

Stanage Forum Annual General Meeting 2014

Minutes of Meeting held in The Memorial Hall, Oddfellows Road, Hathersage on 1 November 2014

32 people attended the meeting.

Welcome and Introduction

Apologies were received from: Cllr Jean Monks, Adam Long, John Thompson, Andrew McCloy, Edwina Edwards, Charlotte Gilbert.

1. Cllr Jacque Bevan, Chair of the Stanage Forum, welcomed those present and gave a brief résumé of the history of the Forum which was instigated by the Peak District National Park Authority (the Authority) in 2000.
2. A small Steering Group had been appointed at the first meeting and endorsed at subsequent annual meetings. Its membership had evolved to include representatives of new user groups as these emerged – like mountain bikers. Jacque recorded a particular vote of thanks to Wendy Thomson who had recently stood down after many years service.
3. Just over a year ago the Forum had become completely independent, and had drawn up its own Constitution – though it continued to work in close partnership with the Authority. She thanked the Authority for covering the cost of this meeting.
4. Jean Hodgkinson proposed that Stella Mcguire should join the Steering Group as a representative of the Authority, and that other Members of the Steering Group be reappointed. Both proposals were seconded by John Horscroft and carried unanimously.
5. Jacque went on to say the main task of the Forum in 2000 had been to draw up a Management Plan for North Lees. This had expired in 2012 and now needed to be refreshed. A revised Vision Statement, referred to as the Gritstone Wheel, had been drawn up. Copies of this had been distributed, along with copies of the Constitution and Steering Group Members.
6. The focus of today's meeting was to begin the process of refreshing the Management Plan by asking those present to say what they thought needed to be done on Stanage North Lees (Stanage) now and over the next ten years, and how the cost of this might be met.
7. Jacque concluded her remarks by introducing Henry Folkard, the Secretary to the Forum, and Rebekah Newman, who had recently been appointed to the new post of Property Manager, North Lees before handing over to Mary Bagley, Assistant Director of Enterprise and Field Services at the Authority to whom she offered a particularly warm welcome.

National Park Authority Presentations

8. Mary Bagley said that the Authority's Audit, Resources and Performance (ARP) Committee had endorsed a performance report at its September 2014 meeting. It had agreed the appointment of a Property Manager for North Lees – Rebekah Newman would take up post on 1 December; agreed to budget arrangements which secured a full time Estate Ranger post; asked for a report scoping 'giving arrangements' for its March 2015 meeting and required a further progress report in September 2015.

9. Rebekah went on to describe the various wildlife habitats at North Lees, their designations and species as well as the Estate's significant cultural heritage. She outlined the Authority's work with schools, and described recent and scheduled events; proposals to enhance access; the farm tenancy; the camp site and other facilities. She presented a matrix showing various possible sources of income.

10. Rebekah described and asked for views on proposed work on Sheepwash Bank. This had the aim of enhancing the moorland / grassland habitats to benefit landscape and wildlife.

11. Mary then outlined a framework for the Management Plan, which included meetings with the Stanage Forum Steering Group during January and February; public consultation in March; and on-line survey during March and April; 3 Workshops with key stakeholders over an 8 week period and a presentation to ARP Committee in September 2015.

Themes

12. Both Mary and Rebekah had invited comments from the floor as they spoke.

Recurrent themes were, in summary:

- (a) the absolute need for transparency on the part of the Authority. This included financial detail on the real cost of caring for Stanage, and how such costs were derived. Where some figures had been published they contributed little by way of simple clarity. If the Authority wanted to gain the trust of the public it had to be much more open;
- (b) concern about the future of the North Lees camp site, for which it emerged that tenders had been invited. There was dismay that this process was being handled elsewhere in the Authority and not by those who were responsible for Stanage. The Steering Group had protested time and again that achieving a robust holistic vision for Stanage had been repeatedly frustrated by a series of piecemeal decisions on particular aspects. Such decisions lacked coherence or relevance to any overall vision. Retention of the camp site in house was seen as a golden opportunity for the Authority to recruit volunteers, to foster its engagement with users and reach out to those to whom as a public body it held a moral responsibility;
- (c) a passionate wish to retain an open and accessible landscape, free from absolutely all built infrastructure, clutter, or man made intrusion;
- (d) total rejection of any move to fence off Sheepwash Bank. Were it necessary to introduce cattle to that area for ecological reasons a cattle grid offered a vastly more preferable alternative;

- (e) the farm was integral to an holistic vision for the Estate and delivery of agreed conservation, recreation, landscape and biodiversity objectives;
- (f) clarification that the BMC Stand Up For Stanage campaign had set out some basic generic values about how Stanage should be managed which would apply irrespective of who managed it. These values were not directed to any single organisation;
- (g) discussion about car parking; a strong preference emerged for a reasonably priced and easily available annual sticker under the logo of ‘Supporting Stanage’ or similar which would nurture the sense of commitment and ownership many users felt for Stanage. Income thus generated must be directly linked to the delivery of objectives set out in the new Management Plan, rather than to the institution of the Authority or lost in some general fund. There should be feedback on how income thus generated had been spent, objective by objective, displayed at Hollins Bank. Mary was able to confirm that income from car parking would indeed go directly into environmental improvements to be detailed in the Management Plan. In reply to a question, Henry, speaking for the BMC, confirmed that the BMC would give its support to such an approach;
- (h) the need for better public transport links;
- (i) some support for a ‘Friends of Stanage’ fund raising type initiative. It was also cautioned that the whole of the Eastern Edges landscape was of as much concern as any single parcel of it, and that it would not be helpful to establish any sort of rivalry between the various estates for good will, volunteers or fiscal resource;
- (j) emphasis on the need for greatly enhanced partnership working within the Sheffield Moors Partnership area contextualised by a joined up strategic approach to a common vision for human and natural benefits. Enhanced partnership offered better value for money for land managers and investment of time by volunteers. All organisations were currently under extreme financial pressure;
- (k) better notification of subsequent Forum meetings.

!3. Though forcefully expressed it was accepted that the above themes could not all be resolved at this AGM. They were however taken on board and would not be ignored. The focus should turn to the main purpose of the meeting, namely to begin to record suggestions which would lay the foundations for refreshing the Management Plan.

Workshop Session

14. Those present were invited to record, on post-it stickers, their own aspirations on what needed to be done now, within the next ten years, on how these should be paid for, and to offer any other suggestions they wished to make. These would be written up as an annex to the minutes.

15. There was also an invitation for anyone to raise particular points of concern directly with Mary, Rebekah or Steering Group members.

Open Forum

16. During an Open Forum those present gave added emphasis to issues which had been aired earlier in the meeting, or had been recorded on the stickers.

Next Steps

17. Jacque then summarised where we go from here. Within the next week or two a part of the Authority's web site would be dedicated to Stanage North Lees on which the minutes of the meeting, the comments from the post it stickers and other relevant information would be posted. The site would be accessed by

<http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/stanage-northlees>

Minutes would also be e-mailed to all who had left their contact details.

18. Further discussions would take place between the Authority and the Steering Group as a matter of course – and of necessity – but she would additionally convene a plenary session of the full Forum when this was appropriate. She noted that though Rebekah had come to the current meeting, she did not formally take up post till 1 December.

19. She thanked all those who had come for their attendance, and for their very relevant and frank contributions. To conclude the meeting, she introduced Bill Gordon who would give an illustrated talk – illustrated visually and by sound recordings – on the Ring Ouzels of Stanage.

The Ring Ouzels of Stanage

20. Bill gave a description of the race, migration and habitat of the Ring Ouzel, *Turdus torquatus torquatus*, drawing attention to individual characteristics of the Stanage population in respect of plumage and song. Some birds had a distinctive white area in their plumage, whilst sonogram recordings had proved the Stanage birds had a unique element to their call – a Derbyshire accent.

21. He described the distinct territories on Stanage and Burbage, the constructive relationship that had evolved with climbers and the problems caused by predation. Though Stanage is a hugely popular site for all sorts of recreation it had bucked the national trend this year in achieving an increase in numbers of fledged young over the previous year – though the numbers remained disturbingly low.

22. Bill was warmly applauded for a captivating presentation, and the meeting drew to a close.

Number present: about 32 - of whom some self registered

Age

Under 21	21 – 40	41 – 60	over 60
none	1	9	13

Where do you live

Derbyshire	Yorkshire	Elsewhere
10	13	none

Main Interest

Climbing	7	Walking	7
Cycling / Mountain bike	2	Photography	2
Archaeology	3	Quite enjoyment	3
Wild life	1	Bird watching	1
Landscape	1	Exploring	1
Flying	1	Running	4
Local Amenity	4	4x4	1
Shooting 4x4 drivers	1	Local Access Forum	1

What Work Needs To Be Done On North Lees Now?

2.1: Control Bracken

2.2: Better information before meetings like this

2.3: Removal of interpretive sign boulders that used to have information displays on them

2.4: Please no more fencing on the roadside

2.5: No fence - too obstructive on landscape: go for cattle grid

2.6: Keep campsite in house

2.7: Given the good practice model of consultation with climbers re ring ouzels is there any evidence on the conflict of 'open access' and other wildlife (birds in particular) on the Estate and Stanage in bird breeding season

2.8: Horse friendly gates on the bridle path through North Lees past the Hall. I am partly disabled and have to dismount for all three and really struggle with the top one on the road

2.9 I believe the camp site should be run by the Estate

2.10: Locations for tree planting

2.11: Openness: listening to the PDNPA is like being back in the 19th century. All data, particularly financial should be published under the government open data licence. You won't be taken seriously nowadays without that

2.12: No 'street furniture'

2.13: Understand success of current approach to car parking and its sign free contribution to environmental protection and directed access before interfering with it

2.14: Need to ensure that NIA tree planting avoids hang gliding licensed areas

2.15: Concessionary bridleway from the toad up past the Buck Stone onto the Causeway to make a round route for horseriders: the Plantation bridleway is all but impassable for them

What Development Would You Like To See In The Next Ten Years

- 3.1: Webcam for pied flycatchers and other species if possible. SBSS bird study survey this year. How often are they? Could they be annual and disseminated more widely?
- 3.2: More awareness to users' groups through UKC, magazines
- 3.3: Don't improve access eg to the standards under Burbage
- 3.4: No further improvements to paths for increased access
- 3.5: More volunteers engaged in upkeep of Edge
- 3.6: Beware of it becoming too much of a recreation hub – what would be the implications of associated infrastructure? Impact on landscape / wilderness (though I know it is not a wilderness).
- 3.7: People from different interest groups get to appreciate the diverse qualities / good things about North Lees Stanage not just their own area of interest / involvement
- 3.8: Greater appreciation of cultural heritage in its widest sense including archaeology ie improved knowledge; public engagement
- 3.9: Informal concessionary footpath from Ridgeway side to the Warren
- 3.10: Good partnership working – constructive linking up with Sheffield Moors Partnership / Eastern Moors – including public outreach
- 3.11: Carry on controlling parking. Emphasis on sustainable transport where possible. Car park stickers a good idea
- 3.12: When Stanage North Lees has its own identity it will need its own web site
- 3.13: Dedication under CROW of all undedicated areas: the land is publicly owned
- 3.14: Retention and improvement of camp site at reasonable fees
- 3.15: Do not want to see Estate fragmented or part of it sold off
- 3.16: Clear the holloway to the right of the Plantation and ensure its bridleway status is maintained
- 3.17: Put a self closer on the little gate from the NT land onto Sheepwash Bank below Dennis Knoll and persuade farmer not to lock it
- 3.18: Better relationship with PDNPA – less mistrust: more transparency
- 3.19: Constructive partnership working with Sheffield Moors and Moscar Estates

Any Other Suggestions?

- 4.1: Keep volunteering voluntary – beware of forced labour schemes
- 4.2: Coffee / tea service at Ranger Post
- 4.3: Reduce man made intrusions. This is a precious landscape. Don't fence: cattle grid or no cows? Minimal signage
- 4.4: Forum website would be very useful to be able to access documents, websites etc
- 4.5: It is very difficult to make meaningful business plans without complete and transparent financial information from the Peak Park
- 4.6: Park and Ride services? Better public transport to Stanage
- 4.7: No fences
- 4.8: Devise coherent approaches on predator control and grazing management with neighbours
- 4.9: Website for Stanage Forum
- 4.10: Campsite: Why is it impossible for the Peak Park to run it efficiently and retain £s to fund estate? Review this proposal
- 4.11: Dedication of permissive paths and old routes not established as legal rights of way (lost ways)
- 4.12: Evolve a proper joined up landscape scale vision which excludes all fences
- 4.13: Annual membership would be preferable as a payment – enhances feeling of ownership, unlike parking fees etc
- 4.14: Full archaeological survey and documentation of ancient and industrial heritage
- 4.15: Comprehensive plant and wildlife survey: data to be made available on dedicated web site for general information and for educational purposes
- 4.16: Make very few changes ie no fencing
- 4.17: Sheepwash Bank NT land. Stop stiles change to gates. All stop stiles to be replaced by gates

- 4.18: Essential to maintain access
- 4.19: Friends of Stanage and Gift Aid
- 4.20: Engage now
- 4.21: Heritage: not just scheduled sites: others eg early trespass on Stanage; the formation of the Woodcraft Folk below Stanage in 1929 – the ‘Rock of Resolution’
- 4.22: Dedication of area around Chapel ruins as Access Land
- 4.23: Introduction of transport to Stanage to help reduce pressure on car parks.
? sponsorship
- 4.24: More volunteers to implement land changes
- 4.25: Make the water in the streams and brooks drinkable again. Water quality never seems to get mentioned in the ecological plans
- 4.26: Presentation: get an internationally recognisable figurehead to help focus attention: someone of the status of Chris Bonnington but more Peak District oriented. Interest for Stanage Forum seems very parochial and local for an internationally important site
- 4.27: Get grant application or sponsorship for cattle grid on Sheepwash Bank
- 4.28: Drystone wall? Use volunteers or charge them to do a course
- 4.29: North Lees: under used. Remove concessions and direct people there
- 4.30: Apply for more grants: corporate sponsors

How Should The Cost Of Caring For North Lees Be Funded?

- 5.1: Donation box at Dennis Knoll. Donation boxes on the barriers at each end of Long Causeway
- 5.2: Annual Pass for parking should be easier to get
- 5.3: Should not necessarily be run for profit but should be self sufficient. Friends of Stanage and Gift Aid
- 5.4: Outdoor Pursuit CTR? Any way of asking for contribution towards the cost of using the Edge
- 5.5: Parking: the number of cars who avoid paying by parking on the verges is ruining the grass and lowering the income. Notices on walls saying that car park income is ring fenced for Stanage upkeep might shame some into using the car park
- 5.6: Friends of Stanage (same as Friends of Kinder Trespass)
- 5.7: Film ITU: Advertising locations promotions
- 5.8: Sponsorship eg climbing shop / manufacturers etc
- 5.9: Camping – wooden chalets in the woods surrounding the campsite (Canadian style). Rent would continue through the winter months
- 5.10: Some kind of charitable trust to maximise benefits of charitable funding in bidding process
- 5.11: Contributions from user groups and clubs encouraged
- 5.12: Wills and legacies – promote this in solicitor's offices. Allow funding to run on from one financial year
- 5.13: Donation from guidebooks etc to go to North Lees Estate
- 5.14: Membership scheme to fund North Lees of Friends of Stanage
- 5.15: Budget which is discrete and not time limited – for legacies and large donations
- 5.16: Giving option on website. Grant application for Sheepwash.
- 5.17: Pass management, if not ownership also, to a membership organisation like the National Trust (who could dedicate it as inalienable and so protect it for ever) and save all the cost and acrimony of having to deal with the Peak Park

- 5.18: Charge commercial operations for use of the Edge
- 5.19: Charge for parking at Dennis Knoll, Hooks Carr as well as Plantation
- 5.20: I'm Supporting Stanage sticker – annual sub £ brilliant idea
Friends of Stanage stickers for cars £20 pa: £15 pa concessions
- 5.21: Highways Agency Environmental Funds for cattle grid
- 5.22: Advertise farm is selling teas
- 5.23: Trend North Lees running costs downwards
- 5.24: Many people love Stanage. Do you make best use of volunteer labour?
- 5.25: Fundraising: Leasing premises (ie old barn / shop in Hathersage) specifically as Stanage. Information Centre and sale of local produce / crafts
- 5.26: Would be good to see the figures involved: Required, gained, lost etc
- 5.27: Take on Stanage Estate. Similar to the ? of the ?Glade room scents for the National Parks
- 5.28: Hold 'Dark Sky' astronomy evenings at camp site and / or on Stanage Edge itself. Hire local astronomy clubs to provide telescopes
- 5.29: On line booking for North Lees camp site, National Trust do it and charge a premium for it. Could be a big money earner at peak periods
- 5.30: Sell courses on wilderness / outdoor survival eg building shelters, navigation, wild food identification. Sheffield City Council run similar courses for their Eccleshall woodland site
- 5.31: Produce leaflets and large scale pictorial maps of North Lees / Stanage including routes of Ranger led walks. Sell them in local outlets eg Longshaw, Hathersage shops
- 5.32: Annual parking permit to be purchased in local shops as opposed to meters and collection boxes: visual pollution
- 5.33: North Lees is for the long term, not a short term fix. Prioritise long term funding strategy which embraces loss of funding post HLS. Similarly evolve a conservation strategy not driven by Natural England's imprimatur bought through HLS