

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 23 October 2007.

Present:

ACTION BY

Mr. Roy Denney (Chair), Mr. B. Sutton, Mr. T. Kirby, Mr. G. Mabbitt, Mr. M. Parr, Ms. V. Allen, Mr. J. Law, Mrs. L. Foreman, Mr. B. Sutton, Mr. S. Warren, Mr. P. Lancaster, Ms. H. Brown, Ms. A. Pyper, Mr. J. Hefford and Mrs. R. Camamile CC.

In attendance:

Ms. Heather Broughton, Mr. Bill Carter, Mr. Edwin McWilliam, Mr. Andrew Poole and Mr. Sam Weston.

By invitation:

Ms. J. Beech (Natural England).

147. Introductions and Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Heather Brown to her first LAF meeting.

The Chairman informed members that Ms. Phipps of the River Access Group, who had intended to give a presentation to the Forum had broken down en route and would be unable to attend.

148. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Mrs. L. A. S. Pendleton CC and Mr. P. Tame.

149. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2007 were adopted as an accurate record.

150 Matters arising from the minutes

Minute 139: Connect2

Mr. Kirby informed the Forum of East Midlands Tourism actively promoting some schemes over others. Ms. Broughton informed the Forum that Mr. Williams would be in touch with Sustrans in due course regarding this issue.

The Chairman asked that Forum members do all that they could to promote the County Council's Watermead Country Park scheme amongst their own groups and organisations.

Minute 134: Feedback from LAF visit to Bradgate Park

The Forum was informed that Leicester City LAF were to take a tour of Bradgate Park following on from the Leicestershire LAF's visit in July 2007.

151. Urgent items

The Chairman asked members to raise any urgent items to be added to the agenda at his discretion. Members raised the following urgent items:

- Charnwood Dog Control Orders.

152. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

153. Subgroups and working parties

Verges Subgroup

There were no updates from the Verges subgroup. It was suggested that the Subgroup discuss the possibility of a trial scheme to fence off grass verges between ten and 20 metres wide.

It was noted that Mr. Mike Sheldrake was currently involved with a series of departmental changes. It was hoped that he would be able to attend the next LAF meeting.

LTP Subgroups

Members of the LTP subgroups would now be receiving details of all works as implemented.

ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) Subgroup

It was reported that two members of the forum had visited County Hall to view the Rights of Way systems and had a brief look at the developing database of ROWIP and other network requests.

AGREED:

That if other members wished to view the data, they should contact Mr McWilliam directly to arrange a date and time.

ALL

Publicity Subgroup

Mr. Poole provided an update to members, arising from the Subgroup's meeting of 22 October 2007.

It was reported that the current name of the Forum was appropriate but the addition of a strap line may be beneficial for members of the public who were not aware of the responsibilities of the Forum.

Changes were made to the wording of the LAF leaflet. These changes would be incorporated into the LAF banner. A copy of the revised leaflet is filed with these minutes.

A LAF seminar to promote the work of the Forum was discussed and the following conclusions of the Subgroup were summarised:

- The aim of the seminar was to gain the attention of the relative agencies advised by the Forum by focusing on issues that affected them;
- The seminar would be an opportunity to discuss key issues such as the Local Area Agreement, the 3 cities and 3 counties plans for major urban development and work toward improving health and wellbeing outcomes;
- The seminar should be a half day event in early 2008, ideally held at County Hall.

The Forum concurred with the suggestions of the Subgroup and highlighted the importance of the selection of speakers for the event.

AGREED:

- (i) That the Forum's name remain 'The Leicestershire Local Access Forum';
- (ii) That '*Promoting Rights of Way and Access Land*' be adopted as the Forum's strapline;
- (iii) That a LAF seminar be held in early 2008 incorporating the suggestions above.

E. McW.

154. Discovering Lost Ways

The Forum received a report of the Director of Community Services regarding the role of Local Access Forums in the Discovering Lost Ways Project. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

Members wished to make the following response:

What role do you see the LAF having in DLW?

The Forum would like to have a direct role in considering

how the project is managed for Leicestershire. In particular, the Forum would like to further develop priorities in conjunction with the proposals set out in the Leicestershire ROWIP.

If this required the LAF becoming more involved in route specific discussions how could this be handled?

The Forum would wish to discuss specific cases and be able to comment directly. The Forum continued to doubt the ability to deliver the Lost Ways proposals, due to the complexity and cost of the current legal framework. A simplified system allowing for some form of local contribution to decision making would be the only way to meet the dates set out in the legislation.

What relationship do you see between DLW and the ROWIP?

The Leicestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan was published last year. This included a series of policies considering the issue of Lost Ways. This was set out alongside other matters, priorities and programmes in the action plan. It is the view of the Forum that there was a direct link between the ROWIP for the County and the future planning and delivery of Lost Ways. Such ways must each be assessed on their merits, but should be prioritised in favour of those that enhanced the actual network and some mechanism and funding should be created to allow for reasoned trade-offs between historic routes of limited value and alternate links with more meaning to serve the needs of the present population.

155. Planning Application changes

The Forum received a report of the Director of Community Services regarding changes to the Planning Application process. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

Forum members welcomed the inclusion of a ROW section in the form.

AGREED:

That members note the new application form and electronic application process.

156. Non-management of common land

The Forum was informed by Ms. Allen of areas of common land that were not being managed appropriately.

Mr. Carter informed the Forum that there were varying levels of responsibility for common land and that that responsibility

was split between the County Council and district councils.

AGREED:

- (i) That Ms. Allen contact the relevant Parish Council on this issue;
- (ii) That this item be suggested for discussion at the next meeting of the Verges Subgroup;
- (iii) That, in future, when members raise items for discussion, they bring the relevant documentation to the meeting in order that the item can be discussed thoroughly.

V.A.

157. Open Forum

The Forum was informed by Mr. Sutton of a footpath in Barton-in-the-Beans which he believed should be diverted around a house.

Forum members suggested that the path should be subject to a diversion order though it was questioned whether there would be sufficient finance to carry this work out.

Ms. Beech informed the Forum that a networking seminar would be held by Natural England early in 2008 where issues such as the one above could be discussed.

158. Dog Control Orders

Mr. McWilliam circulated a paper from Charnwood Borough Council notifying the Forum of their proposals to make a Dog Control Order under Section 55 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. A copy of the paper is filed with these minutes.

AGREED:

That the Forum make no objection to the order but request that all land dedicated as 'Open Access' under the CROW act within the Borough be included .

159. Agenda items for the next meeting

The following items were AGREED for discussion at the next meeting:

- The Sustainable Community Strategy (PW);
- The Local Area Agreement (PW);
- Growth Points (PW);
- Charnwood Forest (PW);
- Country Parks (PW);
- 'Access to Nature' – presentation (JB);

- 'Business Plan for 2008' (JL).

160. Dates of future meetings

The next meeting of the Forum would take place at 6pm on **Tuesday 11 December 2007** in **Guthlaxton Committee Room**, County Hall (*the schedule of meetings for 2008 would be agreed at this meeting*).

23.10.07
6pm – 8.10pm

CHAIRMAN