

Access in the Nidderdale AONB



Most of the routes in Nidderdale AONB are across private land which the public has the legal right to access on public rights of way. In total there are 820 kilometres of public rights of way in the AONB.

There are five different types of public rights of way (PRoW):

- **Footpath** - for people on foot only.
- **Bridleway** - for people on foot, riding or leading a horse, with or without the right to drive cattle, or riding a bicycle.
- **Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)** - for people on foot, riding or leading a horse, with or without the right to drive cattle, riding a bicycle, driving a horse-drawn vehicle or driving a motor vehicle.
- **Road Used as Public Path (RUPP)** - for people on foot, riding or leading a horse, riding a bicycle, and possibly a right driving a horse-drawn vehicle or a motor vehicle.
- **Restricted Byways (RB)** - for people on foot, riding or leading a horse, with or without the right to drive cattle, and driving a vehicle other than a mechanically propelled vehicle.

All public roads, footpaths, bridleways, roads used as public footpaths and byways open to all traffic, are highways, and are maintained and protected under the Highways Act 1980. Unlike National Parks, AONB's are not responsible for their

maintenance. In Nidderdale AONB, North Yorkshire County Council are responsible for maintaining the condition of the rights of way.

The Definitive Map

The Definitive Map and Statement is the legal record of Public Rights of Way, showing all those routes where the public have the right to walk, ride and drive. The Definitive Map and Statement came into being following the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 when it was decided that there should be formal record of the different types of routes that the public had the right to use. Information was collected from Parishes in the 1950s, and each surveying authority produced a Definitive Map and Statement, (excluding some of the major urban areas of the country). The Statement provides a brief description of the status and position of each route listed by Parish.

You can inspect the Definitive Map and Statement at the County Public Rights of Way Office at County Hall. Some District Councils, Parish Councils and libraries have copies of the Definitive Map for the local areas.

Open Access land in Nidderdale AONB

Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000

This Act permits free access by the public to areas of open country and registered common land. Large areas of previously inaccessible land have been opened up for the public to use for 'open-air recreation'. In Nidderdale AONB nearly one third of the area is now considered open access land.

Access Land

Not all land is subject to the new access rights. Only the land defined below is classed as access land:

- **Open country** mountain, moor, heath and down;
- **Registered Common Land;** and,
- **Dedicated Land** land dedicated for open access by a public or private landowner.

There are a number of ways you can find out where access land is. The Countryside Agency's website has a section where you can view access areas. The County Council has copies of the conclusive map, which are available to view on request. New Ordnance Survey, Explorer series maps show the new access areas.

New Rights New Responsibilities

Open access gives you the freedom to walk freely over Access Land, however, there are some conditions you will need to be aware of. Landowners have 28 days a year when they can close parcels of their land. Closures are normally to ensure public safety while carrying out necessary management tasks such as heather burning. During these times you are prohibited from entering that parcel of land unless you are following an existing right of way. There are a number of ways you can find out about such closures. The Countryside Agency administer the closures and they will have up to date information available on their website. Access information points have been installed at popular locations where information on closures will be displayed.

Taking dogs onto open access land

If you are planning to take your dog on to access land with you, it will be necessary to find out what restrictions there are for that particular area.

Owners of grouse moors have the right to exclude dogs from the moor all year round. On all other access land you must use a fixed lead no more than two metres long at all times near livestock, and from 1 March to 31 July as this is the bird nesting season and lambing time - birds and lambs are at their

most vulnerable to dogs at this time of year. Again information about dog restrictions can be obtained from the Countryside Agency's website and at local information points.

Local Access Forums

Local access forums across the country were set up as advisory bodies under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. They provide advice to access authorities with regard to access issues and developments.

There are three local access forums in North Yorkshire. They include the North Yorkshire Local Access Forum (covering the area outside the two national parks), the Yorkshire Dales Access Forum and the North York Moors Local Access Forum.

Local access forums are designed to represent a wide range of views, bringing together interested parties and expertise and provide advice on a range of access issues, all of which aim to improve public access to 'open access land'.

Members of each of the local access forums are chosen to represent a broad cross-section of stakeholder views, including user interests (such as the Ramblers Association), landowner interests, members of the relevant County Council or National Park Authority and other local interests such as conservation, tourism and business.

Useful information

Open Access Helpline: 0845 1003298

Access website: www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Access e-mail: openaccess@countryside.gov.uk

Ordnance Survey: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk