

# North York Moors National Park Local Access Forum

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

## LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06

### 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.



Photo by Mike Kipling

### 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 the following changes to the Membership over the past year:

Catriona Cook, Catherine Cussons, Peter Hay and Derek Hanson were reappointed for a further three years. Trevor Johnson and Pam Caton resigned; they had been Members since the Forum started in 2002.

The current Members of the Forum as at 27 November 2006 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, Derek Hanson (Deputy-Chairman), Norma Taylor and 2 Vacancies.

(\*Authority or Council Appointees)

Biographical information about some 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 carer's allowances.

## **Summary of the Year**

It has been a busy and productive year for the Forum. They have helped guide the National Park Authority through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process, supported the National Park Authority and advised on key issues including:

- Dogs and access
- Management of green lanes
- Continuing implementation of Countryside and Rights of Way Act and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act
- Provision of key facilities for visitors

## **Meetings**

Meetings of the Forum were held on the following dates: 6 December 2005, 7 February 2006, 4 April 2006, 6 June 2006 and 3 October 2006. 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 6 December 2005**

- Members reappointed George Winn-Darley as Chairman and Derek Hanson as Deputy Chairman.
- Forestry Commission Issues – two representatives of the Forestry Commission attended the meeting and gave a presentation on current access issues. They also explained their procedure for closure of Dedicated Open Access areas on Forestry Commission land.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan for North Yorkshire – A copy of the Area and Service Centre Assessments were circulated to Forum Members; they made comments on the Assessments at the meeting and also attended a meeting about the Assessments at North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).
- Members agreed the Annual Report.
- English Nature Report – Dogs, Access and Nature Conservation – Members considered the Executive Summary.
- National Countryside Access Forum – a Member volunteered to monitor the NCAF Website for any issues of interest.

### **Meeting held on 7 February 2006**

- Barrier Free Access – a representative of North York Moors Disabled Access Group, Jan King, gave a presentation to Forum Members.
- Geocaching – a presentation on this new recreational activity was given by the Open Access Officer. There were concerns from the Forum about potential problems including access restrictions, impact on the moors and contact with landowners.
- Shooting – Members considered the final report of the Effects of Public Access on Lowland Game Management issued by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission.
- Other issues discussed at the meeting included: An update on the recovery works following the floods in 2005, the National Park's Peer Assessment Review, Sheep deaths on Blakey Road, crackdown on illegal motorised activity.

### **Meeting held on 4 April 2006**

- Public Rights of Way Survey Results and Action Plan – the Director of Recreation and Park Management gave a presentation on the results; there were some difficulties with the way in which the survey was being undertaken by other authorities, which meant that results were not really comparable.
- Public Toilets – Members discussed the availability and importance of toilet facilities in the Park. Letters were sent to District Councils in the National Park stressing the importance of these facilities to encourage people to visit the countryside, particularly from urban areas.
- Dogs and Access – A representative of the Kennel Club gave a presentation on various issues including; their role in promoting responsible dog ownership, assistance dogs in the UK, exercise area information and opportunities for Local Access Forums. Forum Members also considered the English Nature report “Dogs, Access and Nature Conservation” and the National Park’s Press Release on Dogs. The Local Access Forum Members recommended that the National Park should produce a leaflet similar to that produced by Pembrokeshire with a positive message about visiting the National park with Dogs. They also asked for the Press Release on dogs issued by the National Park to be re-worded before it was re-issued to refer to the need to protect lambs as well as grouse.
- Promoting Outdoor Recreation in English National Parks, Good Practice Guide – Forum Members expressed interest in the project “Experience Moor” which helped young people access the countryside.

### **Meeting held 6 June 2006**

- Rights of Way Easy to Use Indicator – the Director of Recreation and Park Management explained that there would be some changes made to the way the Authority carried out the Annual Survey of Rights of Way.
- Equestrian Strategy – the Tees Forest Recreation Officer gave a presentation on “A Strategy for the Equestrian Leisure Sector in the Tees Valley”. Members commented on the recommendations in the Strategy.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Part 6 2006 – Forum Members considered a report on the implications of this Act for the North York Moors National Park. Particular issues highlighted included the provisions in relation to dual status ways and new Traffic Regulation Order powers for National Parks. Forum Members supported the engagement of contract staff to help in the confirmation of the status of unrecorded Rights of Way in due course. They also supported a reactive approach for the Authority in issuing Traffic Regulation Orders.
- NYCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Forum Members requested copies of the draft plan before it went out for public consultation; comments were to be fed back to the Forum’s representatives on the Working Group.
- Pockley Moor Green Lane – A presentation was given by the Director of Recreation and Park Management on the current status of the Traffic Regulation Order across Pockley Moor and the NYCC Ecology Officer’s report on the route.
- Following the meeting on 6 June, Forum Members attended site visits to Lowna and Monket Bank in Farndale to look at unmetalled, unclassified roads issues first hand. Motorbike use of the route at Lowna, which was only a riverside path on the edge of a low lying, wet field came as a surprise to many members, though on this dry day the route was not difficult to walk and repairs including small culverts, apparently undertaken by motorcyclists, were evident at some of the soft patches. Monket Bank, a steep track leading west out of Farndale had been very badly eroded by motor vehicles and water, but re-built by North Yorkshire Highways using a high cement content aggregate mix. This had made a firm surface, but had a lot of loose stone on the surface posing a high slip hazard and was still very stark white in the landscape. The under-track drainage system appeared to be working well, though members were concerned that open ditches preventing water coming down onto the route had not been re-instated.

### Meeting held 3 October 2006

- NYCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation – six representatives were appointed to attend a consultation meeting to discuss the draft document on 22 November.
- Unsurfaced, unclassified roads – The Highways Asset Manager from NYCC, Doug Huzzard gave a presentation on the issues. He was addressing the “list of streets” as a matter of urgency and anomalies would be identified and investigated.
- National Audit Office Report on the Right of Access to Open Countryside – a summary of the recommendations and findings from the report was circulated to Members of the Forum.
- Barbed Wire on Public Rights of Way – A Forum Member raised the issue of barbed wire and asked for clarification on the rules in relation to it. An advice note for landowners was circulated at the meeting which explained the rules. Forum Members asked that this be circulated to all Parish Councils as a reminder.
- Flood Recovery – the Director of Recreation and Park Management updated the Forum on progress with recovery work since the floods in 2005.



The new bridge at Hawnby under construction - it was installed as part of the flood recovery programme.



The completed bridge at Hawnby.

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). Matthew Wedgwood monitors the website of the National Countryside Access Forum and reports back to each Forum meeting. 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.