

Tees Valley Local Access Forum Annual Report

April 2013 – March 2014



Chairman's Report

We are happy to report on the success of the two Heritage Lottery Funded Partnership Projects in the Tees Valley. Limestone Landscapes is now reaching large members of the general public and many events and activities have taken place. With a successful bid to Paths for Communities and joint work with Elwick Parish Council, a circular path through the creation of two new public footpaths will be developed around the village linking footpaths and routes to neighbouring villages and into Hartlepool.

River Tees Rediscovered has successfully reached stage 1 with the award of £100,000 in phase One for the development stage 2; Rights of Way Officers and members are actively involved in this, particularly in relation to improvements to the Teesdale Way and

Circular Trails linked to the Teesdale Way in Stockton-on-Tees, Darlington and Middlesbrough.

In the spring the Friends of the TVLAF audited the Teesdale Way for the River Tees Re-discovered Landscape Partnership between Piercebridge and Warrenby in Redcar. Discussions with North Yorkshire County Council and Durham County Council are underway to agree the standards for the development of the route and its promotion.



The Teesdale Way and the Bridge into Teesport by Alan Murray-Rust

The England Coast Path between Hartlepool and Sunderland is hoped will be given Secretary of

State approval in the Spring of 2014 and the TVLAF is supporting steps to extend the route from North Gare at Hartlepool across the Tees Estuary to link with the Cleveland Way. Natural England expect the next section of the England Coast Path south from North Gare at Seaton Carew to Filey in North Yorkshire to be under consultation during 2014.

Regional working has continued, with joint work pledged between our neighbouring LAFs and the sharing of good

practice at the recent spring northern National Conference held in Durham on the 7th March 2014. Speakers included Network Rail, Defra, the Ramblers, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Lottery and Natural England. All information delivered was cascaded through the Forum and widely disseminated through huddle.

Our Vice Chair, Rob Brown was invited to sit on the Management Board of the Tees Valley Local Nature Partnership and work already

underway includes the Natural Networking Opportunities Mapping Project and positive links are being made with tourism and the Health sector.

My thanks go to the Rights of Way Officers across the Tees Valley and for the valuable contribution of all the TVLAF members.

R. Daniels

Robin Daniels
Chair, Tees Valley Local
Access Forum



STOP PRESS
4year old Oliver Robinson officially opens the latest section of the England Coast Path, the new 55km stretch between Sunderland and Hartlepool.

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An example of boarding out a footpath; Stockton on Tees have had recent success with Network Rail.

Business of the Forum

During the year, two full meetings have been held, on the 18th March 2013, the AGM took place at the Town Hall, Middlesbrough and on the 15th October 2013, the general meeting took place at the Beehive, Lingfield Point, Darlington.

Appointment of members

At the AGM in March 2013, Robin Daniels was voted in as Chairman, with Rob Brown Vice Chair.

Presentations

The AGM on the 18th March 2013 at the Town Hall in Middlesbrough, discussed the issues associated with a 'effective disenfranchisement of Appointing Authorities' where the number of elected members was restricted to three by the Defra Guidance for Joint Forums. It was agreed to contact Defra to discuss the matter. More positively, the Chair Robin Daniels and Vice Chair Rob Brown were both unanimously re-elected with Robin thanking the Officers for their hard work in support of Anne Louise Orange and colleagues in relation to the successful outcome of Stage 1 funding for River Tees Re-Discovered. Work is now underway for the submission of the Stage 2 application for **River Tees Re-discovered** to the Heritage Lottery Fund.



River Tees from the Transporter Bridge

In October 2013, **Andrew Best Natural England north east Coastal Access Team Manager** described the latest position on the development of the England Coast Path. The aim was to open the Hartlepool to Sunderland stretch, (Headland to South Bents) by April 2014. One of the main obstacles along this stretch was the bridging of the Dene at Ryhope; due to a substantial landslip, the bridge would not be installed and a slightly longer route around the Dene would be put in place.

The next stretch from North Gare, Seaton Carew to Filey in East Yorkshire would be considered by the Secretary of State in the Winter of 2014. The crossing point of the River Tees is Newport Bridge, with a secondary option to use the Transporter Bridge if it was available.

Partnerships

Rob Brown is part of the Management Team on the **Teesside Local Nature Partnership** and described the Natural Network Opportunities Mapping Project, Biodiversity action Plans, Biodiversity Offsetting, links to the Health sector and the Rural Strategy.



Landscape on Teesside

It was agreed that links must be encouraged between the rural economy and access through the Teesdale Way, the England Coast Path and other national trails as all would lead to an increase in rural tourism.

The River Tees Re-Discovered partnership is a collaboration between all of the TVLAF Local Authorities and is supported by HLF. The River Tees Rediscovered partnership aims to reconnect people with the fascinating heritage of the river – from the agricultural / pre-industrial period through to the major changes of the Industrial Revolution and the chemical industries of the twentieth century. The vision is to reconnect the people of the Tees with their river through telling the engaging story of the River Tees as a natural feature that has moulded the physical and cultural development of the

landscape and communities through which it runs. RTR will give everyone a chance to explore and celebrate the River Tees, from Piercebridge to Teesmouth, through a series of community projects and activities.

Hartlepool Borough Council together with Elwick Parish Council have created two new public footpaths forming a route around Elwick with assistance from **Paths for Communities and Limestone Landscapes**. The existing Public Rights of Way network within the Hartlepool borough is good but it links villages to the town of Hartlepool and other villages, with very few cross links allowing short circular walks. The parish of Elwick wanted to change this with the two new paths linking between the existing footpaths.



Elwick Village Green Archaeology Excavation , part of the Limestone Landscapes project which included a Village Atlas

P4C was able to complement this with new footpaths creating a heritage trail linking the village historical and wildlife assets. The trail connects an historic Drovers road, the site of a Mill and the Howls ancient woodland area with other parts of the Saxon village.

Efforts to open up more of the region's coastline to walkers are now well underway after the **England Coast Path** between South Bents in Sunderland and



Steetley Pier at North Sands, Hartlepool, picture by Kate Millar

the North Gare in Seaton Carew in Hartlepool path was officially opened at Seaham, on the 15th April 2014. "The coastal path links two important maritime centres in Hartlepool and Sunderland and will help regenerate areas which have suffered from a loss of industry over decades," said Natural England north east Coastal Team Manager Andrew Best. It is hoped that the full North East coastal path will be completed in the next six years.

Officer Updates

ROWIP Action Plans have been moving throughout the year. Rights of Way Officers from each Local Authority have been applying for a wide range of funding opportunities to assist with the development of new access projects, improving and upgrading paths, cycleways and bridleways. A number of their projects are detailed here.

Middlesbrough

A full survey of bridges on RoW was completed in January 2014 and a programme of bridge improvements is expected to be completed by 2016. Two Friends Groups have been set up at Blue Bell Beck and Marton West Beck aiming to improve local access.

Stockton on Tees



Surveying equipment (Counters) installed at Wynyard Woods and Teesdale Way at Stockton on Tees

Darlington

Links along the River Tees at Hurworth within Middlesbrough Football Club training ground are continuing, and a major highway scheme is planned to permanently stabilise land slippage below the A67 at Carlbury, near Piercebridge. This will require the temporary closure of some footpaths.

Hartlepool

Hartlepool has improved the Seaton walkway/permissive Bridleway from Seaton Lane to Brenda Road, widening the entrance and installing a horse stile. We have worked with the local school to create welcome panels, which have now been installed at each end of the path. A booklet of nine, new local walks has been designed with sketches from a local artist and has been distributed to all Hartlepool Borough Council outlets.

Regional Working

Robin Daniels and Geoff Hughes (Chair of Durham LAF) were re-elected Chair and Vice Chair respectively of the **north east Region Local Access Forum** in the spring of 2013.

Three meetings have been held during the year of the north east Region Local Access Forum. **Ivor Crowther, north east Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund** was invited to the Regional meeting in November 2013. He described the projects history, they first began in 1994 with the Parks Programme and in 1998 Landscape scale projects began with the Mineral Valleys. Landscape Partnership Schemes number 69 nationally awarding £108M, there are presently 8 in the north east region attracting funding of £14M. Partnership funding has increased this by a further £10M.



Ivor Crowther north east Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund

Ivor described the north east schemes in some detail; these include the Mineral Valleys, Living North Pennines, Limestone Landscapes, Heart of Teasdale, Peregrini in Lindisfarne, River Tees Re-discovered, Allen Valleys and the recently approved Land of Oak and Iron in the Derwent Valley.

The second Local Access Forum **National Conference**, northern event, hosted by Defra and Natural England was held on the 7th March 2014 at County Hall, Durham.

Full papers are available on the Natural England web site

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6311471092858880>



Anastasia French, Ramblers Campaigns Officer

Speakers included **Anastasia French, Campaigns Officer from the Ramblers**, who outlined their latest campaign, Paths in Crisis; **Phil Graham, Commercial Scheme Sponsor from Network Rail** who outlined their recent work with public Rights of Way nationally and **Rob Aubrook, the new north east Area Manager for Natural England** who outlined the links that could be made between Forums, LEPs and LNPs.

Membership

Beryl Bird

Beryl works as Regional Co-ordinator of the north east Chairs and Vice Chairs Local Access Forum. She farms, with her husband, outside Hartlepool.

Rob Brown

Rob farms on the outskirts of Hartlepool and joined the Forum to help put both the broader farming perspective as regards ROW, and the experience of farming on the urban fringe.

Robin Daniels

As Head of Tees Archaeology, Robin has developed a service which promotes and encourages opportunities for

people to become involved in the heritage of the area.

Deborah Jefferson

Deborah heads the Hartlepool Borough Council Countryside Warden team, responsible for the management of five nature reserves in Hartlepool.

Fiona Campbell

Fiona joined the TVLAF to assist in the development & improvement of access to the rural environment for people of all abilities, as a voice for the disabled community.

Norman Leslie

Norman is a retired veterinarian and an active member of the YHA, Ramblers Association & Stockton

Ramblers. Norman retired from the Forum in October 2013.

David Leyshon

David is a long standing member of the Ramblers Association, Open Spaces Society and Stockton Rambling Club. David retired from the Forum in October 2013.

Michael Roff

A retired Chartered Engineer, Michael is a keen walker and cyclist. His particular interest is to try to eliminate 'missing links'.

Judith Underwood

Judith has worked in the environment sector for over 10 years, working on physical environmental improvement projects with Groundwork.

Appointing Authority membership

Councillor Michael Smith
Rob Morrow Rights of Way Officer
Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Councillor Nicola Walker
Stewart Williams Rights of Way Officer
Middlesbrough Council

Councillor J Lauderdale
Chris Scaife Rights of Way Officer
Hartlepool Borough Council

Councillor Dot Long
Malcolm Thompson Rights of Way Officer
Darlington Borough Council

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