

**MINUTES OF THE DALES WAY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**The meeting took place at 2.00pm on Sunday 18 November 2007**

**1 Present:** D. Cossar, W.K. Griffiths, A. McManus, C. Musson, D. Smith, C. Speakman, R. Thornton.

**2 Apologies:** M. Buckley, P. Robertshaw, F. Sanderson.

**3 Minutes of the last meeting** on 1 October 2007 were accepted subject to two corrections:

5 (Addingham Cycle Route) "...fierce opposition...statement that the Dales Way would be damaged."

7 (Any other Business) "The information board at Shipley Glen...The Bradford City Council would be approached..."

**4 Matters Arising:**

*Harrogate-Bolton Abbey Link:* C. Speakman undertook to organize a meeting with the Nidderdale Ramblers by this December. *Jan*

*Addingham cycle Route:* The Ilkley Gazette had published a letter from D. Smith setting out clearly the support of the Association in favour of the proposed cycle route.

*Ilkley Display Board:* D. Smith now has a new display board but will seek help from the YDNPA for the best way to protect it from UV light.

*Shipley Glen Display Board:* A. Mc Manus reported that the display board there had been badly vandalized and that its location made it vulnerable to further damage. A new, relocated board was needed and he would consult with the Bradford City Council for their support.

*Meeting with the YDNPA on 9 Oct:* (A full copy of the minutes was circulated)

A. McManus highlighted the following points:

The user survey of 2007 was much appreciated by the Authority though it was not proposed to conduct a similar one in 2008.

A postal survey in 2007 was not conducted but the Authority will provide 'FREEPOST' envelopes for the 2008 survey. (See item 7)

There was one location where signage was to be examined.

Finance to offset the cost of providing UV protection for display boards would be sought from the Sustainable Development Fund of the Authority.

Cam Forest. The Authority would provide a new stile. A. McManus also reported that the felling of trees in the forest had not obscured the path.

Sedbergh: The possibility of providing some route for off road walking on the DW near the town would be examined.

*Bank Lane (Grassington):* The local parish council was considering the desirable re-routing of the DW past the farm.

**5 Officers Reports:**

**Membership and Finance and Sales:** It was reported that the membership was now 470.

The current account was £1200 in credit. It was also reported that in addition to an annual income of ~£1200 from membership subscriptions a further ~£500 might be expected from donations. The forthcoming newsletter would highlight the final sale of souvenirs and that by January 2008 it was expected that any remaining stock could be

given to charity. Badges, certificates, the Handbook and Guide would continue to be available.

**Web Site:** The number of hits averaged at ~ 2500 per month with a ~ 3500 in the height of the summer.

#### **6 The future of the Dales Way Association.**

The document prepared by the Secretary on the outcome on this subject at the October meeting was generally welcomed. Since that meeting, the Officer responsible for Membership and Finance had affirmed that contrary to earlier impressions, he was in fact prepared to continue with his present duties for the next three years or so if there were no offers of any new help. He did so in the light of his strongly held belief that the membership and the financial well being of the Association were very important for the Association's future. These views were clearly expressed to the Committee and were welcomed by the Chairman who was therefore of the view that the Association could continue in its established manner for the immediate future. The Chairman felt too that a membership validated the role of the Association in its interactions with public bodies and that if circumstances changed he believed that 'Plan B', evolved at the Oct committee meeting could be brought into effect.

In the ensuing discussion, there was strong body of opinion that there was no 'Plan B' as such but only outlines of a possible course of action should there be an emergency caused by a vacant officer position occurring or of the realization that there was a need to change the structure of the organization to better carry out its objectives. The possibility of not having a membership should be seen in this context. There were several who also felt that in the context of the earlier committee discussion, the financial position of a reformulated association could be quite adequate for a new *modus operandi*. It was also pointed out that some income could come from investing some of the reserves in a high interest account and possibly from accommodation providers paying for inclusion in a web based handbook. A view was expressed that there was a need for substantial reserves and an annual income to provide for unforeseen emergencies such as the building of a new bridge but this was not universally accepted.

*A practical suggestion* was that officers should each produce a dossier detailing their responsibilities. These could then be used in discussion with any potentially new officer and could be used to help lighten the workload of any of the present officers.

*Another possibility* mooted was that more local members of the Association might be attracted to the AGM if greater publicity were given the attractive walk before the meeting.

**It was decided** to include an item in the calling papers for the 2008 AGM an item on the discussion in the Committee about the future of the Association.

The discussion moved on to the **question of the handbook**. The October committee meeting had agreed that it should be produced in its present form for 2008 and that its contents should also be put on a website. That committee meeting also considered the possibility that future editions of the handbook would be available only on the website

where it could be available to a wider readership and would be easily be updated on a more timely basis.

The present editor outlined her concern at the amount of work involved in producing a new handbook, work that did not simply consist of the typing in new text and corrections but also for example, contacting previous accommodation providers for their new entries, and checking that facilities such as local post officers and cash points were still available. She also reminded the Committee that she had been a 'last moment' volunteer for the post as no other person was available and that she had taken on the work without knowing how onerous it was.

The Web Officer said that he could and did update information on the present website which consisted largely of handbook information. However long-term difficulties in dealing with QDK, the creators and managers of the site, made him favour a new website under the sole control of the Association. ~~November 22, 2007~~ Technically this was not a difficult nor expensive task and it would save the Association ~£100pa in management fees. *delete*

**It was decided that** the Web Officer should explore further the question of creating a new website for the Association which could among other items include the material currently in the handbook and that this new web site would, crucially be under the direct control of designated officers.

The question of the copyright of the handbook was discussed along with the implications of the Data Protection Act in putting information on the Web.

**It was agreed** that these all these issues affecting the future of the handbook would be discussed at the next committee meeting when further information should be available.

#### **7 Postal Questionnaire for users of the Dales Way.**

**It was agreed** that accommodation providers from Dent to Sedbergh would be asked to give their guests who were walking the Dales Way a questionnaire and FREEPOST envelope. The questionnaire would be that used in earlier DW surveys. DC would obtain 500 FREEVIEW envelopes from the YDNPA. DS would do the initial distribution of the questionnaires (of about 20) per address in February and DC would see if more were needed part way through the survey period that would be from March to the end of September 2008. *pos*

No decision was reached on offering an incentive for the completion and return of the questionnaire.

**8 Any Other Business:** It was agreed that  
**the next Committee meeting would be on**  
**Saturday March 1 2008 at 2.00pm**  
**in Dalegarth.**

David Smith was thanked for his hospitality. The meeting finished at 16.50.

22/11/2007

*Ch. Spink*  
*11/3/08.*