

## **WEST YORKSHIRE PENNINE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

**MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2008 AT THE CITY HALL, BRADFORD**

### **PRESENT:**

#### **Members:**

Ms J Turner (In the Chair)  
Ms P Ashton  
Mr E Bromet  
Mr R Gibbon  
Mr D Hamer  
Mr R Hindley  
Councillor Kirton  
Ms D Metcalfe  
Mr T Norris  
Mr G Ramsden

#### **In Attendance:**

Mrs R Finney  
Mr A Gardner  
Mr D Jackson  
Ms S Leffman  
Mr R Malkin  
Ms K Windett

#### **Apologies:**

Mr I Condliffe, Mr E Crouch, Mr A Fowler, Mr T Hedge, Mr D Nortcliffe, Mr G Keating, Ms P Sheridan

(It was noted that Mr Crouch had now stood down as a member and a replacement would need to be found).

### **173 ROLE OF NATURAL ENGLAND IN RELATION TO COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS, ADVICE AND FUNDING**

At the last meeting of the Forum a request had been made for Andrew Mackintosh of Natural England to attend this meeting to discuss their work, plans, funding, access issues and any other common areas of interest. Andrew Mackintosh attended the meeting and provided a detailed presentation in relation to the following:

- Introduction – Outcome 2: Enjoyment of the Natural Environment: More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often
  - Natural England was committed to increasing the number, diversity and frequency of people who enjoy the natural environment
  - to achieve this, Natural England would work with farmers, land managers and public authorities to maintain and develop access and to assist them to successfully manage and benefit from increased public access to the natural environment.

- Natural England was DEFRA's expert adviser on access and recreation
- Background
- Access and recreation work areas
  - Open Access
  - Coastal Access
  - Discovering Lost Ways
  - Rights of Way
  - National Trails
  - Agri-environmental Access
- Integrated Access (including SSSI Diversion Orders)
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Communities Team Work on Access
  - Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
  - Access to Nature
- Access Policy Work – Future Work Areas
  - Access and Recreation Policy Review
  - Principles for Recreation Policy
  - Policy positions
  - Budget situation – “Hard choices”
- Regional Access Work
  - Access and Recreation Team
  - Regional Delivery Framework 2008/09
  - Assessment of regional resources
  - National Programme Access
  - Integrated Access
  - Profile

A paper providing detailed comments in relation to the above issues was circulated at the meeting.

Particular concerns were raised at the meeting regarding the 5% cut in Natural England's budget from DEFRA and another 5% which was proposed, and particularly the effect that these cuts would have on the work to be carried out by Natural England.

Andrew mentioned that the Team would welcome feedback and advice from regional partners to shape regional delivery and would aim to provide a high quality access provision and advice.

**IT WAS AGREED** that any comments from members of the Forum be e-mailed to Rachel Finney who will encompass these into a letter to Natural England.

**174 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2007**

**IT WAS AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007 be approved as a correct record with the following amendment:-

Minute Number 171 (Update on Deer Hill) – Delete the words 'but they were unwilling' and replace with the words 'and they were willing'.

**175 MATTERS ARISING**

In relation to Minute Number 170 (Consultation on the proposed Wharfedale Trail) it was noted that the comments of the Forum from the last meeting had been passed on, and a response was awaited.

In relation to Minute Number 169 (Response to LAF to "Discovering Lost Ways" E-bulletin) the comments of the Forum had been passed on to Natural England and a response was awaited.

**IT WAS AGREED** that the thanks of the Forum be passed on to former members of the Forum who had completed their terms of office.

**176 CO-ORDINATION OF LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS' VIEWS**

Discussions took place as to whether Local Access Forums should be feeding into a national forum. The view was expressed that there should be a national access forum website which should contain a section for each Local Access Forum. The website should include national topics and contain a facility to provide comments. It should highlight the activities of Local Access Forums. It was considered that Natural England could assist in this process. A view was expressed that local authorities would notify this Forum of problems rather than the Forum having to identify such problems. Discussions took place as to whether this Forum should be discussing problems in particular areas, such as Deer Hill. It was generally considered that the Forum should involve itself in such issues providing these were the larger issues and not, for example, small planning applications. In this respect it was noted that the Forum had not been consulted on the situation at Rishworth Moor.

**IT WAS AGREED** that

- (a) David Nortcliffe be requested to express his views to the next meeting on this issue; and
- (b) the Forum be provided with information at the next meeting on the position relating to Rishworth Moor.

**177 ACCESS MANAGEMENT GRANT SCHEME**

The Forum was provided with a letter from the Ramblers' Association advising that the Access Management Grant Scheme (AMGS), which provided funding to local authorities to support the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, had been vital to the successful introduction of the new rights of access in England. The letter stated that the AMGS was scheduled to end in March 2008, and the Ramblers' Association believed strongly that funding was needed to ensure the continued smooth operation of the new rights, to maximise the benefits of the legislation for the public and to meet the management needs of landowners and nature conservation.

**IT WAS AGREED** that a letter be sent to Sir Martin Doughty, the Chairman of Natural England, expressing this Forum's support for the Access Management Grant Scheme and calling for a clear and immediate commitment to its extension, as long as it is not at the expense of other forms of access.

**178 UPDATE ON DEER HILL**

The Forum was provided with a copy of a letter from the Rifle and Pistol Club to Mr Malkin regarding the issue of climbers using the Shooters Nab rock face. The issue had been discussed at the Club's committee meeting and the Committee members were not in favour of allowing climbing. The letter indicated that the Club would take action against anyone observed to be trespassing on the land. As requested at the last meeting, copies of plans were also submitted.

Mr Malkin advised that the Club would not negotiate anything until the issue of the rights of way was resolved. The Club wanted to delete the rights of way from the Definitive Map, and a response from DEFRA was awaited. Kirklees Council could do no more until a determination was received from the Planning Inspectorate. Kirklees Council considered that it was not a priority to deal with this issue. Concerns were raised at the meeting, particularly that the Club was preventing anyone using a large area of moor land except for their members. The Club were also non-compliant in many factors.

**IT WAS AGREED** that

- (a) a letter be sent to Kirklees Council requesting that steps, including appropriate enforcement action, be taken to remove the obstruction;
- (b) a letter be sent to Natural England pointing out that the new legislation appears to have resulted in a reduction of access on this site, and that restrictions approved seem to be unnecessarily stringent and that in cases such as this there should be more opportunity for public involvement in the decision process; and

(c) a letter be sent to Peak Park expressing concerns about the lack of stiles across the fence around the new access land recently exchanged between the shooting club and the access land.

(copies of the draft letters regarding the above to be sent to members of the Forum).

**179 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS - UPDATE**

Calderdale Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan was now completed and was available on the Council's website. Bradford were carrying on implementing the Action Plan and in April would be looking at other issues which came out of it. The Plan would be put on the Council's website. A draft of the Kirklees Improvement Plan should be available by the end of February.

The view was expressed that the issue of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans should be kept on the agenda as a standing item, and implementation could be reviewed perhaps twice a year. A review of progress on the Bradford Rights of Way Improvement Plan could take place at the next meeting.

**180 OTHER LOCAL ACCESS PROJECTS**

Discussions took place on the funding of bridges, and it was noted that a number of projects were coming along in Bradford. There was also a project at Cragg Vale in Calderdale, although this was being delayed by technical difficulties on site. Two other projects were being looked at in Calderdale. Discussions took place on the recent floods and the damage caused to the Transpennine Trail and other routes. It would be helpful if local authorities could provide advice in relation to footpaths which had suffered flooding as well as other causes which resulted in their closure.

**181 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

**IT WAS AGREED** that meetings of the Forum take place every three months, although a meeting could be arranged earlier if it is considered appropriate, for example, if major issues arise.

**182 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**IT WAS AGREED** that the next meeting take place in approximately three months. Rachel Finney be requested to e-mail members regarding convenient dates.