

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**ACCESS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at the Town Hall, Grassington on Thursday, 25 January 2007.

Present:

W Fenten (in the Chair), TRN Harrison-Topham, D Heather, KJ Lancaster, JJ Pearlman and Dr KM Petyt.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK
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1/07

MINUTES**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2006, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2/07

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following public question was asked by Mr Ken Miller:

*“As the national park Authority you have responsibility for the upkeep and repair of Public footpaths and bridleways, along with the associated gates and stiles. It is understood that the general maintenance and repair of these barriers is shared between landowners and the National park and is usually carried out to a good standard. However it has become clear that in some instances the relevant work nowhere near meets the current British standard for gaps, gates and stiles. This in turn can have a knock on effect to the enjoyment of the general public when using the parks footpaths and bridleways.
The Yorkshire Dales have many gates and stiles with designs unique to this area and of course should be preserved and maintained for future generations to come.
I would like to ask the Access Committee to officially adopt the broad principals of British Standard 5709-2006 and use the contents as good working practice on future new build and maintenance projects”.*

The Chairman responded as follows:

“Thank you for your question.

The National Park Authority is delegated highway authority for public rights of way within the National Park. Responsibility for this work is delegated to the Authority by agreement with its constituent Highway Authorities.

Direct responsibility for the maintenance and provision of stiles and gates lies with the relevant landowner. In the majority of cases the Authority undertakes this work on behalf of the landowners.

In carrying out this work the Authority follows the principles of British Standard 5709-2006. Its approach is outlined both in the Integrated Access Strategy 2005 but more specifically in the Public Rights of Way Maintenance Plan 2006 to 2011, which states that:

'Where repair and replacement of infrastructure is required, any work should be subject to the following considerations:

- Infrastructure should be suitable to the route's status and should be of a standard necessary for them to be used without undue inconvenience.*
- Construction should be of a high standard and appropriate to the route's use. Although there is no statutory design to which infrastructure must comply, suggested designs are provided by publications such as 'British Standard – Gaps, gates and stiles' or the 'Pennine Bridleway Design Guide'.*
- Infrastructure should be appropriate to its location: matching where possible the local design, material and methods of construction. All works should safeguard the historical, scenic and environmental value of the National Park.*
- Wherever an existing piece of infrastructure is being maintained, every opportunity to replace difficult barriers with more accessible features will be considered. For example: where a ladder stile needs replacing could it be replaced with a gap or gate? The less remote a route the more stringently this criteria for repairs should be applied.'*

All relevant staff have been issued with this guidance together with details of the British Standard Gates, Gaps and Stiles specifications which are incorporated into their works and when giving advice on specifications for others.

It is considered that this flexible approach is more effective in meeting the Authority's objectives than a formal adoption of the British Standard.

I hope this addresses your concerns but if you would like to discuss specific issues further the Ranger Services Manager, Alan Hulme, would be more than happy to meet with you."

3/07

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from TRN Harrison-Topham.

4/07

DECLARATIONS OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

JJ Pearlman declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Modification Orders with regard generally to the interpretation of legislation.

5/07

DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

JJ Pearlman stated that he had been lobbied on Low Blean, Raydale, but had not responded, and Dr KM Petyt stated that he had been lobbied on the diversion at Semer Water.

6/07

DEFINITIVE MAP TEAM - QUARTERLY REPORT

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Definitive Map Officer.

A member asked whether, if an application for a 'BOAT' was unsuccessful, it would automatically become a restricted byway? The Definitive Map Officer stated that that might be the situation, but if the application was on use, a separate application would be required. Members were, however, assured that, although interpretation of the legislation was complex, each case would be examined on its merits.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to member and officer comments being taken into account, the report be noted.

7/06

YORKSHIRE DALES GREEN LANES ADVISORY GROUP

CONSIDERED – the report of the Access Officer Projects.

A member suggested that it might be helpful if minutes from the Group were attached to future reports for members' information as they would record amongst other matters the membership of the Group.

Some members expressed an interest in joining officers when assessments of routes were being carried out.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to members' comments being taken into account, the report be noted.

8/06

TRANSFORMING OUTDOOR YORKSHIRE STRATEGY

CONSIDERED – the report of the Access and Recreation Manager.

The concerns outlined in the report were endorsed by members, although they supported the Authority's involvement, in order to be able to exert appropriate influence.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the contents of the report of the Access and Recreation Manager be noted and the views put forward endorsed;
- (b) Officers continued involvement in the North Yorkshire Cultural Partnership Outdoor Adventure Working Group be supported, to ensure that implementation of the Strategy considers fully National Park purposes.

9/06

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS CUMBRIA

CONSIDERED – the report of the Access and Recreation Manager.

A member hoped that the aim to 'provide a seamless and integrated delivery of high quality, consistent countryside access services throughout Cumbria' would not result in the standards of service in the Yorkshire Dales being reduced.

It was also mentioned that a report on the same subject had been received at the Dales Access Forum with 'less than enthusiasm'.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the Access and Recreation Manager's report be noted and the views put forward within the report be endorsed as the Authority's response to Cumbria County Council.

10/06

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PARK MANAGEMENT

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Park Management.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) with regard to the Lune Valley Cycle Route, the possible development of the route be supported in accordance with the principles outlined in the report of the Head of Park Management.

11/06

YORKSHIRE DALES ACCESS FORUM

CONSIDERED – the draft minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum held on 8 January 2007

RESOLVED –

That the draft minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum held on 8 January 2007 be noted.

12/06

JERRY PEARLMAN

Members requested that their appreciation be recorded for the contribution that Jerry Pearlman had made towards the work of the Committee and the Authority during his membership of the Authority which would be ending on 31 March.