

Annual Report Of The
Leicestershire Local Access Forum
2004

Forward from the Chairman of the Forum

As an entirely new entity the Forum has been finding its way over this first year and developing its role in line with the brief and guidelines provided by DeFRA.

Amongst our basic aims is to promote a better balance between the needs of outdoor sport and recreational pursuits and those of nature conservation in the countryside whilst giving due consideration in as far as allowed for within the Act, to the concerns of those living and working within the areas. We are tasked with helping to encourage use of the countryside for leisure and health and to assist in educating the public as to how to conduct themselves when out in the countryside.

We are to give 'reasoned' advice to various bodies and agencies and this obliges us to listen to all points of view and be prepared to compromise our own views to achieve that balance.

We have discussed and made contributions to numerous consultations over the year but now need to become more proactive and publicise our role to solicit information from members of the public and other bodies. We are tasked with promoting and advertising our existence and role and we also need to decide to what extent we feel we need our own output as opposed to merely advising other bodies on promotion of correct usage of the countryside.

We need to create a programme of works to complete our obligations.

The frequency of our meetings and the time available does not permit in depth work on projects such as suggestions for the local authority in regard to The Rights of Way Improvement Plan and we may well have to consider setting up working parties to deal with specifics.

The members of the Forum are drawn from many organisations and groups with a depth of knowledge within their memberships and we need to tap into this source of material. DEFRA do advise that we are to improve liaison with known interest groups either by taking advantage of existing arrangements or by initiating new ones.

Roy J Denney

Introduction

This is the first annual report of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum. The forum was established by Leicestershire County Council, under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). The group covers the administrative area of Leicestershire County Council. The Forum is a new statutory advisory body. Its role is to advise the County Council on the improvement of public access to land within its area for open-air recreation and enjoyment. The Council operates as the Highway, Surveying and Access authority for the area.

Membership

The forum currently has 21 members:

Mr	Kenneth	Vickers
Mr	Michael	Cheeseman
Mr	Michael	Parr
Mr	Patrick	Davis
Mr	Roy	Denney
Mr	Michael	Jeeves
Ms	Anne	Mather
Mr	Peter	Sapsford
Ms	Ruth	Fenney
Mr	Paul	Tame
Mrs	Alexandra	Pyper
Ms	Vicky	Allen
Mr	Brian	Sutton
Mr	Terence	Kirby
Mrs	Josephine	Pattinson
Mrs	Cordelia	Brock, CC
Mrs	Lesley	Pendleton, CC
Mr	Ernie	White, CC
Mr	Neil	Gibson
Mr	Peter	Lancaster
Mr	Hywel	Tidley

Meetings

Seven meetings have been held since the forum was formed. They were held on:

- 18th August 2003
- 16th September 2003
- 18th November 2003
- 21st January 2004
- 25th March 2004
- 18th May 2004
- 28th July 2004

The agendas and minutes of the meetings are attached as an appendix to this document.

The first year of the forum has seen the group discuss a wide range of access issues. The introduction of the new Act has brought about a wide range of new legislation and the forum itself. The new provisions within the act continue to be discussed introduced and enacted.

Open Access

The primary focus of this first year has been the introduction of the new provisions of the Open Access Mapping. The Countryside Agency has been carrying out a wide scale consultation programme to assess those areas that should be included.

Leicestershire is not blessed with substantial areas of 'mountain, moor, heath or down'. However, this did not prevent a lively debate regarding the sites that should be included. Leicestershire falls within area 7 of the mapping. The forum has considered both the Draft and Provisional maps. The Conclusive map will be published in 2005. Despite a number of representations from the forum for additional areas to be considered, by the agency, the amount of land included was reduced.

The forum has also considered a raft of new advice and guidance regarding the future management of open access sites within the county. This has brought new responsibilities and resource issues to the new Access Authority. The forum has expressed concern at the sheer scale of the changes being introduced under the act, and the resources required to respond to these new challenges.

Improvement Plan

The group has also been considering the production of a Rights Of Way Improvement Plan for the county. The Plan is required to consider the following:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

Work on the plan has been progressing steadily. The new requirements to link into the next round of Local Transport Plans is the next area of study for the forum. Members are eager to discuss and develop specific improvements to routes.

Questionnaire

The formulation and results of a survey on recreation in the County has proved informative. Carried out as part of the Citizens Panel initiative, the questionnaire was formulated, carried out and reported on during the year. Some of the headline figures were heartening, such as the 90% of respondents who saw access to the countryside for leisure as important. It was also noted that three quarters of Leicestershire residents go walking in the countryside at least once a month. Further details on the results can be obtained by ringing 0116 2657086.

Training

In January the County Council hosted a training day for forum members. This covered a broad range of rights of way and access work. The day proved to be a great success. It is hoped to run a similar event next year.

Consultations

The forum were consulted on a wide range of issues. These included:

- Management Plans for Country Parks
- Restricted Byways Consultation
- Vehicles In The Countryside Consultation
- Public Places Regulations
- Commencement of Section 63 of CROW
- Section 38 CROW consultation
- New Country Code
- Lost Ways Initiative
- Access Authority Draft Circular

Details regarding all of these items are detailed in the attached minutes.

In addition, Leicestershire County Council hosts details regarding the group on the web. This can be accessed @ www.leics.gov.uk/laf This includes details of the group together with information of meetings. Alternatively, you can contact the secretary of the group by ringing 0116 2657086 or write to the Rights Of Way team, Room 500, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RJ.

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Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Monday 18th August 2003, 7pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome To Observers
- 3 Declarations Of Interest
- 4 Matters Arising
- 5 Open Access Mapping (Agency Presentation)
- 6 Adoption Of Constitution - Report
- 7 Election Of Chair / Vice Chair
- 8 Open Access Mapping – Report
- 9 Rights Of Way Improvement Plan - Report
- 10 Country Park Changes – Report
- 11 Country Code – Report
- 12 Restrictions Consultation - Report
- 13 Any Other Business
- 14 Agenda For Next Meeting
- 15 Date Of Next Meeting

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting held on

Monday 18th August 2003, 7pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mrs. Anne Mather (Vice Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Michael Parr, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C., Mrs. Delia Brock C.C. Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Eddie Smallwood, Mr. Joe Greaves, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mrs. Ruth Fenny, Mrs. Jo Pattinson, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mr. John Prendergrast (Solicitor – Chief Executives Dpt.), Mr. W. D. Carter (Senior Access Officer), Mr. Peter Williams (Service Manager – Environmental Management), Mr. Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer), Mr. Piers Lindley (Access Officer).

1 Apologies

Mr. Ernie White C.C., Mr. Paul Tame and Ms. Lynne Evans (guest speaker from the Countryside Agency).

2 Welcome

Mrs. Lesley Pendleton, CC, (Acting Chair), welcomed members of the Forum and observers to the first meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum.

3 Declarations Of Interest

John Prendergrast, (Solicitor, Environment, L.C.C.) introduced a report on Declarations of Interest to members of the Forum. (See report from the Director of Community Services on the Constitution of The Forum, Appendix C, pg. 6 paragraph. 21). In order for the forum to operate within the framework of Local Government rules and within the regulations pertaining to constitutions, members are asked to declare any personal interest which may affect any matter that is discussed by the forum, particularly if it relates to any issue of a financial nature. Members were invited to seek advice from the secretariat of the Forum if they have any doubts or concerns as to what constitutes a personal interest.

4 Matters Arising None

5 (Item 6) Adoption Of Constitution – Report

5.1 (See report from The Director of Community Services on the Constitution of the Forum). It was reported that the Rights of Way & Access to the Countryside Act 2000

established the County Council's duty to establish a Local Access Forum and that such a Forum must establish a proper constitution. The report proposed a constitution based on the model put forward by The Department of Environment Food and Regional Affairs, (D.E.F.R.A.).

5.2 The primary points within the constitution are :

- . • The Role of The Forum,
- . • The Responsibilities of the Forum.

5.3 It was proposed that there be 22 members of the Forum, 9 of which would be required to be in attendance in order to form a quorum. It was also proposed that the Chair and Vice Chair be elected from members with different primary interests.

5.4 Amendments to the draft constitution:

a) Mr. Roy Denney proposed that when new members replaced existing members part of the way through the existing member's three year term, the new member also be appointed for a three year term rather than for the remaining period of the existing member's term.

b) Mr. Patrick Davies proposed that within the constitution, in paragraph 1.1 the word 'travel,' be inserted after the words "for the purpose of" and before the words "open air recreation.....". and also in paragraph 1.6 the words 'travel and' be inserted after the words "public have access for" and before the words "open air access".

5.5 Vicky Allen proposed that the Constitution with the above amendments be agreed. This was seconded by the Acting Chair and was agreed by the Forum.

6 (Item 7) Election Of Chair / Vice Chair

6.1 Six members were nominated at the meeting as candidates for Chair of the Forum. These were Mr. Terry Kirby, Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Mike Cheesman, Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Ray Denney and Mrs. Anne Mather.

6.2 Each candidate was invited to make a short statement on the experience and abilities they would bring to the position, after which there was a ballot. Mr. Roy Denney was duly elected Chair of the Forum. Mrs Lesley Pendleton, CC, stepped down from the Chair and Mr. Roy Denny took over the chairing of the remainder of the meeting.

6.3 The nominees for the post of Vice Chair were reduced to four in number in line with the Forum's rules on representation of interests. These were, Mrs. Anne Mather, Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Kenneth Vickers and Mr. Mike Cheeseman.

6.4 After a ballot Mrs. Anne Mather was duly elected Vice Chair.

7 (Item 5) Open Access Mapping Presentation

A presentation on the subject of Open Access Mapping was to be given by Lynne Evans of the Countryside agency. However Ms. Evans was obliged to offer her apologies and the presentation was given by Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer, L.C.C.) in her stead. Mr. McWilliam was thanked for his clear and informative presentation.

8 Open Access Mapping – Report

8.1 Bill Carter, (Senior Access Officer, L.C.C.) presented the above report. Please

see the full report for details). The Leicestershire Local Access Forum has been invited to put forward its comments and proposed amendments to the Draft Map for area 7. The County Council will be responding to the Countryside Agency separately.

8.2 County Council officers are currently examining land classification records and other material to assist with the authority's response. Officers agreed to make this material available to the Forum.

8.3 The Forum agreed to make a response to the Countryside Agency, and a special meeting of the Forum will be held to discuss the Draft Map.

9 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

9.1 This report was presented by Edwin McWilliam, (Please see report for full details).

9.2 The forum was asked to endorse the outline programme for developing the new plan, and members were informed that they would receive a progress report on the developing plan at every meeting of the Forum. Members agreed to endorse the programme. Mr. McWilliam invited members of the Forum to let him know if there were any ideas or items which they thought might be useful for him to consider for inclusion in the plan.

10 Country Park Changes – Report

10.1 This item was introduced by Peter Williams, Service Manager, Environmental Management. (please see report for full details). The new Forum will not only be involved with public rights of way and access land but all aspects of access to the countryside including the County Council's Country Parks.

10.2 The two developments in Country Parks Management considered in the report were:-

- . • The introduction of pay on entry barrier controlled access to car parks, and:
- . • The introduction of new bylaws.

10.3 Mr. Eddie Smallwood raised the issue that the change to pay on entry may cause an increased problem of parking on verges outside car parks. The Country parks Team will be monitoring the situation to see if changes in parking habits do occur.

10.4 In addition to the contents of the report Mr. Williams also informed the Forum that they would also be consulted on the Beacon Hill Country Park Management Plan within the next couple of months.

11 Country Code – Report

Members of the Forum were asked to note the contents of this report. (please see report for full details). Ms. Vicky Allen suggested that all Forum members who did not already receive a copy of the Countryside Agency's News Letter might find it useful to have their names put on the Agency's mailing list. Mr. McWilliam is to forward members names to the Countryside Agency.

12 Restrictions Consultation – Report

12.1 The Department for Environment food and Rural Affairs is consulting on proposals relating to the removal or relaxation of general restrictions on Access Land, and the purpose of the report was to seek Forum members views. (please see full report for details).

12.2 Officers recommended that the Forum support Option 3 which is described in

page 1, paragraph 6 of the report. This was agreed by the Forum.

12.3 Mr. Patrick Davies asked if planning permission would be required if a landowner wished to dedicate land for open access which was currently being used for a different purpose. Mr. Prendergrast advised that it may be required if there was an intention to change the primary use of the land or construction works constituting development were part of the scheme.

13 Any Other Business None.

14 Agenda For Next Meeting

14.1 Members were invited to put forward items for the next Agenda, but it is likely that the subject of the Forum's response to the Draft Access Map will predominate.

14.2 Specific sites for discussion at the next meeting may well include:-

Cademen Woods, High Sharply, Gun Hill, Charnwood Lodge (missing area) and Beacon Hill.

15 Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 16th September 2003 at 6.30 p.m. – RoomB3 County Hall. Tuesday 18th November at 6.30 p.m. – venue to be advised.

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Tuesday 16th September 2003, 6:15pm

Room B3
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

1. Apologies
2. Chairman's opening remarks
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
6. Open Access Mapping – Discussion of sites
7. Publicity, press releases and newsletter
8. Web site, members details in public domain
9. Any Other Business
10. Agenda for 18th November Meeting
11. Provisional dates for next two meetings

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on

Tuesday 16th September 2003, 6:15pm

Room B2
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mrs. Anne Mather (Vice Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C., Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Eddie Smallwood, Mr. Paul Tame, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Jo Pattinson, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mr. John Prendergrast (Solicitor – Chief Executives Dpt.), Mr. W. D. Carter (Senior Access Officer), Mr. Peter Williams (Service Manager – Environmental Management), Mr. Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer).

1 Apologies

Mrs. Alex Pyper , Mr. Michael Parr., Mr. Joe Greaves and Mrs. Ruth Fenny.

2 Minutes Of Previous Meeting

The minutes were adopted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

3 Declarations Of Interest

In order for the forum to operate within the framework of Local Government rules and within the regulations pertaining to constitutions, members were asked to declare any personal interest which may affect any matter that is discussed by the forum, particularly if it relates to any issue of a financial nature.

The Chairman requested that a list of interests be maintained for the group. Mr McWilliam undertook to circulate a form to members of the group.

4 Matters Arising

None

5 Open Access Mapping

Mr McWilliam gave a brief presentation on the Open Access Mapping. The group was then asked to consider any sites that should be added to or removed from the Draft Map. The following sites were discussed:

Beacon Hill

The group considered the site shown on the plan. Mr Denney proposed that the site to be considered should be extended to cover a wider area. An amended plan is attached to the minutes. This proposal was put to a vote.

7 votes for the proposal
2 votes against
with abstentions

Cademan Moor

A plan was circulated, showing an area proposed to be added to the map. This was then voted on.

7 votes for the proposal
2 votes against
with abstentions

High Sharpley

The group considered the site shown on the plan. It was proposed that the sites to be considered also include Gun Hill. This proposal was put to a vote for submission to the Countryside Agency.

10 votes for the proposal
2 votes against
with abstentions

Buck Hill

The group considered the sites shown on the plan. This proposal was put to a vote.

8 votes for the proposal
3 votes against
with abstentions

Ives Head

The group considered the site shown on the plan. It was proposed that the area of the site be reduced, with the removal of a field. This proposal was put to a vote.

9 votes for the proposal
1 votes against
with abstentions

An amended map is attached to the minutes.

Ulverscroft

The group discussed the site. The proposal to add the site to the draft plan was put to a vote.

8 votes for the proposal
3 votes against
with abstentions

Terrace Hills

The group considered the site shown on the plan. This proposal was put to a vote.

7 votes for the proposal
4 votes against
with abstentions

Coalville Meadows

The group considered the site shown on the plan. This proposal was put to a vote.

5 votes for the proposal
3 votes against
with abstentions

It was proposed that all owners of the sites should be written to, explaining that the forum was proposing the areas for inclusion as open access. Mr McWilliam undertook to write to the owners. He also agreed to fill in the appropriate application forms for the Countryside Agency.

Since the main item on the agenda took so long, remaining items were deferred to the next meeting.

6 Any Other Business

None.

7 Dates of Next Meeting

Tuesday 18th November at 7p.m. – Sparkenhoe Committee Room.

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Tuesday 18th November 2003, 7pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Apologies

Chairman's opening remarks

Disclosures of interest

Minutes of last meeting

Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

Correspondence

Constitution – Final version

Publicity, press releases and newsletter

Rights Of Way Improvement Plan

Beacon Hill Management Plan

Crop Monitoring Programme 2003

Update regarding Restricted Byways

Any Other Business

Agenda for next meeting

Provisional dates for next two meetings (Thursday Jan 15th)

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on

Tuesday 18th November 2003

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mrs. Anne Mather (Vice Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C., Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mrs. Alex Pyper , Mr. Michael Parr, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Eddie Smallwood, Mr. Paul Tame, Mrs. Ruth Fenney, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Jo Pattinson, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mr. John Prendergrast (Solicitor – Chief Executives Dpt.), Mr. W. D. Carter (Senior Access Officer), Mr. Peter Williams (Service Manager – Environmental Management), Mr. Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer), and Mr Mike Sheldrake.

Apologies

Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C., and Mr. Joe Greaves.

Minutes Of Previous Meeting

Mrs Fenney noted that her name had been spelt incorrectly. With that exception, the minutes were adopted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

Declarations Of Interest

Mr McWilliam undertook to issue some guidelines to forum members. The requested information is attached to the minutes.

Matters Arising

None

Letters

Mr McWilliam reported on correspondence received and sent by the group.

The formal applications for amendments to the Draft Open Access maps had been sent. The Countryside Agency had formally responded and confirmed receipt.

Three letters had been received from the Belvoir Estate, the Paget Estate, the Grace Dieu and Longcliffe Estates regarding the areas the forum considered should be open access. In all of the letters the agents strongly contested that the sites should be included as open access sites. They also confirmed that they would be objecting to the Countryside Agency.

The group agreed that replies be sent to the agents thanking them for their comments.

Mr Graham Lowe has formally resigned from the group. This is due to health and other evening commitments.

Mr Prendergrast confirmed that any replacement would have to be advertised and go through an interview process.

Constitution

A final copy of the constitution of the group was circulated. This included amendments agreed previously. It was noted that the period of office for the Chair and Vice Chair was not clearly defined. It was agreed that this should be set at one year.

Publicity

Mr Denney introduced a discussion on the extent the group should promote its own work. Members were reminded of their responsibilities to publicise the work of the forum. He also mentioned advice from DEFRA to establish a regular newsletter.

A number of members pointed out that newsletters are expensive and it was doubted if there were people who could afford the time to oversee production.

Mr White suggested the use of the County Council newsletter, Newline. This could publish an article regarding the forums work. It also goes to all households in the county.

Improvement Plan

Mr McWilliam gave a presentation on the format and timescale of the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan.

Mr Denney suggested that the group should write to local user groups and councils to seek their views on the current and future provision of access within the county.

It was pointed out that the County Council would be initiating a similar consultation exercise in spring, as part of the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan. It was generally agreed that this should be monitored, for consideration at the next meeting.

Beacon Hill Management Plan

Mr Williams introduced the new Management Plan for Beacon Hill Country Park. All members of the group were issued with a copy of the plan. If anyone wished to make comments on the proposals, they were asked to contact Peter Williams, or pass on their comments via the secretary.

Crop Monitoring Programme

The contents of the report were duly noted. The County Council was congratulated on its recent programme.

Update On Restricted Byways

The report was noted. Members agreed to recommend that DEFRA should require that black waymarkers be used on restricted byways.

Any Other Business

The issue of training for the group was discussed. The County Council offered to host a training day for members on the 19th of January. The event will begin at 10am. Refreshments will be available from 9:30. Lunch will be provided and further details will follow. This is to be held at County Hall in the Sparkenhoe Committee room.

Mr Sutton asked if the group could consider further usage of roadside verges and disused railway lines.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 21st January at 4:30p.m. – Sparkenhoe Committee Room.

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Training Day Agenda

Monday 18th January 2004

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Parking should be available in the visitors car park

09:30 Arrival, Coffee and Tea

10:00 Introductions

10:15 The Surveying Authority

Followed by workshop

11:00 Coffee and Tea

11:15 The Highway Authority

Followed by workshop

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Promoting and Waymarking Paths

Followed by workshop

13:30 Initiatives

Followed By workshop

14:15 Coffee and Tea

14:30 Summary

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Wednesday 21st January 2004, 4:30pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Apologies

Welcome to observers

Declarations of Interest

Minutes of last meeting

Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

Correspondence

Training Event

Chairman's comments

Consultations and questionnaire

Web Update

Community Services Service Review

Roadside Signing

Mechanically Propelled Vehicles Consultation

Any Other Business

Agenda For Next Meeting

Date Of Next Meetings For 2004

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on

Wednesday 21st January 2004

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mr. Michael Parr, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Paul Tame, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Jo Pattinson, Mr. W. D. Carter (Senior Access Officer), Mr. Peter Williams (Service Manager – Environmental Management), Mr. Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer), and Mr Mike Sheldrake (Highways Dept).

Apologies

Mrs. Anne Mather, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mrs. Ruth Fenney, Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mr. John Prendergrast Mr. Eddie Smallwood, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C and Mr. Michael Jeeves

Minutes Of Previous Meeting

Mr Sutton requested that his comments on roadside verges and disused railway lines be added to the minutes.

Declarations Of Interest

None.

Matters Arising

Mr Williams confirmed that he had received two detailed responses to the Beacon Hill management plan. Mr Cheeseman asked if there were plans to provide further disabled access at the site. Mr Williams stated that the County Council was always seeking ways of providing further access.

Correspondence

Joe Greaves has formally resigned from the group.

This leaves three vacancies. The County Council intends to advertise to fill these posts. Members were asked to forward the details of any interested parties.

Training Day

Mr Denney expressed thanks for the efforts made to put on the training day. It was generally agreed to have been a success.

Lost Ways

Jane Beech, from the Countryside Agency, circulated a paper regarding the Lost Ways Project. Attached is a copy of the summary.

Questionnaire

Mr McWilliam gave a presentation on the proposed questionnaire and asked for comments. The questionnaire will probably be submitted to the Citizens Panel. The panel is a group of 1,300 residents, broadly representative of Leicestershire, who have volunteered or agreed to take part in a series of surveys seeking their views on the Council's services and what might be done to improve them

A broad discussion ensued about the areas that the questionnaire should cover. It was agreed that the final draft should be sent to members for comments.

Web Update

Mr McWilliam distributed a Guide to web mapping. He then demonstrated how to use the on line mapping to show paths.

Community Services Review

Mr Williams updated the group on the proposed re-organisation of the Environment branch within Community services.

Roadside Signing

Mr Carter set out the programme of roadside signs. He also assured members that destination information is being included. About 50% of signs contain further details.

Mr Davies asked if the signs could also include the website address. Mr Carter agreed to investigate the matter.

Mechanically Propelled Vehicles Consultation

Mr Carter introduced a new consultation paper from DEFRA. Copies were circulated to members. Responses are invited by February 13th.

Any Other Business

Members of the group enquired if there was a representative covering the city area. It was pointed out that the group covers the administrative area of the County Council. It was generally agreed that the City Council should be approached to send an observer to the next meeting.

Agenda for next meetings

Mr Sutton asked if more use could be made of roadside verges. He also asked if there was any information on disused railway lines for recreational use.

After some debate, it was agreed that this would be an agenda item at the next meeting.

A number of guest speaker invitations were suggested. These included:
Bradgate Park Trust

English Nature
Severn Trent
Woodland Trust
National Forest

Mr McWilliam offered to contact the relevant parties.

Mr Denney suggested that an open forum chat session should be a regular at the end of each meeting.

Mr Davies requested that the subject of specifications, expectations and costs be on the agenda at some point.

Dates of Meetings for 2004

Thursday 25th March at 4:30p.m. – Framland Committee Room.

Tuesday 18th May at TBA. – Venue - TBA.

Wednesday 28th July at TBA. – Venue - TBA.

Monday 27th September at TBA. – Venue - TBA.

Thursday 18th November at TBA. – Venue - TBA.

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Thursday 25th March 2004, 4:30pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Apologies

Welcome to observers

Declarations of Interest

Minutes of last meeting

Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

Correspondence and Members update

Roadside Verges

Disused Railways Update

National Demonstration Presentation From The Countryside Agency

Questionnaire Update

Public Inquires

Mechanically Propelled Vehicles Consultation

Cropping Advice

Public Places Regulations

National Forest Access And Recreation Action Plan

Section 63 Commencement

Open Forum

Any Other Business

Agenda For Next Meeting

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on

Thursday 25th March 2004, 4:30pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr Neil Gibson, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. Michael Parr, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Jo Pattinson , Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mr. W. D. Carter (Senior Access Officer), Mr. Peter Williams (Service Manager – Environmental Management), Mr. Edwin McWilliam (Rights of Way Policy Officer), and Mr Mike Sheldrake (Highways Dept) Mr John Prendergrast, Mrs Heather Broughton (Head Of Environmental & Heritage Services).

Apologies

Mr. Paul Tame, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C Mrs. Anne Mather, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mrs. Ruth Fenney, Mr. Graham Lowe, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C and Mr. Michael Jeeves

Welcome To Observers

Representatives from Leicester City Council were welcomed to the meeting.

Declarations Of Interest

None.

Correspondence

The group had received a letter from Alan Michael MP, Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality. The Minister introduced a new grant scheme aimed at new Open Access sites. Local Access Authorities in conjunction with Forums will be encouraged to draw up plans for new sites and bid for funding.

Eddie Smallwood sent in a letter explaining his reason for resigning from the group. This was read out to the meeting. Members wished him well.

Anne Mather had written to the forum regarding the times of meetings. This letter was read out in full. She made the point that the meetings needed to be held outside normal working hours to allow for attendance from several members. She also asked if meetings could meet at different locations to reduce travel time for certain meetings. After some discussion it was agreed that the next meeting should start at a later hour.

DEFRA had consulted the forum regarding regulations under S38 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This was to be considered at the next meeting.

Roadside Verges

Vicky Allen presented a paper on the use of verges. She identified the verge network as a vital component for horseriders and walkers. She then listed the main obstacles to using verges. These included:

Drainage Grips

Narrow mown strips

Outgrowing of hedges and other vegetation

Traffic Signs and other furniture

Litter and rubbish

Mike Sheldrake responded from the Highway Authority. His note raised a series of issues. He set out the legal framework and gave a good insight into the difficulties of managing verges for recreational purposes. The group was most interested in the problems of buried apparatus and equipment that belonged to statutory bodies. Mr Sheldrake pointed out that the movement of this apparatus could be very expensive.

Mr Sutton questioned the use of fibreglass covers by undertakers. Utilities should be requested to provide better materials. Mike reminded the group that the highway authority could only take action in relation to items that were a danger to users.

Vicky Allen asked for more verges to be cut at more regular intervals.

Mr Sheldrake then set out the costs of providing a rural footway or shared use surface. The group asked if the issues discussed could be developed. It was agreed that Mr Sheldrake would organise a further meeting with interested parties to discuss the matter further. This group would then report back to the forum in due course.

Disused Railway Update

Mr McWilliam gave a presentation on the use of former railway lines in the county for recreation. This included details of all routes that have been converted. It also set out the range of problems facing further recreational use once the land had been split and sold.

National Demonstration Presentation – Countryside Agency

Jane Beech, from the Countryside Agency introduced the Rights of Way national demonstration programme. She outlined the projects being undertaken by the exemplar authorities, together with the lessons emerging. For further reference members are advised to visit www.prowgpg.org.uk

Regional seminars are due to be held in summer.

Questionnaire Update

Mr McWilliam updated the group on the final version of the citizen panel questionnaire. This was to be sent out shortly.

The headline results should be available for the next meeting.

Public Inquires

Mr Sutton drew the attention of the group to a current public inquiry regarding the proposed upgrading of a footpath to a bridleway. He pointed out that the pursuance

of such cases could put off landowners and occupiers from allowing horse riders to use footpaths. A number of paths are currently used in a permissive capacity.

Mr Predergrast reminded the group of the legal situation and the legislative framework, that the County Council works within.

Mr Carter updated members on the provisions of Section 31 of the Highways Act. This allowed landowners to protect themselves from claims, provided that they had followed certain procedures.

Mechanically Propelled Vehicles Consultation

Mr Carter introduced the consultation paper.

During the passage of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) concern was expressed to government about unlawful vehicular use of rights of way ie. on footpaths, bridleways and the new status classification of restricted byways. The document sets out proposals for dealing with these problems.

Members were in general agreement with the County Council report on the paper.

Public Places Regulations

Mr Carter introduced the consultation paper on regulations about public places under section 42 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. This is a response to concern regarding provisions in existing legislation that could impose undue burdens on landowners of open access land.

Members were invited to contact Mr Carter by 16th April if there were any matters they wished to comment on.

Cropping Advice

Mr Carter updated the group on this year's crop monitoring programme. Members were given details of the leaflet and correspondence sent out to more than 4000 addresses in the county.

Members were also reminded of the comparative success of the scheme last year. The programme of inspections was due to begin in April. It is expected that about 500 paths will be inspected.

National Forest Action Plan

Members considered the National Forest 'Access and Recreation Action Plan'. Mr Carter gave a brief overview and commented on the short response time available. Members stated that they would like to see sites with access protected in the longer term, more linear access created and more consideration of public transport within the document.

Section 63 Commencement

Mr McWilliam updated members on the commencement of Section 63 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

This allows anyone to serve notice on the Highway Authority, requesting the removal of an obstruction.

Open Forum

A variety of specific queries were then raised regarding paths in the county.

Agenda For Next Meeting

Members requested that verges be on the agenda again.

Date Of Next Meeting

18th May, 6:45pm Snibston Discovery Park, Coalville

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Tuesday 18th May 2004, 6:45pm

Snibston Discovery Park
Ashby Road
Coalville
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome to observers
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 1 Minutes of last meeting
- 2 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
- 3 Correspondence and Members update
- 4 Roadside Verges
- 5 Questionnaire Results
- 6 Section 38 Consultation
- 7 Improvement Plan Presentation and Analysis
- 8 Publications
- 9 Works Update
- 10 Open Forum
- 11 Any Other Business
- 12 Agenda For Next Meeting (Wednesday 28th July)

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on

Tuesday 18th May 2004, 6:45pm

Snibston Discovery Park
Ashby Road
Coalville
Leicestershire

Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr Neil Gibson, Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. Ken Vickers, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mrs. Jo Pattinson , Mr Hywel Tidley, Mrs Ruth Fenney, Mr Terry Kirby, Mr Peter Lancaster, Mr Paul Tame, Mrs Anne Mather, Mr. Peter Williams, and Mr. Edwin McWilliam.

Apologies

Mr. Patrick Davies, Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mr John Prendergrast, Mrs Heather Broughton, Mr. W. D. Carter, Mr Mike Sheldrake.

Welcome To Observers

There were no observers at the meeting.

Declarations Of Interest

None.

Minutes Of Last Meeting

The minutes were excepted as an accurate record of the last meeting.

Correspondence and Members Update

The group was informed of a News release from DEFRA, regarding the proposed timetable for the introduction of the new rights of access to open country. The current timetable of commencement for area 7 is October 2005. Members were reminded of the open access web site www.openaccess.gov.uk for further updates. It is expected that the Provisional maps will be available for consideration at the next meeting of the group.

Two new members of the group introduced themselves. They are Hywel Tidley, who has links to driving groups and Peter Lancaster, who is also the Chair of the Leicestershire Rights of Way Advisory Group.

Roadside Verges

Vicky Allen updated the group on progress since the last meeting, including a meeting with Mike Sheldrake.

Mr McWilliam informed the group that Mr Sheldrake had produced a very early draft of a document entitled "Managing Highway Verges to Assist and Promote Walking and Horse Riding". This is only a draft skeleton. Mr Sheldrake would like to work with representatives of the forum to develop a guidance note for County Council staff and attempt to identify specific sections of verge.

This item is to appear on the agenda at the next meeting for further consideration.

Questionnaire Results

Mr McWilliam presented a report from research on the 'Leicestershire Voice Citizens Panel Wave 4' results.

At the previous meeting the group had been presented with the headline figures of the questionnaire results. The new report gave more analysis of the results. Some disappointment was expressed regarding the small amount of responses from men and women in the 18-29 group. Overall the findings were generally agreed to be very interesting. Some of the headline figures were heartening, such as the 90% of respondents who saw access to the countryside for leisure as important. It was also noted that three quarters of Leicestershire residents go walking in the countryside at least once a month.

A copy of the report will be circulated to members who were unable to attend the meeting.

Section 38

Mr McWilliam introduced a consultation paper from DEFRA, regarding regulations on appeals against notices under S38 of CROW.

The proposals summarised the position of the Access Authority (Leicestershire County Council). An assessment of the new means of access to each site will need to be carried out prior to the commencement date next year. The forum will be consulted in conjunction with landowners and occupiers.

The access authority may then enter into agreements with owners and occupiers to provide new or improved access or maintain others. Section 38 deals with the appeals against this process.

The forum noted the paper and had no further comments.

Improvement Plan Update

Mr McWilliam gave a presentation on assessing adequacy of the network for the improvement plan. After running through a series of examples, he introduced a possible methodology that has been adopted by several exemplar authorities. This involved two stages. First recording of the resources currently available. Second was an assessment of adequacy in relation to likely demand.

He then set out examples and described some of the proposed adequacy measures. Much of the study is based on areas close to population centres.

Any other business

A plan was circulated, showing the improvement and signing schedule for the next 12 months.

Agenda For Next Meeting

Members requested that verges be on the agenda again. It was also suggested that the group meet at Brocks Hill, with a possible presentation from the Wildlife Trust. Unfortunately, due to a conflict of dates, this was not possible.

Date Of Next Meeting

28th July, 6:45pm Guthlaxton Committee Room, County Hall

Leicestershire Local Access Forum

Agenda

Wednesday 28th July 2004, 6:45pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome to observers
- 3 Declarations of Interest
 1. Minutes of last meeting
 2. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
 3. Healthy Walking Presentation (David Sugden)
 4. Correspondence and Members update
 5. Open Access Provisional Mapping
 6. Surveying Authority & Lost Ways
 7. New Country Code
 8. Access Authority Draft Circular
 9. Open Forum
 10. Any Other Business
 11. Agenda For Next Meeting