

**The Dales Way Association
Committee Meeting – Saturday 16 March
12 noon for 12.30pm
in the Beckett Room, St Chad’s, Headingley**

Minutes

Present: Colin Speakman (Chair), Kath Doyle, Tony Grogan, Alex McManus, Donald Holliday, Chris Grogan (minutes).

Apologies for absence: Frank Sanderson

Minutes of the Committee Meeting of Dec 8th 2012 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising from these minutes not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda.

Update on Cam Forest. Colin reported that the planning application to build a road to extract timber from Cam Forest was passed despite objections and inadequate consultation. The scheme is supported by the YDNPA and the Forestry Commission. The 106 Agreement places restrictions on the number of wagons allowed on the route and days extractions are allowed. The footbridge at Gearstones will be removed and replaced with a new bridge. It is likely the road will be used for extracting timber from Greenfield Forest in future.

It is important that the scheme is monitored and the Section 106 conditions are adhered to. Walkers will be in a good position to report any breaches of the conditions if we can let them know via the website what those conditions are and when they start to apply. Alex suggested making the information available in Buckden also.

This makes the Watershed Alternative even more attractive. Recognition of the section around Cam Houses as a public right of way is now essential. A meeting between the owners of Cam Forest, the Yorkshire Dales Society, the DWA and the YDNPA could discuss this and the option of the new road following the low level route off Cam.

Action: Colin to liaise with YDS

Arrangements for Douglas’s walk and meal. Meet Staveley April 4th late morning and walk to Bowness where we will have a meal and a presentation to Douglas.

Action: Colin to invite Frank and ask him to book the meal.

Chris to invite Chris Musson, Nikki and Carol when details are finalised.

Kath to design “Life Membership” certificate and send to Tony.

Tony to print on nice paper.

Re-structure and Charity application update and presentation.

Chris reported that the DWA is now officially a Small Charity.

Tony gave a presentation taking members of the committee through the stages of applying for/renewing membership online and the various payment options. Tony and Chris were thanked for all the hard work that had gone into this.

Membership Report

Chris reported that we have 400 entries on our Membership database. Of these 79 are family members. 307 pay by Banker's Order already. It is hoped that some of the remaining 93 will renew once they get their letter. There have been 5 new online membership applications which were all approved by the meeting.

Website Report

Tony reported that as well as setting up the system for online membership he has also tidied up some of the other bits of the website, including the Public Transport section, which includes links to transport services and also a downloadable version of Alan's former Handbook insert.

Since setting up the web analytics in early December 2012, to the beginning of March (i.e. 3 months) we have had 1,409 people visit the website, in 1,996 separate visits. 33% are returning visitors, 66% new. 83% are from the UK, 6% from the US, with visitors also from Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Canada, France, Isle of Man and Belgium (in order of popularity). Most people come direct to the Home Page, with the Accommodation and Route Pages being the most popular other pages. Most people by far come to us via Google Search, followed by direct link (i.e. straight to our web address), followed by Bing and Yahoo searches.

The top 5 referral sites (i.e. people coming to us from a link on another website) are, in order of popularity: yorkshiredales.org.uk, ramblingman.org.uk, domehouselakedistrict.co.uk, wikipedia.org, and skyware.co.uk. Just under a quarter of the visits were by mobile device.

We have 243 "fans" to our Facebook page, which is proving quite lively at times.

Chris reported a request from Sykes Cottages to advertise on our website. It was agreed that cottages are not appropriate accommodation for Dales Way walkers but that they could join our Facebook page.

Action: Chris to let them know

Footpath Officer's Report

Alex gave his Footpath Officer's Report which is contained in the newsletter.

There is still confusion about the new fingerpost at the entrance to Thursgill Farm. The definitive route (marked by fingerpost) crosses a meadow but the farmer prefers walkers to use the farm track. Walkers also find the track more obvious. Possible solutions are a) the track could be signed as a permissive path or b) the farmer could apply to Cumbria County Council for a route diversion. The DWA would support either.

Action: Alex to talk to the Rangers at Cumbria County Council

Alex presented the updated design for the Information Boards. It was agreed they look excellent and we should replace all 10 in the next year.

Action: Alex to go ahead and make the necessary arrangements

Alex and Donald to liaise over the board at Bowness

Colin suggested we trademark the Dales Way logo.

Action: Colin to go ahead

Finance Report

Donald gave the Finance Report to Feb 1st 2013.

Income for the period is £4139.61

Expenditure is £1977.00

Donald to liaise with Martin Bairstow at Sutcliffe and Riley re the preparation of the 2012 – 13 accounts.

Any other business

There is a plaque on the new bridge over Crosdale Beck to acknowledge the contributions by the Ramblers and DWA. The YDNPA Ranger has suggested an official “opening”. Alex to fix a date with him and be DWA rep. The rest of the Committee will go if possible.

Date of next Committee Meeting

Thursday August 8th at 12 for 12.30pm at the Riverside Hotel, Ilkley

The business was concluded at 2pm and the members of the Committee then packed 400 letters and newsletters ready for posting to the members.