

Apply to join the Leicestershire Local Access Forum



Speak up on Countryside Access

Are you:

- 🕒 Interested in rights of way and green spaces to explore and enjoy the countryside?
- 🕒 Keen to help shape the future of rural and urban paths, and open access land?
- 🕒 Able to represent land owners and managers, or access users, or other interests?
- 🕒 Able to spare an evening every three months and the occasional afternoon?

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People with a passion for the countryside and interested in exploring their neighbourhoods are invited to apply to join the Leicestershire Local Access Forum.

The Forum brings together representatives of land managers, users and other relevant fields or areas of interest to watch over and help shape the future of footpaths, bridleways, byways, open access land and other green spaces.



The Forum is an independent body that advises Leicestershire County Council, and other relevant bodies, on how people can make the most of opportunities for getting out and about in the great outdoors.

If you feel that, in a voluntary capacity, you could contribute to the Forum's work, this pack tells you more about the Forum and how you can become involved as a member.

This Pack contains:

- Information about what the Forum does and what being a member involves.
- A role description and person specification for Forum members.
- Links to sources of further information including the Forum's website.

To ensure the Forum represents the varying aspects of 'access' both to the countryside and in urban areas, applicants are sought who are interested in any of the following:

- Walking and rambling
- Running and/or Orienteering
- Cycling and Mountain biking
- Equestrian pursuits (riding or driving)
- Motorised vehicle and motor bike use
- Water-based activities and sports
- Youth services / organisations
- Disabled and disadvantaged groups
- Ethnic Minority Communities
- Land owners, managers and Farming
- Nature conservation and Environment
- Rural / Local Business
- Tourism
- Health promotion
- Education
- Local authority
- Public transport

An outline of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum

What is the Local Access Forum?

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) is an independent official body, set up as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and exists to represent the interests of everyone in the County concerned with public rights of way (footpaths, bridleways and byways) and access to the countryside.

Leicestershire has a network of 'definitive paths' totalling over 3000 kms (the equivalent of a path from Leicester to well beyond Moscow) and more than 100 Open Access areas. There are also permissive paths, country parks and other opportunities to walk and ride.

Note that a separate Local Access Forum covers the City of Leicester. More details are at: www.leicester.gov.uk/local-access-Forum

What is the Access Forum for?

The main role of the Forum is to advise all levels of local government, national government and other agencies by commenting officially on policy proposals and any other access issues. In doing this it focuses particularly on:

- improving public access to land for outdoor recreation.
- encouraging the enjoyment and understanding of the countryside.
- considering the needs and concerns of land managers, tenants and owners.
- enhancing and conserving the natural environment.
- developing the rights of way network, working through the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).
- broadening opportunities to use the rights of way network – considering especially those who, at present, may feel excluded.

What else is expected of the Forum?

Whilst giving advice the Forum is expected to:

- Develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside.
- Respect local circumstances and different interests while following national guidance.
- Act as a bridge between different interest groups and seek a consensus wherever possible.



Forum members during a management presentation at Bradgate Park

Who does the Access Forum advise?

The Forum is a 'statutory advisory body' which may comment officially on relevant matters, giving its advice to various public agencies including:

- the County and District Councils
- Town and Parish Councils
- Central and Regional Government
- Highways Authorities
- Natural England

The Forum may also advise other conservation and environmental bodies.



Who does the Forum represent?

The Forum is made up of local people. Individual members represent areas or fields of interest rather than any particular organisation of which they might be a member. The Forum has a maximum of 22 members, up to 3 of whom will be County Councillors. Members cover different interests, representing people who either:

- enjoy countryside access activities, such as walkers, horse riders, orienteers, runners, cyclists, motor users, climbers and wildlife or heritage enthusiasts.
- own, farm and manage the land, including landowners, tenants, farmers and other occupiers.
- or have an interest in other aspects such as local community or conservation issues, promoting health, the environment, public transport or tourism.

Who appoints Forum members?

Responsibility for appointing Forum members is with the County Council. The Council ...

- aims to ensure there is a balance between the different fields or areas of interest.
- seeks people who can contribute positively and bring wider experience to the work of the Forum, whether or not they are land managers or committed rights of way users.
- recognises the need for the Forum to contain a broad base of skills and views, and for its membership to reflect the spectrum of all those who live and work in Leicestershire.

Does the Forum take up individual issues?

The Forum focuses upon broader concerns and does not normally comment on individual issues. However, it is able to raise issues of a more general nature with Council officers, and regularly monitors the work of the County Council's Rights of Way Service.

How often does the Forum meet?

There are 2-4 main meetings a year plus any sub-group meetings. Members may also attend site visits, workshops, training events and conferences as appropriate.

Main Forum meetings are normally on weekday evenings, sometimes preceded by an optional afternoon workshop session. Site visits and training may be at other times.

Are Forum members paid?

No. All members are volunteers and give their time freely. However, members can claim reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred as part of Forum duties including travel, subsistence, childcare or care of other dependents. After being appointed procedures for claiming, mileage rates and subsistence limits will be outlined, and claim forms provided.

Who can attend a meeting of the Forum?

Anyone. All full Forum meetings are open to the general public as observers.

How to access agendas and minutes of Forum meetings?

The web address: www.leicslaf.org.uk links to the Forum page on the County Council website. This includes a link to web pages where the minutes and meeting papers are available to download.

It is important to note the Local Access Forum is publicly accountable so the highest standards of integrity are expected from members and all Forum business is a matter of public record.



What issues or subjects has the Forum previously covered?

- Forestry Commission – Government proposals for the sale of land
- Future of permissive access under the Higher Level Countryside Stewardship scheme
- Leicestershire County Council's proposals for its third Local Transport Plan
- The consultation about the future of the County Council Country Parks Service
- Comments on the proposals for creating a Charnwood Forest Regional Park
- Comments on major planning applications e.g. Sustainable Urban Extensions
- The planning application at Newhurst Quarry, Shepshed and possible new paths
- Bardon Hill new quarry plans – current rights of way impacts and proposed new paths
- Possible recreational uses of non-operational hard rock quarries
- Progress reports on the proposals for a National Forest long distance Trail
- Walking for Health and Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport's 'Active Together' schemes
- The fatal attack on a walker by a bull at Stanford-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire.
- National proposals for progress on dealing with unrecorded rights of way
- Comments on applications for official orders for Alley Gating e.g. at Wigston
- Temporary path diversions, particularly at Castle Donington for the Download Festival
- Barrow upon Soar bridleway rail crossing – temporary closure and possible solutions
- Regular updates on Legal Orders which will divert, create or extinguish public paths

Role Description

Role Title	: Leicestershire Local Access Forum Member
Service/Section	: Environment & Transport Dept., Leicestershire County Council
Location	: County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester
Expectation	: 2-4 evenings per year, plus other occasional workshops
Remuneration	: Unpaid voluntary position, reasonable expenses offered
Liaison With	: Other members of the Forum, staff and elected members of the County Council, Natural England, elected members and staff of local councils, organisations concerned with the areas of interest covered by the Forum, and local communities and residents.
Role Purpose	: To contribute to the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LAF) which gives advice to Leicestershire County Council, and other agencies, on the improvement of public rights of way and open access land in the county for open-air recreation and enjoyment.

Responsibilities

1. To play a full and constructive part in the work of the Forum, attending meetings and briefings as reasonably required, including occasional site visits.
2. To prepare for Forum meetings and briefings by reading relevant documentation, background papers etc.
3. To contribute positive ideas and actively take part in discussions within the Forum in an objective and constructive manner.
4. To be respectful and understanding of the views of other Forum members.
5. To represent the full range of issues related to the member's individual field(s) of interest, not only those of any particular organisations connected with that interest.
6. To contribute positively to Forum discussions within meetings including sub-groups.
7. To be willing to undertake and participate in appropriate training, including possible travel as required to other locations.
8. To engage with community contacts to publicise the work of the Forum, and gather feedback on current issues to contribute to the Forum's discussions.
9. In all contacts to present a good image of the Local Access Forum as well as maintaining constructive relationships.
10. To abide by the rules and guidance as set out in the Terms of Reference and other protocols agreed by the Forum.

Person Specification

Role Title : Leicestershire Local Access Forum Member
Service/Section : Environment & Transport Dept., Leicestershire County Council
Remuneration : Unpaid voluntary position

Requirements	Essential	Desirable	How Assessed
Experience Working within a formal public committee Working in partnership/consensus and liaison with a variety of groups and interests. Dealing with and discussing policy and strategic issues Involvement with issues and organisations related to countryside access in the particular area(s) of interest		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	App/Int App/Int App/Int App/Int
Knowledge Countryside access issues in one or more field/area(s) of interest relevant to the Forum Legal context of rights of way and wider countryside access Administrative procedures in local or central government or similar contexts (e.g. companies) Some familiarity with the countryside of Leicestershire	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	App/Int App/Int App/Int App/Int
Skills Good communication and interpersonal skills at all levels Computer literacy including use of the internet Working constructively, recognising the validity of other views and seeking agreement on solutions Liaising with wider contacts to gather views from the relevant area(s) of interest and to publicise the Forum	✓	✓ ✓ ✓	App/Int App/Int App/Int App/Int
Attributes Commitment to prepare, attend and contribute to Forum meetings, plus some extra events, in a 1-3 year period Commitment to making the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for outdoor recreation in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests Commitment to the Forum reaching a consensus on access issues, recognising the concerns of users, landowners and managers, communities and environmental groups	✓ ✓ ✓		App/Int App/Int App/Int
General Circumstances Understanding and commitment to furthering equal opportunities in relation to the work of the Forum Willingness to undertake occasional Forum-related training in working hours or where it involves travel outside the county		✓ ✓	App/Int App/Int

App =Application Form Int = Informal Interview

How to apply to become a Forum member?

Applications are welcomed from anyone with an interest in this area. To become a member you should:

- familiarise yourself with the outline about the Forum on pages 3 -5.
- to see some of the Forum's recent concerns, look at the agendas and minutes from recent meetings, for copies follow the link on the web page: **www.leicslaf.org.uk**
- study the Forum member role description and person specification on pages 6 -7
- read through the Forum terms of reference, and the roles and responsibilities of members and the County Council (as the Appointing Authority). The link to this is the last one at the bottom of the web page which **www.leicslaf.org.uk** links through to.
- if you have an questions have an informal discussion with the Forum Secretary. Contact details are included below.
- attend a meeting of the Forum as an observer. For the dates of future meetings follow the link on the web page: **www.leicslaf.org.uk**
- send in a completed application form. A paper version is included with this pack. For an electronic version contact the Forum secretary at the address below.
- be available to attend an informal interview with the Forum Secretary. Reasonable expenses will be paid to those who come for an interview.
- understand that, if your application is not successful you will be advised to that effect.

Note that, whilst other personal details will be treated as, confidential, the names and interests of Forum members are published on a page on the website.

How to contact the Forum?

Contact the Forum Secretary at this address:

Leicestershire Local Access Forum
% Safe & Sustainable Travel Team,
Leicestershire County Council,
Environment and Transport Department,
Room 700, County Hall,
Glenfield
Leicester, LE3 8RJ

Telephone: (0116) 305 7086

Email: information@leicslaf.org.uk



Forum members discussing access issues on 'The Slabs' between Barrow upon Soar and Quorn in the Borough of Charnwood

Leicestershire County Council appoints members of the Forum and provides administrative support, however the Forum is an independent statutory body.