



**Peak and Northern Footpaths Society** Est. 1894  
Registered Charity no 212219

# Annual Report 2021

## Contents

- 1. Annual Review**
- 2. Objects**
- 3. Structure, Governance and Management**
- 4. Activities, Achievements and Performance**
  - Reports from*
    - Volunteer coordinators, Faults and Improvements officers*
    - Lost Ways*
    - Courts and Inquiries officers*
    - Consultations and Orders*
    - Signpost and Bridges officers*
    - Membership Secretary*
- 5. Financial Review**
- 6. Appendix**

## Annual Review

**Kathy Mclean, PNFS Chair**

Reflecting on another year it is sobering to note that we have remained in the grip of a global pandemic far longer than we originally imagined. However, limitations on travel and socialising experienced by everyone, have highlighted the value of our open spaces. Even when we were under the most stringent lockdowns, we were able to walk outside. Being free to walk along well-maintained paths, often in beautiful countryside, has been a lifeline for many people. Over the past two years we have become even more aware of the health and mental health benefits of being outside in woodlands and by water.

I am sure this is one of the reasons why the Society has been expanding, as you will see from the reports. More members, more volunteers and more inspectors. Our ability as a society to cover a greater number of parishes means we can increase the reporting of faults and requests to Highway authorities to ensure that Public Rights of Way are in good repair and routes preserved.

Like other businesses and societies, we have become used to virtual meetings, with Management and Courts and Inquiries meetings all carrying on successfully but without groups meeting in person. Taylor House in Stockport has been maintained and improved though only recently opened for work and small meetings. We hope that this will change as 2022 progresses, but the learning from the use of virtual platforms will stay with us and continue to help us to contribute to our responsibility to reducing emissions by reducing unnecessary travel. One event we do want to hold in person is a Strategy Day, to consider the strategic direction of the society over the next five years. We have had to cancel this twice, but we hope to be able to arrange a meeting in person in the summer.

Trustees are required to lead the society and we had seven in post as we entered 2021 but fell to six after a resignation. In the first quarter of the year, we undertook a skills gap analysis of the existing trustees followed by a recruitment campaign for additional trustees using the National Council for Voluntary Organisation's materials to support. Following an internal recruitment campaign in the second quarter of the year we successfully appointed one Trustee. In the final quarter of the year, we undertook a further recruitment campaign by advertising on several websites (Reach volunteering, Trustees unlimited and Doit.org and Sector 3 which is local to Stockport). We had ten applicants and were delighted to find three new Trustees who accepted positions in the first quarter of 2022.

Our previous Secretary (David Brown) stood down at the AGM and Jenny Allen was appointed. Jenny has had a significant impact this year, helping to streamline our policies and procedures and generally supporting the Managing Committee.

Succession planning is a constant issue, a risk which is identified on our risk register. To help mitigate this risk we also had a successful campaign to increase the number of Courts and Inquiries officers with four new appointees in 2021. All had an induction and are now making a great contribution, with support as required from a mentor. We plan to conduct a targeted recruitment campaign for our Consultations and Orders team in 2022.

Our finances are well looked after by our treasurer, Paul Easthope and we have sufficient funds to support the activities of the society, including improvements. This year we reviewed our investments and decided to move our investment advice and management from execution only to discretionary management.

Social media is a vital way to communicate, and we recruited two professional social media marketers via Reach volunteering who assisted with managing our Facebook and Instagram pages in the first quarter of 2021. Both were successful, one with Facebook, the other focused on Instagram resulting in increasing engagement with PNFS. A new volunteer began helping us in November 2021 and is continuing with the theme of engagement. This successfully led to an increase in the number of people following the Society and is therefore very effective in promoting PNFS. In the future we plan to make greater use of social media to promote our work.

Our members have adapted to online communications as demonstrated by the popularity of a talks programme organised by David Gosling. This has been very successful with a wide range of internal and external speakers and can still be viewed through the PNFS website. Our walks programme was suspended during the worst of the pandemic but has resumed with walks on both sides of the Pennines, details are available on the website,

So, overall, this has been an excellent year for Peak and Northern Footpath Society. I would like to thank everyone who has helped in any way at all, whether by being a member, inspecting footpaths, putting up signposts or being a Trustee. None of the progress we make would be possible without the goodwill and commitment of our membership. I wish everyone a positive, productive and enjoyable 2022.

## Objects

Our registered charity constitution states our objects are

- *Creating, preserving, and improving open spaces, public access rights and rights of way, (other than for mechanically propelled vehicles) particularly in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire, the former Metropolitan Counties of Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South and West Yorkshire and in Blackburn & Darwen, Blackpool, Derby, Halton, Stoke-on-Trent and Warrington*
- *Preventing the abuse of such rights*
- *Monitoring supporting and opposing proposals and orders for the creation, closure, diversion, and regrading of public rights of way*
- *Erecting and maintaining direction posts, signs, footbridges and commemorative and other structures that improve access*

## Structure, Governance and Management

Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS) is an unincorporated association that is registered as a charity (no 212219), governed by a constitution. The address of the charity is Taylor House, 23 Turncroft Lane, Stockport, SK1 4AB.

The current constitution was adopted by PNFS in 2013 with modifications approved in 2018, to enable PNFS to fund improvements. [PNFS: Constitution & Policies \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](https://peakandnorthern.org.uk) An unincorporated organisation is not a legal entity in law. It has no legal rights and is not separate from its members. An unincorporated association does not have limited liability. Individual members are legally personally responsible for any debts and contractual obligations, acts or omissions. Indemnity insurance is in place for trustees with separate liability insurance for other volunteers.

As PNFS is not a legal person any bank accounts, contracts, response to consultations, applications for definitive map modification orders are made in the name of an individual on behalf of the Society.

The Society is run entirely by volunteers, including our trustees. Trustee appointments are made in accordance with the constitution. Trustees appointed between AGM's must be formally elected at the next AGM. All trustees must stand for election or re-election on an annual basis. A new recruitment process has been introduced during 2021, including a formal vetting process to ensure that any applicant is eligible to act as a trustee. An induction programme has been introduced during 2021. This has been developed using guidance from the Charity Commission and resources provided by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), of which PNFS is a member. New trustees are also provided with a welcome pack produced by the Charity Commission and are provided with trustee training by the NCVO.

Two trustee recruitment programmes were undertaken during 2021. As a result of the first programme, we were pleased to appoint Chad Wilkinson as a new trustee. The second programme advertised for trustees externally with the process ongoing at the end of the reporting period.

Our trustees 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

- Kathy McLean Chair
- David Gosling Vice Chair
- Paul Easthope Treasurer
- David Brown Hon Secretary from January 2021 until 17<sup>th</sup> April 21 (AGM)

- Jenny Allen Hon Secretary from 17<sup>th</sup> April 21 (designated at AGM)
- Mel Bale
- David Morton
- Chad Wilkinson (appointed 27<sup>th</sup> August 21)

The trustees can confirm that we have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. Working for the benefit of the public is at the core of all our activities.

## Activities, Achievements, and Performance

***Object 1- creating, preserving, and improving open spaces, public access rights and rights of way, other than for mechanically propelled vehicles.***

We have a team of volunteers who help us to achieve this object, including the Footpath Inspection and Faults team managed by our Volunteer Coordinators, an Improvements Officer who project manages all our applications for improvements and our Lost Ways team who research and apply for additions to the rights of way network. They have provided a summary of their activities during 2021.

### Footpath Inspectors and Inspections

#### David Gosling and Linda Smith

2021 has been another record year for the number of footpath inspections undertaken and faults reported, despite the impact of the pandemic on the ability of some of our volunteers to inspect footpaths. However, as we have been reporting for several years, the capacity of local authorities to respond to faults continues to vary from good to very poor. The impact on preserving and maintaining the footpath network provides ample justification for the work of our inspectors. Serious problems are referred to the Courts and Inquiries officers to consider legal action.

PNFS takes the view that it is important to record the state of footpaths, even if faults are not resolved quickly. The Footpath Inspection Database fulfils this function admirably. We now have excellent records across the heartland of our region, and we are expanding our records in areas not previously inspected, for example in parts of Lancashire and Staffordshire.

Access to the digitised PNFS records for all Highway Authorities is now available to all inspectors so that they can research the history of paths in their parishes.

During 2021 we appointed a new record of 50 inspectors, but there were 27 resignations and one death (Bob Proctor) – a net increase of 22. At the end of the year, we had 172 inspectors and they covered 730 parishes. This compares to 90 inspectors and 330 parishes inspected in 2014. In seven years, recruitment of volunteers has grown steadily.

A total of 10,640 inspections were recorded on the Footpath Inspections Database.

In 2021, 4434 faults were recorded of which 3825 were still outstanding at the end of the year. In 2020, 3505 reported and 2070 were still outstanding.

In 2021 there were 520 paths reported to be dangerous or impassable of which 433 are outstanding and there were a further 3906 less serious faults of which 3411 are outstanding. These statistics show the generally poor response from Highway Authorities.

Five Inspectors' Newsletters were published in 2021 in January, April, June, September and November. A series of six online training sessions were well attended at the beginning of the year.

Since then, five online talks have also been broadcast by Zoom. These are all ways in which the Society engages with our volunteers.

### **New Volunteers**

The process of responding to new volunteers has been improved this year. Linda Smith is our new Volunteers Coordinator, and she has responded to over 70 new volunteer enquiries. She aims to inform and support them as they start to work with us. This work is fundamental to achieving our purpose as we are a volunteer led Society and without well supported volunteers, we wouldn't be able to carry out any of our functions.

Linda responds to general volunteering enquiries, providing further information on all aspects of our work and how to get involved. Some are directed towards becoming Path Checkers and many become footpath inspectors (see above).

All new inspectors discuss suitable parishes before appointment and an experienced person is appointed to support their first steps into footpath inspection. There is now an excellent on-line training course which new inspectors can access on our website. Nevertheless, some new appointments have been slow to make a start, so we are currently undertaking research into the problems they face.

In a move to widen the age range of our volunteers, Linda Smith has undertaken mentoring of student volunteers. During 2021, we attended a volunteer recruitment fair at Manchester University, raising awareness of the Society and use of the Path Checker app. Linda has supported 5 school students, including 4 Duke of Edinburgh award students for their 'volunteering activity' (3 at bronze, 1 at gold level). Four university students have volunteered to undertake footpath inspections in Greater Manchester.

### **Faults**

#### **John Fisher**

We provide a service to members and to the public where footpath faults can be reported. 2021 was the first full year for which we have comprehensive data.

320 faults were reported. These were either from the PNFS website or, increasingly, direct from the field using the new 'Path Checkers App' for mobile phones.

Each report is, where possible, forwarded to the Inspector for the relevant parish.

85 % of these were acknowledged. Thanks are due to all our Inspectors for this extra work, particularly those in the more popular areas, where there is no Inspector, the Area Officer takes over, or failing this a local volunteer.

The reporting over our area has been analysed in Signpost and showed an even spread between north and south but a strong bias to west over east. The restrictions in the first part of the year contributed to reports being often from areas nearer to towns and cities.

Many (a quarter) of those reporting were Inspectors away from their own parishes and many (roughly half) sent in more than one report. Some of the more active reporters have been recruited as Inspectors or as Path Checkers.

Members reading this are encouraged to use the system by whatever means they prefer, and to comment on its effectiveness. Work is ongoing to analyse how many of the reports lead to a timely resolution of the fault.

## **Improvements**

### **Nigel Howe, Improvements officer**

Our Improvements officer has been busy with projects despite the challenges of Covid. Requests for funding donations for improvements may be made via the application form on our webpage [PNFS: Improvements \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](https://peakandnorthern.org.uk/PNFS/Improvements) or via email directly to our Improvements officer (email address details are found on the contacts page of our website). We also use social media to advertise and promote the improvement projects we have funded and to invite further applications for suitable projects. This system is working well with a steady stream of projects being submitted generally by local councils or groups of walkers.

There are 11 improvement projects at various stages of development. Barrow Bridge bridleway and Horwich FP68, Bolton is currently in progress. The aim is to improve drainage and install steps to improve access. Walkers are currently avoiding the path due to erosion and diverting through a neighbouring field. This is part funded by PNFS in conjunction with Manchester and High Peak Ramblers and Horwich Town Council.

Alvanley FP17, Cheshire West and Chester, has been completed but requires additional remedial works. Funding was approved for improvements to Eckington FP 133 (Sheffield HA) and Eckington FP 37 (Derbyshire HA), in October 21. It is a very well used route that is impassable in winter. This is a jointly funded project with the Don Catchment Rivers Trust. It is a major project that will be undertaken in two stages during 2022 with the aim of improving access for users of this route.

The other improvement projects are still at various stages, awaiting final costings, details from the local councils, and various details yet to be resolved.

A completed project has improved access for users to Harmers Wood in Frodsham, Cheshire. Our first happy customer is picture on the steps in the photo below!





### **Creating rights of way/Lost Ways (Definitive Map Modifications Orders)**

#### **Ken Brockway**

Twenty-four Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) applications were submitted by PNFS to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) in 2021 a distance of 5.1km. This makes a total of 72 since March 2018 with a total mileage of 22.4km. Two 2021 claims were for Restricted Byways and two bridleways because the evidence supported that status. All our applications researched to date by DCC have been recommended for an order to be made.

There are five applications with first stage consultation in progress and three more have consultation completed but as yet no report is being prepared. Six published reports with a recommendation to make an order await the order being made. It is rather a challenge to keep track of progress until we are consulted after the making of an order. Only one order was made in 2021 but two have already been made in 2022. Two orders have been confirmed, one from an application submitted in August 2018, confirmed in March 2021 as Matlock RB110 and already shows on the latest OS map. The other submitted January 2020 is now on the map as Ashover FP164 along Pudding Bag Lane linking to FP161.

Thanks to members who have sent in possible candidates for research. Not all have resulted in sufficient solid evidence so if your potential lost way is not on the register of applications user evidence may be required to support limited historical evidence. The cut off may have been cancelled but recording paths is still important.

## ***Object 2- preventing the abuse of such rights***

We have a dedicated and knowledgeable team of Courts and Inquiries officers who act as our specialists in this area. They form the Courts and inquiries Committee, a subcommittee of the trustee board (see terms of reference [PNFS: Constitution & Policies \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](https://peakandnorthern.org.uk/PNFS_Constitution_Policies) ).

A successful recruitment campaign in 2021 saw an additional four Courts and Inquiries officers appointed to the Committee. We have two new officers sharing Wigan (Dave Taylor and Geoff Jones), one new officer covering the Ribble Valley in Lancashire (Shirley Addy) and another in Oldham (Andrew Jackman). All new officers have a full induction, have access to the Institute of Public Rights of Way (IPRoW) training course, and are mentored by an experienced C&IO. We are grateful to Andy Leader, John Harker and Martin Hamper, all experienced C&IO, for acting as mentors.

We have reports from several our officers below.

### **Derbyshire**

#### **Rhoda Barnett**

Work for the Society gradually returned to near normality, particularly in the second half of the year. A major change in July was the retirement of the rights of way manager at Derbyshire County Council and the appointment of a temporary replacement. Working with him has led to progress with several of the previously intractable problems of the obstruction of paths, to resolve which diversions were the most realistic solutions. I am hopeful that many of the necessary legal orders will be confirmed early in 2022. Many more routine obstructions and problems with “out of repair” paths were resolved quite quickly by showing the Council that the Society was prepared to use its legal powers.

The number of preliminary consultations from the County Council about the making of modification orders to correct the definitive map and statement was similar to last year. Several of these were concerned with applications made by the Society as part of the Lost Ways scheme, and this work continued in 2021. The Council made 6 modification orders, and on behalf of the Society, I objected to 3 of these, since I considered that the evidence did not support the conclusions reached by the Council which were to the detriment of walkers. Planning Inspectors working on behalf of the Secretary of State will determine these orders over the coming months.

There was an increase in the number of consultations from the Borough and District Councils about planning applications for proposed development on sites crossed by public rights of way, and again I was able to ensure that many potential adverse effects were avoided.

I continued to give our Inspectors and officers advice. I worked with the Peak District Green Lanes Alliance to try to ensure that the enjoyment of walkers’ use of rights of way was not affected by vehicular use, and with the Peak Park rights of way officer to assess diversion proposals. I was also involved with the training of the Society’s Inspectors, assessing proposals for the expenditure of the Society’s funds on improvements to public paths, and the continued revision of the Society’s policies for many facets of its work.

### **Kirklees**

#### **Andy Leader**

I have continued to work on removal of obstructions, make representations on legal orders, and planning applications affecting prows with the aim of protecting and improving public access to the



rights of way network. Some successes in 2021 include successfully objecting to the order to divert Spenborough Footpath 110. The outcome was a new order which included the removal of steps, a more user-friendly gradient and better sight lines to make the path safer. I also objected to the order to divert Holmfirth Footpath 146. This resulted in errors in the order being corrected by the Planning Inspectorate and an improved surface on the ground for walkers.

I worked with residents and adjacent landowners to secure the temporary closure (to vehicles) of Cheese gate Nab Side an unmade road on the Kirklees Way. The closure was prompted by a letter before action. Some repairs have been carried out and it is hoped the closure to vehicles will become permanent. Following another letter before action a long-standing barbed wire obstruction on Holmfirth Footpath 73 was removed.

I represented the Society at the Public Inquiry into the diversion of Holmfirth 60 at Wolfstones, arguing against the proposal which is not in the public interest. The outcome of the inquiry will be known later this year. Kirklees Council also made a DMMO on this path to record a greater width because of an application I made on behalf of the Society. I also provided evidence for the inquiry into the claimed right of way through Holmfirth Cricket Club. The Planning Inspectorate have now confirmed this route as a Restricted Byway.

## **Tameside**

### **Udo Pope**

During the past year my role as Courts & Inquiries Officer for Tameside has involved pressing Tameside MBC both to remove unlawful obstructions of public rights of way and to clear overgrown vegetation preventing their use. This has involved threatening, and in some cases taking, enforcement action by way of issuing appropriate statutory notices as well as regularly chasing progress with Tameside MBC.

In particular, the overgrown state of a considerable number of footpaths in Mossley has continued to be a focus for action. Following an inadequate response by Tameside MBC to a formal letter from the Society threatening enforcement action in respect of ten such paths, I issued statutory notices under section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 in respect of the disrepair of three of those paths, accompanied by notices under section 130A of the Act in respect of two unlawful obstructions affecting one of the paths. Disappointingly, at the date of writing this report, only one of the three paths has been cleared of vegetation and the obstructions that were the subject of the section 130A notices remain in place. This is despite assurances that the necessary clearance works had been ordered and despite Tameside MBC serving appropriate statutory notices on the landowner in respect of the unlawful obstructions. Nevertheless, Tameside MBC appear still to be actively progressing the resolution of the outstanding issues on these paths and also on the other paths dealt with in my December 2020 letter (indeed some of those other paths have since been cleared by Tameside MBC) and I am continuing to chase progress.

This year I also issued a formal letter to Tameside MBC on behalf of the Society threatening enforcement action in respect of six unlawful obstructions of paths in Mossley, Longdendale and Stalybridge. Although at the date of writing this report those obstructions remain in place, it appears that the threat of enforcement action has spurred Tameside MBC into appropriate action, by way of ascertaining land ownership and initiating contact with landowners to procure the removal of the obstructions. Again, I am continuing to chase progress.

Finally, a notable development this year has been that, following a Freedom of Information request for records of public rights of way inspections carried out by Tameside MBC in the previous five

years (biennial inspections being provided for by its Highway Risk Management Inspection Code of Practice), the Council disclosed that most of its rights of way had not been inspected at all during that period. This disclosure led it to recognise “a gap in resources” and to order a full survey of its public rights of way network to be carried out. It is understood that the Council's officers have subsequently inspected 268km of footpaths and bridleways. It is to be hoped that the results of this survey will lead to improvements in the state of Tameside MBC's public rights of way network in years to come.

## **Trafford/Salford/Manchester**

### **Martin Hampar**

Progress on a number of matters has been slow during the past year, not only due to Covid-19 restrictions, but increasingly due to the fact that many highway authorities are devoting less resource to rights of way matters. As a result, few issues have been resolved during the year.

As in previous years, my work on behalf of the Society during the year has been divided between attention to issues in my home borough of Trafford, Greater Manchester and a number of more general activities, mainly in Manchester and Salford, and also in other parts of Greater Manchester.

I am continuing to collaborate with Ramblers groups in several areas on matters of common interest and concern. During the year I have pursued work on several applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders in Trafford, although none have been completed during the year.

I have commented on Orders proposing changes to the rights of way network in several Greater Manchester districts, and on specific planning applications that may affect public rights of way, in Trafford, Manchester and Salford. I have responded to consultations affecting level crossings from Network Rail and from the Office of Road and Rail.

I have continued to monitor the development of both the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, now known as “Places for Everyone”, and the plans for HS2 for the possible effects on public rights of way and other public access in Greater Manchester.

### ***Objective 3 Monitoring supporting and opposing proposals and orders for the creation, closure, diversion, and regrading of public rights of way***

We have a Consultations and Orders(C&O) team that consists of a C&O Manager and Assessors (based at Taylor House our registered office) and Area Officers who work remotely. By law the Society is a “prescribed organisation” and Highway Authorities (HAs) have a statutory obligation to send us copies of Public Path Orders that propose to, if confirmed, divert, stop up, extinguish, or create a public right of way, or part thereof.

Our C&O team receive and respond to all consultations and orders issued by Highway Authorities. Where an objection to an Order is considered, this is referred to a C&IO for the relevant area. The processes followed by this team are set out in the volunteers handbook, sections 2 and 3. [PNFS: Volunteers Handbook \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](https://peakandnorthern.org.uk/volunteers-handbook)

### **Consultations and Orders Manager**

#### **Terry Norris**

The Society's status as a statutory consultee means that we are sent copies of all public path orders under the Highways Act 1980 which divert or extinguish public footpaths. In addition, in almost all cases we are consulted when an order is first being considered, enabling the assessors to contact an

inspector to look at the proposal and make comments with a view to ensuring that the final order protects the interests of walkers. We are also sent copies of all draft orders under planning legislation. By this stage it is difficult to effectively make representations to safeguard the public interest. Some planning authorities have agreed to send us lists of planning applications which are advertised as potentially affecting a public right of way. This enables us to contact an inspector in the same way as happens with Highway Act cases with a view to obtaining the maximum public benefit from the planning process and to reduce the number of footpaths built over or moved onto estate roads.

#### Consultation and Orders Stats 2021

Consultations	310
Planning application consultations	190
Orders	187
Confirmed Orders	56
Objections	9
Public Spaces Protection orders /Gating Orders	2
DMMOs pre-order making consultations	17
DMMOs	6
Objections to Made DMMO's	3
DMMOs submitted to claim lost ways	24

#### ***Object 4 Erecting and maintaining direction posts, signs, footbridges and commemorative and other structures that improve access***

##### **PNFS signposts**

##### **David Morton Signpost officer**

Due in part to the pandemic, we erected only twelve new signposts in the last twelve months, but in the last 126 years we have erected 630, most of which survive and are maintained in good condition, by a small team. The majority are in the Peak District, but for the last twelve years we have tried to increase their spread across the north of England and bring their benefits to a wider walking public as well as landowners, tenant farmers, Peak Park rangers, off-road cyclists, and horse-riders.

They are particularly appreciated by individual walkers and walking groups not only as aids to navigation but also because they provide opportunities for memorial and commemorative plaques.

As in every year since 1896, our signpost work has continued to benefit rights of way users and landowners and eases relationships between the two. Our signposts indicate the existence of a public right of way and its type, e.g., a Footpath open to walkers only, or a Bridleway open to walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders.

Signs at farmyards also point path-users in the right direction at points where they might go astray and cause a nuisance. Farmers are often happy to consent to and even help to erect the signs. They and Peak Park Rangers find them helpful in discouraging a) off-road cyclists and motorcyclists from

misusing and eroding the footpath network and b) the public in general from dropping litter and failing to control dogs.

Good examples of farmer-friendly signs are the group of four at Laund Farm, Chipping and two at Pain Hill Farm, Slaidburn (Signposts 602) all in the Forest of Bowland, Lancashire.

Seasoned ramblers in the northwest also like their familiarity and availability for commemorative or memorial plaques in places which are significant to them. They benefit one of the last surviving aluminium foundries on this side of the Pennines, plus our timber, hardware, small plaque, and paint suppliers, as well as our contractor.

Finally, we think that the signs benefit the society, as evidence of its continuing work and as a way of attracting new members from across the region.

One of the latest signs to be installed is S624 at Stretton Hall Farm, Clay Cross, Derbyshire. I have chosen it partly because it photographed well on a bright, sunny day in mid-December.



## Bridges

### Nigel Howe, Bridges officer

There has been very little progress this year in the funding and replacement of bridges across our area. The Bridge at Wards Reservoir, Belmont north of Bolton, finally had its official opening, having been postponed due to Covid on numerous occasions. The Red Rafter project should be completed this spring (2022) when the weather improves, the bridge parts have been flown in and just require assembling. There is a possible replacement of 2 bridges at Failsworth, Bolton. There is also ongoing monitoring of the works to the pack horse bridge, Goyt Valley, Derbyshire by United Utilities.

Over the past 12 months there have been no new bridge projects carried out, if anyone is aware of any bridges that requires funding please get in touch.





The official opening of the new bridge at Wards Reservoir Belmont, near Bolton

### **Gates for Stiles improvement project**

As part of our work to enable improvements to rights of way, PNFS has donated funds to replace stiles with gates on public rights of way throughout Cheshire East. PNFS previously agreed to fund up to fifty gates to replace stiles within Cheshire East, a project that began in November 2020 and has been very well received. Due to its success, the trustees agreed in July 2021 to increase the overall funding to £12,000 to be spent within a three-year period.

This funding will allow greater accessibility to pathways for more people. Cheshire East have warmly received this additional funding, stating that 'use of the borough's countryside has never been more popular than the levels that have been reached during the pandemic and that shows no sign of changing, as people continue to enjoy the benefits of being outdoors'.



Trustees have also agreed to fund up to a further six Highway Authorities with the same level of funding to improve access to rights of way and open spaces across our area. We are promoting the availability of this funding via our Facebook and Instagram pages and by direct contact with the Highway Authorities within our area.

## **Membership Report**

### **Mel Bale, Membership Secretary**

People may recall that 2020 saw an unprecedented increase in our membership of 12%. In my last report I said that it would great to see a similar rise in the year to come. My hopes haven't quite been realised but I am pleased to be able to report that our membership numbers have yet again increased, albeit by a more modest figure of 3%. You can see the actual figures in the table below. However, this only tells part of the story. There are a significant number of members and affiliates who have yet to renew for the current membership year. If only half of these people/groups renew, the actual increase in membership will be over 7%.

The trend for people to join online via PayPal has continued this year and many new members have decided to pay by Direct Debit.

There has been a steady increase in the number of groups that have chosen to affiliate to the society. Some have decided to do so after hearing about our revamped 'Improvements Policy' which can provide funds for suitable schemes that improve an open space or public access right including definitive rights of way. If, and I know it's a big if, all affiliated groups renew their membership before the end of May, they will number 100!

Please don't forget that your subscriptions are vital to the work of the society in protecting, promoting, and improving the Public Rights of Way network. If you don't already Gift Aid your subscription and are a UK taxpayer, please just sign the appropriate section on your next renewal form. By doing so you effectively increase the value of your subscription by 25%. Gift Aid can be claimed retrospectively for 4 years, so if you can Gift Aid please consider doing so.

Membership renewal reminder letters will be sent out with the first issue Signpost of the 2022/23 membership year in June. I would encourage all members to renew as soon as possible and also consider paying their subscription by Direct Debit if they do not already do so. Not only does this reduce the need for reminders but it also allows more time to be spent on other work for the society.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for all their support and encouragement throughout the year and in particular, Paul Easthope, our treasurer, who yet again has been a great help when dealing with the financial aspects of membership.

Finally, please do contact me at [membership@pnfs.org.uk](mailto:membership@pnfs.org.uk) if you have any questions or ideas about membership.

## **Membership Details**

<b>Members</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Annual</b>	1073	1079	1091	1245	1289
<b>Ten Year</b>	50	39	18	5	2
<b>Five Year</b>	4	2	2	0	0



<b>Hon Life</b>	34	32	35	34	35
<b>Total</b>	1161	1152	1146	1284	1326
<b>Affiliates</b>	89	85	87	88	79

**Note:** The 2021 figures are for 'paid up' members with 3 months of the membership year still to run. There are 78 Individual and Household members and 21 Affiliates who haven't yet renewed in 2021/22. All have recently been sent renewal reminder letters or emails. This should result in more renewals.

#### **For members who pay by Direct Debits**

**CAF (Charity Aid Foundation Bank) collect our direct debits. This means that on your bank statements/online accounts you will see "Charity Donation" rather than any reference to PNFS. This will be followed by a reference number either FRS... (6 numbers) 10... or 11... or 12... (seven numbers).**

**Collection dates are 1st & 15th of the month.**

Please think about changing to paying your subscriptions & donations by direct debit, and if you are a taxpayer signing up for Gift Aid. Forms available at <http://www.peakandnorthern.org.uk>

## Financial Review

### **Paul Easthope, Treasurer**

#### **Accounting Basis**

The PNFS accounts have been prepared using the "receipts and payments" method, rather than the "accruals" method as used up to 2006. This is in accordance with Charity Commission guidance and the trustees' decisions made in 2006.

#### **Income**

- Receipts were down slightly to £74,887. This was mainly due to legacies being down by £2,705 to £27,295.
  - Member's subscriptions were up again by £946 to £15,428. Again, the highest in recent years. Affiliations were up to £1,883.
  - General donations were down by £1,461 to £7,224
  - Gift aid was slightly lower to £5,018
  - Signpost/Footbridge donations were up appreciably by £1,879 to £7,233 a record
  - Dividends and interest were virtually the same at £10,684
- Taking out legacy income, overall income was slightly higher by £1,580 at £47,582. Virtually the same as out total expenditure of £47,782

Direct debits account for two thirds of our individual/household membership subscription income, £10,283 this year. Our new PayPal account has also been successful with £2,965 of subscription/donations payments. This included a £220 donation from their Charity Fund.

Many thanks to our loyal and new members who are very generous with their donations. This helps keep our membership rates extremely low.

#### **Expenditure**

Overall expenditure was appreciably lower by £16,728 to £47,782. This was nearly all due to a large

decrease in Footbridge expenditure and a small increase in Signpost expenditure. Taylor House costs were higher.

- Taylor House costs were up £2,826 to £10,323. This cost included refurbishment of the old file storage area, retiling the workshop roof, main office roof repairs, repairs to damp-proof course needing some re plastering of the walls.
- Signpost costs up £742 to £8,517
- Footbridge costs were down appreciably to £7 due to no Footbridge installations this year
- Travel costs increased by £784 to £4,721. Due to more footpath Inspectors being out inspecting rights of way this year.
- Printing costs virtually the same at £5,914. It now costs over £1.50 to print and post a newsletter, so please consider taking them online
- Postage/Phone/Stationery costs much higher, up by £808 to £4,699. Postage higher partly due to posting to the Officers during the office closure. Higher legal notices postage. Full year on fibre broadband. Also Zoom subscription costs, FID upgrade, online file storage cost. Stationery higher due to purchasing storage boxes for storing scanned files.
- Computer costs up £2,056 to £5,173, higher due to computers being upgraded
- Insurance was slightly lower again at £1,143
- Subscriptions/Donations/Training costs were virtually the same as last year at £455
- Improvements to PROWs was up from zero last year to £4,997
- Legal/Prof./Secretarial costs up £784 to £1,783 due to a full resumption of Management & Courts & Inquires meetings

The net surplus being **£27,095**.

## **Assets**

The balance sheet is much higher due to legacy income at £515,170

Our investments are valued at £165,200, plus £14,000 held in cash with Charles Stanley our Investment Broker, being the result of a bond being redeemed. This being a 6.7% increase on last year's valuation. The dividend returned was 4.78% net of broker charges. Liquid assets were up £41,095 to £289,317 including £14,000 from the redeemed bond to be reinvested in our investment portfolio.

## **Reserves policy**

Our assets at year-end 2021 were £515,170 held in a combination of cash, investments, and fixed assets (our office building, computer equipment, furniture, and fittings). Within this figure we have restricted funds of £61,010 and fixed assets of £60,654.

We maintain a contingency fund of £10,000 for repairs to the ageing office building and have ring-fenced legacy funds of £165,661.

This leaves a reserve of £217,845 We look to maintain our reserves at between £174,000 and £231,000. These figures are reviewed annually and increased in line with RPI.

## **Property**

Taylor House, our registered office in Stockport. Title to this property is vested in the Official Custodian for Charities. This is in line with our legal status as an unincorporated association.

The building is valued in the accounts at its purchase price rather than its current market value.

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees report aboveSigned  
on behalf of the Charity trustees

Signature 

Full name Dr KA McLean

Designation: Chair

Date 30/04/2022

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## Appendix

### Honorary Members

The President and Vice Presidents are elected in recognition of outstanding services to the Society and they enjoy all the benefits of honorary membership.

Members of 20 or more years' standing who are aged at least 65 are entitled, on application, to honorary membership.

## **PRESIDENT**

Position vacant

## **VICE PRESIDENTS**

Kate Ashbrook  
Mrs & Mrs A F Bennett

David Bratt  
Norman Edwards

Mrs Gwynneth Littleton  
Ian McMillan

## **Other Honorary Members**

Hilda Bowler  
Mr & Mrs J Burling

Barrie Clark

Michael Davies

Mrs M Frankland

Brian Gerrard

John and Audrey Grimsey

Margaret Haigh

John Harker

Philip and Anne Harris

Mrs J Hibbert

Mr & Mrs D Hilliker

David Hilton

Alan Hooley

Mr A Howcroft

Mr & Mrs J C Law

Pat Moneypenny

Mr T L Norris

Will and Marianne Peters

Mrs M D Seal

Mr C H Shaw

Harry Scott

Hilary Summerscales

Mrs B Taylor

Mary Whitehead

Peter Williams

Ted Wolfe

Mr S Wraith

Keith Wykes

## **Affiliated Groups**

Abbotsfield Fellwalkers of Flixton

Alderley Edge, Wilmslow & District FP Society

Altrincham Rambling Club

Anchor Ramblers

Anderton Parish Council

Ashover Footpath and Bridleway Committee

Ashton-u-Lyne & District Walking Club

Barnsley Mountaineering Club

Billington and Langho Parish Council

Blackbrook Conservation Society

Blackburn Rambling Association

Blackrod Town Council

Bolton CHA Rambling Club

Buxton Rambling Club

CHA Bradford Rambling and Social Club

CHA Manchester Rambling Club

CHA Mansfield

CHA Sheffield Rambling Club and Social Club

Chapel en le Frith Rambling Club

Chapel-en-le-Frith Parish Council

Merseyside & West Cheshire Area RA

Mid Cheshire Footpath Society

Mossley Town Council

North Turton Parish Council

Northenden Walkers

Oldham Wednesday Walkers

Pennine Wayfarers Rambling Club

Pott Shrigley Parish Council

Poynton Rambling Club

RA Congleton Group

RA Doncaster Group

RA East Cheshire

RA Greater Manchester & High Peak Area

RA North & Mid Cheshire Area

RA Nottinghamshire Area

RA Oldham Group

RA Preston Group

RA Sheffield Group

RA South Yorks & NE Derbyshire Area

RA Stockport Group

Cheshire Tally Ho Hare & Hounds Club	RA Trafford Group
Clayton le Dale Parish Council	Red Rope (Manchester)
Club AZ Walkers	Rimington and Middop Parish Council
Crescent Ramblers Northwich	Rochdale CHA Rambling Club
Dark Peak Bridleways Association	Rock and Heather Club
Denby Footpaths Group	Rossendale Ramblers
Derby Nomad Ramblers	Saddleworth Pedestrians
Derbyshire Pennine Club	Saddleworth Runners
Disley Footpaths Society	Sale Walking and Activity Group
Dore Village Society	Salesbury Parish Council
Eccles Rambling & Social Club	Sandbach Footpath Group
Grindleton Parish Council	Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group
Halifax Rambling and Social Club	Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers
Hanliensian Rambling Club	Shirland & Higham Parish Council
Hayfield Parish Council	Stockport Field Club
Helsby Parish Council	Stockport Rambling & Social Club
HF Bury Group	Stockport Walkers
HF Nottingham Group	Stockport Walking and Outdoor Group
HF Warrington Rambling Club	Sutton-in-Ashfield and District Rambling Club
Holymoorside & Walton Parish Council	Tameside Ramblers
Hunshelf Parish Council	The Irregulars
Leek & District FP Preservation & Rambling Group	The Rucksack Club
Macclesfield Countryside and Heritage Club	The Strollers
Macclesfield Rambling Club	Thornley with Wheatley Parish Council
Manchester and Salford Ramblers Group	Trafford Walkers
Manchester Associates Rambling Club	U3A Sale Walking Group
Manchester Field Club	Warrington Field Club
Manchester Rambling Club	Whaley Bridge Town Council
Marple District Rambling Club	Wirral Footpaths & Open Spaces Preservation Soc.
Melbourne Footpaths Group	Yarrow Marchers







# Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

No 212219

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

01/01/2021

to

12/31/2021

## Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>				
Subscriptions	15,428		15,428	14,482
Affiliations	1,883		1,883	1,637
Legacies, bequests	27,295		27,295	30,000
Donations general	7,224		7,224	8,685
Donations signposts & footbridges		7,233	7,233	5,354
Gift Aid tax	5,018		5,018	5,210
Interest/Dividends	10,684		10,684	10,570
Miscellaneous	112		112	64
<b>Sub total</b> (Gross income for AR)	<b>67,644</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>74,877</b>	<b>76,002</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b>				
Nationwide BS stock redemption	14,000		14,000	0
			0	0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>81,644</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>88,877</b>	<b>76,002</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>				
Taylor House running costs	10,323		10,323	7,497
Signpost & Footbridges	1,291	7,233	8,524	37,303
Travel & Subsistence	4,721		4,721	3,937
Printing,Copying,newsletter	5,914		5,914	5,892
Postage Telephone Stationery	4,699		4,699	3,891
Computer, Software & maintenance	5,173		5,173	3,117
Functions / Fundraising costs	0		0	55
Insurance	1,143		1,143	1,303
Subscriptions, Donations, Training	455		455	425
Improvements, Commemorative	4,997		4,997	0
Legal Professional & Secretarial	1,783		1,783	999
Sundries	50		50	91
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>40,549</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>47,782</b>	<b>64,510</b>
<b>P &amp; L SURPLUS</b>			<b>27,095</b>	<b>11,492</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b>				
Investment Trusts			0	0
			0	0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>40,549</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>47,782</b>	<b>64,510</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>41,095</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41,095</b>	<b>11,492</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>187,212</b>	<b>61,010</b>	<b>248,222</b>	<b>236,730</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>228,307</b>	<b>61,010</b>	<b>289,317</b>	<b>248,222</b>


## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Savings accounts	<b>189,953</b>	<b>61,010</b>
	Current accounts & petty cash	<b>38,354</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total cash funds</b> (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	<b>228,307</b> OK	<b>61,010</b> OK

	Details	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Government stocks		
	Corporate bonds		<b>56,551</b>
	Equities		<b>30,154</b>
	Inv.trusts,pref shares,ETF funds		<b>78,495</b>
	TOTAL	0	<b>165,200</b>

	Details	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Taylor House building	<b>60,153</b>	
	Computer Equipment	<b>13,458</b>	
	Furniture fittings & other	<b>4,351</b>	
	P A sound system	<b>1,509</b>	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print name	Date of approval
	P Easthope	1/28/2022
		1/28/2022

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of  
Peak and Northern Footpaths Society**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Elizabeth Hudson ACA  
30 Howey Lane, Congleton CW12 4AE  
3rd April 2022