

# North York Moors National Park Authority

2 November 2020

## Update on Easy Access Routes and Transition to Miles without Stiles

### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on progress toward implementing the Miles without Stiles policy in relation to easy access routes as approved by Members at NPA 23 March 2020

### 2. Background

- 2.1 At NPA 23 March 2020 Members reviewed the provision of easy access routes in the National Park and approved a new categorisation policy, adopting the 'Miles Without Stiles' approach to grading the routes.
- 2.2 Whilst Government restrictions have restricted work output and budgets, both of which have had an impact on planned works, it has been possible to undertake both some maintenance and new work toward the ambition set out in the March paper.

### 3. Update on Current Routes

- 3.1 Work planned to upgrade three easy access routes in order to enable the transition to Miles without Stiles has not been able to be carried out as scheduled in 2020 due to access budgets being cut in response to the pandemic. However, £8,000 has been made available from reserves to enable the work at Cawthorn Camp to go ahead in early 2021, with the work at Rosedale Mineral Railway and Esk Valley postponed to financial year 21/22 and funded out of operational budgets.
- 3.2 The other outstanding elements of the transition to Miles without Stiles are the updated webpage, which will be completed as part of the website upgrade (though this is also delayed due to the pandemic); and updated DDA compliant route descriptions, to be carried out by the Marketing and Communications team (see para 5).
- 3.3 Recent work at Sutton Bank has created a 330 metre pump track and a 2.5km figure-of-eight family cycle trail through woodland. It acts as a longer and wider start to the existing Cliff Trail so that families can ride side-by-side through the forest, as well as providing better access for disabled cyclists using adaptive cycles. Riders have the choice of riding gently along the track or more adventurously, by picking out features such as jumps and banked corners.
- 3.4 On the Cleveland Way, the White Horse path at Sutton Bank has been partially resurfaced as part of ongoing work in 2020, with further work planned for later this year. The easy access path at Runswick Bay has been reinstated after water damage, and a surfacing upgrade is due to take place on the Easy Access length out of Robin Hoods Bay (known as Rocket Post Field).
- 3.5 In 2019 the North Ranger team replaced the riverside boardwalk at Danby Moors Centre, improving this short but valuable accessible walk with the assistance of volunteers.

3.6 General work to reduce the number of stiles and replace with gates has continued, with the number of stiles on the National Park PROW network at 2551, decreasing from 2795 in 2017 (a 9% decrease). Stiles on PROW present a barrier to many users, for instance those with injuries, waiting for hip or knee replacements etc. Additionally, people with dementia have difficulty carrying out activities in the proper sequence, so stiles can represent a significant barrier to access for dementia sufferers.

#### 4. **Management Plan**

4.1 The new management plan to be launched in April 2022 and associated business plan present an opportunity to promote accessibility in all areas of the Authority's work and find ways to make more areas of our work accessible.

#### 5. **Future Opportunities**

5.1 The Hole of Horcum walk from Saltergate car park has potential to be an outstanding accessible walk for users of all abilities. The terrain of the upper path is flat, offers spectacular views, which are otherwise only available from the car park. There are however, problems to resolve with Highways and Scheduled Ancient Monuments consent, both of which make creation of this path difficult.

5.2 Forge Valley – the old boardwalk structure remains in use and is subject to regular H&S checks both by NYM Rangers and Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise (RWCE). Repairs are made on a regular basis to replace broken boards and support the structure. Both recent RDPE and the Green Recovery fund bids have been unsuccessful. The directors of RWCE will continue to work in partnership with both SBC and NYMNPA to seek a funding solution which can deliver the vision for a fully accessible, sustainable boardwalk.

5.3 The Sheepwash easy access path around Cod Beck reservoir was constructed in 2018 by Yorkshire Water, and NPA Rangers facilitated a complete loop by installing a bridge in 2019. When the route opened in 2019 it was well received by local users but despite improvement made by Rangers, feedback indicates that further work is needed. The extent of this will require commitment from both Yorkshire Water and National Trust to invest in drainage and pitching works. Interpretation on site would further benefit users. There is no interpretation on site though Yorkshire Water have created a short online route guide. These issues have been raised with the National Trust by the NYM DAG.

5.4 There is a growing base of support for adaptive cycling in and around the North York Moors, in particular at Dalby Forest Cycle Hub CIC and Get Cycling Community Benefit Society in York. Both organisations offer tours, cycle hire and training.

#### 6. **Tramper Scheme**

6.1 Work was carried out at Sutton Bank in 2019 to upgrade the designed tramper route and the tramper scheme (run by Lake District Mobility <https://lakedistrictmobility.org/north-york-moors> ) was launched there in November 2019 but has only been lightly used since. For the time it has been available it has had consistently good feedback. The equipment is very easy to use even for a novice, and the route adds value above and beyond the short easy access loop. Full instruction is given before use.

- 6.2 Officers are in discussions with NYCC Highways to move the A170 crossing at Sutton Bank to improve visibility. Lake District Mobility's insurance does not allow the tramper to cross the main road which limits the route options significantly. This is in contrast to the mobility scooter also available for hire, which is not part of the Lake District Mobility scheme and can be taken across the road. In theory the Authority could run Trampers under its own insurance, alongside the mobility scooter, but users would lose the benefit of being part of a wider network which users can pay once to join and then have access to Trampers at all sites.
- 6.3 Feedback from National Trust Ravenscar about the Tramper Scheme has also been positive after initial concerns about emergency vehicle access for customer/Tramper recovery led to only one short route being offered when the scheme was launched. Officers are optimistic that a second longer route can be added after the scheme has had a sufficient trial period at Ravenscar.

## 7. Disabled toilets across the NP

- 7.1 Good provision of disabled toilets is one of the biggest enablers of confident access to the countryside for disabled people. All of the NPA owned toilets are in need of some degree of refurbishment over the coming years. Disabled toilets are at the following sites;

Site	Condition	Refurb required (estimated)
Chop Gate	Poor	<1 year
Newton under Roseberry	Average	1-3 years
Goathland	Good	3-5 years
Hutton le Hole	Good	3-5 years
Low Mill	Good	3-5 years
Kildale	Average	1-3 years
Ravenscar	Average	1-3 years
Sutton Bank	Average	1-3 years
Moors Centre	Average	1-3 years

Refurbishment estimates refer exclusively to the condition of current buildings, fixtures and fittings.

- 7.2 The NPA provides annual toilet grants to support the continued provision of public toilets in the following parishes:

Parish	Disabled toilet Y/N
Coxwold	N
Aislaby	N
Danby Group (Danby/Westerdale)	N
Egton	N
Lealholm	N
Whorlton	Y

- 7.3 Disabled toilet provision across the National Park could be improved by upgrading NPA owned disabled toilets to good condition in line with the table above and by offering higher grants to parishes which can provide disabled toilet facilities

## 8. **Website Accessibility**

- 8.1 New accessibility regulations (Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018) dictate that all documents uploaded to the website will need to be reviewed. It is a priority for the Marketing and Communications team to update the existing PDF format of all accessible routes. This work is due to be carried out as part of the transfer to the new website and may mean an alternative way to presenting the routes is deployed since PDFs are not accessible documents.
- 8.2 The new website will also incorporate improved features for disabled users to access content. Consultation will be carried out with the DAG throughout the design phase.

## 9. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 9.1 Work will be carried out by the Ranger Service and / or contractors as appropriate. Maintenance work and the path proposals at 3.1 will be funded from operational budgets. Implementation of other aspirations will need to be included either in the MTFs or as part of the Asset Management Strategy to be developed.

## 10. **Contribution to National Park Management Plan**

- 10.1 U2, U3, U4, U7, U11

## 11. **Legal Implications**

- 11.1 The National Park Authority has a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic, and to take steps to meet their needs. Offering a wider range of accessible routes with a clear grading system improves the service delivered to a wide range of users; and ensures that we continue to remove barriers and improve accessibility opportunities

<h2>12. <b>Recommendation</b></h2>
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| <p>12.1 That: The report be noted.</p> |
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Contact Officer  
Debbie Trafford  
Head of Ranger and Recreation Services  
Tel No  
01439 772700

### **Background papers to this Report**

**File ref**

1. **Miles Without Stiles Route Grading System 23 March 2020 NPA**