

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 30 October 2006.

Present:

Action by

Mr. Roy Denney, Mrs. Ruth Camamile CC, Mr. Terry Kirby, Mr. Michael Parr, Mr. Rajwent Mann, Ms. Alex Pyper, Mr. Brian Sutton, Ms. Michelle Stratford, Mr. Stan Warren, Mr. Hywel Tidley, Mr. Tim Hudson, Mr. Graham Mabbitt, Mr. Paul Tame, Ms. Laura Holloway, Ms. Lorraine Forman and Mr. Jeremy Hefford.

In attendance:

Mr. Bill Carter, Mr. Edwin McWilliam, Mr. Peter Williams, Ms. Jane Beech and Mr. Sam Weston.

34. Introductions

Mr. Weston welcomed the new membership to the Forum and asked members to introduce themselves with their main area of interest and why they decided to join the Forum.

35. Election of Chairman

Mr. Weston asked the Forum for nominations for Chairman for the coming year. Mr. Denney was the only nomination, proposed by Mr. Mabbitt and seconded by Mr. Kirby. Mr. Denney was duly elected Chairman of the LAF for the coming year.

Mr. Denney took the Chair

36. Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman asked the Forum for nominations for Vice Chairman. Mr. Brian Sutton was the only nomination, proposed by Mr. Denney and seconded by Mr. Mann. Mr. Sutton was duly elected Vice Chairman of the LAF for the coming year.

37. Opening remarks – Chairman

The Chairman introduced Ms. Beech to the new members of the Forum and explained her advisory role to the Forum as an officer of the Countryside Agency.

38. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of Ms. Allen and Mr. Vickers.

39. Matters arising from the minutes

(a) Minute 5: Stone Hole (Forest Rock) site, Woodhouse Eaves

Mr. McWilliam commented that he had met with Ms. Chris Traill (Head of Culture and Leisure Services at Charnwood Borough Council) Mr Denney asked for Mr. Vickers to be updated with any progress.

E.McW.

(b) Longmoor site, Ravenstone

Mr. Carter reported that there had been no developments on this issue.

40. To advise of any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

The Chairman indicated that the application by Leicester City Council for a traveller's site in Braunstone Frith would be discussed at the end of the meeting if there was time to do so.

41. Declarations of interest

The Chairman explained the procedure for declaring interests to the Forum.

No declarations were made.

42. Correspondence

Mr. McWilliam circulated and briefly guided the Forum through the following documents:

- o 'Friends of Holly Hayes Wood'
- o The River Access Newsletter
- o The Access Newsletter
- o A Members' Directory
- o The Local Access Forum Guidance Notes
- o A 'Contact Map' with details of contacts for County Council officers across the County
- o Relevant Authority Guidance Review Notes from Natural England

Concern was expressed by some members of the Forum regarding the 'Rivers Access newsletter, which some thought to be insulting to land owners.

Copies of the above documents are filed with these minutes.

43. Revised Draft LAF Guidance

Mr. McWilliam went through the latest Draft LAF Guidance

and reported that a final version of the Guidance was due to be published in the New Year.

44. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

Mr. McWilliam introduced the final ROWIP and thanked members of the Forum for their help in working on the document. He also reported that the ROWIP had been formally adopted by the County Council on 20 September 2006. He reminded members of the interest the document had caused and that the department had received over 400 responses to the document. The Plan had also been integrated into the County Council's Local Transport Plan.

Copies of the ROWIP were to be sent to all relevant authorities and organisations.

Mr. Sutton questioned the figure quoted on page 71 of the Plan relating to the restoration of paths following ploughing. Mr McWilliam explained the context of the figures quoted. Mr Sutton still felt that it could be misleading..

45. Reports from Subgroups

Mr. McWilliam reminded the group of the three improvement schemes that were progressing. Each has a LAF sub group. They cover areas of Coalville, Leicester South West, North Soar Valley and Leicester East would be co-ordinated with other proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan.

AGREED:

E.McW.

That forms be circulated to members to enable them to choose which subgroups they would like to join.

46. 'Down Your Way' and Publicity

The Chairman reported that members who joined the Publicity subgroup would have to play a very active role in promoting the Forum to the public.

Ms. Beech commented that a newly proposed project entitled 'The Green Exercise' had been submitted to the National Lottery in a bid for funding. If the bid was successful, finances would be allocated in June 2007. It was noted that the Forum could have an opportunity to play a role in this publicity, if the bid was successful.

Concern was expressed by members at the way in which ROW are publicised to youngsters as a way of getting

exercise and not as something to be enjoyed. Mr. Carter pointed out that a lot of the County Council's publicity material for ROW is aimed at youngsters and does this in a positive way.

AGREED:

That a subgroup be established to look at ways of positively promoting the LAF.

E. McW.

47. Natural England Grant Cuts

It was agreed at the meeting that there would be a change in the order of business.

Mr. Carter reported that the County Council continued to work closely with Natural England in many projects across the County. He pointed out that, despite the current funding issues with Defra, the County Council remained hopeful of receiving further funding from them in the future, despite their withdrawal of financial support for the ROWIP and Open Access.

It was added that all Defra agencies (including Natural England) were suffering budget cuts.

AGREED:

(a) That an update on Defra funding be reported to the Forum at the next meeting;

J. B.

(b) That a representation be made to Defra on behalf of the Forum to indicate concern at the financial cuts.

R. D
E. McW
S. W.

48. Questionnaire and Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

Mr. McWilliam took the Forum through a questionnaire on the procedure for meetings which had been carried out with the previous membership and covered such issues as venues, times and frequency of meetings.

AGREED:

That meetings of the Forum be held at 6pm at County Hall on the following dates:

- Tuesday 5 December 2006
(with a member training session at 2pm)
- Monday 29 January 2007
- Thursday 22 March 2007
- Tuesday 22 May 2007

S. W.
E. McW.

49. Training

It was agreed that this item had already been covered under Minute 48 above.

50. Lost Ways/ARU Update

Mr. McWilliam circulated a copy of 'Discovering Lost Ways', a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

It was reported that the Discovering Lost Ways issue was a complex one and that members would require targeted training on this specific issue.

E. McW.

51. Gating Order Applications

Mr. Carter explained Gating Orders to the Forum. The Forum discussed the two Gating Orders and the role it had in being a consultee on these applications.

AGREED:

- (a) That the Forum objects to the proposed Gating Orders in Loughborough and Wigston;
- (b) That a small working group be set up to deal with future gating orders.

E. McW.
W. C.

E. McW.

52. Restoration Proposals at Minerals Sites

The Forum discussed the role it could play in planning applications.

AGREED:

- (a) That a small planning group be set up to deal with planning applications;
- (b) That an email be sent to all members of the Forum asking them if they would like to be a part of a Planning sub group.

E. McW.

E. McW.

53. Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

It was agreed that items be emailed to Mr. McWilliam and Mr. Denney and passed to Mr. Weston for inclusion in the agenda for the next meeting.

54. Any Items that the Chairman has Decided are Urgent

- (a) Leicester City Council Planning Application for a Travellers' Site in Braunstone

All members agreed that should the site receive planning approval, all ROW should be maintained.

- (b) Bradgate Park Meeting

It was reported that there had been no contact from Bradgate Park about staging a meeting of the Forum there.

55. Open Forum

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

6:00pm – 8.40pm
30.10.06

CHAIRMAN