Lane	Carperby	Drainage
U234/9/30	Busk Lane	Bainbridge	Surfacing 100m & drainage
U429/1/70	Fremington Edge	Reeth, Frem & Heaulaugh	Surfacing 50m, drainage and signage
U255/9/70	Dubbing Garth Lane,	Low Row	Drainage

Conclusion

42. 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.

43. Through this past year and despite its difficulties, the Authority has still been able to secure a total of £407,067 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 2023/24

44. 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.

45. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority now manages the entire network of 2,637km of rights of way in the National Park. The ease of use figure for 2022 was 91%, which is very pleasing. This is the fourth time in the last 5 years that we have reached or exceeded 90%. It means despite the difficulties faced over the Covid period the Authority remains on-course to reach the 2023 (December) 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.

46. The confirmation of the Coast to Coast path to join the family of National Trails by the Secretary of State, is welcomed and comes with financial resources for implementation and future maintenance as well as for 'wider benefit' opportunities. We look forward to implementing the route through the Yorkshire Dales over the coming 3 years.

Further Information

Further information regarding the report is available from:

Alan Hulme,
Head of Pak Management
Colvend, Hebden Road
Grassington BD23 5LB

email
alan.hulme@yorkshiredales.org.uk

Direct Line
01756 751647

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 23 May 2023

Recharge in Nature – Grant Opportunity

The Challenge

The past few years have seen a significant improvement in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's (YDNPA) public rights of way network and a drive to improve accessibility by removing stiles and improving path surfaces.

We have promoted these routes through our website and our new walking app and also supported large numbers of groups to access them through our outreach programme. Accessible hubs are in development at Aysgarth and Malham, all terrain wheelchairs are in place in 4 locations across the National Park with one more to come at Aysgarth, and 2 changing places currently being constructed.

We want to take these opportunities to a much wider audience, to enable more people with a wide range of disabilities to make use of these access improvements to improve their health and wellbeing, make independent visits to the National Park, and to create an opportunity to deepen their connection with nature through fully immersive sensory experiences. As well as looking at the needs of people with mobility issues, we are aiming to improve access to people with Autism, dementia, visual impairments and hearing impairments.

The Opportunity

As part of BMW's 'Recharge in Nature' we have the opportunity to bid for project funding to enhance the positive experience of being in a National Park – the focus is on environmental sustainability within National Parks but projects are invited ranging across access improvements, health & well-being, nature restoration, work supporting at-risk species and sustainability initiatives of any sort but including, in particular, sustainable travel projects.

Our *BMW Recharge In Nature* project should have a **long-term or lasting impact** and must address one of these issues:

- improving access to the outdoors
- supporting health & well-being

The project would start in May 2024 and run for 12 months.

The Project

We'd like to focus our bid on accessibility with the aim of increasing the accessibility of the National Park to people of all disabilities (physical, sensory and intellectual access). Below are our thoughts on outputs which could form the basis of the bid, but **we would be grateful for the LAF's views, input and ideas:**

- 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.

Rebecca Greenfield
Head of Access and Engagement.

Yorkshire Dales Access Forum – 23 May 2023

Officer's Report

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Yorkshire Dales Access Forum Membership

At the beginning of 2022 a selection process took place for members to the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum.

We would like to welcome the following new member to the Forum:

Graeme Cowling representing Access for people with visual impairments.

We would also like to welcome back Jon Beavan, Leo Crone, John Bucknall and Malcolm Petyt for a further three year term.

3. Meetings of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum for 2022

The following are the dates for meetings during 2022:

Tuesday 23 May 2023, 1.15 pm @ Yoredale, Bainbridge

Tuesday 28 November 2023, 1.15 pm @ Venue to be confirmed

4. Authority Meetings

Any member of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum can attend Authority Meetings as a member of the public. Please contact Rebecca Hill 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 2023:

Date	Venue	Time
27/06/2023	Yoredale, Bainbridge	10.30
26/09/2023	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00
12/12/2023	Yoredale, Bainbridge	13.00

5. Eden Rivers Trust

The Eden Rivers Trust has been awarded development funding of £181,190 to develop a major that will improve both access to Eden *and* its natural heritage by breaking down the barriers for people and nature to thrive in, and beside our rivers.

The project, *Access to Eden: Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges* will remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing the natural heritage of Eden and build the bridges needed to give them the confidence to enjoy our blue and green spaces. Having healthy, thriving natural spaces is key to this, so there are also plans to remove barriers for Eden's special wildlife, connect habitats and promote nature recovery.

Access to Eden will focus on improving participants' physical and mental health and well-being in a sustainable and fun way, and future projects include:

- Co-creating and improving **accessible green spaces on people's doorsteps** in Penrith and Carlisle, including a reserve next to the new Cold Springs Estate, Penrith ; a community tree nursery in west Penrith and improving Engine Lonning reserve, Carlisle,
- Exploring, rediscovering and connecting **paths and trails** along, and in the River Eden by improving access to the river and countryside through a set of trails – both new ones and refreshed favourites. This will include some fully accessible routes and new 'ways to the water' with train trips to Settle-Carlisle stations and onto the river for all ability and mobility levels, with wheelchair hubs in Appleby and Carlisle,
- Leading a **river revival**, where environmental organisations and communities improve and protect wildlife habitats, removing barriers to fish migration and tackling invasive species,
- Clearing up the Caldew – combining float trips, riverbank walks and paddling to **retrieve plastic pollution** from the whole length of the River Caldew,
- Hosting a **community welcome** by the Fellside becks, 'twinning' with groups from Carlisle and beyond, and
- Creating an Eden Access hub that will **promote access to Eden** in every way possible, as sustainably as possible, both online and in print.

The YDNPA are one of the 15 partnerships involved with the project. Officers have begun the work to identify walking routes that can be made more accessible to more people. Work will also include the promotion of a sensory trail within the project boundary.

6. Access guidance

In April 2023, the Paths for All launched their new Access Guidance. Written by the Sensory Trust, the document is designed as a practical reference with techniques, tools and design details to help people meet, and where possible exceed, their legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010. Examples of good practice show how

these principles have been implemented on the ground, and signpost to further information and expertise. A copy of the guide can be viewed using the following link <https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/guidance/outdoor-accessibility-guidance>.

A two day conference, organised by the Outdoor Recreation Network, is also being held to launch the document. Representatives from the YDNPA will be attending.

7. Regional Local Access Forum

The minutes of the last meeting of the Yorkshire, Humberside and North Lincs Regional Access Forum can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

Rachel Briggs
Access and Recreation Officer
May 2023

Appendix 1

YORKSHIRE, HUMBER & NORTH Lincs REGIONAL ACCESS FORUM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT LEEDS CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

Date: 08th March 2023 Start time: 10.30 Finish Time: 3.30 pm

Attendees:

Phil Maude (PM)	YH & NL RAF Acting Chair	Leeds LAF
James Copeland (JC)	Guest Speaker	NFU
Mike Willison (MW)	Chair	Leeds LAF
Didy Metcalf (DM)	Y & H & NL RAF Secretary	Bradford LAF
Jon Beavan (JB)	Chair	YDNPA LAF
Bob Buckenham (BB)	Parks & Countryside Dept.	Leeds CC
Alison Fuller (AF)	Chair	NYMNPA LAF
Mark Corrigan (MC)	Yorkshire Regional Access Field Officer	British Horse Society (BHS)
Frances Ross (FR)	Vice Chair	N Lincs LAF
Paul Sherwood (PS)	Chair	NYCC (outside NPs)LAF
Hazel Armstrong (HA)	Chair	ER & H JLAF

Apologies:

David Jeffels	Councillor	NYCC
Pam Allen (PA)	Chair	Bradford LAF
Julie Swift (JS)	Secretary	Calderdale LAF
Graham Hale (GH)	Disability Action Forum	Calderdale LAF

Actions:

ITEM 3b	PM and MW look at latest proposals for the Micklefield BW crossing
ITEM 5	RAF/NFU to explore possible joint newspaper article
ITEM 7	DM to obtain Sustrans contact details from MC DM to invite Natalie Wray (SUSTRANS) to our next meeting.
ITEM 8b	MW to examine the wording of the Advice Note 1/09 to highlight where alterations to the wording could support LAFs as consultees. Follow up?
ITEM	
ITEM	DM to contact Danielle Radley re: communications with LAFs

1. Introduction/Apologies

PM welcomed Guest Speaker James Copeland from the NFU. He also thanked Leeds CC for the use of the Committee Room and facilitating the technical arrangements. 3 members joined via Microsoft Teams, (MC, AF & FR).

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed HA and Seconded PM

3. Matters arising

a) HS2/Trans Pennine Route update

PM said there was nothing to report on HS2.

MW Trans Pennine Route improvements are going forward from west to east between Huddersfield and Morley, and a Transport Works Act order for an upgrade to between Leeds and York is expected later this year.

b) Network Rail crossings

DM reported that JS had proposed David Shorrocks from Network Rail (NR) as a potential speaker, but following consultation with PM and MW, it was decided there had not been enough developments at NR to justify his time with a presentation. But an invitation is not ruled out on a future occasion.

Horton- in Ribblesdale footbridge and lift: JB reported that a new footbridge has been agreed at Horton-in Ribblesdale at the cost of £1.800, 000, (£1m from NR and £8,000,000 from government). There will be a lift for people with disabilities. It's an important crossing on the main Three Peaks walking route, and will cater for large groups of people on sponsored walks needing to cross safely at the end of a tiring day. The local quarry also plans to send more stone out by rail increasing train traffic. There has been some opposition mainly from train buffs, but his LAF regards it as a great improvement.

Micklefield bridleway: MC Reported that he had recently met David Shorrocks in connection with the railway crossing at Micklefield where a bridleway currently crosses the track. As the BHS is not being offered a bridge or an alternative route, MC asked if Leeds LAF could put some pressure on to find a way to keep this definitive bridleway open.

MW asked for more detail as he thought it was agreed that there is no physical space to accommodate a bridleway bridge. MC said despite there being 2 earlier acceptable alternative options, these have since been abandoned and the current proposal sends horse riders onto the old Great North Road through Micklefield. He hoped the LAF might be able to assist.

BB said he had given serious consideration to alternatives and the current preferred route is to take the BW to the east of the crossing using a narrow underpass. He had raised concerns about the narrowness and that the decision is based on analysis of current use of the bridleway, which could easily increase in the future if other routes are linked into it.

Beverley Bridleway Bridge: MC also reported that a new bridge in Beverley funded by Council has got the go ahead.

HA added that it was funded by ring fenced Section 106 money. The new bridge will be positioned south of the existing England Springs crossing, and will combine with another footpath crossing. On the east of the track a footpath will be upgraded to a 5 meter cycleway and bridleway, divided into surface and unsurfaced widths. The continuation on the west side of the track is being discussed.

Resolved PM and MW look at latest proposals for the Micklefield BW crossing

c) The Coast to Coast National Trail

AF asked MC to expand on the article she had read in the BHS magazine about approved plans for the Coast to Coast Route being scrapped.

MC explained that the BHS and Cycling UK had complained because NE had not followed the correct National Trail consultation process. Despite assurances to the contrary from NE, the BHS and Cycling UK had not been included in the consultations. They will now be included in the planning of a potential route for higher rights. Over the coming months, some routes scoped by Cycling UK with the help of the YDNPA and the NYMNPA would be considered, and as far as he knew the walking route had not been abandoned.

JB said his understanding is that a shared trail for everyone along Wainwright's route was never going to be viable, in the same way that the Pennine Way was an agreed a walking route from the outset. The agreed route will go forward, while ideas for a separate Coast to Coast bridleway route are now being scoped and he has seen informal paperwork for a route to the south.

4. Natural England Update

SWG: the update provided the information that "work on statutory instruments and associated guidance is continuing but as yet, a suitable statutory vehicle for repealing the 2026 cut-off has not been identified". However, HA had already emailed to alert members that during a speech given to the National Equestrian Forum by Lord Benyon, he had intimated that the government had gone back on its commitment to repeal the cut-off date and it will be implemented.

MC said people are rightly concerned and are writing to their MPs. PM observed that government is running out of parliamentary time for new legislation. Also, there is possibly a political element as scrapping the cut-off date was not universally popular and allowing its deferral until 2031 as permitted under the CROW Act maybe considered a suitable compromise. AF agreed, a CLA member on her LAF had been unhappy about its abandonment as for them it represents an end to uncertainty.

LAF Support: DM noted that it is heartening that NE has appointed someone (Danielle Radley) to set up a 'Share Point' through which to communicate with LAFs, as this has been a neglected area for too long.

5. NFU Presentation – Guest Speaker James Copeland

NFU structure: JC said the NFU is comprised of members whose first point of contact is their group secretary at a local NFU office. The secretaries are co-ordinated by a County Advisor. Our region is divided into two areas: York and East Yorkshire which includes the North York Moors; and West Yorkshire, Humberside and the Yorkshire Dales. Until last week all were supported by a regional office in York, but due to financial cuts, this has merged into a Northern Region. JC and another officer now share support for around 11,000 businesses in Yorkshire, Cheshire and the Scottish Borders, whilst North Lincolnshire businesses are covered by the Midlands team.

Guidance: the NFU publishes a number of business guides relating to public access on DMMOs, diversions, access and livestock, and coastal access.

Effects of Brexit: our departure from Europe has meant direct support for farm businesses is being phased out, and with it, payments for public goods such as public access. At the same time dramatic increases in the price of energy, fertiliser and fodder are leading to change in the way farm businesses are run. The traditional family model is being replaced by a more corporate approach, often involving new investors with no previous background in land management. Therefore, new business models are likely to reflect what society is asking for by dividing into separate sections, e.g. food production, energy offsetting and the environment. Ideally, this will include a more flexible approach to public access which can respond quickly to changes in land use.

Change: some examples the public might notice are savings on feed by leaving cattle out for longer, changing the fields they graze, or, not keeping cattle at all and setting land aside for carbon offset and energy production. The difficulties of providing safe public access in what is a more industrialised landscape is something NFU members are apprehensive about it. There is interest in providing school visits, education and permissive access, but current uncertainty and a lack of clarity about funding public goods is preventing the development of business plans which include them.

Positive aspects: we have had success in reducing anti-social behaviour by working with a Ramblers group and people from livery yards, by joining our farm watch scheme they were able to help report unusual vehicles and fly tipping. We recommend that our members talk to and join Local Access Forums to develop better understanding and ways of working together. We are keen to explore opportunities to open up the countryside to more diverse groups of people, and to work with the NHS on social prescribing.

There followed an interesting Q & A session, added as an addendum at the end of these minutes:

6. Unsurfaced Unclassified County Roads (UURs/UCRs) and Other Routes with Public Access (ORPAs)

DM reported that the NE Update summarises the current situation, in that Defra continues to assess the classification and future management of Green Lanes/UCRs/BOATs, but has nothing to add that can be shared at present. This accounts for the RAF having received no replies to the letters DM had sent to Lord Benyon and Andrew Carmel (NE) on their behalf, asking for progress on this matter.

At the suggestion of members DM had also contacted other Regional LAF groups: North East, North-west Chairs, East Midlands RAF and Derbyshire, to sound out their opinions, but had received no response. JB said he had flagged this up at the North West Chairs meeting, who had agreed that individuals would contact us if they had anything to contribute.

Locally, applications were submitted to NYCC in 2021 to add 7 UCRs to its DM as BWs or FPs. The applicant has since applied to PINs for those applications to be progressed, and PINs has ordered that they be made by 4th August this year, jumping the queue of NYCC backlogged claims. NYCC is now consulting on the applications which it proposes to add to the DM as BOATs. Andrew Mackintosh (NE) is aware of the situation and together with the AONB team is monitoring developments.

7. Active Travel

PM noted we had deferred asking a guest from Active Travel England until a future meeting. DM said that she been unable to identify a potential representative from their website. MC said he is in contact with Natalie Wray the northern manager at SUSTRANS, and can provide her contact details.

There followed a brief discussion about the lack of clarity of SUSTRANS role as a charity, government advisor, and agent for delivery. PS and PM both were concerned that fully fledged approved schemes appearing as if from nowhere without any grass roots consultation.

HA said attempts to incorporate bridleways into the national cycle network and tarmac them were not unusual. AF agreed, such issues arose between Scarborough and Whitby, where there was resistance to tarmacking the whole route. PM noted that people are generally in favour of greenways but perceptions of what they should provide seem to differ. It would be interesting to hear the SUSTRANS' view, particularly on rights of way in urban areas which concern many of our LAFs. Resolved DM to invite Natalie Wray (SUSTRANS) to our next meeting.

8. LAFS:

a. Attracting new members

PS spoke about the difficulties his LAF has in attracting new members. 3 members have recently left complaining it is pointless. They now only have 9 members when there should be 13, but NYCC do not seem enthusiastic about recruiting. Lately the relevance of the LAF has been more challenging than ever, as the re-organisation from county council to unitary authority is overshadowing attempts to get things done.

PM thought that there are good examples of experience and knowledge at our meeting today, and as he understood it our job is to advise. In Leeds the members focus largely on rights of way as there is little access land, and if we hear through contacts of someone who may be interested in membership we approach them.

HA asked if PS had sent them the s 94 Advice Note. Her LAF does not sit in County Hall but moves around the area to involve local people, with meetings held in places such as Bridlington and Goole. The aim is to involve and educate local people by taking the meetings to them. The LAF gives advance notice to nearby parish and town councils, the public are also welcome and encouraged to submit written questions. We have recruited some of these parish councillors who are often retired professional people; 2 of whom have made an invaluable contribution dealing with the 6 North Sea cabling corridors which have threatened to close all rights of way in their path.

AF asked how the venues are funded. HA said they relied on the statement on the Defra website that LAs are obliged to fund the venues for meeting regardless of where they are held.

JB stressed that LAFs need to give formal advice to their appointing authority if they are to be taken seriously. That includes giving formal advice on what you expect from them as regards recruiting the right calibre and number of members; under the CROW Act they are bound to give it proper consideration. His LAF used to move their meetings around but financing that proved difficult. PM asked if any Councillors attended the NYCC LAF. PS confirmed there are 2. FR reported her council (NLs) actively supports their LAF on its website and in a newsletter. She has recently sat on a selection panel which recruited 3 new members; however, meetings are on hold until after the local elections. PS took the point about the advantage of being supported by a good proactive website. The East Riding and Devon LAF coverage is exemplary, whereas NYCC contains only very basic information.

b. Adding LAFs to list of consultees in review of Advice Note 1/09

DM: a NYCC LAF member brought to our attention that the above document is being reviewed, following correspondence with Andrew Mackintosh (NE) about their LAF representation to NYCC planning being ignored. This raised the question do members think we should ask to be included on the list of consultees?

MW pointed out that LAFs are mentioned several times in the text, but omitted from the List of Consultees as they were created after the document was first written. As Advice Note 1/09 is simply guidance to LAs, he suggested it might be more appropriate and practical to ask for a form of stronger wording of the text. AF said that the issue of who should be consulted on planning applications where a PRoW was affected was discussed at their last meeting. At present user groups are not consulted and it was suggested they should and the relevant planning advice note amended.

PM proposed that MW looks at the wording to highlight where, a) changes may require legislation which would be unlikely and where, b.) a small alteration to the wording may strengthen the position.

Resolved: MW to examine the wording of the Advice Note 1/09 to highlight where alterations to the wording could support LAFs as consultees

c. NYCC discussion paper on Waymarking

PS introduced a paper on way-marking created by his LAF in response to a request from NYCC for advice on signage for 'Recreational Paths'. These are named promoted routes shown on OS maps that have been created either by the LA or by user groups. Some are now 20 years old and the signage may be worn out, the routes may have changed slightly, or the promotional material is out of date.

The LAF wished to sound out the Regional Forum's view on special signage for the routes, as they generally run over rights of way which are already waymarked, and there is no additional budget for special signage.

HA where named routes have been created, they are not always shown on an OS map, therefore, the creator needs to find other ways of promoting it. Good waymarking, leaflets or an App help strangers to the area. HA is aware of promoted routes, (1 with an accompanying book) that are now hard to follow on the ground. She felt they do need extra signage if it can be afforded, because it is justified by the money it draws into local economy and the new visitors it attracts.

BB Leeds has some older established recreational routes that are reasonable easy to follow. Lately people have come forward with suggestions for establishing new routes. We have been able to facilitate some by getting commercial sponsorship, and a reasonably affordable solution is to ask for permission to attach roundels to elongated finger posts, which gets the information out on the ground.

MW thought it reasonable to ask and expect special signage, but the fact is that some years on from their creation the signage deteriorates and LAs should not be automatically expected to take on the responsibility. The hope is that the original group is still extant or some other group is sufficiently interested to find ways of refreshing the signs.

PS agreed that the crux of the matter is council funding. PM thought crowd funding might be an effective solution, and HA suggested we put it on the next agenda.

d. RoWIPS

HA ours is just coming to the end of its review and we hope it will be published this week.

PS thought theirs would be reviewed next year.

DM Bradford's RoWIP is rarely mentioned and I don't think the Council sees updating it as a priority.

AF NYMNP is part of the NYCC one and we do not have a separate one.

FR in NLs our main problem is that we haven't got a rights of way officer at present. Until one is appointed it will not be possible to make updates.

BB I try to work on a review of the Leeds RoWIP. The existing document is a good one: it is still a live tool in that we refer to it and use the Action Plan to make network improvements. PM said we are encouraging PCs to set out their aspirations for the ROWs networks in the neighbourhood plans. If they are

recorded in the plans, it will then be easy to incorporate those suggestions into the RoWIP review.

PS we have been considering how we can work more closely with PCs. There are a great many in NY but not all of them seem fully active. The change to a Unitary Authority might present an opportunity to revive a dialogue. MW suggested it would help to identify which of them has a Neighbourhood Forum and are developing their Plans. Leeds LAF encourages PCs to list their RoWs as assets.

9. a) Chair of next meeting

PM agreed to chair the next meeting

b) Secretary of next meeting

DM agreed to act as secretary

10. LAF Reports from constituent LAFs including RoWIPs & contact with MPs

ER & H

HA we had a problem with planning in that they added a proviso that the land owner closes a road. Although it was a long cul-de-sac it still had value, and therefore brought objections from all quarters, including the LAF, BHS, Ramblers, BBT, the RoWs Department and the Definitive Map Team. As a result the owner could not proceed with the scheme and there has been a lengthy delay and bad feeling locally. The LAF suggested a compromise using another route, and just last week the land owner signed a dedication agreement for a mile long RoW which plugs a long gap in the network, so we are very grateful to legal for backing everyone up. The agent is going to take the chair of the LAF to a disciplinary hearing, which HA welcomes.

We have had another success with the new interchange south of Beverly on the route to Skidby, which will create 2 miles of bridleway behind the hedge on the dual carriageway. This will link into the 3 miles of walking riding and cycling routes along the relief road obtained a few years ago, and also links to the England Springs rail crossing bridge mentioned earlier.

The England Coastal Path The section from Filey to Bridlington is nearly finished with the infrastructure and way-marking in place. Three new footpath sections were needed south of Hornsea at Mapleton and Cowden, and one south of Withernsea, and I think the section to Spurn Point will be open by autumn this year.

NYCC

PS we have 2 working groups, 1 dealing with the way-marking issue, and another looking at planning. We are also working with the authority on ways to fill gaps in the RoWs network, for example where paths stop at parish boundaries and bridleways lead into footpaths. PM commented that that is where local Plans can really be helpful.

NYMNP

AF Our last meeting was held in person on 6th December 2022 and most members were present. We discussed how BVPI works, methods of volunteering, use of e-mountain bikes, guidance for planning applications

where a PRow is impacted, funding of changing places, disabled bus access, terms of reference for LAF members (no changes required), funding shortfall for the National Park, diversion orders that the National Park is dealing with (requests from landowners are dealt with by NYCC), Moorsbus, pheasant pens near bridleways, anti-social behaviour and the revised British Standards to assist the visually impaired.

The Ranger service has been restructured, existing staff have been appointed with vacant posts being advertised externally. A part time project officer has been appointed to deal with the new Coast to Coast National Trail sections that go through the National Park. The National Park has received a Defra disabled access infrastructure grant of £76,000 and 3 specific projects have been identified.

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

FR we have had 2 meetings out of 3, the third being a site meeting which we had to cancel. The LAF has recruited 3 new members and will hold our next meeting after the local elections in May. The RoWs Department has now only 2 members of staff and no RoWs Officer; the post was advertised last month but has not as yet been filled.

A new footpath is being developed as part of the Fosse Beck Improvement; this is planned to go from Messingham Road to Scotter Road but we have had difficulty getting landowner agreement.

BRADFORD

DM unfortunately we have lost our LAF Secretary, Tim Brooks, who has been with the LAF from the outset. We are sorry to lose him, but wish him luck in his new post as Calderdale's Definitive Map Officer. The head of Bradford's Countryside Department is temporarily filling in as Secretary until a new appointment is made. We haven't had a meeting this year, which is simply due to members not being able to agree a date.

LEEDS

MW we have held 2 meetings since the last Regional meeting.

November

- Presentation by head of Strategic Planning on the 1st stage consultation on revision to Local Plan. Topics relevant to the LAF's remit:
 - Green and blue infrastructure
 - Place making
 - Sustainable infrastructure

Comments submitted via S94 (4) letter.

- Sustainable transport improvements at Scotland Lane and Whitehouse Lane to support better connection for public transport and active travel between the proposed parkway rail station, Leeds North West employment hub and Leeds Bradford Airport.

Comments submitted via S94(4) letter.

February

- Presentation by Connecting Leeds on A660 Headingley – University. The scheme will introduce a safe infrastructure that supports walking and cycling. A temporary scheme established during COVID to separate pedestrians, cyclists and road users demonstrated an appetite for safer infrastructure. It is the first scheme in Leeds involving Active Travel England.

LAF submitted its support via S94(4) letter.

- Rothwell – Templenewsam – LAF has had an early input to a Sustrans-designed National Highways-funded safe and continuous route for cycling and walking. Sustrans design team will attend next LAF meeting (May) to present more detail.
- ELOR update
 - The scheme received the BHS ‘gold standard’ award for a well-designed equestrian route including Pegasus crossings at each road junction.
 - The contractor is to address drainage issues on the recreational route.
 - Route upgrades to bridleway are pending in the vicinity of Wood Lane.
- Rights of Way Circular 1/09 – Noted that the document is to be updated. Agreed to leave any lobbying of DEFRA to the Regional Forum to ask that local authorities must add LAFs the list of consultees.

Between meetings the LAF has been consulted on a number of public path orders including 2 from Network Rail.

- West End footbridge carrying Morley FP139 removed to allow for Trans Pennine Route Upgrade. LAF suggested adding steps to an embankment to avoid a desire line developing as a short cut which would likely become eroded. Network Rail has accepted this suggestion.
- High Royds Wood crossing closure to the east of Leeds on the boundary with N Yorkshire. Leeds CC processing the application for the crossing closure and diversion.

All responses were via S94 (4) letters.

MC I nominated Leeds City Council and Balfour Beatty contractors for a 2023 BHS Award for their work on the East Leeds Orbital Route, where they have created 7 KM of routes for all users. Similar to the Beverley scheme mentioned by HA, it provides a segregated cycling and walking route on one side of the carriageway and a riding route on the other with 5 Pegasus crossings.

I have alerted MPs to the fact that it represents an absolute gold standard of what can be achieved to create sustainable transport and is a model that should be followed by every authority. It is also being used by all groups as a

recreational route, and so fits in with social prescribing. The only downfall is a lack of horse box parking in the vicinity, but that can be addressed.

CALDERDALE

JS Via email - For the first time in many years we now have a RoW team of 3 members of staff. There is a large back log of work to address now but significant progress. The LAF now meet bi-monthly due to amount of work (increased from quarterly meetings) and are well attended by members, staff and Councillors. We are steadily making progress on outstanding issues.

11. Items for next agenda:

The Cut-off Date (Item 4 NE)

Quantifying Schedule 14 Applications (Item 11)- HA suggested that LAF chairs ask their LAs to provide the number of outstanding applications they have. LAs are simply not getting the funding to process these. We all know there is a big problem, and if we can quantify it, we will have regional statistics to put before the Minister and our MPs.

- How many outstanding Schedule 14 applications they have?
- What are the dates of the earliest 6 applications?
- How many were resolved in 21/22?

Communication with other RAFs/NE (Item 4/6) - MC suggested we continue our efforts to set up an online conference with other RAFs as proposed to discuss UUCRs at our last meeting. There also needs to be a dialogue with NE sadly missed following the disbanding of HUDDLE. DM said it had been problematic as there is no way of knowing which RAFs are active or how to contact them. Those that had been contacted seemed reluctant to respond, which she thought due to nobody being authorised to speak on behalf of an RAF. PM noted that NE has appointed Danielle Radley to liaise with LAFs and perhaps DM should contact her to find out what for that would take.

Active Travel/Sustrans (Item 7) – to be invited as a guest speaker

Signage for Recreational Routes (Item 8c) suggested by HA

12. Dates of the next meetings are Wednesday 13th September 2023 & Wednesday 13th March 2024

ADDENDUM – ITEM 5 Q & A SESSION

PM does the NFU fear for the future of the traditional farming landscape?

A) JC The pressure on land to deliver society's needs, will almost certainly lead to change. This could be a reduction in crop production or withdrawing from certain activities. The new business models mean that landlords tend to intervene more in what activities take place on their land. This might be looking at new carbon markets, carbon capture, or tree planting. Wetland creation may also impact on access by making areas inaccessible.

HA where does national food security come into this?

- A) JC Managers are zoning farms into food production areas and environmental land. It may be that a food production area has a public right of way across it, in which case it might be desirable to divert it in order to comply with the increasingly strict food production regulations designed to prevent contamination.

RoWs Diversions: redirecting RoWs around two sides of a field rather than straight across it is an attractive option for NFU members and land managers. Where entry and exit points to a field remain the same a diversion should be a simple process without conflict. Unfortunately there are usually objections, and the process is too slow to fit in with business planning for what is essentially an industrial unit.

JS agreed that farms are industrial areas and the public should not feel entitled to go wherever they wish, particularly given the safety issues around farm machinery. PM sympathised as he knew from personal experience that diverting paths can be a very costly process with no guarantee of success for the applicant. Diversions are liable to be objected to on the grounds that the path is less direct and therefore less commodious.

MC pointed out that where a crop or change of use might only be for a short period (e.g. year), a formal legal diversion may not be the correct way of dealing with it. Personally, he would feel obliged to challenge it; as a year on, the public would be right to question why a route had been diverted for no apparent reason.

BB said his LA always gives full consideration to farmers' requests for diversions. For a small fee they carry out a consultation to test the water, and usually arrive at a suitable mutually agreed solution. Difficulties do arise and diversions can be expensive for land managers, it was hoped that the Deregulation Act measures would simplify the process but have yet to be implemented. Creating a permissive path directing traffic away from the legal route is an option but the definitive line must remain open.

PM are there ways in which LAFs could work more effectively with the NFU and land managers to make permissive paths more visible? They may seem an attractive option to land managers, but a serious draw back for the public is that they are not shown on the OS maps.

- A) JC in other regions we have worked with National Parks and farmers to create bespoke signage to indicate permissive networks. The challenge we have is casual visitors just googling routes shown on un-registered maps. If routes are inaccurately shown on private mapping software, they are impossible to remove. Perhaps pressing for better regulation of these maps is something that NFU members, LAs and LAFs could unite behind.

HA in the East Riding where LOs enter into agreements with the LA the paths are shown in orange dots on the ER website for as long as the contract lasts. MW added that permissive paths are shown on the Leeds map in pink.

DM understood that the OS will be consulting on an overhaul of its symbols later this year. This presents opportunities for more flexible online mapping, including temporary permissive paths. It could also include the sort of information JC's members would like, by helping the public to understand land use and promoting farm businesses.

MC Has the trial regarding Limousin cattle begun by the NFU about 2 years ago been completed? This breed is known to be aggressive and was involved in the recent sad fatality in Wakefield.

A) JC did not know but would make enquiries.

Walking with Cattle PM expressed concern about the coroner's remarks about banning walkers from the countryside. JC noted the actual report is more measured referring to 'certain times of year'.

JB Has the NFU lobbied against including public access in ELMs? He recalled that during the early development of the scheme public access was included as a public good, but has since disappeared.

A) JC No. The initial vision was to "rip up the rule book" but in practice delivering a whole new system in such a short timeframe has been a nightmare. The NFU supported the provision of a suite of new landscape protection measures and access options which complement their tourism plans. But, only about 6 options have been provided instead of the 20 that are needed, and frustratingly we still lack detail and clarity. Schemes need to be flexible, we have a lot of members wishing to provide education, but school farm visits are expensive and on the farm facilities need to be provided. Alternatively, farmers have visited schools to teach about the environment and how farms are run; this has proved inspiring, successful and popular. Children have then followed that up by visiting farms with their families on Open Farm Sundays

MC commented that the BHS are also very disappointed at the lack of access options in ELMs funding, and is still asking the Minister for improvements. He had noticed that even well run farms, which he regarded as meeting a gold standard in access provision, are having difficulty with the complexity of the scheme.

JB added that there is much more scope for educational farm visit schemes, and agreed that the options seem too restrictive. He suggested they should not just be confined to schools, but could include user groups and others, to promote interest and positivity about what's going on the land.

MW the Deregulation Act passed in 2015 promoted methods of fast-tracking DMMOs; we are still waiting for clarification on this is it affecting your members?

- A) Yes. The very long waits for DMMOs to be processed, coupled with the holding back of diversions is making it impossible for businesses to plan. These matters are increasingly adversarial with the public going to law, and LAFs should avoid being perceived as supportive of that approach. There have been occasions where land managers have generously allowed permissive public access, only to find demands that it become statutory.

JB are the responsibilities of land managers under ELMs now less of a priority having been replaced by commercial payments for carbon capture etc.? And, is the new relationship with access and the land seen as a risk rather than an asset to these new commercial enterprises?

- A) JC Yes in some ways. One example being, in development 10% of land needs to be dedicated to Bio-diversity to mitigate to the habitat loss. This is a legal contract which has to be delivered. Here there is a dichotomy, creating biodiversity will attract people, but allowing a right of way to go through it may be putting that biodiversity at risk.

There is nervousness about compliance when it comes to RoWs, as the rules around the inspection are unclear. Farmers are entitled to plough a footpath, on which to grow and harvest a crop, but then ground cover must be re-established over the whole area. If a farmer quite reasonably leaves a metre wide strip for the public footpath, it is not clear if this complies with the requirement to establish full ground cover in order to receive a payment. It would assist NFU members greatly if LAFs are alive to these issues, and work with farmers to find solutions.

Re-instatement: AF commented that farmers did not always re-instate the RoWs after ploughing, and that is likely to increase with cross compliance being phased out. BB said there are still laws governing this with penalties that can be imposed as well the Defra regulations. Liaising with the local authority remains the best way to ensure paths are re-instated.

AF what can be done about damage done to RoWs by farm vehicles?

- A) JC as farm machinery is getting larger and more expensive; increasingly land managers are turning to contractors to do their work, reducing their control over how it is carried out. Environmental rules often impose inflexible time constraints for activities like hedge trimming and muck spreading which are often too tight. JC suggested that this is an area where a dialogue between the farmer, the LA and the LAF could lead to a chance for a permanent path improvement.

JB said the same problem occurs in his area, where historical problems with a path have been re-instated only to be trashed by heavy machinery. However, his LA felt it was outside their remit.

JB what is the relationship between the CLA & the NFU?

A) JC the CLA has more business and estate members and the NFU has more tenant farmer members. There are shared interests across those groups and some differences.

JB how can LAFs attract more NFU representatives? They are supposed to consist of ⅓ recreational interests, ⅓ businesses and ⅓ land owner/management community. But in his experience all LAFs have difficulty attracting members from the latter category. Today's discussion has proved how really helpful their participation would be.

A) JC recommended that LAF Chairs make sure everyone feels equally welcome and comfortable and not targeted. He has often advised NFU members that they can attend LAF meetings as guests in order to explain an outstanding issue. He suggested a couple of newspaper articles from LAFs, highlighting problems and providing positive solutions would encourage greater participation. Some obvious topics are: the commercial use of common land by dog walkers, dog disturbance of ground nesting birds, especially be those on extending leads and sheep worrying.

PS agreed it would encourage better understanding of the problems faced by land managers, and believed user organisations could do more to promote that. HA thought that user group members were usually well informed: it is the casual day visitor that lacks knowledge. She suggested the RAF could work with the NFU to write an article for the Saturday Yorkshire Post. MW also suggested the Farmers Guardian. JS said that a couple of years ago he had had articles published in the Yorkshire Post and Farmers Weekly, about the difficulty attracting members from the land management sector, but had received no response.

DM is the NFU open to us keeping up a dialogue? Challenges crop up all the time and it will be helpful to have NFU member's perspective.

A) JC Yes keep in touch.

PM thanked JC for his helpful talk, which had covered topics about which he had previously been unaware. These discussions have highlighted that we need to find ways of cooperating with the NFU as it is extremely important to understand the challenges the faced by the farming community in Yorkshire.

Appendix 1

YORKSHIRE DALES LOCAL ACCESS FORUM 2022

NAME	INTEREST DETAIL	TERM ENDS?
Leo Crone	Trail bikes	2022
Barbara Gravenor	Walking, cycling, canoeing, Swaledale Outdoor Club	2024
Peter Baggaley	mountain biker, road cyclist, walker	2024
Malcolm Petyt	Walking and cycling	2022
John Bucknall	Land owner	2022
Rachel Forsyth	Land management (National Trust)	2023
Alex Law	Land owner	2024
Debbie North	Access for people with disabilities	2023
Hannah Gardner	Ecologist, horse riding, climbing	2023
Paul McGee	Wildlife conservation, heritage conservation, mountain biker, walker	2024
Jon Beavan	Cave rescue, outdoor recreation and local business	2022
Nick Cotton	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (Cumbria County Council)	
Neil Heseltine	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (Parish Council)	