

PEAK & NORTHERN FOOTPATHS SOCIETY

HELPING WALKERS & PROTECTING FOOTPATHS
SINCE 1894



Signpost S038 repainted and photographed by David Morton ~ October 2024

ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS

2024



Invitation to Members

PNFS Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 17 May 2025

at

Stockport Guildhall

169 Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UA

By road From Junction 1 of the M60, follow signs for the centre of Stockport until you reach the A6. Going south the Guildhall is 300 yards past the town hall opposite Stockport College. The free car park is accessed via Brentnall Street.

Rail Stockport railway station is ten minutes' walk away.

Bus The frequent 192 service and the 199 and 392 services call at the bus stop positioned directly outside the building.

10:30	Tea and coffee are available on arrival
11:00	AGM commences
12:30	Cold buffet lunch*
13:30	Guest speaker - David Stirling <i>The History of the Goyt Valley</i>
14:30	Open forum
15:30	Meeting closes

*A donation is invited to help defray the catering costs which are £13 per person

Agenda

- 1a Minutes of the previous meeting**
To be agreed and matters arising discussed.
- 1b Minutes of the last EGM**
To be agreed.
- 2 Reports and accounts**
To receive and consider:
 - the accounts
 - the Annual Report
 - the report of the independent examiner for the year ended 2024
- 3 To appoint an Independent Examiner**
This must be proposed and seconded from the floor.
- 4 Election of members to the managing committee who will be the charity trustees**
 - To re-elect Kathy McLean as Chair
 - To re-elect Paul Easthope as Treasurer
 - To re-elect Dave Brown
 - To re-elect Mel Bale
 - To re-elect David Gosling
 - To re-elect David Morton
 - To re-elect Chad Wilkinson
 - To re-elect Tim Lewis
 - To elect Simon Robinson
- 5 To re-elect David Bratt as President**
- 6 To agree to affiliate to**
 - the Open Spaces Society,
 - the Ramblers,
 - CPRE
 - Peak District Green Lanes Alliance

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PEAK AND NORTHERN FOOTPATHS SOCIETY

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Annual Review

Kathy McLean, PNFS Chair



Twenty twenty-four was the 130th anniversary of the Peak and Northern Footpath Society. The remarkable tenacity and commitment of members and volunteers from 1894 to 2024 was celebrated on 15 August by a number of members and volunteers [see *Signpost* 82]. The success of the society depends on its members and volunteers, so we were delighted to appoint two new Trustees in June last year, Simon Robinson and Chloe Jeffries. Unfortunately, Chloe has since stood down, but I am pleased to say that Simon has continued and brings experience in communications and publicity. A huge thank you to all our volunteers many of whom give hours every week to ensure that we continue to achieve our objects.

Another key milestone was the publication of our five-year strategy, launched at our half year meeting, after helpful input from members, who fed back following the Annual General Meeting and after a draft was circulated. There are many ambitions in the strategy and the Trustees have now created a set of priorities to be addressed in 2025. The full strategy is available on the website www.pnfs.org.uk.

We were delighted that Jack Cornish accepted our invitation to become a Vice President. He is Head of Paths at the Ramblers and author of *The Lost Paths*. During the year, there were some notable successes. For example, Ramsden Road in Kirklees was in disrepair. PNFS took Kirklees Council to court. Kirklees requested an adjournment to have time to provide a budget, a design and a timetable to repair the route, which PNFS accepted. Much of the repair work has subsequently been completed. This victory not only restored access for the community but also demonstrated the effectiveness of our advocacy efforts. This success was due to the hard work of Andy Leader, supported by colleague Courts and Inquiries officers. Andy was required to attend court, give evidence, and instruct legal representatives. The case was so successful that we received reimbursement for some of our fees.

Other successes have followed, for example, John Harker succeeded in helping a local resident, to have footpath Risley 19 opened after it had been closed for twenty years. Another notable success was the Footbridge on Keighley 29, part of the Bradford Millennium Way.

We describe these in more detail in *Signpost*, as one of the ways we can demonstrate the impact of the work done by volunteers. *Signpost* has always been an important vehicle for sharing our achievements, providing updates, and thanking those who make our progress possible. We encourage everyone to read the upcoming issue for a detailed account of our most recent accomplishments.

Our footpath inspectors do a brilliant job inspecting, reviewing, and reporting on public rights of way in their parishes. Simon Worrall, Footpath Inspector Coordinator, has spent the year contacting inspectors, establishing who is still active, and recruiting new inspectors. A conference for all footpath inspectors was held on 1 March.

Other volunteers continue to do amazing work, often hidden from direct view. For example, our small team of Assessors receive and respond to many enquiries to Taylor House. John Fisher expertly deals with faults reported to PNFS, the majority via our Pathchecker app. In 2024, there were 476 reports, a similar number to the previous year.

Our signposts, which you see on your walks across the region, continue to represent us well. David Morton and his small group of volunteers have worked hard, mainly on repairs this year, but would still like to have some new places to put them, especially in areas with few. New locations for signposts not only help guide walkers but also serve as a testament to the ongoing efforts and presence of our society in the region.

Courts and Inquiries and Area Officers provide much of the expertise which is vital when we challenge a council or respond to a proposal to deviate or extinguish a public right of way. We still have a shortage of volunteers for these roles. One of the key priorities in our strategy relates to both increasing the number of volunteers and planning for succession.

One of the enabling themes in our strategy is the need to increase the diversity of the society. We welcome people from all backgrounds and walks of life but acknowledge that we have more to do to become more representative of the people who use not just rural footpaths but urban and suburban footpaths. This means reaching out to communities who may not be fully aware of the work we do or how they can get involved. We would like to broaden our membership and volunteer base, doing so would enrich our perspectives and improve our efforts in preserving and promoting footpaths for all.

Paul Easthope has continued to provide stewardship for our resources, and I am pleased to report that we have a healthy balance sheet. We have spent less on footbridges and footpath improvements this year but hope that will increase again next year.

All our Trustees have worked hard this year, each contributing both general and specific expertise. I would like to thank them all.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to PNFS this year. The combined efforts of our dedicated members and volunteers are what truly make a difference. Together, we can look forward to another year of protecting and enhancing the footpaths we cherish.

Officers and Volunteers

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Yorkshire (excluding
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Andy Leader
(Kirklees)
Udo Pope
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Mel Bale*

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Nigel Howe

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Simon Worrall

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Andrew Harter

FILING CLERK

David C Brown*

OTHER TRUSTEES

Tim Lewis
Chad Wilkinson
Simon Robinson

*Officers marked * are also
trustees*

Footpath Inspectors, Inspections and Faults

Footpath Inspectors and Inspections - *Simon Worrall, Inspection*

Co-ordinator, Linda Smith, Volunteer Co-ordinator

The Society's objectives are to monitor, protect and improve the 17,600 miles of public rights of way (PROW) in our area. A team of volunteer footpath inspectors are fundamental in helping the Society achieve these objectives by monitoring PROW for faults, reporting faults to their Highway Authorities and thus protecting and improving the PROW in their respective areas. Footpath inspectors are asked to walk all the paths in their area at least once every two years and more frequently if they can.

The Society retains good inspection coverage in large areas of Derbyshire and Cheshire East where we have a strong member base. However, we have weaker coverage in significant parts of Lancashire (including Burnley, Preston, Chorley), Doncaster, Liverpool, Stoke, Wakefield, Oldham and large parts of Staffordshire where our membership numbers are lower. During 2024 however we have improved coverage in the Sefton and West Lancashire areas and added further inspectors to South Staffordshire. Notably we have difficulty in attracting inspectors into the more urban areas of our region where PROW can be particularly important for connectivity and are under greater threat from planning decisions. The Society recognises the need to develop inspector numbers in these areas in the future.

At the start of 2024 we had 180 volunteer inspectors. During the period we have been contacting inspectors with little or no inspection activity since 2021/22. Changes of personal circumstances has resulted in a significant number of inspectors stepping down, 49 in all, nearly 30% of the inspection base. However, we have been active and appointed 34 new volunteers, many new members of the Society and some in areas that we have had poor representation in the past. Existing inspectors have also offered to take on more parishes so we have retained our coverage at similar levels to 2023 – some 47% of all parishes in the Society's region.

In 2024 some 7,500 path inspections were recorded on our database (2023 – 8,000). 2550 faults were recorded (2023 – 2,500).

We ended 2024 with 165 volunteer inspectors and since the start of 2025 have seen the rate of attrition fall and are pleased to report an uptick in new inspectors.

The Society is grateful to every volunteer footpath inspector for their time in helping us further our objectives.

Path Checker Faults Report - *John Fisher, Path Checker Fault Co-ordinator*

We provide a service to members and to the public allowing footpath faults to be reported to the Society, followed up by an inspector and reported to the relevant Highway Authority.

476 footpath faults were reported during 2024, very similar to the previous year (487). The Path Checker application (app) accounted for 80% of all reports. Other reports came via the website or by email.

218 people used the system. Of these, 122 were new reporters sending their first reports this year. Many of the new reporters have so far sent only one report, whereas the more regular users sent multiple ones. The standard response to new reporters now includes a link to membership.

Each report is forwarded to the inspector for the relevant parish. Around 80% of these were acknowledged – slightly down on last year. 113 Inspectors received at least one report, and thanks are due for this extra work, particularly those in the more popular areas. Where there is no inspector, the Area Officer or another volunteer responds. Cheshire East recorded a big increase in reports, up from 52 to 84, with other areas recording the same as or slightly fewer than 2023. Yorkshire (both South and West) continued to be very under-represented (4%). Consideration is being given to increasing publicity for the Path Checker App here.

The most common reports, all similar to last year, related to stiles (134), signposting (65), obstructions (59), overgrowth (55) and bridges (24). Reports relating to floods and waterlogging rose to 36, perhaps a reflection of increasingly severe weather events.



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Lost Ways

Ken Brockway

Like our walks, the Lost Ways work has had ups and downs, so the big up at the end of 2024 was news that the 2031 cut off will be abolished, when parliamentary time allows - but as usual a caveat. We, that's you and I, need to keep footpath issues in sight of our MPs.

PNFS had partial success with a short link at Horsley, a village just north of Derby. The county council made an order for a footpath with a width varying between 5.4 and 7.7 m, but this received objections. The Planning Inspector modified this width to 0.6m, based on evidence provided by the landowner and agreed to by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) without giving PNFS a chance to provide its own evidence. So we now have a thin strip down the centre of a wide track. We have made another application to correct this.

The Secretary of State direction reported last year for a path in Riber has had effect and DCC has agreed to make an order. Discouraging signs on the route have been removed, so it looks like a win to provide a surfaced path which avoids an often muddy field.

We also had a surprise when a DCC report arrived agreeing to make an order for a disputed path, Osleston and Thurcaston Footpath 40. Shame it's taken so long, because the field through which the path runs now has holidays chalets in it, so the owner is likely to object. If only DCC had acted when it was first aware of the issue.

I was delighted to recently walk through the farmyard at Dale Abbey along an excellent and inviting wide track that local horse riders successfully claimed, or should that be reclaimed. I recall visiting the area as a child when we followed the claimed route. The PINS decision offers a useful decision on poor plotting on the Definitive Map, which we can use elsewhere.

Another success was in Wirksworth, where we supported a parish council user claim with historical evidence. All these changes need bringing to public attention; interesting to note that they sometimes appear on OS maps before the DCC online map.

I do still wonder if, rather than lost ways we should be looking at unrecorded ways. Analysis of the Derbyshire modification order register has shown that most user evidence applications are successful. These provide paths that folk have used and want to use but are then, usually, blocked by landowners. With more landowner declarations reducing the likely success of user evidence claims in future, we need to protect unrecorded walked paths in addition to recorded paths, some of which never get used.

Courts and Inquiries

Manchester, Salford and Trafford - *Martin Hampar*

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 and Lancashire.

There have been recent changes in rights of way personnel in all three of Manchester, Salford and Trafford, and I have been attending meetings with officers at all three authorities.

I have continued to collaborate with Ramblers groups in several areas within Greater Manchester on matters of common interest and concern. I have also continued my involvement with several Definitive Map Modifications Orders relating to Brooks Drive in Trafford. I have been working with Ramblers to provide user input to a review of their Definitive Map by Manchester City Council.

I have responded to consultations covering Public Path Orders proposing changes to the rights of way network in several Greater Manchester districts, and planning applications that may affect public rights of way in Trafford, Manchester and Salford.

Derbyshire and Derby City - *Rhoda Barnett*

The budget constraints on both Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Derby City rights of way services have worsened in 2024. A new rights of way team leader for DCC has tried her best, but it is an uphill battle for both councils to fulfil their legal duties to protect the rights of the users of public paths.

This has been most apparent in the removal of obstructions and the repair of surfaces. I was given authority by the Courts and Inquiries Committee to serve several legal notices on DCC, seeking to resolve problems which affected walkers the most, but the council has become adept at doing just sufficient to stall the process, which leads to the Society applying to the court. As a lack of resources is a valid defence in the case of obstruction removal notices it is very difficult to pursue notices under these circumstances. However, four diversion orders to resolve obstruction problems were made by DCC; one has been confirmed, and the other three are the subject of ongoing discussions to remove objections.

With respect to the making of modification orders to correct the definitive map and statement (DMMOs), I assisted DCC with the process of the determination by the Planning Inspectorate of five orders, three of which have now been confirmed, resulting

in the legal recognition of three public rights of way. The outcomes of the other two are still pending, partly because the Planning Inspectorate is also severely under resourced. Following detailed investigation of evidence by Society officers and others, resulting in applications by the Society, an order was made by DCC to add a path in Hayfield to the definitive map, and it will soon be making an order for a path in Buxton. I have continued to help the Society's Lost Ways co-ordinator to make DMMO applications - see the relevant report in this document.

Other more routine work continued: comments made on 157 planning applications, resulting in many cases by the safeguarding of public rights threatened by developments, and in improvements to public paths. Comments were also made on 14 proposed public path orders and 21 made orders, both diversions and extinctions, with many subsequent revisions and even withdrawals in a few cases, protecting public rights within the limits of the tests in the relevant legislation.

I have continued to work with the local Ramblers, the Peak District Green Lanes Alliance and the Denby Footpaths Group, and to a lesser extent the British Horse Society, with our common aim of protecting and enhancing the use of public rights of way.

I am very grateful for all the help given by the Society's officers and inspectors; without their diligence, much of the work which I have carried out would have been impossible.

Tameside - *Udo Pope*

There have been no new instances of obstructed or overgrown paths brought to my attention in the last year. However, I have continued to press Tameside Council to clear overgrown vegetation on public rights of way that our footpath inspectors had notified to the Council in previous years and which had not yet been cleared. Although relatively slow, there has been further progress on these.

As set out in last year's annual report, in September 2023 I had notified Tameside Council of my intention to serve statutory notices under either or both sections 56 and 103A of the Highways Act in respect of four public footpaths within Hyde that were overgrown by vegetation and, in the case of one of those footpaths, also obstructed by a fence. After an initial prompt and positive response from the Council, progress stalled due to budgetary pressures, with the Council stating that two of the paths were considered low priority and that none of the paths were likely to be cleared in the 23/24 financial year. I continued to chase progress on the four paths and one of the paths was in fact cleared prior to the 24/25 financial year. However, the other three paths remained obstructed well into the new financial year. Accordingly, on 9 August 2024 I served section 56 and section 130A notices on Tameside Council in respect of these three uncleared paths. I am happy to report that this led to two of the paths being cleared not long after the service of the notices. However, in the case of one of the paths, Hyde Footpath 166, which is also obstructed by a fence, the Council finally informed me in January of this year that the quoted cost of clearing the vegetation on

the path (which is wholly overgrown and out of use) was greater than the Council's remaining maintenance budget for footpath clearance for the current year. Accordingly they intend to complete the vegetation clearance works and to re-open the footpath in the 25/26 financial year. I will continue to chase progress on this.

In both of the last two Annual Reports I mentioned the ongoing obstruction of Mossley Footpath 186 (in respect of which I have previously threatened to serve a s130A notice) and the need for a potentially dangerous gulley to be bridged before it could be reopened. Disappointingly, there is no further progress to report this year. I shall continue to press for the installation of a footbridge over the gulley and the removal of the obstructing fence, so that this footpath can also be re-opened.

South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire (excluding Kirklees) and Stockport - John Harker

"This is the age of the train." Remember that TV advert? Maybe that sums up my 2024, with a strong hint of irony. Railway improvements are generally to be welcomed, budget overruns aside. The downside is the inevitable impact on the public path network. Fortunately, this Society doesn't cover East Anglia and southern England, where many "at grade" crossings of rail lines have been extinguished, or diverted onto circuitous new routes that often involve big detours and dangerous roadside experiences. However, we haven't escaped in the territory covered by this Society.

I represented the Society at a 12-day public inquiry in February-March 2024 held in Leeds. Network Rail (NR) wanted (amongst many other non-path related matters) to extinguish several "at grade" path crossings of the line east of Leeds as part of the Trans Pennine Upgrade scheme, which is ongoing. The Society, on my recommendation, objected to two of these closures, one a footpath, the other a bridleway. Faced with a barrister representing NR and an army of technical experts, it was hard going. It wasn't helped by the fact that Leeds Council, which had objected to the bridleway closure order, then announced at the outset of proceedings that it had decided that the cost of opposing the closure was too excessive and it would present no witnesses from the Public Rights of Way section, who would have been expected to give evidence. Instead their written statements could not be cross examined or tested, and thus carried little evidential weight with the appointed Inspector. Unfortunately, the outcome was that both of the crossings have been closed with no real attempt to provide suitable alternatives.

The train theme continued with Ecclesfield Footpath 100 in Sheffield, where the path crosses "at grade" the line between Sheffield and Barnsley. NR closed the crossing due to vandalism of track side safety equipment. A routine temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was made. Standard procedure, nothing to see here. A site meeting of all interested parties in 2023 agreed, or so I thought, that the only feasible alternative to permanent closure was a new footbridge for which funding, we were told, was not

immediately available. Fast forward to last year, I found out that the TRO had lapsed without NR seeking an extension to it, as can happen. FP 100 was now illegally obstructed by NR fencing. What's more, NR now disowned the verbal agreement about a new footbridge being erected. An attempt by the Society to persuade the Highway Authority (HA) to take enforcement action failed. The HA felt that it had no powers under Health & Safety legislation to enforce reopening and replacement of safety equipment. The fear was that a reopened path would risk accidents for which the HA would get the blame. I thought that the HA could use the Highways Act 1980 section 143 to enforce obstruction removal, but the Society was reluctant to risk the financial exposure of a court case that might arise if we had to take action against the HA under section 130a of the Highways Act 1980. We have reached an impasse. But recently the local Parish Council and the Lib Dem councillor on Sheffield Council are involved and possibly the relevant MP, so watch this space.

Other highlights (or low lights) of 2024 involved a second trip to Leeds in December last year to oppose, at public inquiry, the diversion of Leeds Footpath 207 to allow the development of an enclosed games arena for the adjacent academy school. Many local residents were against the diversion and we were aided at the inquiry by a number of local organisations who gave evidence of the importance of the cobbled path and its history. Allegedly, Oliver Cromwell's army used this very path on its way to its victory near York at Marston Moor in 1644. Unfortunately, Oliver was not available to verify this on the date of the inquiry. I suspect this diversion will be confirmed, notwithstanding our (and local) efforts to prevent it. We have raised the Society's profile, however, in an area where we were weak.

To end on a happier note, the footpath in Risley near Derby, which this Society helped the applicant get added to the Definitive Map by a confirmed Modification Order in 2023, finally became available to use. The Society had to threaten legal action against the County Council in early 2024 to get them to force the landowner-objector to do the works necessary to make the path available to use. Its reopening, after being blocked off in 2003, was celebrated by appearances by yours truly on BBC East Midlands today on prime time local TV and radio, as well as in the Derby Telegraph. Rumours about a statue of me being erected in the village by grateful local residents are, I'm sad to say, not based in fact!

Consultations and Orders

Brian Hamilton, Assessor

At the beginning of the year Alan Pickup, Phil Rheinberg, David Mulvey and I continued the work of assessors in the Consultation and Orders section, mainly working from home. Unfortunately, due to other pressures David Mulvey was unable to continue.

I would like to thank the Society's inspectors for the good work and prompt reports they give us, and the Courts and Inquiries officers for their support. David Brown files all our documents digitally at Taylor House and also puts them on the cloud where they can be accessed by inspectors and other officers.

We have been involved in 8 objections during the year. We have withdrawn our objections in two of these; the rest are ongoing.

The statistics for the year are listed below, (previous year's figures in brackets):

Orders 210 (146)

Consultations 272 (291)

Confirmed Orders 65 (64)

Objections 8 (5)

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Signposts

David Morton, Signpost Officer

The number of new signposts fell this year from 19 in 2023 to 7. I thank again those four members who suggested their locations. More suggestions are needed, especially for locations outside the Peak District, West Pennine Moors and Ribble Valley.

The donation to cover the full cost of a new signpost remained £800. This includes a modest amount to cover future maintenance. We are still maintaining signposts dating all the way back to 1905, so in the long term, maintenance costs are met out of PNFS funds. Our minimum required donation remained £500, but we asked donors, if possible, to pay the full amount and those who pay UK income tax to Gift Aid their donations.

By December we had a total of 582 signposts, ie a nett increase of only 4. This total included 8 fingerposts, 5 commemorative wall plates and 2 toposcopes (viewpoint indicators). In April S385 was reported to me as stolen from its secluded spot near Lowgill Parish Church, Tatham PC, probably in late 2023. Phone calls to the PC and new owners were inconclusive and the PC quickly replaced the sign with one of their own. S511 in Hope Woodlands was also stolen. PDNP at Fairholmes were duly informed and said that it is a problem area re signage. 511 was previously uprooted by vandals then replanted by PDNP volunteers at my request. Our short-lived third toposcope on nearby Win Hill was also stolen within a week of its installation in 2019. Our memorial and Join Us plaques have also been stolen in that area and nearby Abney Moor. The cross-plate on 504 near Derwent Edge was smashed by vandals and 93 at Hope was smashed by a hedge-cutter. 93 will be replaced away from the hedge in 2025.

All our signposts can be seen on our website: www.pnfs.org.uk > what we do (at the top in orange)> signposts and bridges> here (in orange).

New Signposts in 2024

S653 at GR SJ 99222 75086 on Rainow FPs 1 and 2 at Thursbitch ruin

S654 at GR SK 19311 74105 on Longstone Moor at FPs Gt. Longstone 21 and 34.

Donated by Notts Rock and Heather Club 1953-2023

S655 at SJ 95469 64419 on Winble FPs 34 and 37 at Whitelee Farm

S656 at SJ 95598 64240 on Winble FPs 34 and 38 by River Dane at Gig Hall footbridge.

Donated by vice-chair David Gosling and commemorating PNFS's 130th anniversary.

S657 at SD 63345 20826 on Lancs 9-3 55/56/57/31 Ratten Clough ruin, Brinscall

S658 at SD 63317 20708 on Lancs 9-21 31 at Ratten Clough, Wheelton Moor, Brinscall

S659 at GR SK 12962 68042 on Flagg Moor at FPs Flagg 1 and 2

Maintenance

With so many signposts to maintain, I was very pleased by the response of those members who clean, paint and/or now send me reports and photographs of our signposts, especially those in outlying places like Wakefield, Sprotborough (Doncaster), Thorpe Salvin (near Worksop), Ashover and North Wingfield, Belper, Kedleston, Wootton, Ipstones, Stafford, Thurstaston (Wirral), Ormskirk, Silverdale, Tatham and Bowland.

Plaques on 385 (Abney Moor) and in Hope Woodlands were replaced using Resistorx screws, which are very hard to remove. 7 signs were repainted using either wood repair half-posts (71, 130, 213, 271, 320), whole new wood post (427), recycled plastic (124) or recycled angle iron post (494). When our wooden posts rot, their sound sections are saved and recycled as repair posts. 38 at Brough near Hope was shot-blasted and powder-coated, then highlighted by myself. A small number of plates and posts were wedged and a great many were variously cleaned, touched up or fully repainted or cleared of vegetation by a small but growing number of PNFS members. My thanks to them and our contractor John Hodgson.



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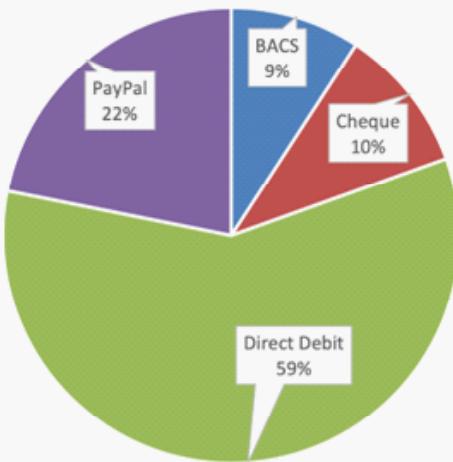
At last year's AGM the membership voted almost unanimously to accept the trustees' proposal to increase the Society's subscription rates by approximately 30%. As Membership Secretary I was more than a little concerned that the increase might mean that some members might be put off renewing. I'm delighted to say that doesn't appear to have been the case. The table below shows that our membership numbers at the time of writing (mid-February) are actually slightly higher than at the same time last year. In fact, a number of people have told me that the increase was long overdue.

Membership	Jan 2024	Jan 2025
Individual	683	678
Household	210	243
Affiliate	89	92
AffFree	89	106
Concessionary	7	8
Honorary	32	33
VP	6	7
Total	1326	1350

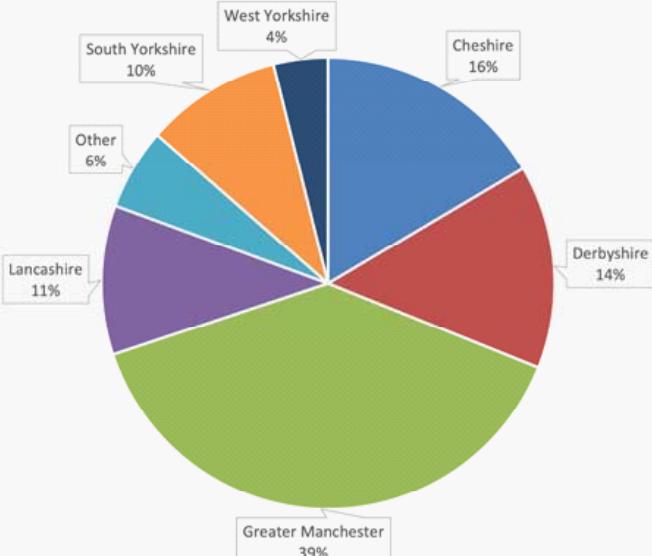
My role has expanded a little over the last 12 months. I have assumed responsibility for monitoring our direct debit and BACS payments. This reduced our treasurer's workload, and enabled me to be more responsive to membership renewals. Getting to grips with the systems that CAF and the Co-operative Bank use to collect and process our payments has been challenging to say the least. They could both learn a few lessons from PayPal!

The chart below shows which payment methods our members use. Direct debits (DD) are by far the most popular. Once set up, these payments are automatic, and from the Society's point of view we would encourage all members to adopt this method. A DD form is on our website and can be found at pnfs.org.uk/join. Once completed, just email it to me and I will do the rest, and you'll be spared my nagging renewal letters and emails. PayPal and BACS are also very popular payment methods. I think the pandemic accelerated the move to online payments; certainly the use of cheques seems to be on the decline. Postage has become increasingly expensive, so if you still prefer to pay by cheque, PLEASE just use a second-class stamp and save yourself 80p!

Payment Types



Affiliated Groups



The distribution of membership always interests me, and this year I've chosen to highlight where our affiliated groups are based. Not surprisingly, their locations are very similar to those of individual and household members. Greater Manchester, Derbyshire and Cheshire account for almost 70% of the groups. Numbers are much lower for the remaining counties that we cover. The 'Others' figure includes 3 groups from Nottinghamshire, so that county has more affiliates than Staffordshire and Merseyside combined (they are included in the Others figure).

Our 5 Year Strategy has been mentioned elsewhere in this Annual Report. I have been asked to lead our 'Growth and Engagement' subgroup to progress that aspect of the strategy. At the time of writing its remit has yet to be discussed and agreed, but as I've said to several people already, its title is clearly a starter for 10! To me, Growth and Engagement should apply to most if not all aspects of the Society and the work that we do.

Whilst our membership numbers have slightly increased in the last year, we are still a relatively small organisation regionally. Most of our new members either join to become footpath inspectors or because they have seen our signs whilst out walking. One of my hopes for the subgroup is that we can find better and new ways of making ourselves known across ALL the counties that we cover, and maybe even beyond, and thus grow our membership numbers.

We are actively looking for more people to become involved in the work of the Society. If you are tempted, please do get in touch.

Work has continued to develop the Society's website. There is now a members area, pnfs.org.uk/members. Its contents include the latest issue of our quarterly Signpost magazine, access to the minutes of the Society's various regular meetings and read-only access to our unique Footpath Inspection Database (FID). Access to the members area will be via your membership number entered as your username and your personal password. Existing members should have already received their login credentials by email; please email me at membership@pnfs.org.uk if you haven't received them as yet.

Our FID has undergone a significant redevelopment in the last 12 months. It was previewed at our Inspectors Conference in early March and will soon be fully operational. The new version presents fault information in a clearer and more manageable way. The underlying data structure has been modified, making it more straightforward to monitor how faults are being managed and hopefully resolved. Our thanks, as always, go to Roger Fielding who has designed and developed the FID.

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 if you have any questions or ideas about membership matters or our websites.

Financial Review

Paul Easthope, Treasurer

Accounting basis

These 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 up £11,380 to £58,683: 19.4%. This was mainly due to donations doubling to £16,670.
- * Members’ subscriptions increased slightly to £16,769. Affiliations were down slightly to £1,828.
- * General donations nearly doubled, up £8,122 to £16,670. One notable donation came from the sale of the PNFS Squeeze Stile calendar; £735.
- * Gift aid was slightly higher at £5,513.
- * Signpost donations were higher at £4,173.
- * Dividends and interest were up nearly 50%: £3,158 to £9,823.

Taking out legacy income, remaining income was higher: up by £13,540 at £54,843.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure was appreciably lower by £31,218 to £43,090. This was nearly all due again to a large fall in footpath improvements expenditure, signpost expenditure and the repayment of solicitors fees of £3,535.

- * Taylor House costs were similar to last year at £3,482.
- * Signpost costs were down appreciably to £4,632.
- * Footbridge expenditure was higher than last year at £6,306.
- * Footpath improvements costs were down £13,398 to £5,975.
- * Travel costs were down by £529 to £4,790
- * Printing costs were down £511 at £5,719.
- * Postage/phone/stationery costs were slightly higher at £4,230
- * Computer costs were the same at £4,906
- * The cost of holding our Annual General Meeting and our Half Year meeting was down £77 to £945
- * Insurance was slightly higher at £1,392.
- * Subscriptions/donations/training costs were up £276 to £630.
- * Footpath Improvements were down an appreciable amount by £13,398 to £5,975.

Schemes funded this year: Sandbach phase 3 £1,625 and Bolton FP338. £4,350

- * Legal/prof./secretarial costs at only £27 are artificially low. This was caused by £3,535 being repaid to the Society by Kirklees MBC It was part repayment of £4,200 solicitors' fees paid by the Society included in last year's accounts to apply legal pressure to reinstate the surface of the bridleway known as "Ramsden Road"
- * Sundries fell by £39 to £55.

This resulted in a surplus for the year of £15,593, compared with a deficit of £27,005 last year.

Assets

The balance sheet is £23,125 higher due to the £15,593 P&L surplus and capital growth of our investments of £7,532: total £23,125. New balance £459,457.

Our investments rose in value to £189,859, including £4,068 cash held waiting to be reinvested with Redmayne Bentley, our investment broker. The capital growth of £7,532 plus dividend income of £4,018, being a total of £11,550, resulted in a total return of 6.33%

Current assets were up £15,593 to £208,943.

Direct debits subscriptions

CAF (Charity Aid Foundation Bank) collects our direct debits. Please note you no longer see on your statements and online bank details any mention of PNFS. Instead, you see "Charity Donation" followed by a reference number, either FRS (6 numbers), 10, 11 or 12 (seven numbers). Collection dates are 1st and 15th of the month.

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



Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from 01/01/2024 to 31/12/2024

CC16a

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 £
A1 Receipts				
Subscriptions	16,769		16,769	15,771
Affiliations	1,828		1,828	1,906
Legacies, bequests	3,840		3,840	6,000
Donations general	16,670		16,670	8,548
Donations signposts & footbridges		4,173	4,173	3,210
Gift Aid tax	5,513		5,513	5,052
Interest/Dividends	9,823		9,823	6,665
Miscellaneous	67		67	151
<i>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</i>	54,510	4,173	58,683	47,303
A2 Asset and investment sales				
Redmayne Bentley Investments bought			0	21,514
Transfer from Redmayne Bentley cash account to investments			0	1,062
<i>Sub total</i>	0	0	0	22,576
<i>Total receipts</i>	54,510	4,173	58,683	69,879
A3 Payments				
Taylor House running costs	3,482		3,482	3,512
Signpost & Footbridges	6,766	4,173	10,939	16,950
Travel & Subsistence	4,790		4,790	5,319
Printing, Copying, newsletter	5,719		5,719	6,230
Postage Telephone Stationery	4,230		4,230	4,131
Computer, Software & maintenance	4,906		4,906	4,906
Functions / Fundraising costs	945		945	1,022
Insurance	1,392		1,392	1,233
Subscriptions, Donations, Training	630		630	354
Footpath Improvements projects	5,975		5,975	19,373
Legal Professional & Secretarial	27		27	11,184
Badge purchases, bank charges & Sundries	55		55	94
<i>Sub total</i>	38,917	4,173	43,090	74,308
P & L SURPLUS				
A4 Asset and investment purchases				
Redmayne Bentley Investments bought			0	21,514
Transferred from Redmayne Bentley cash account to Investments			0	1,062
<i>Sub total</i>	0	0	0	22,576
<i>Total payments</i>	38,917	4,173	43,090	96,884
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	15,593		15,593	-49,581
A6 Cash funds last year end				
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	135,490	57,860	193,350	242,931
	151,083	57,860	208,943	193,350

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds			
	Savings accounts	127,049	60,310
	Current accounts & petty cash	21,584	0
	<i>Total cash funds</i>	148,633	60,310
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			

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

Signature

Treasurer

Paul Easthope
Karen Rea

Chair

Date of approval

22/1/2025

22/1/2025

Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

S

Report

Section A

Independent Examiner's

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2024

Charity no

212219

Set out on pages

Twenty three.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Alan A. Clements

Date:

4th March 2025

Name:

Alan A. Clements Rev'd

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Fellow Association of Charity Independent Examiners

Address:

15 Carleton Road, Great Knowley, Chorley PR6 8TQ

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, upon application, to honorary membership

President

David Bratt

Vice Presidents

Kate Ashbrook
Mr and Mrs A F Bennet
Jack Cornish
Norman Edwards
Mrs Gwynneth Littleton
Ian McMillan

Other Honorary Members

Hilda Bowler	Alan Hooley
Eva Burling	Mr A Howcroft
Barrie Clark	Judith Hunt
Wade Cooper	Cliff and Marina Law
Michael Davies	Roy Lomas
Peter Edwards	Pat Moneypenny
Mrs M Frankland	Terry and Vera Norris
Ian Gibbon	David and Margaret O'Leary
John and Audrey Grimsey	Mr C H Shaw
Margaret Haigh	David Sissons
John Harker	Hilary Summerscales
Philip and Anne Harris	Anne Watson
Jean Hibbert	Peter Williams
David and Alma Hilliker	Ted Wolfe
David Hilton	Keith Wykes
David Hinde	

Affiliated Groups

Abbotsfield Fellwalkers of Flixton
Activity in Retirement Macclesfield
Alderley Edge, Wilmslow & District FP Society
Altringham Rambling Club
Anchor Ramblers
Anderton Parish Council
Ashton-u-Lyne & District Walking Club
Billington and Langho Parish Council
Blackburn Rambling Association
Blackrod Town Council
Bolton CHA Rambling Club
Bolton Ramblers Group
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 Parish Council
Chapel-en-le-Frith Rambling Club
Cheshire Tally Ho Hare & Hounds Club
Clayton le Dale Parish Council
Crescent Ramblers Northwich
CROWS
Dark Peak Bridleways Association
Denby Footpaths Group
Derby Nomad Ramblers
Derbyshire Pennine Club
Disley Footpaths Society
Dore Village Society
Eccles Rambling & Social Club
Grindleton Parish Council
Halifax Rambling and Social Club
Hanliensian Rambling Club
Hayfield Parish Council
Helsby Parish Council
HF Bolton
HF Bury Group
HF Nottingham Group
HF Warrington Rambling Club
High Peak Ramblers
Hulme Walfield Somerford Booths Parish Council
Hunshelf Parish Council
Macclesfield Rambling Club
Manchester and Salford Ramblers Group
Manchester Pedestrian Club
Manchester Rambling Club
Manchester Weekend Walkers Ramblers Group
Marple District Rambling Club
Melbourne Footpaths Group
Merseyside & West Cheshire Area RA
Mid Cheshire Footpath Society
Mossley Town Council
North Turton Parish Council
Northenden Walkers
Oldham Wednesday Walkers
Oread Mountaineering Club
Osbaldeston Parish Council
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
RA Trafford Group
Ramsgrave Parish Council
Red Rope (Manchester)
Rochdale CHA Rambling Club
Rochdale Ramblers
Rossendale Ramblers
Saddleworth Pedestrians
Saddleworth Runners
Sale Walking and Activity Group
Salesbury Parish Council
Sandbach Footpath Group
Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group
Sheffield 40s Walking Group
Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers
Shirland & Higham Parish Council
Stockport Rambling & Social Club
Stockport Walkers
Stockport Walking and Outdoor Group
Sutton-in-Ashfield and District Rambling Club
Tameside Ramblers
The Irregulars
The Rucksack Club
The Strollers
Trafford Walkers
U3A Sale Walking Group
U3A Warrington Walking Group
Whaley Bridge Town Council
Whalley Parish Council
Wilpshire Parish Council
Wirksworth Town Council
Wirral Footpaths & Open Spaces Preservation Soc.
Woolston Parish Council

Area Officers and Inspectors

Barnsley	John Alexander	Derbyshire -Amber Valley	Debby Pickvance
<i>Area Officer</i>	Quentin Blagg	<i>Area Officer</i>	Simon Thompson
Chris Davison	David Brown	Rhoda Barnett	David Tibbit
<i>Inspectors</i>	Martin Brown	<i>Inspectors</i>	Richard Whiteside
Mel Bale	Tony Clare	David Armin	Derbyshire - Erewash
Simon Hulme	Chris Davies	Jim Bosworth	<i>Area Officer</i>
Simon Jones	Sheila Dillon	Ken Brockway	Martin Davis
David Oldfield	Clive Evans	Sandra Dixon	<i>Inspectors</i>
Barry Tylee	John Fisher	John Harker	Martin Davis
Toy Whiting	Terry Fones	Dudley Ibbett	Ken Brockway
Blackburn with Darwen	Phil Gadsby	David Moreton	Kathy McLean
<i>Inspectors</i>	David Gartside	Mike Nelms	Derbyshire - High Peak
Graham Fullarton	John Goodman	Derbyshire - Bolsover	<i>Area Officer</i>
Rob Johnson	Brian Hamilton	<i>Area Officer</i>	Derek Bodey
Roger Marks	Mark Kambites	John Harker	<i>Inspectors</i>
Bolton	Tony Littler	<i>Inspectors</i>	Mel Bale
<i>Inspectors</i>	Clare Maxwell	Anne Green	Derek Bodey
Jim Foster	Gavin Miller	Bill Parke	Bill Buckley
Bradford	Maria Novelty	Derbyshire - Chesterfield	Richard Davies
<i>Inspectors</i>	David Powell	<i>Area Officer</i>	Kate Deamon
Gill Darnbrook	Duncan Smith	John Harker	Paul Easthope
Andrew Harter	Linda Smith	<i>Inspectors</i>	Nigel Hackney
Neil Walsh	David Taylor	Bill Parke	Colin Hill
Bury	Peter Varetto	Derbyshire - Dales	Julian Hodgson
<i>Inspectors</i>	Richard Vickery	<i>Area Officer</i>	Tim Lewis
Andy McMullan	Cheshire West and Cheshire	Rhoda Barnett	Steve Millward
David Pollard	<i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Inspectors</i>	Steve Royle
Calderdale	Jenny Allen	Derek Bodey	Tracy Royle
<i>Inspectors</i>	Peter Annice	Marie Campbell	Ian Smith
Andy Allen	Sue Annice	John Collins	Duncan Smith
Rory Brooke	Jim Booth	Jim Cowley	Helen Steel
Esther Maylor	Sheila Dillon	Richard Davies	Derbyshire - North East
Neil Mercer	Chris Fortune	David Furniss	<i>Area Officer</i>
Jenny Sibbons	Andy Garland	Steven Gwelan	John Harker
Cheshire East	John Gascoyne	Ann Haden	<i>Inspectors</i>
<i>Inspectors</i>	Ian Howe	Julian Hodgson	Bill Parke
Steve Elliot	Gavin Miller	Jim Howell	
Chris Elliot	Joe Park	Merrick Iszatt	
Pete Annice	Linda Smith	Stewart Keech	
Sue Annice	Andy Thorne	Geoff Lockwood	
Will Ablett	John Q. White	Kathy McLean	
Derby City	Derbyshire - Amber Valley	Derek Northin	
<i>Area Officer</i>	Rhoda Barnett	Bill Parke	
<i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Inspectors</i>		
Kathy McLean	Kathy McLean		
Barry Thomas	Barry Thomas		

Derbyshire - South	Lancashire - Preston	Rochdale	Stockport
<i>Area Officer</i> Rhoda Barnett <i>Inspectors</i>	<i>Inspectors</i> Pete Kirby	<i>Inspectors</i> Jerry Brown Ross Myddleton	<i>Area Officer</i> David Gosling <i>Inspectors</i>
Keith Armstrong Martin Davis John Eaton Sally Kim Kathy McLean Barry Thomas Ed Green	Lancashire - Pendle	Rotherham	David Gosling Geoff Green John Mooney Aidan Moss Udo Pope
	<i>Inspectors</i> Mark Chung Simon Worrall	<i>Area Officer</i> John Harker <i>Inspectors</i>	
Doncaster	Lancashire - Ribble Valley	David Oldfield	Tameside
<i>Area Officer</i> John Harker	<i>Inspectors</i> Shirley Addy		<i>Inspectors</i> Paul Easthope Udo Pope
Halton <i>Inspectors</i> Mike Brown	Lancashire - Rossendale	Salford	Trafford
	<i>Inspectors</i> Danny Allen Blaine Parkes	<i>Area Officer</i> Martin Hampar <i>Inspectors</i> Gary Webster	<i>Area Officer</i> Martin Hampar <i>Inspectors</i> Martin Hampar
Kirklees <i>Inspectors</i> Jane Hodgson Joanne Jones Paul Marshal Dan O'Hara David Oldfield Steve Slator Emily Thompson	Lancashire - South Ribble	Sefton	Wakefield
	<i>Inspectors</i> Paul Cocker Andy Rae Brent Whybro Danny Withington	<i>Inspectors</i> Neil Davis	<i>Area Officer</i> John Harker <i>Inspectors</i> John Adler John Collins Jose Cree Bill Parke David Oldfield
Lancashire - Burnley	Lancashire - West	Sheffield	Warrington
<i>Inspectors</i> Shirley Addy Rachel Meredith	<i>Inspectors</i> Nick Storer Neil Davies	<i>Area Officer</i> John Harker <i>Inspectors</i> John Adler John Collins Jose Cree Bill Parke David Oldfield	<i>Area Officer</i> Jan Howe <i>Inspectors</i> Jenny Allen Jan Howe Nigel Howe Patrick Knowles Peter Varetto
Lancashire - Chorley	Lancashire - Wyre	St Helens	Wigan
<i>Inspectors</i> Steven Greenbank Bob Smith Cheryl Speight	<i>Inspectors</i> Brian Dearnaley Paul Hargreaves Jon Henry Belinda Nixie Andrew Paton	<i>Inspectors</i> Kevin Rigby	<i>Inspectors</i> Peter Burns Geoff Jones Nick Storer Dave Taylor
Lancashire - Hyndburn	Leeds	Staffordshire	
<i>Inspectors</i> Shirley Addy	<i>Inspectors</i> Andrew Harter Martin Wright	<i>Inspectors</i> Martin Balderson Kate Beresford Paul Beresford Tony Clare Eric Davies David Edge David Gartside Bill Parke David Tibbit Bill Twig Chad Wilkinson	
Lancashire - Lancaster	Manchester		
<i>Inspectors</i> Phil Featherstone Jane Hodgson Kathy McLean Belinda Nixie Andrew Paton Hugh Stewart Paul Tynan	<i>Inspectors</i> Martin Hampar		
	Oldham		
	<i>Inspectors</i> Brian Lomas Richard Knight Ken Smith		