

WEST YORKSHIRE PENNINE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MEETING HELD ON 15TH JANUARY 2009 AT THE TOWN HALL, HALIFAX

RESENT:

Members:

Mr D Nortcliffe (Chair)
Ms P Ashton
Mr I Condliffe
Mr R Gibbon
Mr R Hindley
Ms D Metcalfe
Mr T Norris
Mr G Ramsden

In Attendance:

Ms S Leffman
Mr R Malkin
Ms K Windett

Apologies:

Councillor Byrne, Mr E Bromet, Ms J Turner

David Nortcliffe welcomed all to the meeting.

29 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH OCTOBER 2008

IT WAS AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2008 be approved as a correct record.

30 MATTERS ARISING

Minute No. 15 – Discovering Lost Ways – the present position was unknown. Members considered what further action this Forum could take.

IT WAS AGREED that the three authorities be asked for information in relation to the outstanding DMMO claims and a report on this, which should include details of how authorities prioritise these and the number they are able to deal with in a year, be submitted to the next meeting.

31 RISHWORTH MOOR FENCING – UPDATE

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting regarding the erection of a large fence around parts of Rishworth Common, Sophie Smith of Yorkshire Water together with Bruce Wilkinson of Moors for the Future attended the meeting. A map showing the location of the fencing and associated works was circulated at the meeting. Concerns were expressed at the meeting regarding the lack of consultation, and Yorkshire Water were advised that it was a legal requirement to consult the Highways Authority regarding the inclusion of new gates or stiles across a public right of way. The issue of access for horses was raised and Members were informed that such access had been taken into consideration and would be provided where necessary. Members were informed that certain areas were not suitable for horses but access would be provided where it was required. Members made the point that this was an urban common and horses could go anywhere, and the horseriders should make the decision as to whether it is suitable. A

concern was raised that more bridle gates should be provided. Problems could arise due to lack of consultation in that gates could be installed and then requests would be made for these to be converted into bridlegates. Members were informed that there were over 30 bridlegates and all rights of ways had bridle gates. Concerns were expressed regarding damage which could be caused by motorcycles once the work had been completed. It was suggested that consultations take place now with senior police officers before the problems occur. Also, advice from the local land owners should be sought as to the present problems. Yorkshire Water confirmed that they would consult Sue to ascertain what steps could be taken to prevent this problem. Members were advised that at present work was underway to prepare the specification for the tender. The fencing work was due to commence in April and was expected to take approximately 8 weeks. A concern was raised that this timescale would coincide with the bird nesting season. Yorkshire Water advised that they would seek advice from Natural England on this issue. General concerns were raised that this proposal had not been thought through properly and a complete re-think was required taking into account the concerns raised at this meeting.

IT WAS AGREED that Yorkshire Water be requested to take the comments from this meeting into account and consider delaying the scheme until these issues have been resolved.

32 ENCOURAGING TRAVEL ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR RECREATIONAL USE

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting, Alan Bishop from Metro attended the meeting and circulated a paper which provided details regarding the network of bus services operating throughout Calderdale which could assist walkers and tourists to access the countryside. Members raised the need to persuade walkers to use ordinary bus services and the need to get this message across. A concern was raised regarding the lack of real time information at Bradford Interchange. The provision of the website was commended. A concern was raised that outlying areas could do with buses running later, although it was accepted that this was often judged on the number of passengers using the service. Alan Bishop advised that Metro were trying to engage with operators to form an association with a view to improving business plans and the service they provide. Metro were trying to help the operators, particularly in relation to isolated communities.

33 NATURAL ENGLAND'S REVIEW OF NATIONAL TRAILS AND ROUTES

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting, Members were provided with a copy of the consultation document and asked to consider putting together a response. The statement in the document that national trails were better maintained than other trails was questioned. A concern was made that it was not useful to look at parts of the access network, but these should be looked as a whole. It was felt that the survey was not complete in that, for example, useful information could have been obtained from the Local Authority in relation to the Transpennine Trail. The Local Authority's website contained lots of useful information which could be used. A concern was expressed that routes used for a particular use should remain as such and not be converted into multi-user routes.

IT WAS AGREED that Members of the Forum be requested to submit any comments on the consultation document by 22nd January, and David Nortcliffe will prepare a response encompassing these comments.

34 ACCESS LAND

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting, Robin Dalton of the Countryside Unit attended the meeting. The Countryside Service was endeavouring to develop medium to long term proposals in line with the principles of good countryside recreation management and nature conservation across the district. The Countryside Service had received a small grant from Natural England to help begin the process of building up an effective database that would enable them to monitor what was happening to the environment, identify what was needed and hopefully attract the support and funding required to conserve and enhance the natural resources of the area. The database would be of particular importance as more and more organisations become involved with recreation, conservation and commercial development of the countryside and natural resources. They were required to submit a report to Natural England by April. In order to monitor the condition and impact of the use of the access land in Calderdale they needed to gather baseline information incorporating data on land use, recreation use, ownership, tenancy, ecological and landscape condition. At present the priorities were:

- (i) record the condition of all the works carried out as part of the CROW Act infrastructure works and identify future management and maintenance needs;
- (ii) to identify and implement some small scale works relating to improved access and landscape or bio-diversity conservation, working with volunteers and the local community.

The question was raised as to what would be outcome. Robin advised that the ultimate aim was to obtain funding – not only for Calderdale. If any members had any comments/questions they should contact Robin direct on 01422 249136/07712 867619 and robin.dalton@calderdale.gov.uk.

35 HARD SURFACING OF BRIDLEWAYS – RESPONSE FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES PLANNERS

Further to the discussions which had taken place at the last meeting, members were advised that Kirklees had not yet responded. Calderdale responded advising that the hard surfacing of a bridleway did not require planning consent as it was a permitted development under Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Using the same legislation, Bradford responded advising that consent was required for the hard surfacing of bridleways, and they quoted a case from Bingley in 1997 in which successful enforcement action was taken.

IT WAS AGREED that

- (a) a reminder be sent to Kirklees asking for a response;

(b) the British Horse Society be asked for a copy of Counsel's ruling on this issue; and

(c) this issue be considered further at the next meeting and Kirklees Council's response and Counsel's Opinion be presented to that meeting.

36 ACCESS LAND – REPORT BY TERRY NORRIS

Terry Norris reported on problems accessing some access land. Kirklees had decided that this was not a priority area and did not intend to let the public know. This was against the spirit of the CROW Act.

IT WAS AGREED that

(a) a letter be sent to Kirklees Council asking them to let us know the position; and

(b) information be obtained as to the extent of work which cannot go ahead due to lack of funding. This information should be in the form of a list of what the three authorities want to do but can't due to lack of funding.

37 REMAINING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Due to time constraints it was agreed to defer the remaining items of business until the next meeting.

38 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 16th April 2009, at 2.00 pm in Halifax.