

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

5th September 2017

AGENDA ITEM 9.8 – Peak and Northern Footpaths Society – request for membership

1 Background

1.1 The following request has been received from the above society; the note following was attached to their request.

Dear Clerk

We would like to introduce ourselves and invite your parish/town council to consider affiliating to the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society.

The Society was founded in 1894 to fight the closure of a footpath by the landowner in what is now the Peak District National Park. This was the Snake Path from Little Hayfield to Ladybower, and the Society's victory in getting it reopened and safeguarded in perpetuity was the first of many such successes we have achieved in our 122-year history.

The Society, which is a registered charity and run entirely by volunteers, has a proud tradition of offering its help to any person or organisation that seeks to protect or enhance the network of public rights of way in the 35 local authorities we cover in the Midlands and north of England.

We have helped members of the public who have found a right of way obstructed but were unsure how to go about getting the obstruction removed. We have helped people seeking to claim a well-used path as a right of way but unsure how to get it legally recognised as such. Our help is based on our extensive knowledge of the law on public rights of way and on our experience of how it applies.

We encourage the use of the path network by erecting the Society's distinctive green-and-white signposts at path junctions. These signposts reassure walkers of their route and help them avoid straying off the agreed path – a benefit to ramblers and landowners alike. We have over 500 such signposts in a wide variety of locations. Many of them have been paid for by members of the public or organisations to commemorate somebody.

By affiliating to the Society, your council will have at its fingertips a source of advice and expertise which you can call on at any time to help deal with a path problem. The cost of affiliation is £22.50 per annum.

In the meantime, we're attaching two documents we hope you will find useful. One is *A Guide to Footpath Law for Parish Councils* and the other is a brief one-page summary of what the Society has to offer (see below), should your council decide to affiliate to us.

If you would like someone from the Society to attend one of your council meetings, please ring our office on 0161 480 3565 to arrange a convenient time. Leave a message if no one is in, and we'll get back to you. Alternatively, email mail@pnfs.org.uk.

If you would like to explore our website, go to <http://www.peakandnorthern.org.uk/>

How the Society Can Assist A Parish Council With Regard To Public Rights Of Way

Jack Steel
Clerk to Parish Council

1. Advise on the making of an application for a definitive map modification order where there is considerable evidence of use of a path or more and the route is not recorded on the definitive map of public rights of way for the parish.
2. Advise on cases where the parish council wishes to oppose an application for a public path order to close or divert a public right of way. Where the society agrees that there are valid grounds for objection and the order is against the interests of walkers the Society will also object.
3. Where there is a longstanding obstruction of a path give advice as to whether there are grounds for making a representation under section 130(6) of the Highways Act 1980 to force the highway authority to take enforcement action to have the obstruction removed.
4. Where a path is out of repair and the matter has not been resolved despite requests to the highway authority for remedial action, the Society will advise as to the potential use of section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 to force the authority to put the path back into repair.
5. To make available the services of the Society where the parish council needs legal advice as to a question of law affecting a public right of way in the parish.
6. Advise on the production and display of a parish map showing all public paths and access land, where there is public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
7. Assist in the devising of walking routes in the parish to encourage use of public rights of way in the parish.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That members consider the request and decide on any future action to be taken.