

North York Moors National Park

c/o Local Access Forum Secretary,
 North York Moors National Park
 The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, YORK
 YO62 5BP

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT December 2008 to November 2009

Introduction

The North York Moors National Park Local Access Forum was established by the National Park Authority in September 2002. The purpose of the Forum is to advise the National Park Authority about improvement of public access to land in the National Park for open-air recreation and enjoyment.

In carrying out its functions, the Local Access Forum must take into account the needs of land management, the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the National Park including the flora, fauna and geological features of the area, as well as any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

Area covered by the Local Access Forum

The Forum covers the whole of the North York Moors National Park.

Membership

The Forum is comprised of seventeen Members. In November 2009 there was 1 vacancy and the remaining places were taken by:

- Four users of local rights of way,
- Six owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way exist, and,
- Six "other interests" such as heritage, tourism, health, local businesses, education, transport and local communities.



Of the seventeen Members one is nominated by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, one by North Yorkshire County Council and one by the North York Moors National Park Authority.

There have been the following changes to the Membership over the past year:

Catherine Cussons and Peter Hay were reappointed for a further three years. Derek Hanson left the Forum. Jonathan Bateman joined the Forum and Amanda Peacock will be joining on the 1st December.

LAF responded to the Forestry Commission's review of its estate

The current Members of the Forum as at 30 November 2009 are:

User Representatives: Jonathan Bateman, Peter Hay, Elizabeth Kirk, David Leyshon

Landowner Representatives; John Cavana, Paul Cody, Catriona Cook (Deputy Chair), Catherine Cussons, Michael Knaggs*, George Winn-Darley

“Other Interest” representatives: George Dawson, Jan King, Muriel Mitchell, Amanda Peacock Norma Taylor and Steve Scoffin*.

(*Authority or Council Appointees)

Biographical information about the Members is on the National Park website www.moors.uk.net

Members of the Forum are unpaid, although they are able to claim travel, subsistence and carers allowances.

Summary of the Year

It has been another busy year for the Forum. They have made a valuable contribution to the work of the Authority, particularly in helping to shape the Moorsbus Review and challenging its rights of way performance. The first cross-North Yorkshire LAF meeting was held in March when members from the County’s LAF joined those from both National Parks to discuss key issues of green lane management, rights of way signage and raising the profile of the Forums.

The LAF responded to several Defra consultations including coastal access implementation; adapting to coastal change and the effect of the Disability Discrimination Act on Rights of Way structures. Considered responses were also made to the Forestry Commission on a review of its role in managing the Forest Estate; to the National Park Authority on the 5 year review of Fire Directions in the North York Moors, and to North Yorkshire County Council on strategic priorities for the next Local Transport Plan – LTP3.

Meetings

Meetings of the Forum were held on the 2 December 2008, 3 March 2009, 2 June 2009 and 8 September 2009. Meetings are open to the public and agendas are available on the National Park’s website approximately five days before the meeting. A brief report of discussions at each meeting is given below, the minutes for each meeting and accompanying agendas may be obtained from the Local Access Forum Secretary (see contact details).

Meeting held on 2 December 2008



Moorsbus to be improved thanks to LAF input

Advice Given:

- Moorsbus and Accessing the National Park – A presentation was given on the work being carried out by the Authority. Members agreed:
 - a. Officers would take on board the comments and suggestions of the Forum.
 - b. Support the work and progress of Moorsbus.
 - c. The Forum anticipate minor changes to the Moorsbus Service in 2009 in order to meet public demand and provide improvements to the existing service.

Other Items:

- Members received updates on Recreation and Access Strategy, Coastal Access, Heritage Connections Project and National Trails Review.

Meeting held on 3 March 2009

Consultations Responded to:

- Strategy for the North Yorkshire Countryside – Members considered the proposed strategy from North Yorkshire County Council. Forum Members agreed to the following additional pieces of text which would be forwarded to North Yorkshire County Council as the comments from the LAF.
 - a. Page 18, second paragraph “ undulating wooded hills and flat farmland all threaded by little old lanes and roads which are an expression of the history of the countryside, and scattered.....
 - b. Page 36 The Resource – additional bullet point: Roman, medieval and historic hedged lanes, pack horse bridges and stone trods.

Other Items:

- Members appointed Derek Hanson as Chairman and Catriona Cook as Deputy Chair.
- Members received a presentation on the Rights of Way Action Plan and Performance Indicator Results.
- Forum Members were given updates on Recreation Events, Delivering the Rights of Way Improvement Plans for North Yorkshire and Redcar and Cleveland, Discovering Lost Ways, Coastal Access, Activity to tackle Illegal/Damaging Vehicular Activity, Newtondale Forest Drive by the Forestry Commission.

Meeting held on 2 June 2009

Advice Given:

- Raising the profile of the LAF through publicity, information and consultation. Members considered the Officer report and made the following recommendations:
 - a. That the following text be added to all advice issued by the Forum

“This letter constitutes formal advice from the [insert name of forum]. [Insert name of relevant section 94(4) body] is required in accordance with Section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its function.”
 - b. The Director of Recreation and Park Management to speak to the Press Officer at the National Park about raising LAF profile.

Consultations Responded to:

- Members considered the Statutory Review of North York Moors CROW Act Fire prevention restrictions and responded:
 - a. The Forum agreed that the 14 existing fire prevention directions were still necessary for their original purpose and the nature of the restriction was still appropriate.
- Proposed Revision Open Access Relevant Authority Guidance by Natural England. Members considered the report:
 - a. The Forum agreed to send comments to the Forum secretary by mid July. These would then be compiled into a response with the Chair and sent to Natural England by 4 August 2009.

Other Items:

- Members received a background report on the National Park Authority's Education Service.
- Gating Order in Redcar and Cleveland

Meeting held 8 September 2009

Advice Given:

- Update on Moorsbus Review
 - a. Forum Members fully supported the service and the review.

Consultations Responded to:

- Forestry Commission Strategic Policy Consultation
 - a. A copy of the smaller questionnaire be completed by each forum member.
 - b. The Head of Recreation and Access to compile the responses, complete the on-line form for the Chair to confirm
- Local Transport Plan – LTP 3
 - a. Members noted NYCC progress
 - b. Head of Recreation and Access to compile a response for the Chair to sign.
- Coastal Change consultation June 2009
 - a. Head of Recreation and Access to draft a response to be signed by the Chair with a copy to be sent to Convenor of Coastal Forum

Other Items:

- Monitoring of Performance Indicators.

Site Visit 2 June 2009

LAF Members saw examples of unclassified roads and bridleways damaged by recreational motor vehicles in Dalby and Langdale Forests and formulated recommendations for future management.



Damaged unclassified roads visited by LAF members in June

Further Information from the Local Access Forum Secretary, c/o North York Moors National Park, The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, YORK, YO62 5BP

general@northyorkmoors-npa.gov.uk or on the National Park's website www.moors.uk.net under the "Authority Services", "Rights of Way and Access", "Local Access Forum" Menus.