



West Sussex Local Access Forum

Annual Report: January 2017 – January 2018

Introduction

Welcome to my first Annual report as Chairman of the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF). I hope you enjoy reading about our on-going work to improve and maintain access in West Sussex.

You will see that we have covered a wide range of items and have enjoyed excellent presentations from knowledgeable speakers, which were followed by informative question and answer sessions.

There have been a small number of changes to the membership and there are vacancies which you would find rewarding to fill. If you are interested please contact the Forum Officer for details.

I would like to thank Sam Wright who was Chairman during the first part of 2017 and Glynn Jones, who stood down following a long spell as Member and Vice Chairman. Thanks are also due to all Members for their commitment and interest throughout the year.

Finally a special thank you is due to our Forum Officer, Jane Noble, for her support for the Forum despite ongoing resource issues.

Graham Elvey – Chairman

WSLAF Meetings

In 2017 four formal meetings were held, generally alternating between Horsham and Chichester. The meetings covered items from our work programme and included the following presentations:

- The Work of Highways England in Sussex – Peter Phillips, Route Sponsor for South Central HE reviewed potential schemes in West Sussex, funding and design processes.
- WSCC and Public Path Order consultations - Jon Perks, WSCC Principal RoW Officer gave a presentation on WSCC's work in preparation for the Deregulation Act.
- West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Annual Review 2016 and 2017 - Jon Perks, WSCC Principal RoW Officer gave the annual report on the work of the WSCC PRoW team, and team of Volunteer Rangers and Path Inspectors.



- The work of a WSCC Access Ranger – Nigel Bird, WSCC Access Ranger (AR) gave a presentation on the everyday work of an AR.
- Rides of Way – Kieran Foster, Cycling UK gave a presentation on off-road cycling.
- Local Transport Investment Programme (LTIP) - Andy Ekinsmyth, WSCC Head of Transport and Countryside, introduced the new WSCC Highways procedures for funding improvements to the network.

Summary of WSLAF work

The Forum has continued to support the improvement and maintenance of existing public access, whilst actively seeking to create additional off-road links, via the Rights of Way and greater access network, for informal outdoor leisure, recreation and health.

This work has become vital for the safety of non-motorised users (NMUs). as the road network becomes increasingly busy with traffic generated by new housing development, but this has to be balanced by trying to ensure responsible use and respect for the people who live and work in the countryside.

Consultations and advice

The Forum has been very active over the last year in responding to consultations and requests for advice. We have commented on all Local Plan Reviews in order to ensure the policies will continue to include support for PRow and good access to the countryside.

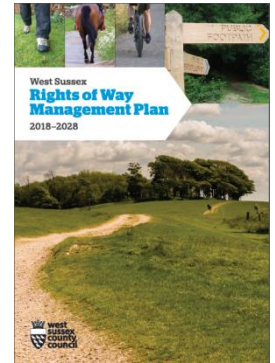
Other consultations the Forum responded to include:-

- England Coast Path – East Head to Shoreham – Natural England
- A27 Arundel By-pass – Highways England (NMU provision)
- A27 crossing, New Monks Farm – Adur District Council
- Railway Crossing, Angmering – Arun District Council



Rights of Way Management Plan (RoWMP)

During the year WSCC drafted and published for consultation the draft RoWMP 2018-2028, which will succeed the present Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). WSCC arranged a bespoke Workshop for WSLAF members providing an opportunity to look in detail at the contents of the draft and discuss various issues raised with Officers. This helped to inform the Forum's comments submitted to WSCC for inclusion in the consultation process.



England Coast Path -East Head to Shoreham



Natural England requested a meeting with representatives of the Forum to introduce NE's preferred route and to discuss ongoing maintenance and potential Trail Partnerships. WSLAF formed a Working Group who were given a detailed presentation of the preferred route together with an explanation for the choice of options available at particular points.

The Forum submitted comments on the proposals to the Government's consultation on this section of the Coast path.

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Access

The agreements for the current permissive HLS routes in West Sussex expire in 2019-2020. The Forum set up a Working Group to investigate the value of maintaining access following Brexit and is producing a positioning paper to submit to a DEFRA consultation due next year.



Kilnwood Vale Development

The Forum continued to promote and take an active interest in the delivery of the proposed Pegasus Crossing across the A264, which will restore the bridleway link severed with the widening of the road over 40 years ago. Provision of the crossing, suitable for all NMUs, will be great example of an access benefit gained from development.

Looking Forward

Recruitment of new members will be a priority for next year. The introduction of fresh ideas and views are important to the success of the Forum, and support and training will be provided to individuals to help them understand and achieve the aims of the Forum. Members will also continue to develop projects on the ground where possible, working with others and actively looking for opportunities where our support and assistance will facilitate improvements to access. This will include working closely with Natural England to progress the England Coast Path through West Sussex, and with West Sussex County Council to maximise benefits delivered through the Local Transport Investment Programme.



Contact the Forum/further information

WSLAF meeting dates, agenda, minutes, consultation responses and list of members can be found on the Forum's website:

www.wslaf.org

Members of the public are always welcome to attend our meetings as observers.

The Forum is always looking for new members, particularly from those representing landownership or land management to ensure a balance of members. Please contact the Forum Officer (details below) for further information.

Forum Officer Jane Noble

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