

Minutes of a Dales Way Association Committee Meeting.

This Meeting took place on **Sunday 21st March 1999** at 1.30 pm in Blenheim Lodge Hotel, Bowness on Windermere.

Present:- Martin Collison, Douglas Cossar, Pat Hickman, Joan & Russell Jamieson, Frank Sanderson, David Smith, Colin Speakman. The Meeting was chaired by Colin Speakman.

1. **Apologies** from Ken & Margaret Staines.
2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting held on 19th September were agreed to be a true record with the following three amendments:-
 - a. Douglas Cossar was present at the meeting.
 - b. Mention was not made that Martin Collison had agreed to take on the work towards installation of an information board at Ilkley Old Bridge.
 - c. Douglas Cossar had raised the possibility of a Festival of Walks on the Dales Way in 2000.
3. **Arisings from the Minutes.** The Internet site run by *Spotlight Marketing & Promotions* was now up and running and it was known that a fair number of accommodation providers along the Dales Way had signed up for this service. The site has only been going a relatively short time and seems to be reasonably successful with 14,752 people visiting it at the time of last information received. It was felt that the operator, who was a Member, should make some additional contribution to the Association or possibly offer a discount to Association Members. (This latter is impractical as, basically, **all** those offering accommodation along the Dales Way are Members).

Otherwise other matters arising are covered below.

4. **Officers Reports.**

Sales

Margaret Staines had reported (by phone) that sales since the last meeting had been slow. Nevertheless cheques almost to the value of £100 had been received during the period.

Footpath.

Pat Hickman (and others) reported on a number of matters as follows:-

The misleading signs near Lobwood House had now been corrected and the route was now very comprehensively signed at this point.

Since the last meeting, David Smith had visited the wood above Cam Houses to find out what was happening and had found the route still blocked and unusable there. Following his report to Pat Hickman she had corresponded with the Park Authority (Steve Hastie, Area Ranger Southern Region) and had a very helpful response. It appeared that a new entrance had been made into the forestry, but for some reason this was some 20m above the old stile where the route hits the forest. This is unsigned and was consequently not seen by David Smith. Other problems also remained. Clearly the situation is not yet resolved and Steve Hastie had offered to attend a site meeting there. Pat Hickman is to arrange for this to happen reasonably shortly.

Russell and Joan Jamieson reported that the building work on the new flats at Cowan Head was now at last nearly completed and that the route past should soon be reinstated.

The new length of path avoiding road walking near Cleabarrow was now fully in place. The total cost had been between £1,400 & 1,500 - so our contribution of £150 was pretty near the intended 10%.

There was no more news about the length of road walking from the Briggflatts direction towards the Lune. Following reorganisation, Rae Lonsdale would no longer be involved in this.

In the following discussion a number of other places where the route might be improved were mentioned and it was suggested that a "Wish List" should be compiled so that we could initiate action on them (if necessary with the offer of a financial contribution).

As a starter this list could include the following:-

Footbridge on Ilkley to Addingham section.

Improved sign posting on leaving Grassington.

New off road route to minimise road walking below Hubberholme.

New off road route to avoid Beckermonds to Oughtershaw road walking.

Alternative route from Cam Houses to Newby Head road junction. (Down Jam Sike - this would avoid the next two items).

Resolve Cam Houses forestry problem.

Alternative line along lower right of way from Winshaw (W side of B6255 to N of Gearstones).

Alternative to lengthy road walking down into head of Dentdale. This is already available but the official route really has to follow the road in order to access much needed accommodation at that point.

Avoidance of road walking on A683 to W of Sedbergh.

Following the above Frank Sanderson reported on the position with the vandalised Dales Way Seat upstream from Bowston. It was suggested that Colin Speakman have a word with Gerry Pearlman of the Ramblers' to get advice. Despite the desire for justice, it was quite clear that high legal costs would be involved in seeking redress for the damage done and that this could not be justified. Colin to liaise with Frank as necessary. Overall it was hoped that friendly contact could be made with the new owner and, eventually, the seat reconstructed. It was established that the Association had no financial liability resulting from the destruction of the seat.

Financial.

David Smith reported Membership to be now 419 with new Members appreciably greater than those not rejoining in the year to date. (48 new Members so far in 1999) 105 Members provided accommodation. 114 Members now paid subscriptions by Bank Standing Order.

There was little to report on the financial side which now covers the majority of the financial year. The total amount in the two Bank accounts was £5,173.43 and the cash flow for the year was a positive £2,000 (approx). There was no foreseeable need to increase the overall worth and David Smith suggested that we had a duty to the membership to devote roughly the positive cash flow to improvements to the Dales Way. (Ref. Wish List above). It is hoped that the accounts will be checked at the same time as those of the Yorkshire Dales Society already arranged for mid April.

5. **Interpretative Board by Ilkley Old Bridge.** Martin Collison had now made some enquiries (with Rick Hill of Bradford Council) regarding this. Unfortunately the estimated cost had risen to £2,000. Sources of funding now to be investigated - Countryside Commission, Ilkley Parish Council. Thought to be given to possibility of producing a number of boards for erection at villages along the route and at Bowness. The cost each would then be significantly reduced.

Design to be considered. Pictorial representation of the route and details of Dales Way Association. After discussion it was agreed that, if appropriate, David Smith's address could be included as contact. This would be information that could vary in time - but neither the board nor David Smith would last for ever!

6. **1999 Handbook.** Douglas Cossar was congratulated on this which gets better each year. The newly introduced adverts for Service Providers was a success and had raised £160 to cover Ramblers' costs. It was felt that we might well extend this in future to include any accommodation providers that wanted greater prominence to their entry. Details to be discussed in the Autumn. It was felt that charges should not just cover estimated costs, but should also bring in some extra income. This should cover increased postal costs which would be incurred by the Association.

7. **Any Other Business.**

Joan Clack of Harrogate Ramblers' hoped to introduce a badge for the Harrogate Link. We are in agreement with the use of our logo for this but will have to insist on correct wording to describe it as a Link to the Dales Way.

An approach had been made to the Association suggesting that we should take out some form of Public Liability Insurance. Likely premium about £80 p.a. It was agreed that as we did not lead walks as an Association, there should not be any possibility of a risk needing this cover. No action.

Following reorganisation of the Dales National Park, David Smith had written to Jon Avison (Head of Park Management). The response had been very helpful and suggested that we should continue to work with the Rangers 'on the ground' but contacting him (or Sue Hilder) for any matters regarding overall policy. David Smith to let Pat Hickman know new names of Area Rangers.

A letter had been received from Member, Bern Hellier who lives in Whitehaven. After walking the Dales Way he had extended the walk for two days to connect with his home and gave brief details of this. He suggested that this might be publicised as an extension. David Smith proposed to detail this in the Spring Newsletter probably together with his own extensions to Coniston. This would be for interest only as it did not seem practicable to introduce semi official routes which could be to any number of destinations in the Lakes.

Our Members, the Ward family from the USA had done the Dales Way in the past and whilst visiting this country again this year, hoped to join us at the AGM.

A letter had been received from Scottish Woodlands Ltd who were seeking permission to plant trees along the south bank of the Wharfe upstream of the Sports complex near the start of the Dales Way. This would be of native broad leaved trees with open spaces and free access. This would have no effect on the Dales Way itself and appeared to be a suitable - even desirable - development. We to respond with no objections to the scheme.

8. **Date & Place for next meeting which is the 1999 AGM.**

This is now arranged to be at Linton on **Sunday, 9th May**. Arrangements as in the past with morning walk at 10.30 starting by Fountaine Inn and the meeting starting at 1.30. Notice/agenda to be included in/with Spring Newsletter.

This concluded the business of the meeting. Thanks were expressed to the hospitality provided by Frank Sanderson at Blenheim Lodge.

David Smith