

**Notes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at  
County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 18 May 2010.**

**Present**

Mr. R. Denney (in the Chair), Mr A. Hillier-Fry, Mrs. A.F. Pyper, Mr. S.J. Warren, Mr. M. Parr, Mr. J. Law, Mrs. L. Forman, Mr. T. Kirby, Mrs. H. Brown, Mrs. V. Allen and Dr. G. Mason.

**Officers in attendance**

Mr. P. Hitchings, Mr. A. Poole, Mr. E. McWilliam, Mr. S. Weston and Mr. P. Williams.

**Action by**

**398. Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting; in particular he welcomed Mr. Anthony Hillier-Fry as a new member of the Forum, and outside representatives Ms. Bryony Govan (Natural England), and Mr. Andrew Watson (Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport).

**399. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Forum and members of the public:

Mr. J. Kitching  
Mrs. R. Camamile  
Mr. H. Eppel  
Mr. C. Gordon – Natural England

**400. Minutes of the previous meeting**

**Minute 380/390.**

It was noted that the Minute following Minute 380. should read Minute 381. not Minute 390. as previously noted, and all those minutes thereafter should follow consecutively from this number.

**Minute 393 (subject to the above change).**

It was noted that the Ramblers' Association walk in memory of David Taylor was scheduled to be held on Sunday 22 August 2010, not on 13 March 2010 as had been previously noted.

Subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

**401. Matters arising from the minutes not otherwise on the agenda**

Minute 359: Feedback from Watermead Country Park site visit

Mr Williams provided the Forum with a further update on developments at Watermead Country Park as part of the Connect2 bid. He told the Forum that works were ahead of schedule and the majority of planned work had been completed, including the installation of dinosaur-themed play equipment around King Lear's Lake. There was still work to be completed on the bridge at King Lear's Lake in the NE corner of Watermead Country Park, which was still subject to ongoing discussions concerning suitable surface material. The proposed planning application to consider lighting on the main route between Birstall and Thurmaston was being considered further before a decision was taken on promoting it.

This year's work programme would be directed along the canal from Meadow Lane to Syston. There would be additional work carried out further north towards the River Wreake junction. Mr Williams reported that proposed plans for a new visitor centre near Wanlip would have to be made more modest in the light of budget restrictions.

Minute 366: Encouraging more people to walk

Mr Williams reported that officers, with the help of Natural England, were looking into the possibility of pursuing the walking group leader training for volunteers (referred to in Minute 412 below) in order to resolve insurance issues for village representatives, whom at present could only lead two walks per year.

Minute 390: National Forest Trail Update

Mr McWilliam gave a brief overview of the current proposals for the National Forest Trail. A meeting of the National Forest Access and Recreation group on 20 May would provide an opportunity for several members to be directly consulted.

Minute 396: Future Recreational use of Rock Quarries

Dr Mason reported that he had presented his proposals for the future recreational use of rock quarries to representatives of Biffa, owners of the Newhurst quarry site. He had received encouraging responses which suggested that the company was willing to explore different uses for the sites.

#### **402. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **403. Urgent Items**

It was AGREED that the following item be taken as urgent:

- Annual Report: Members' Submissions

#### **404. Presentations: Natural England – Walking for Health Programme Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport**

The Forum considered a presentation by Bryony Govan, a representative of Natural England (NE) on the 'Walking for Health Programme'. A copy of the slides of this presentation are filed with these minutes.

Andrew Watson, a representative of Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport (L&R Sport), gave a further presentation on the strategy of Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport. At the meeting Andrew circulated copies of Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport's Strategy for Sport 2009-13 and Strategy for Physical Activity 2009 – 13, copies of the slides of this presentation and the supplementary documents are filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion of the Walking for Health Programme the following points were noted:-

- The Forum supported the aims of the Walking for Health Programme. Members could help to meet these aims by raising awareness of the programme by disseminating information to relevant groups;
- The training of walking leaders comprised of a one day training course provided by NE which covered all relevant information apart from navigation skills, these skills were not covered because it was believed by NE that walking routes would be basic local routes prepared in advance of the day of a walk. Volunteers would gain a Volunteer Walk Leader Certificate at the end of the course;
- Public liability insurance was held by NE which required: the number of people in a walking group; their names; and, each walking group to strictly adhere to further guidance provided by NE;
- NE was attempting to encourage members of ethnic minorities to create walking groups within their own communities by working alongside the NHS Trust within Leicester City; however, it was

clear that further work was required to address this matter in the County.

Arising from the discussion of the Leicester-shire & Rutland Sport Strategy the following points were noted:-

- The Forum supported L&R Sport's strategy. It seemed that L&R Sport had funding resources and the Forum had appropriate knowledge about the local area, both of which could be used more effectively in partnership; it would therefore be helpful and appropriate in the future for L&R Sport to be invited to a workshop at which both groups could brainstorm ideas, alongside other organisations such as NE;
- L&R Sport had strong links with Loughborough University, and as such would be happy to attempt to broker arrangements between the University and the Forum to allow Leicestershire residents access to the University's many sports facilities;
- There was an upward trend being seen in open water activities, for example King Lear's Lake had recently been subject to water testing in anticipation of the introduction of swimming events.

AGREED:

- (a) That the presentations and supplementary documents be noted, and that representatives be thanked for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) That members interested in becoming volunteer walking leaders for Natural England contact Ms Govan using the details below:

**ALL**

Bryony Govan -  
Tel: 0300 0604532  
Email: bryony.govan@naturalengland.org.uk

#### **405. Progress Report on Walking Week**

Mr Poole reported on the progress made towards the organisation and promotion of Walking Week 2010 to be held on 4-12 September. A report of the Director of Environment & Transport detailing this progress was circulated at the meeting; a copy of the report is filed with these minutes.

Mr Poole reported that the County Council's Summer Events Guide contained a four page pull-out guide which was designed to be a promotional teaser as not all Walking Week activities had been finalised. Copies of the County Council Summer Events Guide were distributed at the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The City Council's Leicester Link magazine and the County Council's Leicestershire Matters magazine would both contain short features on

Walking Week 2010 in their July/August editions. A flyer would shortly be distributed to local community facilities such as libraries, leisure centres and shops.

Exciting family orientated activities had been chosen for the beginning of Walking Week 2010 to encourage people to get involved and take up further activities later in the week. It was Mr Poole's intention to organise an event to launch Walking Week, encouraging community leaders and notable local citizens to attend to galvanise other members of the community. Last year the County Council worked alongside 25 partnership organisations and was eager to build on this figure in 2010.

Members were welcomed to become involved in leading walks via the Volunteer Walk Leader Certificate run in collaboration with City Council Parks Services and Natural England. This training would contain an element of navigation training.

Arising from discussion the following points were noted:-

- The Forum congratulated officers on their work towards Walking Week 2010;
- Last year over one thousand people attended Walking Week activities, this year it was hoped this could be incremented by 50% more people;
- Activities had been distributed over a number of days in an effort to most effectively avoid bad weather conditions;
- A network of internet links on each of the partner organisations' home pages was being created in order to promote the event.

AGREED:

(a) That the update be noted;

(b) That members interested becoming volunteer walking leaders for Walking Week 2010 contact Mr Poole on (0116) 305 7655. **ALL**

#### **406. Reorganisation Update**

Mr Williams reported that the County Council was facing substantial financial restrictions in the future as a result of the £66 million efficiency savings that were required.

The action plan for the redistribution of staff resulting from County Council reorganisation was hoped to be completed by 14 June 2010.

As part of the reorganisation the following changes were planned:-

- Part of the Community Environment team which dealt with community grants would become a part of the Better Places team within the Chief Executive's Department;
- Country Parks staff within the Countryside team under Bill Carter would become a part of the Corporate Resources Department;
- Some Rights of Way staff within the Countryside team would be placed in the Transport, Choice & Access team within the Environment & Transport Department; in an effort to make the most of sustainable transport and health promotion;
- Andrew Poole and Sue Hayes would be separated; one of the two would be placed with Country Parks staff, the other with Rights of Way staff;
- The remainder of the Way-marking staff would be relocated to area offices;
- The Environmental Action team and a new climate action team would make up the new management group within the Environment & Transport Department, in a newly named environment branch.

The new arrangements would be of some benefit to the Forum because a broader range of officers would be attending Forum meetings in the future.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

#### **407. Community Paths Workshop Update & Feedback**

Mr Poole reported on efforts towards more collaborative working between the Forum and Parish Councils which were discussed at a Community Paths Workshop. As part of his report, a note detailing the 'Step Forward for Footpaths' initiative was circulated at the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

Mr Poole summarised the points that were made during the Community Paths Workshop as follows:-

- Parishes should be made aware that they may request updated copies of the definitive map showing paths in their area;
- The processes for reporting problems with access routes be made clearer to Parishes;

- Parishes be made more aware of what they can do for themselves with regard to access matters;
- There should be local 'Path Wardens' to link with existing local Historical Wardens;
- The Forum should create and maintain strong links with Parish Councils by offering to attend Parish Council meetings and to lead walks for them, in order to encourage Parishes to organise local walks;
- There should be greater use of notice boards in local community centres to disseminate information about local access matters;
- Parish Councils should be encouraged to consider the path network as a whole, being made aware of how they can help with issues such as 'lost ways'.

The workshop had been successful in encouraging informal discussion and it was hoped that the Forum could hold further workshops to discuss other relevant access matters;

AGREED:

- (a) That feedback arising from the Community Paths Workshop be noted;
- (b) That officers be requested to look into future workshops to discuss other matters relevant to the Forum.

**EM/PH**

**408. Stepping Forward**

Mr McWilliam presented a report informing members of the publication of 'Stepping Forward' a report by the Stakeholder Working Group on unrecorded public rights of way. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

He informed the Board that the organisations involved were facing significant budget constraints, and therefore it may become increasingly difficult for them to make proposed changes to areas that were notoriously difficult to change.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

#### **409. Correspondence**

##### Vicky Allen – Progress of LTP3 and ROW

Mrs Allen had contacted Mr McWilliam to seek an update on the LTP3 and its consideration of rights of way. Mr McWilliam reported that he had spoken with officers working on the LTP3 and he assured the Forum that it would have the opportunity to comment on the Plans at its next meeting.

##### Claire Herring – England Access Forum Meeting to be held 27 May Meeting

Andrew McCloy, the region's permanent representative on the England Access Forum, was not able to attend its meeting on 27 May. Claire was contacting all Local Access Forums on behalf of Andrew in order to find a suitable substitute for the meeting.

##### English Access Forum (EAF) Update

The Chairman of the EAF had sent correspondence to all Local Access Forums updating them on the situation involving NE. NE had accepted there must be some change in the relationship between the two bodies and it had agreed to carry out a joint review into the current circumstances of the EAF and funding arrangements for the future.

#### **410. Highways Agency & East Midlands Access Forum**

Mr Denney reported that he had become aware of a recent meeting between the Highways agency and a number of rights of way group representatives. He had not been aware of this meeting and felt that the Forum should have been invited to send a representative to the meeting.

AGREED:

That officers be requested to ensure a forum representative was invited to any future Highway Agency briefings on Access issues.

**EM**

#### **411. Regional LAF Event – Feedback**

Mr Poole reported that the Regional Local Access Forum Event had been attended by both officers of the County Council and members of the Forum. Generally the event had covered some interesting access issues and useful information on partnership work, but the information covered was not directly relevant to the Forum. Mr Kirby had produced a written summary of the event, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

AGREED:

- (a) That the feedback be noted;
- (b) Mr Kirby's written summary be noted.

**ALL**

#### **412. Orders updates**

Mr McWilliam reported the following order updates:

- A footpath diversion in the area of Foxton Primary School, Gallow Field Road, had been confirmed.
- A temporary footpath diversion of O22/O22a (to 2014) in the area of Bardon Hill Quarry had been confirmed.
- A footpath diversion of P30 (path from Moira Road, Littleworth to bridleway P31 at Boothorpe) had been confirmed.
- Public hearings:

4 August 2010 - A hearing would be held from 7-8 p.m. at County Hall to consider objections to the diversion of footpaths and bridleways on the Wartnaby Estate.

17 August 2010 – A hearing would be held at the Harborough District Offices to consider changes to path A31 from Foxton Road to footpath A22, Lubenham.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

#### **413. Sub Groups, Glenfield Planning Application**

##### Glenfield

Mr Denney presented a letter which he had sent to Blaby District Council outlining the response of the Forum to the Glenfield planning application by Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd. A copy of the letter marked 'C' is filed with these minutes. Blaby District Council had since refused planning permission for the development due to significant local objection.

##### Bardon Hill

Mr McWilliam reported that he would soon be meeting with representatives of Aggregate Industries in relation to the Bardon Hill planning application to discuss rights of way practicalities and issues about wider access in order to obtain feedback from the company.

He told the Forum that the application had been formally submitted and as such would be considered over a long period of time given the complexity of the application. In the meantime the Forum could make any further comments to the company it felt appropriate.

#### Lubesthorpe

Mr McWilliam reported that the proposals in relation to a sustainable urban extension in the Lubesthorpe area were in an early stage of development, therefore members who wished the proposals to consider certain access issues should contact Mr McWilliam or Mr Denney.

#### Gallow Field Lodge

There were proposals for a substantial development near Airfield Farm, Gallow Field Lodge, which may be of interest to the Forum in the future. It may be appropriate to consider the proposals as early as possible in order to influence them.

#### AGREED:

- (a) That the content of Mr Denney's letter be noted;
- (b) That the Sub Group updates be noted;
- (c) That those members wishing to make comments on the Lubesthorpe planning application should contact Mr McWilliam or Mr Denney; **ALL**
- (d) That members who would like further information on the proposals near Airfield Farm should contact Mr McWilliam. **ALL**

#### **414. Communications**

Some communications issues that had arisen had been resolved prior to the meeting; it was therefore felt not necessary to discuss this item.

#### **415. Membership Renewal and Replacement**

Mr McWilliam reported that members would receive later this summer, correspondence asking if they would like to remain on the LAF as part of the membership renewal process. Those wishing to remain members of the Forum would be considered alongside any new candidates that may arise during the advertisement of places on the Forum.

Although time consuming and costly it had proved successful in the past to formally advertise positions on the LAF in the local press. It was therefore likely that the same process would be adopted in order to access the greatest range of potential members.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- The dissemination of the Annual Report to Parish Councils and other groups could be tied in with the advertisement process;
- Providing training to new members early on in their appointment would ensure members were more likely to be engaged in the Forum;
- It was suggested that limiting the number of appointments appearing in any advertisements could act as an incentive for people to become involved, for example advertising two spaces rather than any number of spaces.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

**416. Urgent Item: Annual Report: Members' Submissions**

Mr Poole reported that the Forum Annual Report was awaiting contributions from members. Mr Poole circulated a note detailing 'Possible subjects for forum member contributions' a copy of which is included with these minutes. Responses were required by early summer.

AGREED:

- (a) That Dr Mason contribute a note on the recreational use of quarries, with particular reference to Newhurst quarry; **GM/PW**
- (b) that other members contact Mr Poole or Mr Denney with their contributions as soon as possible. **ALL**

**417. Agenda items for next meeting**

It was noted that the following items be considered at the Forum's next meeting:

- Green Infrastructure
- Lost Ways
- Bardon Hill Planning Application
- Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)

**418. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 8 September 2010-05-25**

This may be preceded by a workshop to discuss the next Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Local Transport Plan. Alternatively a new date may be fixed to specifically discuss these matters. Members will be contacted in due course with details.

6.00pm – 8.35pm  
18 May 2010

CHAIRMAN