



**YORKSHIRE DALES**  
National Park Authority

**Long distance routes; recognition and promotion**

**Draft Policy**

**October 2010**

# Long distance routes; recognition and promotion

## Draft policy

### 1. Background

1.1 There are a considerable number of long distance routes which are promoted in some way that lie, either wholly or partly, within the National Park. Promotion may be in the form of a guidebook describing the route, a website, and/or waymarking on the ground.

1.2 The vast majority of these long distance routes are multi-day walking routes but there are also a number of cycling routes. The routes vary from high profile National Trails to routes which are relatively obscure, and the positive and negative impacts that they have on the local area also vary considerably.

1.3 The National Park Authority is regularly approached for advice on route selection by guide book writers and people devising walks, and it also often asked to 'endorse a route' for example by providing support for waymarking routes 'on the ground'.

1.4 Although there is no doubt that well thought out long distance routes can provide a highly sustainable form of tourism providing high economic benefits with minimal impact, the potential number involved means the Authority needs clear criteria to determine those it 'supports'. Particularly as the level of support and endorsement given by the Authority will have resource implications.

### 2. Current policy context

2.1 The Authority's current policy context is laid out in the National Park Management Plan and Special qualities, special experiences its thematic strategy for recreation and tourism.

#### **National Park Management Plan**

EE8: Develop the scope, quality and co-ordination of recreational infrastructure to increase and promote the area's appeal to a wider range of people and groups and to increase the economic value to local tourism businesses.

#### **Special Qualities, Special Experiences – the Authority's recreation and tourism strategy**

##### ***Multi-day routes***

- Multi-day routes will be signed and promoted where the route is supported by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority as a regional significant route.
- Dedicated ranger(s) will be employed to undertake the maintenance and waymarking of National Trails and other multi day routes where Natural England (or other similar body) funds this activity.

### ***Waymarking (arrows and fingerposts)***

The only statutory requirement is a finger post indicating where a right of way leaves a metalled road. Any other 'waymarking' will depend on location:

- From settlements and other development in the main Dales, waymarking will be used to the extent necessary to orientate visitors, and give them confidence, in their surroundings.
- In rural lowland areas and tributary dales, waymarking will be basic but clear to avoid 'over-management' and will be unobtrusive within the surroundings.
- In open upland areas, the use of waymarks will only be used out of legal necessity or where required as an aid to navigation, with the aim of ensuring that any signs of human activity are minimal given that typical users could be expected to carry a map and compass.

2.2 Whilst this provides overall guiding principles the existing policy does not determine which routes will be supported by the Authority.

## **3. Why promote long distance routes?**

3.1 Long distance routes form some of the country's best known iconic walking routes, and for many people provide a highly memorable and positive experience. They can provide a highly sustainable tourism product, with people moving under their own steam and often accessing the routes using public transport. They also provide a high visitor spend because they will be staying overnight, and often carry little with them so spending more in the local area. High quality routes, such as the National Trails, can also form spine routes from which loops are developed.

3.2 Usage of the various long distance routes can be difficult to determine accurately, but counters are in place on the Pennine Way, Dales Way and Coast to Coast walks. The number of people walking the whole of these routes, either in one go, or in stages, is estimated to be 3000 to 5000 per annum. Translating this into the amount spent in the local economy involves making assumptions around average daily spend and the length of time that walkers are within the National Park. However, even with modest assumptions that end to end walkers are spending £35 - £45 per day, and are in the National Park for 2 to 4 days, this represents an annual spend into the National Park economy of approximately £1.1m to £1.4m on these three routes.

3.3 This visitor spend has clear impact in the local economy and supports many businesses; in particular baggage handling and holiday organisers such as Brigantes, and a large number of accommodation providers, particularly those in more remote areas.

#### 4. Criteria to be used in deciding whether a route should be supported

4.1 There are a number of factors which need to be considered by the Authority when deciding whether to recognise and support a route and whether to permit promotional discs on routes. These are:

National Trails	The Pennine Way and Pennine Bridleway are recognised and promoted as National Trails by Natural England. All National Trails will be waymarked to an agreed standard.
Regional importance	Routes which are long enough that they are completed over several days and which attract significant numbers of visitors to the National Park will be considered favourably.  For routes which have sections in neighbouring authorities, the support of those authorities will also be a factor taken into account.
Permanence	Routes must be expected to last (i.e. to be actively inspected and promoted) for a minimum of 5 years. Routes which have been in existence for less than five years would only be waymarked in exceptional circumstances.
Length of route	Routes designed to be completed in the course of a day will not normally be waymarked as long distance walks. This would not prevent shorter routes being waymarked for other reasons such as with the Red Squirrel Trail, and short routes aimed at increasing participation etc.
Responsibility	There must be a specific group or organisation prepared to take responsibility for inspections and publicity material.
Public access	The route must be available for all members of the public to use. This could include routes with a permissive access agreement provided that sufficient longevity can be guaranteed.
Additional factors	The following will be considered favourably; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economic benefit to the area,</li> <li>• heritage, scenic or ecological interest,</li> <li>• routes benefitting the local community as well as visitors</li> <li>• routes that promote the use of public transport and green businesses</li> </ul>
Publicity material	Must be; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear to read,</li> <li>• easily available</li> <li>• give clear advice on minimising the impact on the area, and</li> <li>• be kept up to date.</li> </ul> <p>Material that provides additional information to promote greater understanding of the area will be seen positively.</p>

Route alignment	The route must be checked the National Park Authority for legal status and issues, and agreed in advance in the case of new routes. Where promoted routes use permissive paths, agreement from the landowner should be made available in writing and should confirm that permission is granted for a minimum of five years.
Road safety	Road sections and crossings, where they are not already approved, need to have been safety audited by the relevant highway authority.

4.2 One of the aims of developing these criteria is to ensure that whilst promoting long distance walks the amount of signage and waymarking is not increased unnecessarily, and that only those routes which form an important part of the outdoor product offered by the Yorkshire Dales is recognised in this way. Furthermore, where other routes follow the same alignment as a National Trail they will normally only be waymarked where they join and leave.

4.3 It should also be noted that the Authority will continue to inform the public about long distance trails that do not meet the criteria for waymarking, because of they still form an important part of what the Yorkshire Dales has to offer.

## 5. Routes currently recognised, supported and/or waymarked

Category 1: National Trails

Category 2: regionally important routes recognised and supported by the National Park Authority which are waymarked.

Category 3: other routes which are not waymarked. This may include routes which have been established for less than five years, or routes which would also need the support of other authorities.

Route	Responsible organisation	Distance in National Park (total distance)	Comments
<b><i>Category 1: National Trails</i></b>			
Pennine Way	Natural England	Edale to Kirk Yetholm. 51 miles (268 miles)	The first National Trail established opening in 1965. Now promoted by Natural England through a variety of hard copy promotional literature and <a href="http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk">www.nationaltrail.co.uk</a> . Several guidebooks and maps available. Marked on OS maps. Also has an association <a href="http://www.penninewayassociation.co.uk">www.penninewayassociation.co.uk</a> .
Pennine Bridleway	Natural England	56 miles (200 miles from Middleton Top in Derbyshire to Kirkby Stephen)	Vast majority of the route in the National Park is now legally and physically created. The aim is for the whole route section to be launched in 2011. Promotional material is already available for open sections and information through <a href="http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk">www.nationaltrail.co.uk</a> . Map of route from Harvey Maps. Will be marked on OS maps.
<b><i>Category 2: regionally important, promotional discs permitted and marked on OS maps</i></b>			
Dales Way	Dales Way Association	Ilkley to Windermere with link routes from Harrogate, Leeds and Bradford. 50 miles (84 miles)	Opened in 1980s. Several guidebooks published. Dales Way Association long established with website ( <a href="http://www.dalesway.org.uk">www.dalesway.org.uk</a> ) and publishes a handbook annually. Regular liaison meetings with YDNPA. YDNPA publishes a leaflet to the walk. Marked on OS maps.

Ribble Way	Lancashire County Council	(70 miles)	Opened in 1985. Is currently waymarked although in poor condition. Little promotion carried out, and appears to be used by only low numbers of walkers. Guidebooks are available. Marked on OS maps.
<b>Category 3: other routes - not waymarked</b>			
Coast to Coast	Wainwright Society	St Bees to Robins Hood Bay 22 miles (190 miles)	One of the best known routes in the UK attracting significant numbers of walkers. Devised in 1973. Currently there is no co-ordinated promotion of the route, but there is a website <a href="http://www.thecoasttocoastwalk.info">www.thecoasttocoastwalk.info</a> . Map produced by Harvey Maps. Route within YDNP is partially waymarked and managed.
Dales High Way	Tony & Chris Grogan	From Saltaire to Appleby. 55 miles (93 miles)	Map book and guidebook produced. Website <a href="http://www.daleshighway.co.uk">www.daleshighway.co.uk</a> . Launched in 2008. Devisers would like route to be waymarked and have discussed with YDNPA and others.
Pennine Journey	Wainwright Society	Settle to Hadrian's Wall and back. 97 miles (247 miles)	<a href="http://www.penninejourney.org">www.penninejourney.org</a> . Guide produced. Would like route to be waymarked and have discussed with YDNPA and others. Launched in 2008.
The Inn Way	Mark Reid	76 miles all in NP	<a href="http://www.innway.co.uk">www.innway.co.uk</a> and supporting book. Launched in 1997.
The Settle to Carlisle Way	None	32 miles (92 miles)	Map produced by Harveys. Original work commissioned through Target Project. Route has been safety audited. Route links all the stations on the railway line. Launched 2005.

Mountain bike coast to coast	Partnership led by North York Moors NPA.	52 miles (206 miles)	Route in development and proposed to launch in 2011. Designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of mountain bikers.  This project is led by NYMNPA and has involved the three NPAs and two county councils throughout.
Lady Ann's Way	None	Skipton to Penrith linking locations associated with Lady Ann Clifford.  49 miles (100 miles)	Book first published 1995.
Herriot Way	None	Route through Wensleydale and Swaledale based on locations related to James Herriot.  49 miles all in YDNP	Book first published 1997.
Airedale Way	None	Leeds to Malham following the River Aire.  8 miles (50 miles)	
Swale Way	None	Boroughbridge to Keld  23 miles (77 miles)	Booklet produced by Richmondshire DC in 1997
Yorkshire Water Way	Yorkshire Water	Kettlewell to Langsett  15 miles (104 miles)	Links reservoirs belonging to Yorkshire Water. Devised by Mark Reid. Book published in 2006.
Bay to bay walk	None	Barrow to Robin Hoods Bay  35 miles (191 miles)	Published in two sections – Grassington to East Coast and Grassington to West Coast. <a href="http://www.bay2bay.co.uk">www.bay2bay.co.uk</a> .

Coast to Coast mountain bike route (Woodcock)	None	22 miles (220 miles)	The best known of variants of Wainwright's coast to coast route for mountain bikers. Guide promoted through <a href="http://www.mbruk.co.uk">www.mbruk.co.uk</a> .
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5.1 The fact that a route is not supported does not indicate that it is considered un-worthy, or is not an asset to the area. There are many interesting and beautiful walks which are not heavily promoted and this can be part of their charm and appeal. Although YDNPA does not actively become involved in the promotion of these routes, or support their waymarking, their use could still be encouraged through being listed on our website or in publications.

## 6. Cycle routes

Where a long distance cycle route involves significant sections on the rights of way network they have been considered in with walking routes above. However, the majority of long distance cycling routes are aimed at road cyclists and form part of the National Cycle Network which is promoted by Sustrans and local authorities. They are fully safety audited and signed. The Yorkshire Dales Cycleway is a recognised regional route and is again safety audited and signed. These routes are listed below for information, but are outside the scope of this policy.

Route	Responsible organisation	Distance in National Park (total distance)	Comments
Yorkshire Dales Cycleway	YDNPA	115 miles (130 miles)	YDNPA promotes the route through <a href="http://www.cyclethedales.org.uk">www.cyclethedales.org.uk</a> and publishes a leaflet. A guidebook is now out of print.
Pennine Cycleway (Route 68)	Sustrans/county councils	Holmfirth to Appleby section.  50 miles (124 miles)	Map available from <a href="http://www.sustrans.org.uk">www.sustrans.org.uk</a> . Specific website no longer operational.
National Cycle Network Route 71	Sustrans/county councils	Appleby to Northallerton section runs through the YDNP between Tan Hill and Leyburn.  20 miles in National Park	Not published as a separate challenge route. Details through <a href="http://www.sustrans.org.uk">www.sustrans.org.uk</a> .
Walney to Wear	Sustrans/county	Walney Island to	Fully signed regional cycle route. Promoted by

Route	Responsible organisation	Distance in National Park (total distance)	Comments
	councils	Sunderland. Runs through short section of YDNP around Tan Hill.  2 miles (153 miles)	Sustrans and through <a href="http://www.cyclingw2w.info">www.cyclingw2w.info</a> .
Way of the Roses	Sustrans/county councils	Morecambe to Bridlington. Runs through YDNP between Clapham and Greenhow.  40 miles (169 miles)	New coast to coast route launched in September 2010. YDNPA have been closely involved with the development of the route.  Will be promoted by Sustrans and other organisations. Map produced. <a href="http://www.wayoftheroses.info">www.wayoftheroses.info</a> .