

Introduction

We want everyone to feel inspired to discover and enjoy what the Peak District National Park has to offer. However, we understand that sometimes it can be difficult to find out what's available and to get out and join in.

We are working together with many groups and organisations to make more access available for more people. This is our first report summarising the work we are doing to improve accessibility and show how this contributes to a more Accessible Peak District.

Finding Out

1) Education

Local Access Forum Accessibility Event



In June 2015, the Peak District Local Access Forum heard from a number of speakers about the importance and means of ensuring that access is for everyone. Contributors included Accessible Derbyshire with their aspirations for this area to be the most accessible in the UK, Fieldfare Trust explaining about how phototrails can build confidence and Experience Community and Mountain Trikes demonstrating how they are extending access.

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In 2016, further accessibility events were held by two neighbouring Local Access Forums and we will work with both Highway Authorities – Derbyshire County Council and Cheshire East - to develop and support this work through their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

Meetings of the Local Access Forum are open to the public to attend. More information can be found at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/laf

Peak District Cycle Hire Staff Training

In 2015, the Authority's cycle hire staff were trained by Accessible Derbyshire to recognise and overcome barriers to various disabilities and the benefits of accessible tourism.

There will be further training of visitor centre staff and everyone else involved in managing and engaging others about our recreational assets in early 2017.

National Park Authorities Access Meeting



In October 2016, the Peak District hosted the annual meeting of the officers involved in looking after access for the National Parks in the UK. We heard from a number of speakers on accessibility and were so inspired that we will aim so that wherever people go and whatever their level of ability they are never far from accessible access in our National Parks.

Accessible Derbyshire Awards

In October 2016, we were delighted to be named as Organisation of the Year at the inaugural Accessible Derbyshire awards ceremony. This was the culmination of Accessible Derbyshire's 'big push' to make Derbyshire and Peak District the most accessible National Park and county.

The event highlighted all the work that is being done which you can read about in this report and [here](#). More information on Accessible Derbyshire at www.accessiblederbyshire.org/



2) Information

Visit Peak District

In September 2015, a national marketing campaign by Visit England promoted the Peak District and the Authority's Parsley Hay cycle hire on the High Peak trail as a leading destination for accessible tourism. The accessible destination guide can be downloaded [here](#).

Visitor Centres

The Authority's [Visitor Centres](#) help to provide the information and advice you need to enjoy the National Park. In the New Year, our service will be further enhanced through training for staff to enhance their awareness of and understanding of accessibility needs.

As part of the refurbishment at Castleton Visitor Centre, we will be improving services and increasing space for accessibility needs. We are not able to provide a permanent changing place

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facility on site but are fortunate in that Derbyshire County Council is one of only a few Councils in Britain to have its own mobile changing place. More information on changing places at www.changing-places.org/.

Other information to help you enjoy the National Park which includes our Access for All guide is available [here](#). We also promote and report on new access and events in the Access and Rights of Way newsletter at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/arownews.

Signage



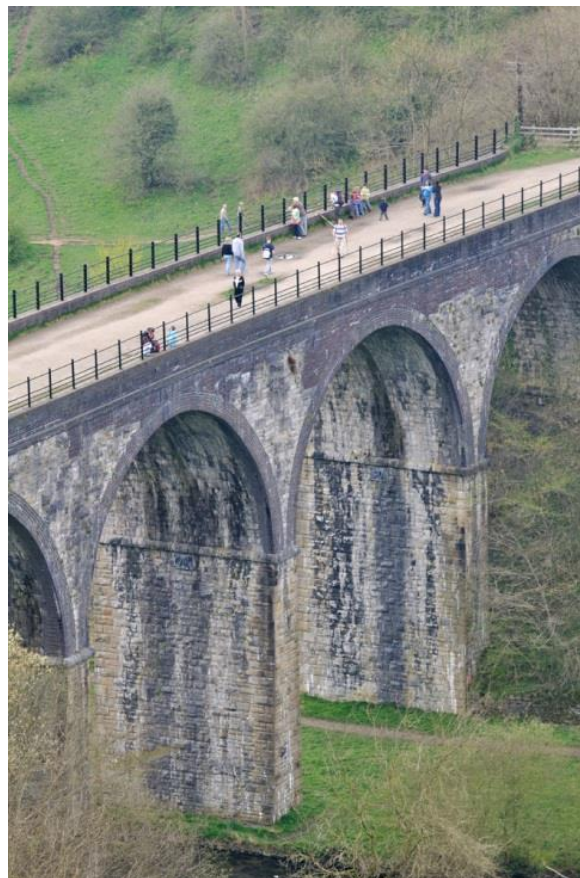
In July 2015, following the improvements to the path around Damflask reservoir, a tactile interpretation panel was erected to help those who are blind or partially sighted. The Inclusive Access Group helped design the panel which was financed by Yorkshire Water. A phototrail for this route was also developed to provide detailed accessibility information. View the route at www.phototrails.org/Damflask

Viewing

Photo trails combine photos of every potential hazard and details on surface, gradient, facilities etc so you can make sure that it's suitable for you before you go. You can search for routes at www.phototrails.org.

Other ways of finding out what might be suitable are films such as the [access peak films](#) or as provided by Experience Community on [handcycling](#) and [mountain trikes](#).

The Peak District was also the first National Park to use Googletrekker. All the [trails](#) owned by the Authority are included. Take a look [here](#) to see more.



Getting Out

1) Places

Inclusive Cycling Hubs

In 2014, Peak District Cycle Hire was selected to be part of Visit England's Access For All campaign. Parsley Hay Cycle Hire on the High Peak Trail was audited and a plan put together to bring the site up to date and suitable for most accessibility needs. This included an [accessibility statement](#), building improvements and staff training.

At the beginning of 2016 Ashbourne and Parsley Hay became part of Derbyshire Sports [inclusive cycling hubs](#). This has allowed us to meet with and share best practice with other centres supplying accessible bikes. Details of the Authority's accessible cycle hire centres can be found [here](#).



North Lees Campsite

Following hard on the heels of the improvements to the toilet block and the creation of a wet room an accessible camping pod is being erected at the Authority's campsite near the iconic Stange Edge. You can read what a difference it will make [here](#) and find out about staying [here](#). Accessible Derbyshire have provided both advice and equipment.



Trails

The Authority's traffic free trails – the Monsal, High Peak, Tissington and Thornhill Trails – extend to 34 miles in the National Park. We're currently resurfacing and widening a section of the Tissington Trail to make it more accommodating for a range of users. More information about visiting at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/trails

Inclusive routes are shown on the Access for All guide available at visitor centres or to download [here](#). There is also an inclusive path forming part of the Black Harry Trails near Stoney Middleton. More information at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/blackharry.

Works to make more routes more accessible are taking place all the time throughout the National Park. This includes works carried out by the National Park Authority, by the Highway Authorities, by National Trust, the Water Companies and many others. Accessibility audits have also been undertaken for the Trans Pennine Trail and at Yorkshire Water's reservoirs. We will be highlighting the best of the Peak District's routes in 2017 in our new Miles without Stiles handbook.

2) Events

Peak Park Health Walks

This year we are celebrating 25 years of Ranger-led health walks. The walks are between 3 to 5 miles and are graded easy or moderate. The walks take place once a month and there is a Next Steps progression scheme. Easy, guided cycle rides on the traffic free trails are also offered using our range of inclusive bikes. Transport is provided for those people who cannot get to the start of a walk. So far this year there have been 300 participants. Find out more [here](#).



Experience Community

In May 2015 the installation of a gate at Langsett reservoir opened up a world of adventure for Craig Grimes and Experience Community which you can read about [here](#). They've also been supported by Yorkshire Water to run a series of guided trips at Langsett Reservoir and to produce films of mountain triking in this area. More information at www.experiencecommunity.co.uk



Disabled Ramblers

In August 2016, the first disabled ramble along Long Causeway and to Stanage Pole and beyond took place. You can read more about it [here](#). The events are very well organised and the support we give is very much appreciated. People come from far and wide to join in on such rambles. Find out more at www.disabledramblers.co.uk



3) Support



We provide support whenever we are approached about opportunities for enjoying the National Park by offering guidance on places to visit, carrying out works, or helping with visits. You can read about one such opportunity [here](#).

4) Equipment



Cycle Hire have a range of inclusive cycles at Parsley Hay which includes the BOMA all terrain powered wheelchair bike and have just been awarded £3500 to purchase another accessible bike which will be ready for the 2017 season. There are also trampers (motorised wheelchairs) for hire at the Derwent Cycle Hire Centre. Cycle Hire also hire out electric bikes. More details at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/cyclehire

Joining In

1) Partnership Projects

Better Outside is part of the South West Peak Landscape Partnership Scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In May 2016 a workshop was held to discuss a number of possible routes for improvement. These improvements will enable more people, especially those who currently don't benefit, to connect with the landscape and heritage of the Peak District National Park in the South West Peak. For more information about the Landscape Partnership scheme and ways to get involved, visit www.southwestpeak.co.uk

A further HLF project has just been announced in the area bordering on Sheffield and the North East part of the National Park where it is hoped that we can extend the links from the city to the shores of the reservoirs and the moors through improving accessibility.

2) Sponsorship and Donations



In 2015, donations totaling £8000 supported the purchase of a BOMA all terrain powered wheelchair bike which is available at Parsley Hay Cycle Hire.

In 2016, Yorkshire Water donated £5000 for training and promotion of Miles without Stiles which is the National Park brand of accessible routes. We are very pleased to have support for this work and during 2017 we will be assessing suitable routes, carrying out improvements where we can and producing a handbook and online information to highlight that there are routes suitable for everyone. You can read more [here](#).

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Donations to the Authority's Access Fund help to open up access by improvements to surfacing and the installation of wicket gates in place of stiles. More information at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/accessfund

Donations raised from Stanage go into access improvements at the [North Lees/Stanage estate](#). Income from event donations on our trails also goes towards maintaining the trails. More information at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/donate.

3) Volunteering



Volunteers working with Peak Park Conservation Volunteers carry out path works to make paths more accessible. Volunteering can also have additional benefits as seen below:

"Our mixed learning support pupils have a large range of needs with both physical and learning difficulties and it amazed me every time that the tasks you chose for us to do met the needs of all the students and yet remained challenging for our most able students. In addition to the physical work the students used many communication and team building skills. The rangers we worked with were knowledgeable about the local area, natural history and conservation; increasing our awareness of nature and countryside management. They made whatever we did fun! As a result of our days with you the students have more confidence and many happy memories."

Our Rangers also work with groups including those with learning difficulties.

4) Conclusion

Each time we consider access, each time we take part in access, each time we support access it all adds up to a more Accessible Peak District. We will be reporting again in 2017.