

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 12 August 2008.

Present

Mr. R. J. Denney (In the Chair), Mr. B. Sutton, Mr. M. Parr, Mrs. H. Brown, Mr. H. Eppel, Mr. T. B. Kirby, Mrs. V. Allen, Mr. J. M. Law, Mrs. L. Forman, Ms. A. Pyper, Mr. S. J. Warren

In attendance

Mr. Edwin McWilliam, Mr. A. Poole and Mr. Sam Weston.

217. Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

218. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mr. G. Mabbitt, Mr. P Tame and Mr. J. Hefford.

219. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2008 were adopted as an accurate record, subject to the following amendment:

That Minute 210 be amended to read 'Mr. Warren referred to a specific case on Footpath L87 at Donington where there was an apparent six month temporary closure.'

220. Matters arising from the minutes

Minute 206: Growth Points and Green Infrastructure

Mr. McWilliam indicated that the new officer had been appointed and would be attending a future meeting of the Forum to discuss the project.

Minute 207: Eco-Town, Pennbury (Stoughton)

Mr. McWilliam reported that he had sent a letter to the Co-Operative Group, as agreed and summarised its contents.

Minute 210: Urgent Item – Footpath Diversion

Mr. Warren reported that he had sent a letter to the County Council's Highways, Transportation and Waste Management Department asking for clarification of the regulations in regard to 'temporary closures'. He had not received a reply. Mr. McWilliam indicated that he would liaise

ACTION
BY

with the Department in the hope of obtaining a formal response for Mr. Warren.

EM

Minute 212: Natural England LAF Handbook

Mr. McWilliam reported that he had brought copies of a CD with him to the meeting and that he would circulate these and explain how to access the information on them (Minute 231 refers).

221. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

222. 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:

- Way marker for public access along Unclassified County Roads (UCRs);
- Subgroups update;
- Junction 19, M1;
- Barrow-upon-Soar crossing.

223. Eco-Town, Pennbury (Stoughton)

Mr. McWilliam reported that the sustainability appraisal had yet to be received. He further reported that the Co-Operative Group were organising five workshops on the following areas:

- Employment;
- Education skills;
- Health;
- Transport; and
- Governance.

Mr. Kirby expressed an interest in attending the 'Transport' workshop, while Mr. Denney indicated that he would be interested in attending one of the workshops.

AGREED:

That further information on the workshops be circulated to Forum members by email as soon as it became available.

EM

224. Bardon Quarry expansion plans

Mr. McWilliam circulated a pamphlet introducing the new outline proposal for a quarry near Junction 22 of the M1. Mr. Denney reported that the information received on the plans thus far had been vague.

AGREED:

That the Forum be part of the consultation process, should any firm proposals develop.

225. Department restructure

Mr. McWilliam provided an update on the restructure of the Rights of Way and Country Parks Teams. The two sections were now operating as the Countryside Service, of which Bill Carter had been appointed Manager. Following a question from Mr. Denney, Mr. McWilliam stated that details on the re-organisation of the Country Park Ranger Teams should be available at the next meeting.

AGREED:

That a chart explaining the name and roles of officers in the Countryside Section be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting.

EM/BC

226. English Access Forum update

Mr. McWilliam reported that there was no new information regarding the English Access Forum, however a date had been set for 4 September 2008 for a meeting to decide who should represent Local Access Forums in the East Midlands on the Forum. Mr Denney was proposing to attend.

227. Gating Orders update

Mr. McWilliam reported that a Scrutiny Review Panel had been established to look at Gating Policy. The Panel had had its first meeting and would be carrying out site visits.

Forum members were concerned that the views of those who wished that access be maintained in areas such as these were likely not to be heard as vociferously as those who wished that they be gated off. Mr. Denney asked if a member of the panel could come to talk to the forum.

AGREED:

That it be requested that the Forum be consulted as part of the review.

SW

228. Promotions update and subgroups

LAF Publicity

Mr. Poole provided an update on promotional activities. He brought with him to the meeting the LAF promotional banner, which the Chairman reported he had received positive comments on. He also circulated a copy of the LAF leaflet. He asked members where they would like the leaflet to be circulated.

Members asked that the following be added to Mr. Poole's LAF leaflet circulation list:

- Relevant County Council departments;
- Relevant organisations listed on the County Council's Infolinx website;
- Parish Councils (with a letter specifically requesting that it be put on notice boards);

Mr. Poole asked that members contact him if they were likely to be attending any events in the near future where copies of the leaflet could be circulated or the banner erected. He added that the LAF budget allowed for further copies of the leaflet to be printed as and when required for this purpose.

It was hoped that the LAF would be able to engage with Community/Area Forums when the opportunity arose.

Mr. Poole discussed the outdoor activities user groups leaflet and poster. He asked that those members representing groups who wished to be included in this material contact him directly regarding how best to present their details.

Mr. Poole sought members' views on the proposed Newsletter, which it was hoped could incorporate the Annual Report in a more readable and 'eye-catching' style.

AGREED:

That officers pick-out issues of interest from the minutes and contact the Chairman to find out who would be best to write a piece on the issue for the newsletter.

Walking Festival

Mr. Poole circulated a report on the Walking Festival 2008, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

ALL

AGREED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That any member with ideas for next year's Festival be asked to contact Mr. Poole.

AP

229. Urgent item – Way marker for Public Access

Mr. Poole reported that there was some confusion amongst ROW users concerning the signing of minor UCRs. Mr. Poole sought members' views on a white on black way marker which indicated that there was public access allowed such routes.

Members had mixed views on the design as they felt it was still not clear who was permitted to use the ROW, however it was not felt that the sign could be improved upon.

AGREED:

That the sign design be approved.

230. Subgroups update

The Chairman indicated that he received an invitation letter from an officer in the Community Services Department to attend the Melton Local Transport Plan (LTP) subgroup meeting, however he felt that the wording of the letter was not appropriate and for that reason he did not attend. Ms. Allen and Mr. Parr did attend the meeting and reported that it was productive. Ms. Allen felt that the 2 weeks she was given by the officer to attend the meeting was an insufficient amount of time to allow her to liaise with her members. Having an area Rights of Way officer at the meeting had helped deal a number of items.

AGREED:

That members of the LTP subgroups be sent a programme of schemes that are being considered over the next 3 years as part of the ROWIP.

EM

231. Correspondence

Mr. McWilliam provided all members with a CD which it had been agreed at the last meeting would contain an electronic copy of Defra's LAF Handbook. Mr. McWilliam indicated that he had also added to the CDs a copy of the Definitive Map for members' reference, as well as a copy of the LAF Guidance Notes.

Mr. McWilliam stressed that the Definitive Map was for Forum members' use only. It could also not be printed. Accordingly, the print function

when opening the documents had been disabled.

AGREED:

That Mr. McWilliam be thanked for the information provided.

232. Ditches

Ms. Allen reported on her concerns in respect of the clearing of ditches. She noted that arising from last year's floods in Leicestershire, there was a proposal in the Pitt Review for ditches to be cleared in order that the risk of flooding in areas was reduced. Ms. Allen added that in some instances where ditches had been cleared, the waste material had been left on the ROW and that this had had a detrimental effect on access.

AGREED:

That a representative of the Highways Department be invited to attend all future Forum meetings.

EM/PW

233. Change to the order of business

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of the Forum to change the order of business from that set out in the agenda.

234. Dates of future meetings

AGREED that the following be adopted as the Forum's schedule of meetings in 2009:

Thursday 29 January
Tuesday 31 March
Wednesday 27 May
Monday 27 July
Tuesday 29 September
Thursday 26 November

EM/SW

The following meetings in 2008 had previously been agreed:

Thursday 2 October
Tuesday 25 November

(All meetings to commence at 6pm and take place at County Hall)

235. Urgent item – Junction 19 – M1

Ms. Allen and Mr. Warren alerted Forum members to a meeting taking place on Thursday 4 September regarding the proposed works to Junction 19 of the M1 to relieve congestion and reduce the risk of accidents. The meeting would commence at 10am at Swinford Village

Hall and was likely finish by 1pm.

AGREED:

That Ms. Allen and Mr. Parr attend the meeting.

VA/MP

236. Urgent item – Barrow-upon-Soar crossing

Ms. Allen informed the Forum that an elderly lady had nearly been killed by a train at a crossing in Barrow-upon-Soar and that a three week temporary closure had been agreed on the crossing. National Rail had applied for a six month temporary closure in order that the crossing could be made safer. Members agreed that this was clearly necessary, despite the access issues that the works would represent.

Ms. Allen added that a meeting would be taking place on 12 September on this issue.

Members also noted other temporary closure orders, including the ongoing issues at Donington.

AGREED

That an officer be invited to a future meeting to discuss the use of temporary orders

EM

237. Open Forum

It was AGREED that, due to time constraints, this item be deferred.

238. Agenda items for next meeting

It was AGREED that an item on the Countryside Section be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum on 2 October 2008 (Minute 225 refers).

12 August 2008
6.10 – 8.35pm

CHAIRMAN