

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 2007 to November 2008

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.



Auditing Access in Forge Valley

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:

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:
John Cavana and Norma Taylor were reappointed for a further three years. Brian James and Matthew Wedgwood left the Forum.

The current Members of the Forum as at 19 November 2008 are:

User Representatives: Catriona Cook*, Peter Hay, Elizabeth Kirk, David Leyshon and Brian Briggs* (1 vacancy)

Landowner Representatives: John Cavana, Paul Cody, Catherine Cussons, Michael Knaggs* and George Winn-Darley (Chairman), (1 vacancy)

"Other Interest" representatives: George Dawson, Derek Hanson (Deputy-Chairman), Jan King, Muriel Mitchell and Norma Taylor.

(*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 a busy and productive year for the Forum. They have made a valuable contribution including informing the Authority's Business Plan for the next 3 years, advice on waymarking rights of way over moorland and ensuring that the definitive map and unrecorded rights of way continue to be prioritised. They have continued to support the National Park Authority in the lengthy and sometime difficult approach to protecting Pockley Moor - support which has paid off with the recent County Council resolution to make a permanent Traffic Regulation Order. The Forum has responded to consultations including the Authority's advice for the public on dogs on Rights of Way: the Marine Bill and Coastal Access.



Restoration work on Pockley Moor

Meetings

Meetings of the Forum were held on the following dates: 4 December 2007, 4 March 2008, 3 June 2008 and 2 September 2008. 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 4 December 2007

Advice Given:

- National Local Access Forum - an email from the West Pennine Local Access Forum regarding the establishment of the National Access Forum was considered. Members gave the following response:
 - a) the money used to administer a national forum would be better used to improve rights of way on the ground.
 - b) they could not immediately identify a useful purpose for a national forum given the remit of the Forums to provide more locally based advice.
 - c) ad hoc contact between Chairs of LAFS when necessary would be more appropriate.
 - d) Forums could contact Government Ministers and MPs directly.
 - e) Members considered a regional body would be more useful than a national one.

Consultations Responded to:

- Members considered the Authority's proposed new advice for the public on dogs on Rights of Way and Open Access land and gave the following advice:
 - a) the Authority should encourage better behaviour than the minimum legal requirement.
 - b) there was support for encouraging a high standard of behaviour.
 - c) Grass crops should be added to the list of 'places' on the schedule due to the detrimental effect of dog fouling on livestock welfare.
 - d) a generic consistent message would be preferable to avoid confusion.
 - e) fenced areas of forestry land could be used to exercise dogs off the lead, this was done in other countries. Members considered it would be helpful if these fenced areas were near residential areas and car parks.

Other Items:

- Members reappointed George Winn-Darley as Chairman and Derek Hanson as Deputy Chairman.
- Forum Members considered a report about the Coast to Coast Mountain Bike Study.
- Members received a presentation from Tim Stevens from Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA).

Meeting held on 4 March 2008

Advice Given:

- Discovering Lost Ways - A paper from Natural England (NE) was considered and the Forum recommended that a letter be sent to NE requesting that further resources should be made available in order to make archive documents more accessible to everyone.
- Proposed new advice for the public on dogs on rights of way - following further consultation the code was represented to the Forum who recommended that reference to arable and grass crops used for grazing, silage and hay should be included in the code.

Other Items:

- The Forum discussed the Lake District permit for motorised users and its appropriateness to this National Park. Concerns were raised about the resource implications of such a scheme and Members considered engaging legitimate users to educate others was a better way forward.
- Members received an update on progress on the Recreation and Access Strategy.

Meeting held on 3 June 2008

Advice Given:

- The Business Plan - Members of the Forum made the following recommendations:
 - a) provision of sustainable toilet facilities at Hasty Bank car park would be welcomed by the public.



Heritage Bus Service near Osmotherley

- b) Members suggested that a more prominent explanation of car park charges could be displayed to help the public understand how the revenue was used.
- c) resolving discrepancies in the Definitive Map was considered a priority.
- d) the current Ranger service was considered a strength and staffing and service levels should be maintained.
- e) details of walking routes should be available on the website.

- f) the Moors Messenger should be available on the website.
- g) improved transport links were important including the Moorsbus and the railway.

Consultations Responded to:

- Members considered a response to the Marine Bill - Coastal Access issues and commented on a number of clauses within the proposed bill:
 - a) Members preferred a S39 agreement to proposed links to Entry Level Scheme.
 - b) Members considered proper compensation arrangements should be made for landowners.
 - c) an open and transparent appeals/inquiry process was important. Negotiation in relation to Coastal Access was welcomed and it was hoped this would lead to fewer problems than those experienced during the CROW process.
 - d) 4 metre strips were acceptable and should only be increased to 5 metres where erosion was anticipated.
 - e) change of land use or management after commencement of the new rights could give rise to a need for a restriction or exclusion not foreseen before.
 - f) funding would be required for the process of establishing diversions.
 - g) there was a need to clarify the differences between existing rights and new coastal access rights in relation to Clause 286 - Power of entry.
 - h) reference should be made to the health and safety aspects relating to dogs crossing fields containing cattle.
 - i) dog fouling would need to be addressed as this was a growing problem.
 - j) strong approval was expressed for the third party insurance provisions in the Bill.
 - k) it was hoped NE would provide funding for coastal access provision under this bill.

Other Items:

- An update was given on the Unsurfaced, Unclassified Roads Liaison Group.

Meeting held 2 September 2008

Advice Given:

- Update on Moorland Access Issues - Members considered a report on the work carried out to date including the provision of stiles at access points to open access land and the mowing of routes to assist users to follow the definitive line. Members made the following recommendations:
 - a) Members were supportive of further mowing of rights of way particularly where adjoining routes of estate roads could cause confusion.
 - b) marker posts would be helpful in locations where grazing or burning regimes made identification of the route difficult.
- The Business Plan - Members made the following comments in relation to the priorities in the Authority's draft Business Plan:
 - a) the continued opposition to aspects of the Marine Bill including compensation for landowners.
 - b) monitoring of Moorsbus figures and targets was required in order to achieve the desired outcomes for the service.

- c) the importance of transport connections for Moorsbus, other bus services and the railway.
- d) the need for continued improvements in the rights of way network.
- e) the need for funding to discover unrecorded rights of way.
- f) promotion of adventure sports and climbing.
- g) ensuring young people had access to the National Park.

Other Items:

- Access to Nature Grant Scheme - Members were advised that the Authority would take the suitability of the scheme into account when considering a project to discover unrecorded rights of way.
- Members discussed the List of Streets and were advised that not all of the routes on the 1932 handover map were on the list of streets.
- Pockley Moor - Members were advised that some restoration work had already taken place on the route in anticipation of a permanent TRO and further work was scheduled to take place once the TRO was confirmed.

Site Visit 3 June 2008

A Site Visit was held for Forum Members to consider coastal matters in light of the consultation on the Marine Bill and proposals for access to the coast.



Rights of way maintenance on the Cleveland Way

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.