

NORTH PENNINES NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

ACCESS and RECREATION WORKING GROUP

&

PENNINE NATIONAL TRAILS NORTHERN WORKING GROUP

MINUTES

1 October 2024.
Rookhope Village Hall

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies.

Attendees	Apologies
Mike Ogden - Durham County Council (Chair)	David Benson – Westmorland and Furness Council
Simon Wilson - North Pennines National Landscape	Susan Gray – Scottish Borders Council
Ted Liddle – Northumberland Joint Local Access Forum	Sarah Hudspeth – North Pennines National Landscape
Shane Harris – North Pennines National Landscape	Molly Jones – North Pennines National Landscape
Judith Mashiter – North Pennines National Landscape Partnership	Jack Ravenscroft – North Pennines National Landscape
Duncan Lovatt – Northumberland County Council	Ron Lyon – Disabled Ramblers
David Gibson – Cumberland Council	Sara Schultz – Natural England
Mike Murden – Durham County Council	Jim Welch – County Durham Local Access Forum
Hannah Kay – Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	Jo McAllister - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Reuben Horsley – North Pennines National Landscape	Charlie Shepherd - Ramblers
	Hazel Wainwright - Westmorland and Furness Council

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters arising

Discussed open access sign replacement. Simon mentioned the 2 PIPs to be replaced in Weardale. Consider survey of PIPs and a prioritised plan.

Action SW to consider survey.

Access for All Funding - Simon advised the group that there is still money in the pot. Discussed the Derwent Reservoir Way and lack of cycle access to Pow Hill. There was a general discussion about ideas for spend.

Action ideas to SW.

Fellfoot Forward LPS. In advance of the meeting Charlie mentioned an issue with the condition of a slow trail.

Action SW to check.

Mike reported that the accessible car parking space at Long Meg has an issue. While on a recent visit, the cows in the field damaged his car.

Action Mike to contact Highways Hotline. SW to discuss with Andy Lees.

4. Roof of England Walk – Shane Harris

SRH updated the group on progress.

We've been developing this new multi-day walking route since 2021. It's 303km (188 miles) long – split down into 14 legs. It will, eventually, touch on all corners of the North Pennines National Landscape & UNESCO Global Geopark.

A funding application (bringing together work under 4 headings: route infrastructure, waymarking, marketing and communications; and route investigations) was submitted to the North Pennines Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme. It was considered at the 29 May Panel. It was deferred, pending submission of a project communication plan.

We expanded and submitted a communication plan following the May Panel and after some toing and froing/clarification the project was approved at the July Panel – with a project value of £55K.

The route:

The route we took to the FiPL Panel is essentially the 'Preferred Route' minus the Cumberland. We're not able to progress the preferred route through Cumberland without addressing some challenging drainage/surfacing works and carrying out six road safety audits. So the short-term solution is to go ahead with a short cut from Slaggyford – following the Pennine Way, along the South Tyne Valley, to join up with the onward route to Haltwhistle. This means that the route is 303km long – with 74.5km of this not on existing promoted routes and hence needing waymarking. The project spend is split down into 4 sections:

Route infrastructure:

- Two sections of steps/revetment on the route in Westmorland & Furness

Waymarking:

- Design and manufacture a Roof of England Waymark.
- Contract to gain consent and waymark the 74.5km of route which is not on an existing promoted route.

Marketing and communications:

- New photography, drone footage and videography.
- Production of short video.
- Design of map asset and illustrations.
- New web presence as part of www.northpennines.org.uk
- Business development toolkit.

Route investigations

- Six road safety audits on road section on the Cumberland Loop.

Pending successful completion of the work this will enable us to make the new route available from Spring/early Summer 2025 – probably initially as a soft launch.

Ted was thanked for waymark ideas. SW noted that the route will be in continual development for some time. MO asked what happens with the sections of route where permission for waymarking has not been given? SH to review the responses to date and consider an approach where those issues have arisen.

Ted stated that there has been good progress and mentioned an agreement with a landowner on the Sandstone Way creating a permissive alternative to follow. Also users do not really draw conclusions and just want something clear to follow.

Hannah mentioned the accessibility audit on the Wainwrights Coast to Coast that circular writing can be problematic and less easy to read, DG also mentioned the shape of arrows on signs considered in the same audit.

The group discussed waymark options.

5. National Trails update – Hannah Kay

Hannah updated the group on the Pennine National Trails Partnership. Had £60k for the Northern section of the Pennine Way this year including Pennine Way People Programme. Had survey reports for the Dryburn Bridge. Shitlington Footbridge in Northumberland done, lanes in Westmorland and other maintenance. Survey Pennine Way next year (Pennine Bridleway this year). Looking at best options for people counters and user monitoring. There is a suggestion that Natural England are ending their counter contract after 2025/26.

The 60th anniversary preparations are going well. Hannah's main role is to develop the events and celebration. Main strands are the exhibition 'A Trail of Inspiration' concentrating on people who have been inspired by the trail. Starts in Hawes where the main launch will be in April. Still to arrange a more southerly venue, then to Bowlees for 2 months, then to the Sill in September and October. It will be a flexible exhibition. There will be a centrepiece collage of images. Encouraging partners to run events and activities that can be listed on a calendar on the website. Ted mentioned that it will also be the 10th anniversary of the Sandstone Way and there will be a ride. SH noted the launch of Roof of England Walk in the same year. DG mentioned it is worth contacting David Pitt.

Action SW to send David Pitt contact details to Hannah. Partners to consider events and activities to add to the calendar.

6. Access for All update – Simon Wilson

SW updated the group on progress to date with the list of works to be included (path surfacing, seating, accessible web content, children activity resources). DG suggested that the Cumberland Comms team might be able to promote the Talkin Trammer next year. South Tyne Trail was discussed as an option. DG working on a Trammer user gate catch with partners and suppliers.

Action. All to consider options for works. Liaise with SW.

7. Governance Review

SW updated members on the progress of Partnership Governance Review. Also mentioned the target outcomes framework requirement in the new Management Plan. DG mentioned QGIS being a useful tool in monitoring. Ted mentioned the need to consider climate issues, SW advise that there is a requirement to produce a Climate Adaptation Plan as part of the Management Plan renewal process. The group discussed the process of monitoring and planning.

8. Project and scheme updates

North Pennines National Landscape Team

SW updated the group on TeesSwale Programme and progress on Weardale Way improvements. Ted mentioned success of a new access post in Northumberland. MO mentioned the Land of Lead and Silver associated work that will be happening soon.

Cumberland

More numbers now on the LAF (still based on the old Cumbria boundaries). Things moving on at pace and very busy.

Northumberland

Duncan reported that the Baybridge/Slaley restrictions have been extended. Has been working with Hexham Ramblers in Allendale that has been very successful. Ted updated the group on continuing MPV illegal use and problems in Slaley Forest.

Durham County Council

Maintenance budget has been suspended for the final part of the financial year. Molly has been in and updated CAMS record with TeesSwale funded changes.

Other

Judith M advised that there is continued work on maintaining rights of way around Mid Teesdale. Also discussing permissive paths with Raby Estate around Snaisgill. The constant issues of parking are problematic in Middleton-in-Teesdale. Ted mentioned the success of the Corbridge carparking scheme.

Ted mentioned the progress to use disused railway tracks as greenways in Northumberland, including a new 2km section at Alnwick and conversation about Hexham to Kielder line. The JLAF remains a strong advocate for strategic access issues. Also mentioned the Reiver Trails network in Kielder Forest, which is a gravel bike network of 10 routes based on a feasibility study that Ted carried out. It has now been implemented with funding for phase 1 from Northumberland County Council. The Reiver brand has a wider application to the geographic area. The new Hamsterley Forest potential development was discussed.

9. AOB

Ted raised the issue of the Tindale Bridge on the Lord Carlisle Railway route, which is next to but not on the right of way. It was funded by Sustrans. The boarding has collapsed because there has been no maintenance due to lack of clarity on responsibility (not the local authority's job). Ted has costed a bridge at approximately £15k and suggests an approach to get the replacement done. It does need addressing, though there is a question over the landowner's role. Mentioned for information.

MO is reviewing his workload and asked the group members to consider volunteering to take over as Chair if he needs to step down.

10. Date, time, and venue of next meeting

Next meeting on Teams probably Tuesday 4th February.