

**Annual Report Of The  
Leicestershire Local Access Forum  
2005**



## Forward from the Chairman of the Forum

Local Access Forums have been evolving over their first years as have the guidelines being provided by DeFRA.

Research and the exchange of ideas of good practice have been progressively refining how they can best operate and there is a current review of the regulations covering their activities.

Leicestershire has had an active forum with most members being able to attend most of the meetings but it has taken time to find ways for members to get actually involved with the nitty gritty.

Working parties and sub groups have now been set up and hopefully members will now start seeing some real impact from their input.

We have been involved in the process of gaining new open access areas under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act but given the nature of Leicestershire, the new permissions which came into effect at the end of October will not add very much to the land available to us. The developing new National Forest is however helping and no less than six million trees have already been planted.

Amongst our challenges 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 also wish to have a real impact on the improvements to our rights of way network to make it easier for people to access the countryside.

To both these ends we need to start publicising our work and making our presence felt out in the community.

We have discussed and made contributions to many strategic consultations in the two years of our existence but now hope to get more involved in local matters of more immediate affect to our own communities.

The major challenge ahead is in the area of the rights of way network. Consultants have been appointed by the Countryside Agency to do archive research for the Discovering Lost Ways Project and they are trawling records for any indication of any old route of whatever sort, and the information is being passed to the Countryside Agency and the Local Authority. They do not seek material from volunteers but both they and the Countryside Agency are keen that volunteers and user groups should cull secondary sources and local records and the Forum can be a conduit for channelling any further information to the rights of way department. The consultants are looking primarily to the National Archives at Kew and the County Archives but much material out in the country has not reached either of those locations.

It is important for us to find out about local conditions, needs and usage patterns and that is very much part of our brief.

Leicestershire is now being split up into manageable areas and work is starting on several of them this year. We welcome any broad strategic ideas or points of concern and specific suggestions for improvements where missing links could be considered, to assist us in our deliberations.

We seek to identify any pockets of countryside where access is permitted but a route in is difficult. Are there any links between communities which are not adequately

provided for at present? It may be that some rights of way could be upgraded to accommodate more classes of user.

The members of the Forum are drawn from many organisations and groups with a depth of knowledge within their memberships and we tap into this source of material and have an opportunity to allay fears based on a lack of understanding of other peoples concerns. It is important to maintain a balance of interests on the Forum and we are under represented in certain areas. One of our aims as mentioned previously is to encourage those who do not normally visit the countryside to do so, and to this end, given the ethnic mix of our larger conurbations, it would be a benefit to have members of the ethnic minorities on the group.

Members serve for up to three years and many of us are in our last year and if any other members of the community wish to be considered for positions when the situation is reviewed they should contact County Hall and make their interest known.

Meetings are currently held every two months; they revolve between day time meetings at County Hall and evening meetings at both the north and south ends of the county in an attempt to allow anyone interested to be able to participate.

Short of actually joining the forum members of the public are welcome to attend all our meetings and can raise any queries, preferable provided in advance.

Roy J Denney

### **Introduction**

This is the second 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 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 19 members all represent areas of interest:

Ms	Vicky	Allen	Equestrianism and sustainability
Mrs	Ruth	Camamile, CC	County Councillor
Mr	Michael	Cheeseman	Disability and Sport
Mr	Patrick	Davis	Cycling
Mr	Roy	Denney	Orienteering, Environment and Walking
Ms	Ruth	Fenney	Walking and Environment
Mr	Neil	Gibson	Off Road Cycling
Mr	Terence	Kirby	Sustainable Transport
Mr	Peter	Lancaster	Walking and Environment
Ms	Anne	Mather	Landowner and Horse riding
Mr	Michael	Parr	Walking and Environment
Mrs	Josephine	Pattinson	Walking, Cycling and Environment
Mrs	Lesley	Pendleton, CC	County Councillor
Mrs	Alexandra	Pyper	Landowner Tourism and Horse riding
Mr	Peter	Sapsford	Walking, Health Promotion and Education
Mr	Brian	Sutton	Farming and Wheeled Access
Mr	Paul	Tame	Farming and Landowning
Mr	Hywel	Tidley	MPV Use and Environment
Mr	Kenneth	Vickers	Rock Climbing, Kayaking, Running and LDR's

### **Meetings**

Seven meetings have been held since the last annual report. They were held on:

- 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004
- 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004
- 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005
- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005
- 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005
- 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005
- 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005, including training day

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

### **Open Access**

Leicestershire falls into area 7 of the mapping. This year has seen the build up to the opening of the access areas on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. The group has been considering both the final mapping and management plans for all of the new sites.

Despite Leicestershire not having large areas of mountain moor or heath, the work has still been considerable. The numbers of sites have been boosted by the inclusion of Registered Common Land.

The management of the sites will be an ongoing process. The forum expects further proposals to be considered for many of the sites, as access takes off. One key gain has been the suggestion to appoint a warden for some of sites.

### **Local Transport Plan & Improvement Plan**

The Forum has been considering a wide range of initiatives in the Draft Leicestershire Local Transport Plan. This is the primary means of attractive funding to Rights Of Way management and promotion within the county. It is also a document that partially absorbs the Rights of Way Improvement plan into it.

The draft proposals in the document are far more comprehensive than looked possible 12 months ago. A series of schemes are being proposed for the county that focus improvements close to where people live. The County Council is intending to maintain the current quality of the network as a whole. The key improvements will be focused in areas that maximise benefit. This is predominantly the half of the network that is within 1 kilometre of where people live.

The schemes of improvements, maintenance and promotion are intended to:

- Increase levels of walking and riding in all sectors of the community
- Raise environmental awareness
- Improve social inclusion
- Encourage tourism and economic development
- Contribute towards physical activity levels

It is proposed that the forum will be working directly with the County Council and in consultation with the communities involved. A series of working parties are to be formed next year to take the schemes forward.

### **Consultations**

The forum has considered and reported on a number of consultation documents. These include changes to a variety of Rights Of Way legislation. The County Council also sought the views on Management Plans for two Country Parks in the area. The Countryside Agency has also been updating the group on a range of issues.

### **Training**

In September the County Council hosted a training day for forum members. This focused on the work of the forum with the upcoming Local Transport Schemes.

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](http://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.

**Appendix****Agendas and Minutes Of Meetings 2004 / 5**

- 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004
- 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004
- 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005
- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005
- 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005
- 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005
- 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005

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**Leicestershire Local Access Forum**

**Agenda**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004, 6:45pm**

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome to observers
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of last meeting
- 5 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
- 6 Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- 7 Correspondence and Members update
- 8 Annual Report
- 9 Local Transport Plan
- 10 Walking And Riding ; An Action Plan
- 11 Verges
- 12 Publicity
- 13 Dates For Meetings 2005
- 14 Any Other Business
- 15 Agenda For Next Meeting Open Forum
- 16 Open Forum

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting held on

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2004, 6:45pm

Guthlaxton Committee Ron  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

#### Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mr Hywel Tidley, Mr Terry Kirby, Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr Peter Lancaster, Mr Paul Tame, Mrs Anne Mather, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr Michael Parr, Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mr. W. D. Carter, Mr. Peter Williams, Mr. Edwin McWilliam and Mr Mike Sheldrake

#### 1 Apologies

Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mrs Ruth Fenney, Mrs. Jo Pattinson Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr Neil Gibson, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mr John Prendergrast, Mrs Heather Broughton

#### 2 Declarations Of Interest

None.

#### 3 Minutes Of Last Meeting

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

#### 4 Correspondence and Members Update

The group had been given copies of a letter from Alun Michael MP, Minister for Rural Affairs. This thanked the efforts of all members of the new Access Forums. The Minister wanted to hear members views on improving and developing the role of the forums. To help this, it was proposed to run regional workshops to enable forum members to come together.

Jane Beech, from the Countryside Agency, informed the group that a seminar was being organised for the area. Roy Denny reminded the group that a National Forum does exist, although membership is by invitation.

The latest copy of the Access Management Grant scheme bulletin was passed to members.

Members requested that the latest copy of 'Sitelines' from English Nature be distributed with the minutes.

The Countryside Agency had written to the forum regarding Open Access Mapping for area 7. Members had asked for further clarification on the areas that the group had asked to be included on the Draft Map. All of the proposals were rejected and Bradgate Park had been removed from the map. The letter stated that the decisions followed mapping methodology and none of the sites were mountain, moor, heath or down. The removal of Bradgate Park followed a study of available data and a site visit.

The Department of Food and Rural Affairs had written to the County Council setting out changes to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan process. From 2005 Improvement Plans were to be integrated into Local Transport Plans. The proposals were set out in guidance issued to Local Authorities.

A further letter from the Countryside Agency confirmed that Access Management Grant Scheme monies could now be applied for.

#### 5 Election Of Chair and Vice Chair

The meeting marked the end of the first year of the group. After asking for nominations, Mr Denney was the only person who wished to put his name forward as Chairman. This was proposed by Terry Kirby and seconded by Vicky Allen. Mr Denney was unanimously re-elected Chair of the group.

Mr Sutton was the only member to put his name forward as the Vice Chairman. This was proposed by Mr Denney and seconded by Terry Kirby. The group unanimously elected Mr Sutton as Vice Chairman.

#### 6 Annual Report

Mr McWilliam introduced the Draft Annual Report for the group. The report is to be distributed through libraries and sent out to interested groups and authorities.

It was requested that interests be listed beside the members name.

#### 7 Local Transport Plan

Mr McWilliam gave a presentation on the new proposals to merge the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan with the Local Transport Plan. This was set out in new Draft guidance from the Department Of Transport. The guidance asks for improvement proposals to be linked to four shared priorities. Congestion, Air Quality, Accessibility and Safer Roads. The new plan will require a high level statement of policy and objectives for improving rights of way based on the above areas. In addition there may be some latitude to introduce Quality of life issues.

Members felt that this required a specific meeting to discuss the issues more fully. It was agreed that a special meeting be arranged for the 27<sup>th</sup> of October at 6pm. This was to focus on the general objectives, as well as ideas for specific examples of improvements and schemes.

8 Walking and Riding: An Action Plan

A presentation was made on a new Action Plan produced by the Department of Transport. This sets out how the Department intends to increase walking and cycling levels. The plan has 42 action points attached to it that set out how this will be achieved. Members noted the contents. Mr McWilliam mentioned that he had received a summary of the recent Great Britain Day Visits Survey. He agreed to distribute the summary document to members with the minutes.

9 Verges

It was agreed to arrange a meeting of the verges sub group. This was subsequently set for 2pm on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at Holly Hayes, Birstall.

10 Quiet Lanes

Terry Kirby informed members of a scheme being run by Nottinghamshire County Council near Sutton Bonnington. This was part of the Quiet Lanes project. This was attempting to provide more attractive routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders along lanes. It also sought to discourage speeding along the routes. The schemes did not involve speed humps or prevent usage by vehicles. A number of members aired support for the principles behind the scheme. Mike Sheldrake reminded the group of the need to assess if the pilot projects were achieving real measurable increases in recreational use.

11 Agenda For Next Meeting

Feedback on the special meeting, publicity and verges were requested agenda items at the next meeting.

12 Date Of Next Meeting

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 6:45pm September, Guthlaxton Committee Room, County Hall

Further Meetings

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 6:45pm.

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April at 6:45pm.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 6:45pm.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 6:45pm.

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, 7pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome to observers
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of last meeting
- 5 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
- 6 Correspondence and Members update
- 7 Review Of Special Meeting
- 8 Scheme Submissions
- 9 Plan Updates
- 10 Verges Group Update
- 11 Publicity
- 12 Joint Orders Consultation
- 13 Registers Consultation
- 14 Any Other Business
- 15 Agenda For Next Meeting
- 16 Open Forum

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting held on

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, 7pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

#### Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mr Terry Kirby, Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr Peter Lancaster, Mrs Ruth Fenney, Mr. Patrick Davies, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr Neil Gibson, Mr Michael Parr, Mr. W. D. Carter, Mr. Peter Williams, Mr. Edwin McWilliam and Mr Mike Sheldrake

#### 1 Apologies

Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mrs Anne Mather, Mr Paul Tame, Mr Hywel Tidley, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mrs. Jo Pattinson Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. Michael Jeeves, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mr John Prendergrast, Mrs Heather Broughton

#### 2 Welcome To Observers

The Chairman welcomed two members of the public.

#### 3 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

#### 4 Minutes Of Previous Meeting

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

#### 5 Correspondence

Several members had submitted proposals for schemes that could be included in the planning process of the Local Transport Plan and Improvement Plan. These were raised later in the meeting under a specific item.

Further correspondence had been received from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) regarding two consultation papers. These were separate items on the agenda.

#### 6 Matters Arising and Special Meeting

Mr McWilliam updated members of the group that could not attend the special meeting. The results are due to feed back to the planning process in drawing up draft working areas for the Local Transport Plan proposals. This should be an item at the next meeting.

Terry Kirby asked if he could be supplied with Bus Stop data for the County. He wished to look at current relationships and links between current bus routes and footpaths and footways. Mr McWilliam undertook to contact the Local Transport Plan group and contact Mr Kirby with the data if it was available. Mr Davies pointed out that such an exercise should be linked to Local Access Plans and proper surveys would have to be carried out to obtain meaningful results.

Several members pointed out that Parish Plans are being undertaken by a number of local councils. The data and results from these exercises could be most useful. Mr McWilliam assured the group that the plans were being considered alongside other information as part of the planning process.

Mr Denney asked that a regular guest speaker slot be held at the beginning of the meeting. Mr McWilliam undertook to find a speaker for the next meeting and also try to book further presentations. The group requested that Severn Trent and the Bradgate Trust be contacted.

## 7 Scheme Submissions

Several members introduced formal submissions of schemes or suggestions submitted to the County Council for consideration.

Ken Vickers stated that water features are not necessarily available to the public. Canoeists are restricted for a variety of reasons when trying to use the Wreake navigation. He also questioned access opportunities around Swithland, Blackbrook and Cropston reservoirs. He questioned if the Bradgate Park Trust needed to restrict access on land it held outside the confines of the park. In addition he pointed out that a number of hills in the county have no formal access to them, including High Sharpely, Ives Head and Robin A Tiptoe. Finally he drew members attention to the lack of public open space in the south and east of the county, especially Country Park provision.

Patrick Davies summarised an extensive list of schemes that amounted to a fifteen-year wish list. However, Mr Davies also linked the proposals back to the results of the Citizen Panel and underlined the resource restrictions that providers, including the County Council work within. He felt that a stockcheck should be taken and examples of good practice and easier wins be considered.

Mr Parr provided a list of proposals that could be considered. He stated that he wanted to focus on two general points. He felt that a good practice example of providing disabled access should be developed early on to encourage further access for all paths. Mr Willams stated that the County Council had developed several good examples. Mr Parr also felt that fingerposts at the start of paths were ideal to promote the network and provide more information, such as destinations and distances. This received support from the group. Mr Parr also raised the possibility of mini maps near the start of paths to encourage use.

Other members had also made postal or e-mail submissions to the secretary.

Mr Sutton proposed that the group become pro-active and develops an individual project. This would raise the profile of the group and underline the problems faced in completing a project. It was proposed that the scheme should be the development of a cycleway between Carlton and Market Bosworth that had been put forward by the Parish Council. This would then allow details to be forwarded to Alun Michael MP to underline the difficulties of work in this area.

Mr Davies formally supported the idea and the group agreed that this was a good idea. Mr McWilliam undertook to liaise with the interested parties and report back to the next meeting.

## 8 Verges Group Update

Mr Sheldrake updated the group on the work of the verges sub group and his own studies. He proposed the following:

- The development of guidance notes for officers
- The further development of Highway Maintenance procedures and documentation for verge usage.
- A priority list of particular verges
- Investigation of the availability of funding for such work under the Local Transport Plan
- Consideration of 'other hedge side' creations

## 9 Publicity

Mr Denney underlined the need to promote the work of the group. Currently few members of the public attended meetings and the group was not actively promoting itself. The issue of guest speakers was again raised and the need to promote the fact. It was agreed to organise a working party to investigate promoting the group. Roy Denney, Ruth Fenney and Edwin McWilliam would organise a meeting to move the matter forward.

Mr Denney also asked if an article could be placed in the County Council newsletter that is circulated to all households. Mr McWilliam undertook to reserve some space in a future edition.

## 10 Joint Orders and Registers Consultations

Mr Carter introduced two consultation papers that had been received from DEFRA. The Joint Orders paper proposed the streamlining of the current system. This would reduce the number of past event orders required to modify the Definitive Map. It also dealt with the scale of mapping to be used and the appropriate relevant date to be used. Members noted the document and had no formal comments to be passed back.

The second document dealt with the establishment of registers required under amendments brought in by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The first is for a register for all definitive map modification order applications. The other two are for section 31 declarations by occupiers who want to acknowledge rights of way but limit any further claims and a register for applications under section 121B of the highways act. The register of

modification applications would help log those claims prior to the cut off date of 2026. The registers are proposed to be available online as well as in paper form. Members noted the contents.

11 Agenda For Next Meeting

Members requested that membership of the group and publicity be on the next agenda. Mr Williams stated that the Watermead Management Plan should be ready for consultation.

12 Date Of Next Meeting

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 6:45pm, Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall

Further Meetings

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April at 6:45pm.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 6:45pm.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 6:45pm.

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005, 6:45pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Welcome to observers
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of last meeting
- 5 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
- 6 Presentation by Joanna Davidson-Watts, English Nature
- 7 Correspondence and Membership update
- 8 Venue, Times and Minutes
- 9 Sub Groups and other suggestions
- 10 Local Transport Plan Proposals
- 11 Verges Group Update
- 12 Watermead Park Management Plan Consultation
- 13 Publicity
- 14 Any Other Business
- 15 Agenda For Next Meeting
- 16 Open Forum

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting held on

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005, 6:45pm

Sparkenhoe Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

#### Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney, (Chair), Mr. Brian Sutton (Vice Chair), Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mr Terry Kirby, Mr Peter Lancaster, Mrs Ruth Fenney, Mr Neil Gibson, Mr Michael Parr, Mrs. Alex Pyper, Mrs Anne Mather, Mrs. Jo Pattinson Mr. Peter Sapsford, Mr. W. D. Carter, Mr. Peter Williams, Mr. Edwin McWilliam and Mr Mike Sheldrake

#### 1 Apologies

Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr. Patrick Davies , Mr Paul Tame, Mr Hywel Tidley, Mr. Ernie White C.C, Mrs. Delia Brock C.C, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton C.C, Mr John Prendergrast, Mrs Heather Broughton

#### 2 Welcome To Observers

The Chairman welcomed Andy Brooks, the Chairman of the Leicester City forum.

#### 3 Declarations of Interest

Roy Denney declared interests in relation to a number of activities at Watermead Country Park, an agenda item.

#### 4 Minutes Of Previous Meeting and matters arising

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

Mr McWilliam reported that he had been in discussions with staff dealing with the request from Carlton Parish Council to provide a footway to Market Bosworth. A meeting is to be arranged to discuss the matter. Brian Sutton and Joe Pattison requested that they be involved with the meeting.

Mr Denney requested the further information on member attendance. Mr McWilliam reported that only one interviewed member of the forum had failed to attend a meeting for 12 months. This member had now left the forum (see below). Mr Denny expressed concern that the County Council members were unable to attend due to heavy work commitments. Mr Williams agreed to look into the matter.

## 5 Guest Speaker

Joanna Davidson-Watts from English Nature was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen events. Members requested that she be asked to speak to a future meeting.

## 6 Correspondence

Michael Jeeves had written to the secretary, resigning from the group. He was unable to commit the necessary time to the group. He offered to give a presentation to the group on Access and Nature conservation. Members requested that the secretary should invite him to give a presentation.

Mr Denney asked what the procedure was for replacing a member of the group. Mr McWilliam reminded members that there were now two vacancies, one for a member who could actively represent ethnic minorities and another with an interest in Nature conservation. Any applicant would have to go through a formal interview process and fill in the appropriate form. Members asked if informal approaches could be made to interested parties. Mr McWilliam undertook to update the web site ([www.leics.gov.uk/laf](http://www.leics.gov.uk/laf)) with details of how to apply. Mr Denney asked if a press release to both promote the group and mention the vacancies could be progressed. He then undertook to write a short article on the group. The use of District Council newsheets and the Leicestershire Matters paper were put forward as good places to publish information. Mr McWilliam confirmed that he had approached Leicestershire Matters regarding an article. Due to demand the next edition was fully booked. A space has been reserved in the subsequent edition. Mr Lancaster pointed out that most if not all members were also in other groups and organisations. He suggested that everyone make mention of the forum whenever possible.

Severn Trent Water had offered to attend the next meeting, as a guest speaker. A request to the Bradgate Trust, for a speaker, had been unsuccessful.

David Gear from the Countryside Agency had written to the forum with an update on the research into better support for the works of LAFs. The Agency has let a contact to the University of Gloucestershire. It is hoped that the research will identify 'successful' examples of good practice and recommend further action including guidance for forums.

Jan Tilsley from the Countryside Agency at Bingham had been organising a LAF event at Grantham. Each regional forum had the opportunity to send three delegates as well as the secretary. There were two provisional dates, 16<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> of March. Mr Denney requested further information on the possible agenda for the day. Mr McWilliam read out a draft agenda that included a presentation on a technical topic, a facilitated discussion on the future role of groups and a workshop and skills session.

The following members requested the chance to attend:

16<sup>th</sup> Feb

- Vicky Allen
- Michael Parr
- Ruth Fenney
- Peter Lancaster
- Brian Sutton
- Roy Denney

10<sup>th</sup> March

- Michael Parr
- Terry Kirby
- Peter Lancaster
- Brian Sutton
- RoyDenney

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair would have places and Mr McWilliam would try to obtain as many further places as possible. *(This meeting has now been set for the 10<sup>th</sup> March, the secretary has passed on details of members to the organiser of the event).*

## 7 Venue, Times and Minutes

Mr Denney introduced the discussion and reminded the group of three submissions that had been circulated from Mr Denney, Anne Mather and Vicky Allen.

Mr Denney requested that items of information could be circulated well in advance of the meeting. This would allow more time and informed discussion at the meeting. Both Mrs Mather and Mr Denney had voiced concerns over Mr McWilliam presenting a number of items at meetings and also taking minutes. The group formally requested that the County Council make further efforts to secure a formal minute taker for the group.

Mr Denney summarised the problems with finding an appropriate meeting time and venue that would be suitable for all members. The use of County Hall provided good accommodation but the meetings had to be cut short. He also felt that the trial of Snibston had not been a success, with many members finding it difficult to attend. Terry Kirby proposed that meetings should begin earlier to allow for more time for discussions. County Hall rooms had to be vacated by 9pm. Anne Mather disagreed. She already struggles to make the 6:45 start due to work and other commitments. She also reminded the group of earlier discussions to try to move the forum around the County.

Terry Kirby pointed out that he attended meetings using public transport. He suggested the use of Leicester Town Hall as this was central for all and easily accessible. Peter Sapsford proposed the use of Glenfield Parish Council meeting room. This could be booked and allowed meetings to end later than at County Hall. Anne Mather proposed Beauchamp College Oadby. She pointed out that the forum had not met on the eastern side of the City. If Beauchamp had no suitable meeting room then Brocks Hill may have something available. Mrs Mather proposed that the group meet in Oadby on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. This was formally agreed.

Vicky Allen suggested that the group should meet for longer and consider meeting for whole days. Alex Pyper agreed that the meetings should be longer but said that a half day would be sufficient. Mr Denney proposed that the group should meet for 2 whole day events each year in the spring and autumn. Half of the day could be set aside for training, following on from the success of last year's event. It was proposed and agreed that the meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> September is an all day event at County Hall.

## 8 Local Transport Plan Update

Mr McWilliam distributed and introduced a paper outlining early proposals for inclusion in the next Local Transport Plan. Mr Denney requested that this be circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. Mr McWilliam explained that the document had only just been produced and wasn't finalised. If it were left to the next meeting, members would have no opportunity to comment.

The document set out how the County Council intends to promote and maintain the network of paths in Leicestershire. The main focus is the network close to where people live. Most walks or rides occur from or close to the doorstep. The proposals also sought to provide access to more people and a wider range of the community. This includes improving access on the ground, the removal of barriers, responding to the Disability Discrimination Act and promoting and encouraging use through pro-active measures.

A five year programme is proposed to include:

- Signage from the roadside
- Waymarking and route signage programme
- Promotional information and encouragement linked to health
- Access for all initiative to remove barriers, real and perceived
- Other specific network break schemes and carriageway improvements and safety audit
- Ongoing monitoring of the use of the network

Mr Kirby made representations that not enough focus was placed on utilitarian use. Mr McWilliam assured him that other parts of the LTP were involved in that study. Vicky Allen felt that rural areas may miss out and there was too much focus on urban use.

Brian Sutton was concerned about the removal of stiles due to livestock. Mr McWilliam confirmed that the removal of any barrier would occur following a consultation with the occupier. No stock fences would be left open. Further comment was made on the specific focus of near urban areas. Mr Carter reminded the group that the proposals related to new monies and the end result may be more allocation of existing funds for the remainder of the network.

Members were asked to forward any comments in writing to Mr McWilliam by the end February.

## 9 Sub Group

Mr Sheldrake informed members that the next meeting of the verges sub group would be at 10am at Hollyhayes, Birstall on the 25<sup>th</sup> February.

He also thought that the issue of 'Quiet Lanes' was an appropriate area for the group to explore. Vicky Allen agreed and also commended the County Council on the lorry restrictions on areas of the county. Mr Sutton pointed out that this did benefit some, but focused lorries on narrow corridors that affected many people. Mr Carter thought it was a good idea to discuss the quiet lanes proposals if the group wanted to have some effect on how the County Council would deal with the issue. Mr Lancaster was concerned about enforcement along such routes and questioned if the resources were available. Mr Sheldrake stated the idea behind quiet lanes was largely persuasion and not directly an enforcement issue. The forum agreed that the verges sub group should look at Quiet Lanes.

10 Watermead Park Management Plan

Peter Williams introduced this item. He started by reminding members that they had a wider access role than rights of way. This extends to broader access management and he was seeking views on the draft management plan for Watermead Park. The draft document had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. A plan was passed to members at the meeting of the site.

Mr Williams stated that the site attracts more than 200000 visitors per year and is on the doorstep for nearly 1 million people. He was interested to hear members views on the site objectives set out on pages 17 and 18 of the document. These were:

- Provide a major site for countryside recreation
- Maintain and enhance the ecological interest of the park
- Provide improved facilities for quiet water based activities
- Improve interpretation and information for visitors
- Develop the education and life long learning opportunities
- Develop links with the community
- Pursue links with partners
- Enhance and generate income to support running costs and improvements

Mr Kirby asked if the feeding of geese was a problem on the park. Mr Williams agreed this was an issue, especially in the part of the site managed by the city. Mr Cheesman felt that the height barrier at the northern site entrance and the lack of disabled toilet facilities restricted access for certain groups. Mr Williams said that the height barrier had now been removed and that the toilet block at the northern end now had a radar key for disabled users.

Vick Allen felt that the document did not discuss wider access and links into the rights of way network. She also raised concerns regarding the state of the bridleway between Birstall and Thurmaston. The boardwalk was of little use to horse riders. The metal bridge at the end of White Lane scares horses due to the noise of crossing it. On a more positive note Mrs Allen felt that further encouragement of use and numbers visiting the park would lead to less illegitimate use. Mr Denney inquired about the status of the area between the the city and county areas that was not coloured on the plan. Mr Williams replied that the County Council has been in discussions with the occupier and is always seeking better links between the two areas. The site was subject to tipping in the past that has a legacy to this day. Mr Denney asked why the site plans shown on the notice boards were upside down. Mr Williams said he would investigate the matter.

Mr Williams asked that members submit any written comments regarding the plan by the end of February.

11 Agenda For Next Meeting

Due to the time and the need to leave the building, this item was cut short and the open forum session abandoned. Mr Denney did briefly outline a proposed new agenda format for the next meeting. He also asked to see any agenda before it was formally circulated to members. Mrs Allen suggested that the group needed at least 3 hours to get through the agenda.

12 Date Of Next Meeting

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March at 6:45pm, Beauchamp College Oadby

Further Meetings

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 6:45pm.

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 6:45pm.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 10:00am all day event

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, 6:45pm

Conference Room  
Beauchamp College  
Ridgeway  
Oadby  
Leicestershire

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Chairman's Welcome
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 1 Minutes of last meeting
- 2 Presentation by Severn Trent Water
- 3 Matters arising from minutes not otherwise on the agenda
- 4 Correspondence
- 5 East Midlands Local Access Forum Event Feedback
- 6 Lost Ways ARU update
- 7 Verges Group Update
- 8 Publicity
- 9 Any Other Business
- 10 Venue and Agenda for next meeting
- 11 Open Forum

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting held on

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005, 6:45pm

Beauchamp College  
Oadby  
Leicestershire

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Vicky Allen, Bill Carter, Eddie McWilliam and Paul Stanley

2 Declarations of Interest

Peter Williams declared an interest in the item about access at Wistow

3 Minutes Of Previous Meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January was confirmed as a true record.

Peter Williams had looked into the attendance of County Council members of the Forum, which had been poor, because they were very busy Cabinet members and reported that appointments would be reviewed after the County Council elections on May 5<sup>th</sup>

4 Guest Speaker

A presentation about the access policies of Severn Trent Water Company. The Forum asked if the company could grant greater access to Blackbrook, Cropston and Swithland reservoirs and whether it was prepared to dedicate more land for access under the CROW Act.

5 Correspondence

A letter from Alun Michael dated 7 March was circulated which set out the latest developments on open access, access to the coast and access to woodlands. The Forum had been asked for its view on access at Wistow, which the County Council had proposed to withdraw funding from. The Forum agreed that, as far as possible, the County Council should continue to assist in providing access at Wistow which was a valuable resource provided with the full encouragement and backing of the landowner concerned.

6 East Midlands LAF Event

The Chairman reported on the East Midlands Local Access Forum held at Grantham on 10 March. The most valuable part of the day had been comparing notes with other forum members across the region. It appeared that fora with secretariats provided by the Chief Executive's or Legal Department allowed the

rights of way officers to contribute fully to the meeting without diluting their time on minute taking and correspondence.

#### 7 Discovering Lost Ways

The Forum received a newsletter updating the work of the project.

#### 8 Verges Group Update

The intention is to have a guidance note produced by the County Council which sets out how verges should be managed to minimise impediments to access along them, hopefully to reduce signage in roadside verges. There will be another meeting of the group to progress this guidance note.

#### 9 Publicity

A letter about the Forum will be sent to Parish Councils in the county shortly. The Chairman agreed to produce the draft of a newsletter about the forum for consideration at the next forum meeting. It was felt that publicity was a key area which was not being addressed properly by the forum.

#### 10 Any Other Business

(a) Secretary. The County Council's Chief Executive's office will be asked if they will provide the secretariat for future meetings. If they would not do the job then the Vice Chairman, Anne Mather, offered to be the Secretary at the next meeting.

(b) There was to be a LTP day at Tigers Ground on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 9.00 – 12.00

(c) The next City Laf meeting is to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> April at New Walk Centre B Block 5.00 (Refreshments) for 6.00 start.

#### 11 Agenda For Next Meeting

The next meeting of the forum will be held at 6.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 25 May in the Guthlaxton Room at County Hall, Glenfield. Future meetings would be held on 28 July at Glenfield Parish Council at 6.45 p.m. and 5 September, an all day event. Agenda items for the next meeting would include Local Transport and Improvement Plan, the role of the Chairman and a presentation by Defra on the Single Payment Scheme and Access or English Nature (now Natural England) on its approach to access, or Michael Jeeves on the view of the Wildlife Trust on access.

#### 12 Open Forum

The following items were discussed:

- a) Motor vehicles on Rights of Way at the conclusion of which was a general agreement that the County Council's approach to management of Gartree Rd was appropriate and should be duplicated elsewhere if the resources can be found
- b) Croft Hill – it was reported that following an appeal by the landowners this site will not be included in the map of open countryside

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 6:45pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 1 Approval of Minutes of last meeting
- 2 Matters arising from minutes not otherwise on the agenda
- 3 Presentation by County Council Archeological Team
- 4 Correspondence
- 5 Report from Regional LAF Seminar
- 6 Local Transport Plan Update
- 7 Forum Structure  
*Council representation update*  
*Secretarial and minute taking update*  
*Role of Chairman*
- 8 Publicity  
*LCC article*  
*Draft LAF Newsletter*  
*Consultations*
- 9 Access Areas
- 10 Training opportunities and needs for all day meeting in September
- 11 Any Other Business
- 12 Venue and Agenda for next meeting
- 13 Open Forum

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting held on

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, 6:45pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicester

#### Attendees

Mr. Brian Sutton, (Chair), Mr. Michael Cheeseman, Ms. Vicky Allen, Mr Terry Kirby, Mr Peter Lancaster, Mrs. Josephine Pattinson, Mr. Ken Vickers, Mr Michael Parr, Mrs A Mather, Mr P Sapsford, Mr P Tame, Mr. W. D. Carter, Mr. Edwin McWilliam and Mr Mike Sheldrake

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Alex Pyper, Mrs Ruth Fenney, Heather Broughton, Peter Williams, Roy Denney, Ernie White and Lesley Pendleton.

#### 2 Declarations of Interest

None

#### 3 Minutes Of Previous Meeting and matters arising

Mike Cheeseman stated that he had been at the meeting.

Vicky Allen reminded the group of the Lost Ways Item. She stated that every parish in the county may have as much as 16 missing paths that would be worthy of consideration to be added to the Definitive Map. Mr Carter said that the County Council had carried out a trial pilot on several parishes to assess the extent of the issue. On average, about 6 paths were worthy of further research in each parish. Of these, only a percentage would ever have sufficient evidence to justify an order being made.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January was confirmed as a true record.

#### 4 Guest Speaker

Richard Knox from the County Council archaeology unit gave a presentation to the group.

He informed members of the records that the County Council maintains of sites and monuments and the role played by the unit in dealing with archaeology in Leicestershire. He then went on to introduce the subject of field walking. He recommenced 'Community Archaeology, A fieldworker's

handbook' by Peter Liddle as an excellent background text. This should be available through the libraries service (ISBN 0 85022 177 3)

He then went on to discuss the role of metal detectors in modern archaeology. Anyone field walking or using a metal detector needs to have sought the permission of the landowner. It was also important to discuss what would happen should anything of value be discovered.

Paul Tame mentioned that the NFU had pro forma agreements that could be used to cover anything found during a survey. Peter Lancaster asked how you would know if someone was already working in the area. The general advice was to talk to landowners who would inform you accordingly. The group went on to thank Mr Knox for a very interesting and informative presentation. Mr Knox can be contacted on [rknox@leics.gov.uk](mailto:rknox@leics.gov.uk) if anyone needs further information.

## 5 Correspondence

Mr McWilliam circulated the Conservation and Walks and Rides register for 2005. This is produced by DEFRA and is available online or from some libraries. He also reminded the group that further copies of the register are available free of charge to anyone by telephoning 01902 693218

A letter had been received from Margret Beckett MP regarding the new agency, Natural England. This will comprise of English Nature and the landscape and access elements of the Countryside Agency.

A letter had been received from the British Canoe Union. They wanted to come and talk to the group about further access along Britains waterways. In particular they wanted to raise the issues set out in the report 'Water-Based Sport and Recreation'. Ken Vickers proposed that the group should invite Tamsin Phipps to talk to the group. A number of sites were raised, including access to the River Derwent. Paul Tame pointed out that the issue of access both along and beside waterways was more complex and often needed the crossing of land to get to the water side. The group agreed to invite the speaker.

Mr McWilliam then circulated 'Managing Public Access – A guide for Land Managers' from the Countryside Commission. Vicky Allen said she had read the booklet and considered it very good.

## 6 Report from The Regional LAF Seminar

Members noted the contents of the report

## 7 Local Transport Plan Update

Mr McWilliam updated the group on progress on the Local Transport Plan. He explained the general types of works and proposals that were being put forward. He also indicated the areas that were to be focused on over the next five years. Both improvements and maintenance were to be focused on routes near to urban areas, although this amounted to 48% of the network. Paths that were well used or could generate use were going to benefit the most.

Vicky Allen raised concerns over surfacing. The needs of horse riders were not necessarily the needs of other users. Mr McWilliam said that these issues would be considered and all works would be subject to widespread consultation process.

Mr Sutton was glad to see that the focus of works was to be on paths that would benefit most users. Paul Tame inquired about the future maintenance of headlands. Mr Carter outlined current payments to farmers under the headlands project. He stated that this would be developed further during the Plan period.

## 8 Forum Update

Mr Carter confirmed that Mrs Camamile CC would be replacing Mr White on the group. It was also confirmed that a minute taker should be available for the next meeting and that this would be on a permanent basis.

Mrs Mather asked if the group wanted to meet at Beauchamp College again. This was not finalised. Mrs Mather also said she would welcome more flexibility in the Chairing of the meetings and wondered if the task could alternate between the Chair and the Vice Chair.

Mr Sutton felt that the needs of 4x4 users should be represented and asked if Mr Tidley could be contacted regarding the next meeting.

## 9 Publicity

The proposed newsletter 'Down Our Way' produced by Mr Denney had been circulated. Members welcomed the newsheet. Everyone was reminded of the need to contribute articles and raise the profile of the group. Joe Pattinson had already submitted to local magazine articles. Mr McWilliam confirmed he would check the article for the next Leicestershire Matters.

## 10 Any Other Business

Vicky Allen asked about the extent of training for Rights Of Way Officers in the authority. She felt that advice allegedly given to a third party was poor. Mr Carter ran through an extensive training schedule and assured the group that the County Council took training seriously amongst Rights of Way staff.

Members discussed at length the format of the September all day event. It was finally agreed to hold the training sessions in the morning and the formal meeting in the afternoon. A lunch was to be provided to members that attended. Further details on exact timing to follow.

11 Agenda For Next Meeting

Anne Mather asked for an update on the Nook at Wistow to be on the next meeting.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July, Framland Committee Room County Hall, 6:45

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005, 6:45pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 1 Approval of Minutes of last meeting
- 2 Matters arising from minutes not otherwise on the agenda
- 3 Correspondence
- 4 Open Access Area 7
- 5 Review Of Local Access Forums Report
- 6 'What About Us' research
- 7 Local Transport Plan Details
- 8 Health Walking Co-ordinator
- 9 Proposals for charging motorists and effects on rural routes
- 10 Update on The Nook Wistow
- 11 Training day meeting in September
- 12 Any Other Business
- 13 Venue and Agenda for next meeting
- 14 Open Forum

## LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

### Minutes of a meeting held Wednesday, 28 July 2005 at Guthlaxton Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester.

#### Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney – In the Chair		
Ms. Vicky Allen	Mr. Michael Cheeseman	Mr. Patrick Davis
Ms. Ruth Fenney	Mr. Terrance Kirby	Mr. Peter Lancaster
Ms. Anne Mather	Mr. Michael Parr	Mrs. Alex Pyper
Mr. Brian Sutton	Mr. Paul Tame	Mr. Hywel Tidley
Mr. Kenneth Vickers		

#### Observers:

Mr Andy Brooks – Leicester Access Forum

#### Officers

Mr. Eddie McWilliam, Rights of Way Officer  
 Mr. Peter Williams, Group Manager, Environmental Management  
 Mrs. Sarah Brookes, Committee Services Officer

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Heather Broughton, Mrs. Ruth Camamile, CC, Mr. Bill Carter, Mr. Neil Gibson, Mrs. Josephine Pattinson, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton, CC, Mr. John Prendergast, Mr. Peter Sapsford and Mr. Mike Sheldrake.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

Mr. Brooks declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 10: Local Transport Plan Details as an officer of Leicester City Council and left the meeting for the consideration of the item. (Minute 23 below refers)

#### 3. Chairs Announcements

- (a) The Chair drew Members attention to the disappointing number of Members who had attended the previous meeting and commented that he hoped attendance would improve for future meetings
- (b) The Chair informed Members that he would be attending a Seminar for Local Access Forum Chairs later in the year.

#### 4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held 25 May 2005, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed, subject to the addition of Mrs. Josephine Pattinson to the list of attendees.

#### 5. Matters Arising

- (a) Minute 8: Forum Update: - Chairing of the meetings would not alternate between the Chair and the Vice-Chair; Members were informed that the Vice – Chair would take the Chair at any meeting the appointed Chair was unable to attend.
- (b) Minute 4 of the Meeting Held on 31 March 2005 – Members were advised that a response from Severn Trent in regard to granting greater access to Blackbrook, Cropston and Swithland reservoirs and whether it was prepared to dedicate more land for access under the CROW Act remained outstanding. Officers undertook to contact Severn Trent and request a response for the next meeting.

## 6. Items of Any Other Business

The Chair sought and obtained the consent of Members to take one further item of business at the end of the agenda: SUSTRANS – Update

## 7. Correspondence

- (a) Regional Contact - Members were informed that Andrew Watson of Lincolnshire County Council was now the regional contact for the East Midlands Local Access Forums.
- (b) British Horse Society – Two members from each LAF, with an interest in equestrian items were invited to attend a meeting with the British Horse Society in the near future. Members were asked to contact Ms. Allen if they wished to attend.
- (c) British Motoring Federation – Members were informed that the Countryside Agency would be holding a workshop for motoring enthusiasts in order to encourage their membership within LAFs.
- (d) Forum Membership – Members were advised that there were currently two vacancies within the LLAF. Members discussed ways to promote the LAF further and gain Members who would represent all sections of the Leicestershire community.
- (e) Section 16 Applications – Members were advised that three S16 Countryside Rights of Way Act applications had been received: Jaguar Wood, Lount; National Forest Company, land near Sence Park, Heather and Wood Farm near Ashby de la Zouch.

## 8. Open Access Area 7

Mr. McWilliam distributed copies of the Defra Access Update 10 and a defra news release dated 22 July 2005 to those Members present. Copies of the handouts are filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that Open Access Area 7, giving new right of access in the east of the country was due to come into force on 31 October 2005. However, the Open Access Area 8 (west) implementation had now been brought forward to the same date. This would impact on the amount of publicity that each of the Access Area could expect to receive.

Members were provided with an update in the work currently being undertaken in preparation for the 31 October 2005; advised that digital information which would allow maps to be issued quickly was awaited and informed that a further

report would be presented to the next meeting. Members discussed at length the various issues that were expected to arise following the new rights of access coming into force.

Following a request from Mr McWilliam Ms. Allen, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Cheeseman, Ms. Fenney, Mr. Tidley, Mr. Vickers and Mr. Denney expressed an interest in being further involved in the publicity organised to promote Open Access Area 7 on 31 October 2005. The issue would be further raised at the meeting on 5 September 2005.

#### 9. Review of Local Access Forums Report

The Chair advised Members of the contents of the Review of Local Access Forums report and gave feedback from a regional seminar he had recently attended.

Members were advised that both the report and the seminar had indicated that there was a lot of uncertainty from both sides as to what the role of a LAF should be and what its priorities were. Attention was drawn to the number of central reports considered at some LAF meetings which took up a large portion of available time and the suggestion that reports should be circulated in advance of meetings to allow Members to only ask questions if they had a particular point to raise.

Successful LAFs generally have an open forum with informal discussions, training sessions and workshops scheduled. They also hold meeting at various venues and had a Minute secretary to support the officers and the Chair.

Members considered that the LAF needed to raise its profile throughout the County with both the general public and the decision makers within local government, which could include encouraging County Councillors to attend meetings

Members then discussed the report in detail and the overlap of issues considered by other bodies such as Stepping Stones. Members welcomed the suggestion that the LAF could seek presentations on the work currently being undertaken by bodies such as Stepping Stones CMP or the Watermead Country Park Joint Advisory Committee.

Mr. McWilliam advised Members that the report had been produced following a consultation exercise and was not a formal report. The report omitted reference to the Local Transport Plan and how it related to both Defra and the Countryside Agency. There was also a lack of reference to the Highways Agency, although the report did contain reference to the issue of finance and that LAFs should be aware of how to access funding and what their budgets are.

RESOLVED:

That the LAF should write to Defra outlining its concerns raised by the Review of Local Access Forums Report.

#### 10. “What About Us” research

Members discussed the two documents “What about us” part one - Challenging perceptions: under-represented groups’ visitor needs and part two – Challenging perceptions: provider awareness of under-represented groups.

Members discussed in detail the issues in regard to the needs of those currently under-represented including BME groups and the disabled, including the ways in which they use the current facilities/areas and the need to make contact with those who are not using them and find out why.

#### 11. Local Transport Plan Details

(Mr Brooks, Observer, Leicester LAF declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion of this item).

Mr. McWilliam advised Members that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) draft was expected to be presented to the next meeting of the Forum. Members were given the opportunity to look at the Local Transport Plan Schemes 2006/07 and discuss them including how access could be improved and ways of increasing public awareness and usage of various sites.

Members further discussed their preferred involvement in the scheme including how they could be recognised as a 'bridge' between the various agencies including landowners and the general public.

In response to a question regarding the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RWIP) Mr. McWilliam provided an update on the progress of the RWIP and the background to it. Members were advised that the current round of consultation in regard to the RWIP would be the last. The next round of RWIP consultation would be subsumed into the LTP.

Following a request from Mr McWilliam Mr. Denney, Ms. Allen, Mr. Cheeseman, Mr. Davis, Ms. Fenney, Mr. Kirby, Mr. Lancaster, Ms. Mather, Mr. Parr, Mrs. Pyper, Mr. Tame and Mr. Tidley expressed an interest in assisting to engage the public further.

RESOLVED:

That engaging with the public be explored further at the meeting on 5 September 2005, including the establishment of subgroups which would feedback to the main LAF.

#### 12. Health Walking Co-ordinator

Members were provided with an update on the progress to recruit a Health Walking Co-ordinator and the various funding streams involved. It was hoped that sufficient funding would be secured to fund a post within Leicestershire.

#### 13. Proposals for Charging Motorists and Effects on Rural Routes

Members discussed the implications the proposals for charging motorists and the effects the proposals may have on rural routes if implemented.

RESOLVED:

That a further report on the proposals for charging motorists and its effect on rural routes including an outline of a possible draft response by the LAF be brought to the next meeting.

*Mr. Kirby left the meeting.*

14. Update on The Nook, Wistow

Mr Williams provided Members with an update on The Nook, Wistow. Support had been given to review the original agreement.

15. Training Day meeting in September

Members had highlighted a number of items for possible inclusion for discussion at training session on 5 September during the course of the meeting and Mr Williams and Mr McWilliam undertook to include as many as possible on the agenda. Members were advised that the training session was due to start at 10.00am.

16. Any Other Business

(a) SUSTRANS – In response to an enquiry the Chair had received that the section of the SUSTRANS route between Ratby and Groby would be widened impacting on the hedgerow either side of the path Mr McWilliams reported that the path would not be widened beyond its original confines. The replacement of the current path with sealed surface would allow use of the path in all weathers to a wider range of the public than at present. The Chair undertook to report back Mr. McWilliams response.

(b) Ragwort – Mr Sutton drew Members attention to the increased amount of ragwort on the verges of county roads. Mr Williams advised Members that the majority of ragwort could be found on roads which were the responsibility of the Highways Agency. The County Council used various methods to control and reduce the amount of ragwort on the verges of roads it was responsible for maintaining, including the use of Cinnabar moths, hand-pulling and spraying.

(c) Living Landmarks – Mr Williams informed Members that within Leicestershire the Heart of the National Forest Foundation were currently seeking a bid from the Big Lottery for Living Landmark funding which would be a huge benefit for access around Conkers, near Moira. A further report would be submitted to the next meeting.

17. Venue and Agenda for Next Meeting

Monday, 5 September 2005, commencing at 1pm in Goscote Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield

***Please note: A training session for Members only will precede the meeting commencing at 9.30am in Guthlaxton Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield.***

18. Open Forum

Due to the time and the requirement to leave the building no issues were discussed under Open Forum.

28 July 2005  
6.45pm – 8.55pm

CHAIR

## Leicestershire Local Access Forum

### Agenda

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005, 1pm

Guthlaxton Committee Room  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Approval of Minutes of last meeting
- 5 Matters arising from minutes not otherwise on the agenda
- 6 Correspondence
- 7 Presentation on Access site reports
- 8 Site Specific Comments
- 9 Equestrian Strategy
- 10 Draft Local Transport Plan
- 11 Any Other Business
- 12 Venue and Agenda for next meeting
- 13 Open Forum

## LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

### Minutes of a meeting held Monday, 5 September 2005 at Guthlaxton Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester.

#### Attendees

Mr. Roy Denney – In the Chair  
Ms. Vicky Allen                      Mrs. Ruth Camamile, CC                      Mr. Michael Cheeseman  
Ms. Ruth Fenney                      Mr. Terrance Kirby                      Mr. Michael Parr  
Mrs. Josephine Pattinson                      Mrs. Alex Pyper  
Mr. Peter Sapsford

#### Observers:

Mr Andy Brooks – Leicester Access Forum  
Mr. S. Warren  
Mr. D. Clark

#### Officers

Mr. Eddie McWilliam, Rights of Way Officer  
Mrs. Sarah Brookes, Committee Services Officer

#### 31. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Heather Broughton, Mr. Bill Carter, Mr. Patrick Davis, Mr. Neil Gibson, Mr. Peter Lancaster, Ms. Anne Mather, Mrs. Lesley Pendleton, CC, Mr. John Prendergast, Mr. Mike Sheldrake, Mr. Brian Sutton, Mr. Paul Tame, Mr. Hywel Tidley, Mr. Kenneth Vickers and Mr. Peter Williams

#### 32. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 33. Chairs Announcements

The Chair provided those Members present with a briefing paper on the Seminar for Local Access Forum Chairs which he had recently attended. A copy of the briefing paper entitled 'Problems and Progress to date with LAFs' is filed with these minutes.

#### 34. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held 28 July 2005, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

#### 35. Matters Arising

- (a) Minute 17(b): Minute 4 of the Meeting Held on 31 March 2005 – Members were advised that a response from Severn Trent in regard to granting greater access to Blackbrook, Cropston and Swithland reservoirs and whether it was

prepared to dedicate more land for access under the CROW Act remained outstanding. Members noted that there was currently no one in the post which would deal with the Forum's request and requested Officer to write to Severn Trent and formally request a response in due course.

- (b) Minute 20: Open Access Area 7/8 - the publicity organised to promote Open Access Area 7 on 31 October 2005 was being arranged by Mr. Carter pending receipt of information from the Countryside Agency. It was proposed to hold an event at Castle Hill, Mountsorrel and all Members would be invited. Confirmation of the final details would be provided to Members nearer the event.
- (c) Minute 21: Review of Local Access Forums Report – Members were advised that their concerns had been passed back to Defra.
- (d) Minute 25: Proposals for Charging Motorists and Effects on Rural Routes – Members were advised that they would be invited to take part in the formal consultation process in regard to this issue and therefore an additional report would not be presented to the Forum.

36. Correspondence:

- (f) Access Management Bulletin - Members were informed that further copies of the Access Management Bulletin would be issued with the minutes of the meeting.
- (g) Countryside Review Letter – Members were informed that an East Midlands Case Study was available to download as part of the new Rural Communities database on the Commission for Rural Communities website: [www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk)

37. Presentation on Access site reports and Site Specific Comments.

The Chairman welcomed Michael Jeeves, Head of Communication for Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

Members were provided with a detailed overview of the Access sites which would be opened up for public use from 31 October 2005. The main points were:

- There are two types of Access: mountain/moor/heath/downs or common land. The Areas being opened within the Leicestershire and Rutland area were common land.
- Some of the sites are very small and difficult to pinpoint such as grass verges within villages or corner of road junctions, the ownership of which has been difficult to identify.
- The initial consultation has had a very small timescale, the Countryside Agency deadline was 16 September 2005.
- User groups will have the opportunity to discuss the Access sites at Phase 2 which will take place over the next two years and will look at individual sites. It was proposed to include disability access, signage,

fencing of areas and the requirements to manage the land within this second stage.

- Open Access Subgroups would be organised for each of the four Areas of Development to discuss specific Access Sites and develop work plans. Site visits would be organised for Member of the Subgroups during spring 2006.

Mr. Jeeves drew Members attention to a number of individual Access sites and outlined the proposals in regard to each area. Members discussed each of the sites in detail.

The Members joined Mr. Denny in thanking Mr. Jeeves for attending the meeting and providing a very informative presentation.

38. Equestrian Strategy

Mr. McWilliam introduced David Clark, Leicestershire County Council Senior Officer, Community Development to the Forum and those Members present were provided with copies of an Equestrian Strategy and Action Plan. A copy of the strategy is filed with these minutes.

Members were invited to respond to the consultation document by 31 October 2005. Ms. Vicky Allen and Mrs. Alex Pyper undertook to discuss the strategy further and report back their response to the next meeting of the Forum.

*Mr Cheeseman and Mrs Camamile left the meeting at 3.30pm*

39. Draft Leicestershire Local Transport Plan

Mr McWilliam invited Members to collect a copy of the draft Leicestershire Local Transport Plan as they left the meeting. The Plan would be an item for discussion at the next meeting to the Forum.

*Mr. Sapsford left the meeting at 3.50pm*

40. Any Other Business

There no further items of business.

41. Venue and Agenda for Next Meeting

Monday, 2 November 2005, at Beauchamp College

42. Open Forum

There were no issues raised for discussion under Open Forum.

5 September 2005  
1.15pm – 4.05pm

CHAIR

## LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

### **Forum Structure**

The Local Access Forum for the County of Leicestershire shall be known as The Leicestershire Local Access Forum. The Forum is established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. In 2002 DEFRA published The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 which came into force on 7th August 2002 and will form the basis of the Constitution of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum.

#### **1. Role**

- 1.1 Provide advice to the County Council on the improvement of public access to land within the County for the purpose of travel, open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.
- 1.2 Respond to the Countryside Agency on the draft maps of open country and registered common land.
- 1.3 In an advisory capacity, contribute to the development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the County.
- 1.4 Comment on the County Council's access strategies with a view to developing additional opportunities for everyone to enjoy the rights of way network, with particular emphasis on encouraging those who might feel excluded, for example people with disabilities.
- 1.5 Advise on the promotion of opportunities for the appropriate use and enjoyment of the countryside.
- 1.6 Advise upon the appropriate management and maintenance of access to land in the County to which the public have access for travel and open-air recreation.

#### **2. Responsibilities**

- 2.1 To have regard to the needs of land management, biodiversity, wildlife management and the interests of landowners.
- 2.2 Take into account statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State whilst operating within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and regulations made thereunder.
- 2.3 Respect local circumstances as well as environmental, social, economic and educational interests.

### **3. Membership of the Forum**

- 3.1 The Forum shall consist of 22 members of whom 3 shall be County Councillors
- 3.2 Individual members will, through consultation, represent a field of interest rather than a particular organisation of which they might also be a member. A reasonable balance of members representing different interests will be maintained.
- 3.3 Members will be appointed for a period of three years. In the event the post becomes vacant during that period it will be re-advertised and a new member appointed for a period of three years.

### **4. Chair and Vice Chair**

- 4.1 The Chair and Vice Chair will be drawn from Forum members. They will be elected by two secret ballots. The first ballot will elect the Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair will represent different categories of interest and members of the appointing authority will not be eligible for either position. Only members considered to be representing a different area of interest from the Chair would then be eligible on the second ballot. The period of appointment to these posts will be decided by the Forum but the maximum period is three years. In the event that either post becomes vacant during the period of appointment, the Forum may decide that both posts should be filled afresh.

### **5. Meetings of the Forum**

- 5.1 Meetings are to be held at least four times a year, but can be held more frequently if the Forum considers it necessary.
- 5.2 The meetings shall be deemed to be quorate when 9 members are present.
- 5.3 Members who have a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, in a matter to be discussed by the Forum should disclose that interest at the meeting. A personal interest is defined as one which might affect a members well being, financial position or business, or that of a relative or friend, to a greater extent than that of other council tax payers, rate payers or other inhabitants of the area. Personal interests will be recorded in the minutes but will not necessarily prohibit that member from taking part in the discussion of that item.
- 5.4 Copies of the agenda for each meeting and any reports will be made available for inspection by the public at County Hall and on the Forum website at least three days prior to the meeting or as soon as possible if a meeting is convened at short notice.
- 5.5 The papers and minutes of each meeting will be made available for inspection by the public at County Hall and on the Forum website for a period of two years after the meeting.
- 5.6 The will of the meeting will be determined by a vote of hands from members. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman may exercise a second or casting vote.

## **6 Public Access to Meetings**

- 6.1 The meetings will be open to the public but people may be excluded if necessary to prevent disorderly conduct or misbehaviour.

- 6.2 A period of time will be made available for representations from members of the public at each Forum meeting.
- 6.3 Observers may (at the discretion of the Forum's Chair) attend and take part in the discussion but cannot vote on or take part in the decision-making:-

7. **Secretary**

- 6.1 The Secretary to the Forum will be responsible for the overall administration of the Forum; including organising the meetings, drafting the minutes, producing the draft annual report and liaising with neighbouring Forums and the appointing authority.

7. **Annual Report**

- 7.1 The Forum shall produce an annual report on its work which the appointing authority will publish and make widely available in the area.

## **MEMBERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members should:

- be representative of users of the new rights of access and users of local rights of way, owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by local rights of way, or other related interests especially relevant to the County of Leicestershire.
- represent a field of interest rather than particular organisations of which they might also be a member.
- publicise the Forum's work and obtain feedback from others with similar interests including the Member's own organisation(s).
- be expected to attend all meetings of the Forum, but must attend a minimum of one meeting a year; deputies will not be allowed.
- be willing to serve on the Forum for a period of up to three years.
- allow a photograph, brief biography and e-mail address to be made available to members of the public and other interested parties on publicity including the Forum website.
- regularly check that e-mail address and reply to messages requiring a response, conveying the broad content of e-mails to the Forum where appropriate.

### **AUTHORITY'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Advertise and appoint Members to the Forum taking into account the need for fairness, transparency and compliance with the Council's policy on social inclusion and diversity.
- Have regard to the Forum's advice when making their decisions.
- Provide a venue and refreshments for the Leicestershire Local Access Forum meetings.
- Provide a secretariat and ongoing support and advice to the Forum.
- Reimburse Forum Members for out of pocket expenses, principally travel, childcare and subsistence costs directly incurred in respect of members' duties.
- Promote the work of the Forum on the Council's website and through other available means including press releases.