

Minutes of the Committee Meeting
1 Oct 2007

Present: D. Cossar, WK Griffiths, A McMannus, D Smith, C Speakman R Thornton,
P. Robertshaw.

Apologies: C Musson, F Sanderson.

1 Matters Arising:

The draft minutes of the AGM were reviewed.

Harrogate- Bolton Abbey Link: There had been no agreement with the Bolton Abbey Estate about re-routing the link. C. Speakman will seek the views of the Nidderdale ranger. The Handbook will need a note drawing attention to the problems with the existing route.

Dales Way Seat in Ilkey: This is now in position and a "Grand Opening" had taken place On 12 July 2007 at which a civic dignitary had presided. A report had appeared in the Ilkley Gazette.

2 The Future of the Dales Way Association:

(See appended notes for a full account)

The principle business of the meeting was a discussion on the future direction of the Association. The general feeling was that there continued to be a useful role for the an organization that would help to promote and preserve the integrity of the Dales Way.

Since the inception of the Association, the advent of the Internet and the web had produced a marked change in the availability of information about the Dales Way and the annual surveys showed that only a minority of walkers now used the Handbook. It was felt that a web based site offered a better platform for information than a printed handbook.

Although membership numbers had remained fairly constant (~450), there was a dearth of new members on the committee to leaven the load of those who had been involved with the Association from its beginning.

There was a significant work load in providing a service for the members but it was recognized that the members did provide an annual income which had contributed to the total assets of the committee, now at ~£10,000.

There were very few requests for souvenirs and the stock was small

Recognising the limited manpower of the committee and that the Association had reserves of the order of £10,000, the overwhelming opinion of those present was that the prime objectives of the Association could be met better without a membership.

The Committee therefore decided that our Web Master would be consulted to see if it were possible to construct a new web site for the Association on which the traditional Handbook information could be published and that information could be updated directly by the appropriate member of the Committee without the need of involving an IT company.

It was also agreed that a slimmer handbook for 2008 would appear in its traditional printed form but that the transport details would be reduced to listing the web sites where the detailed timetables could be found.

It was also agreed that thought needed to be given to the new form the 'Association' should take if these changes were to be agreed at the next AGM and that detailed proposals would be considered at the next committee meeting.

In the meantime the advice would be sought from our Web Master (Chris Musson) as to how a new web site could be created and used without the intermediary of a commercial company and to advise also on how the present contract for the maintenance of current site could be terminated.

3 User Survey (2007):

This had been carried out at Sedbergh, which had proved to be a much better location than Hubberholme. The YDNPA and its volunteers had done much of the work but inadequate information had been sent to Committee members before hand.

It was noted that:

The number of Dales Way walkers was slightly greater this year.
Many of the survey questionnaires were incompletely filled.

It was agreed that the YDNPA should be asked to conduct the survey in future years, with or without the involvement of the Association.

4 Meeting with the YDNPA to be held on Oct 9 2007:

Possible agenda items include:

The footpaths at Bolton Bridge, Grassington Bank Lane and the Harrogate Link.
A McManus will act as the coordinator for this meeting.

5 Addingham Cycle Route:

Sustrans had put forward proposals to reinstate the old railway route from Ilkley via Addingham to Bolton Bridge as a cycle route that could of course could also be used by pedestrians. Although this had found favour generally within the local community, fierce opposition by some landowners had included a public statement that the Dales Way Association were also against it. C. Speakman would attempt to publish a letter in the Ilkley Gazette saying that to the contrary the Association was very much in favour.

6 Officers Reports:

C Musson (Web Master) Circulated for information a report
D Smith (Treasurer/Membership) reported that membership was about 450. There was no problem with the finances and steps had been taken to invest ~£5000 in a high interest account. The autumn newsletter would advertise a bargain sale of the remaining souvenirs. Anything left would then be offered to charity.

7 Any Other Business:

It was reported that the South Lakes Ramblers Association had done some way marking.

Enquiries would be made to see if a sign post could be erected in Bowness.

The information Board at Ilkley was badly faded. Ken and Margaret Staines would be approached about a replacement.

The information board at Shipley Glen had been defaced, though it was still useable. The Bradford Ramblers Association be approached about this problem.

The next AGM will be held at Linton on the 27 April 2008.

The Committee Meeting on Nov 18 will now be held at D Smith's house.

C. L. Spence
18th Nov '07