

# North York Moors National Park

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

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 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.

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



### Membership

The Forum is comprised of seventeen Members:

- Six represent users of local rights of way

- Six represent owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way exist

- Five represent "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 a number of changes to the Membership over the past year:

Ivan Brett resigned, Jon Ackroyd's term of office ended in November 2004, Bill Miller was replaced by Michael Knaggs as NYCC representative following the elections in May, Richard Pearce resigned in October 2004. Selection interviews were held to fill the vacancies which had arisen and three new Members were appointed in November 2005; Norma Taylor ("other" interests), Matthew Wedgwood (user representative) and John Cavana (landowner representative). In addition, two existing Forum Members, Trevor Johnson and Brian James were reappointed for a further three years.

The current Members of the Forum as at 8 November are:

User Representatives: Catriona Cook, Peter Hay, Graham Jeffery\*, Elizabeth Kirk, David Leyshon and Matthew Wedgwood

Landowner Representatives; John Cavana, Catherine Cussons, Brian James, Michael Knaggs\*, George Winn-Darley (Chairman) and William Woods.

“Other Interest” representatives: Barry Atkinson, Pam Caton, Derek Hanson (Deputy-Chairman), Trevor Johnson and Norma Taylor.

(\*Authority or Council Appointees)

Biographical information about each of these Members is on the National Park website [www.moors.uk.net](http://www.moors.uk.net)

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

## **Meetings**

Meetings of the Forum were held on the following dates: 5 October, 7 December, 5 April, 7 June, 2 August and 4 October. 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 5 October**

- Members reappointed George Winn-Darley as Chairman and Derek Hanson as Deputy Chairman.
- Members agreed the Annual Report.
- A discussion took place on the merits of negotiating permissive routes or definitive routes; Members endorsed the pragmatic and flexible implementation of the policy stated by the National Park Authority in relation to securing new linear routes which was “The most desirable method of doing so is to legally dedicate routes recognised as desire lines as Rights of Way, preferably as bridleways wherever sustainable, so as to formally allow access for cyclists and horseriders as well as those on foot.”

### **Meeting held on 7 December**

- Members were updated on the Open Access Information Boards which were to be installed at various locations in the National Park. Members had various comments about the content of the Boards and requested that further meetings be held with moorland owners to ensure they agreed with the wording.
- Forum Members considered the National Park Authority’s Communication Plan for the Countryside and Rights of Way Act Implementation Plan; they suggested a wider distribution of the Newsletter to include parish councils, gamekeepers and schools.
- Members were updated about the National Park’s activities in relation to preventing illegal motorised activity in the Park and the success of joint working which had taken place between National Park Rangers, the Police and estate gamekeepers. Forum Members agreed to write to the Police to thank them for their involvement with the project.
- Members discussed the Public Rights of Way User Survey and suggested some changes.



#### **Meeting held on 5 April**

- Members discussed the Rights of Way Improvement section of the new Local Transport Plan for North Yorkshire and agreed their priorities. These were considered by Members of the National Park Authority when they formulated their response to the Local Transport Plan.
- Forum Members also considered the Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's Consultation Draft Equestrian Strategy, and added their support to Officer's comments.
- Forum Members were briefed on the National Park Authority's plans to implement the new Open Access rights.

#### **Meeting held on 7 June**

- Members agreed a work programme for the coming year Barrier Free Access, Dogs, Horse Strategy, Green Lanes and Review of Open Access (although this was not adhered to due to problems obtaining speakers).
- A Member was chosen to appear in the National Park's publication "Moors Messenger" to try and increase the profile of the Forum.
- Officers updated Members on the commencement of new rights and monitoring.

#### **Meeting held on 2 August**

- Members were updated on Access Management Plans and Monitoring of the new rights and asked that the results of Monitoring be reported to a future meeting.
- Trevor Johnson gave an update on his attendance at the Regional LAF Event in Northallerton.
- Members considered the Countryside Agency's Research Report on LAFs; as a result of one of the suggestions of good practice. Members supported the suggestion of going on a site visit after one of the regular meetings.

### Meeting held on 4 October

- Members considered a report on Recreational Motor Sport in Langdale Forest, following a request at the previous meeting. A planning application had been submitted and Members agreed to submit a number of comments about this particular application.
- There was a report back following attendance at the Local Access Forum workshop in York on 16 September by Derek Hanson and Barry Atkinson.
- Members considered the consultation on the amendment of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002; they agreed that a response should be sent to DEFRA and that the NPA should be asked to concur with its views and reply to DEFRA accordingly.
- Members were updated on the situation at Pockley Rigg, the Traffic Regulation Order had been extended to March 2006.
- Members identified some misleading signs on open access land. Members decided they had no comments to make on the DEFRA consultation on the Heather and Grass Burning Code, but they did comment on the consultation on Diversion of Rights of Way to protect SSSIs.
- The Forum agreed a work programme for the following year:  
Barrier Free Access (7 February 2006)  
Dogs Issues (4 April 2006)  
Horse Strategy (6 June 2006)  
Open Access Review (1 August 2006)  
Green Lanes (3 October 2006)
- After the meeting on 4 October Members attended a site visit to look at flood damage and path maintenance/improvement issues on the ground in the Hawnby area.

At each Meeting there is a report back from Members who are the Forum's representatives on Rights of Way Improvement Plan Working Groups for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (Barry Atkinson) and North Yorkshire County Council (Lady Kirk) and on the NYCC Green Lanes Working Group (Catriona Cook). There is also a report back from the National Park Authority usually given by either the Authority Member on the Forum or one of the Officers.

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

