

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 22 March 2007.

Present:

Mr. Roy Denney (Chair), Mr. T. Kirby, Ms. V. Allen, Mr. S. Warren, Mr. M. Parr, Mr. J. Law, Mr. T. Hudson, Mrs. L. Foreman, Mr. B. Sutton and Ms. M. Stratford.

ACTION BY

In attendance:

Mr. Edwin McWilliam and Mr. Sam Weston.

By invitation:

Ms. J. Beech (Natural England) and Mr. A. Raine (The Friends of Holly Hayes Wood, Minute 93 refers)

87. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Raine from the Friends of Holly Hayes Wood to the meeting.

88. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from the following members: Ms. L. Holloway, Mrs. H. Broughton, Mr. K. Vickers, Mr. P. Tame, Mr. G. Mabbitt, Mr. P. Lancaster, Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mr. W. Carter, Ms. A. Pyper and Mr. M. Sheldrake.

89. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January were adopted as an accurate record.

90. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

91. Matters arising from the minutes

Minute 72: Bradgate Park

Mr. McWilliam reported that Mr. Williams had spoken to Michael Harrison, Land Agent and Surveyor for the Bradgate Park Trust, who had invited the LAF to visit the Park for a presentation and tour. Mr. McWilliam indicated that he would await contact from Mr. Harrison and organise a date for the visit.

E.McW

Minute 76: Voluntary Wardens

Mr. McWilliam reported that he was in the process of liaising with colleagues regarding the use of volunteers and that some progress had been made. It had been suggested that the main focus should be on the encouragement of promoting and leading local walks.

Minute 77: Natural England

- (a) The Chairman indicated that he and Mr. Williams had taken up the issue of access to the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) at Beacon Hill and would be arranging a meeting with Natural England and the Head Ranger of the Park.

The Chairman also informed the Forum that the County Council intended to begin charging for organised bodies' use of Country Parks. The Forum expressed its displeasure at this proposal.

Mr McWilliam reminded the group that this was not a new charge; it had been in place for some years but had not been collected recently. It was based on a standard fee agreed by the Forestry Commission with the British Orienteering Code.

- (b) The Chairman reported on the training event organised by Natural England on 15 March, which he and Ms. Foreman attended. They informed the Forum that the training was extremely useful.

It was hoped that other new members of the Forum would take the opportunity of training with Natural England in future when the opportunity arose.

Minute 78: Misuse of tracks

Mr. McWilliam reported that there had been no developments on this issue and that he would report to the Forum when something had progressed.

E.McW

Minute 86: Bid by Sustrans to improve cycle links at Watermead Country Park

Mr. McWilliam reported that there had been no new developments on this issue. He would keep members updated on progress

E.McW

92. Urgent items

The Chairman asked members to raise any urgent items to be added to the agenda at his discretion. Members raised the following urgent items:

- Stone Hole;
- Footpath modification orders;
- K43 – Possible Traffic Regulation Order.

93. Guest speaker: Mr. Adam Raine, The Friends of Holly Hayes Wood

Mr. Raine delivered a presentation to the Forum on the activities of the organisation and what it intended to do in the future with regards to land in Coalville and Whitwick. A copy of the slides forming the presentation is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the presentation, Ms. Allen expressed a wish for the bridleway into the Coalville Meadows site to be extended and continued through the site. She added that encouraging horse riding may help to reduce some of the motor biking related problems in the Park.

Mr McWilliam reminded Mr Raine of the option to dedicate land as open access.

94. Subgroups and Working Parties

Publicity and Promotion

This group is due to meet on 3 April. It would be discussing the Festival of Walking at Bosworth Battlefield on 4 August 2007 at its next meeting.

Verges

This group had not met. Mr McWilliam agreed to contact Mr Sheldrake.

E.McW

Planning Matters

This group had not met.

ROWIP Subgroups

The Hinckley scheme group was due to meet on either 2 or 5 April 2007.

Workshops

Mr. McWilliam guided members through what had been discussed at the training session earlier that day.

95. New LAF Guidance from Defra

Mr. McWilliam delivered a short presentation on new LAF Guidance from Defra and how it would affect the Forum. A copy of the guidance (marked 'A') and the slides forming the presentation are filed with these minutes.

The following points were raised arising from the presentation and consideration of the document by the members:

- Promotion of the LAF's existence, functions and activities should start with the other officers and members of the appointing authority.
- The Forum's involvement in District Council planning applications should be increased.
- The Forum should have its own clear identity. This should take the form of a logo and headed paper.
- The Annual Report should be more accessible and appeal to the public (an example of the Peak District LAF's Annual Report was circulated to members as an example of a more eye-catching document).
- Some consideration was given to the notion of joining with the Leicester City Council's LAF. It was noted that the system of joint working parties was a better way of combining the LAF's strengths.

AGREED:

- (a) That the cross-over issues between the LAF and its City counterpart should be discussed at officer level;
- (b) That the changes to the Guidance be assessed in relation to the LAF's Terms of reference.

E.McW

S.W./E.McW

96. Defra Consultations

Mr. McWilliam circulated two consultation documents for the Forum to consider prior to the next meeting, relating to M1 widening.

The forum welcomed the document since all of the representations had been addressed. The new layout of the M69/M1 junction was noted and should not affect local paths provided current bridges were retained.

97. Correspondence

The implementation of ROWIPs – correspondence with Barry Gardiner MP

Mr. McWilliam summarised a letter to, and reply from, Barry Gardiner MP sent in reply to that previously circulated. Mr. McWilliam summarised the letter for the Forum. A copy of the letter marked 'B' and of the reply is filed with these minutes.

AGREED:

That a further letter be drafted on behalf of the Forum to Barry Gardiner MP pressing for more funding.

**S.W./E.McW.
/R.D.**

98. Open Forum

It was agreed that this item be deferred.

99. Urgent items

Stone Hole

The Chairman indicated that he had met Mark Graham of Charnwood Borough Council. He reported that rock climbing was accepted but that any permanent bolts inserted in the stone would be removed.

Footpath Modification Orders

The Chairman indicated that the Forum should be a consultee on footpath modification orders. A discussion took place on the merits of being a consultee.

Ms Allen and Mr Warren both raised the issue of a recent order made under Section 116 of the Highways Act. Both felt that the limited consultations carried out under this legislation was unreasonable. In addition the use of the magistrate's court was inappropriate. Other diversion and extinguishment orders made by the County Council under sections 118 and 119 were subject to extensive consultations and a more public process.

AGREED:

- (a) That the forum should be a consultee for Modification Orders, in particular the preliminary consultations;
- (b) That the County Council clarify when a Section 116 agreement is used for routes shown on the Definitive Map and explain why the consultation process used is applied so differently to other path diversions and extinguishments. Also that the forum be consulted on all future orders under 116 on routes shown on the Definitive Map or subject to future 'Lost Ways' claims.

W.C.

K43

Mr. Warren indicated that he understood that the County Council intended to carry out works on the 'Slabs' path between Barrow and Quorn. He stated that there was local opposition to this. Some members expressed surprise that works on the route to enable children and adults to travel between the two communities without the car should be opposed.

AGREED:

That the forum be updated on any proposals to close or upgrade the path.

100. Agenda items for the next meeting

The following items were AGREED for discussion at the next meeting:

- Promotion of the Forum starting with officers and members of the County Council;
- District Council planning matters;
- Creation of a LAF logo;
- LAF Annual Report – how to make it more appealing;
- ‘Involving schools and local communities’ – a presentation by John Law;
- Promotion of Bike Week;
- Promotion of Access Week;

101. Dates of future meetings

That the following dates be AGREED as the Forum’s programme of meetings for 2007 (all meetings to commence at 6pm at County Hall, Glenfield):

- Tuesday 22 May (previously agreed)
- Tuesday 17 July
- Thursday 6 September
- Tuesday 23 October
- Tuesday 11 December

22.03.07
6pm – 8.30pm

CHAIRMAN