

Open Country Newsletter April to June 2005

Open Country is a charitable organisation which enables anyone with a disability to access the countryside, through the provision of countryside activities and information. Fully accessible transport is provided and teams of trained volunteers are on hand to help as necessary

Our new minibus has finally arrived, and is already helping Open Country to develop. We plan that the “lean green machine” will ultimately be available to be used by other disability groups wishing to access the countryside. Thank you so much to everyone who helped with the fundraising.

In an effort to find the £4,000 needed to run our minibus each year, we are revising our transport contributions. This is the first increase for 2½ years. From April 1st 2005, most trips (Zone A) will have a transport contribution of £4.00. To cover the extra fuel costs, activities over a longer distance (Zone B) will have a transport contribution of £6.00. We may be able to waive or reduce the charges when we are travelling very locally.

We are delighted to announce that we are now a registered charity (1107331). Amongst other things, this should allow us to apply for funds that would not otherwise have been open to us, keeping us going in the long term. The charity has 8 Trustees, who are also the Directors of the Company. These are Nick Anderson, Michael Bartholomew, Roy Bousfield, Kevin Holmes, Denis Kaye, Steve Macare, Jonathan Shipton and Margaret Sutcliffe. Our official launch is on April 22nd at Fairfax Community Centre, where we will be joined by Phil Willis MP.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership subscriptions for 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006 are now due. A member's questionnaire is included with this mailing. Please fill it out and return it with your membership. David and Kerry would be glad to help you complete it — your views are very important to us.

COUNTRYSIDE DIRECTORIES

We now have Countryside Directories available for North, East, South and West Yorkshire. Thank you to the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Forward and an anonymous donor for funding the project. We would be grateful to be informed if any corrections or additions are needed.

GETTING "IN TOUCH"

Thanks to James Butcher from Henshaw's College, who has offered to convert some countryside guides and leaflets into Braille for us. Please let us know of any items that you need converting.

ADVISORY GROUP

The next meeting of the Advisory group will be on Tuesday July 5th 2005, from 6.30 - 8.30 pm. All regular members are welcome.

Finally, to make life easier, our web address has been simplified to:

www.opencountry.org.uk

ACCESS FOR ALL GROUP

QUARRY MOOR SSSI, RIPON

Work is almost finished on improving the paths and gateways around this popular nature reserve. The education centre is also more accessible, though at the time of writing we would welcome the views of our wheelchair users on the accessibility of the ramp.

DRAGON BRIDGE, BILTON

Work on the new fully accessible bridge (over the railway near Dene Park) should start imminently. Watch this space!

FISHPONDS WOOD, BEWERLEY

Many people visit this stunning bluebell wood in the spring. The Trailblazers have been busy improving the footpath alongside the pond, and it will soon be accessible to wheelchair users. Parking is still difficult however, and you may have to walk up the steep minor road from Bewerley.