



Meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum Wednesday 31 October 2018

A meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF) was held at **10.30am** on **Wednesday 31 October 2018** at **Buchan Country Park, RH11 9HQ**

Minutes

Present

Graham Elvey (GE) – Chairman
Tricia Butcher (TB) – Vice-Chairman
Helen Baldwin (HB)

Nicol Beard (NB)
Geoff Farrell (GF)

In attendance

Jane Noble (JN) Forum Officer, WSCC
Charlotte Weller (CW) Countryside Services Manager, WSCC

1. Welcomes and apologies

Apologies had been received from Pete Bradbury (PB), Paul Brown (PEB), Jason Lavender (JL) and Derek Wittington (DW).

GE welcomed CW back from maternity leave.

2. Minutes of the Forum

The minutes of the WSLAF meeting held on 25 July 2018 were approved as correct.

3. Actions and matters arising not covered by agenda

Matters arising from the previous meeting, not on the agenda, include:

Item 5b. Arundel Bypass – GF reported that he was pleased with Fliss Drewitt's (FD) Highways England response to his questions. JN had circulated FD's response to members.

Item 7b)ix. 2018 Strategic Transport Investment Programme (STIP) – JN had forwarded the correct Grid Reference to the STIP Officer.

Item 11. Local Plan Summaries – Progress so far:

- Mid-Sussex – complete (JP)
- Crawley - complete (TB)
- Chichester - NB is part way through. **JN to send NB Mid-Sussex and Crawley local plan summaries.**
- Horsham – GE is about half-way through.

TB reported she has already found it useful having these.

4. Any urgent matters to be considered not on the agenda

GE raised a couple of additional items: a railway crossing in Bognor and Defra's call for evidence for the Agriculture Act. It was agreed these would be considered in **Item 5. - Consultations.**

5. Consultations

a. Current consultations

- i. **England Coast Path (ECP) – Shoreham to Eastbourne – Natural England** – The short section of the ECP within West Sussex covered by this consultation was considered by members. Travelling from the west, the route follows the shoreline around Shoreham Beach, looping back to the Shoreham Harbour pedestrian and cycle bridge along the River Adur. Members noted the direct route from Kings Walk to the bridge is far shorter and felt it would be beneficial to sign this on the ground. ***JN to respond to Natural England recommending the direct route is signed.***
- ii. **Southwater Neighbourhood Plan – Southwater Parish Council**– TB noted this Plan does not mention equestrians. ***GE to lead a response. Members to forward any comments by 10 November.***

A short discussion on the Forum's input into Neighbouring Plans took place. It was decided that WSLAF would consider Neighbourhood Plan consultations only when the Forum is contacted directly.

- iii. **Railway Bridge Replacement, Bognor** – GE reported that Network Rail is proposing to replace the bridge over the railway connecting to Ivy Lane, which carries footpath 3038. Members had not seen plans but would welcome the current stepped bridge being replaced by a ramped one, which would provide access for a wider range of people. ***JN to find out what type of bridge is proposed.***
- iv. **Agriculture Bill – call for evidence. GE to consider and circulate details and deadline if he considers WSLAF should input.**

- b) **WSLAF response to consultations advice given since last meeting** – the following responses were noted:

- i. **A2300 improvements** – WSCC. ***JN to circulate GF's comments.***
- ii. **Mid-Sussex Open Space and Play Study** – Mid-Sussex DC
- iii. **Chichester Harbour Management Plan 2019-2024** – Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- iv. **Draft revised Statement of Community Involvement** – Arun DC

6. Stewardship Higher Level Scheme access in West Sussex – GE

HB and NB had inspected the permissive access at Chalder Farm, near Chichester. They reported it is part of Sustran's Route 88 cycleway and is tarmacked. It is scenic and definitively being used. It does not seem to be under threat, so no further action required.

NB offered to walk another route. GE to send details of Buncton Manor Farm permissive access, near Steyning.

GE/TB are to look at further two later this week.

WSCC would probably not be able to pass on landowner information, but WSLAF could do a land registry search.

7. Improvement Projects

TB reminded Members that updates will now only be given on items WSLAF has been involved with (from the previous RoWIP project lists), which are ongoing.

HW135 – Balcombe, Greentrees Farm BW 3727 - Last year Natural England (NE) was told that West Sussex County Council (WSCC) would develop a specification for the drainage and surfacing of bridleway (BW) 3727 (from High Street, Balcombe to Worth BW 79W) in 2017/18 for delivery in 2018/19, with the proviso that if NE made an application to divert the BW in the meantime this would be considered. No application was received, so WSCC applied for assent to the work in September, and this was rejected (although NE did provide detailed comments on the specification). WSCC amended the spec. to include all NE's changes, and after consideration took the decision to move forward with the works without NE's assent. WSCC gave NE the necessary 28 days' notice and demonstrated how it had weighed the balance between conflicting interests, including the special interest of the SSSI. Drainage and surfacing work on the sunken section (immediately north of Greentrees Farm) began on Monday 1 October and work was close to completion at the time of the meeting. JN reported that the BW will remain closed until Easter, to allow the surface to consolidate.

LW34 – A23 Newtimber BW - The scheme went through 'stage 1 value management' in late August, and some design changes have been identified due to the presence of ancient woodland. Highways England (HE) is proposing removal of approximately 750m of dense vegetation (to provide required BW width of 2-3m), with the installation of a safety barrier, and acoustic fencing.

Initial assessment indicates the majority of the BW will be within HE land ownership, but as it is within the vicinity of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) HE asked the SDNP Authority for comments on the proposal and any requirements. The SDNPA has responded and said the Park's boundary runs through the northern part of the woodland, and that in general they welcome the proposals to improve connectivity for non-motorised users (NMUs), especially as there are no groundworks planned within the area of ancient woodland.

However, they have concerns about the proposed removal of vegetation (which it is felt screens the road from the wider landscape and provides habitat connectivity), and the impact of proposed acoustic fencing which it is felt should be screened from the road by new hedge planting.

SDNPA has asked HE to explore other options for connecting cyclists/horse riders to the BW network around Wolstenbury Hill (e.g. an overbridge, or via the existing A23 underpass, or a link between the permissive path at Stalkers Copse to the BW to the east).

LW10 – Downs Link (Christ's Hospital) - WSCC has not yet completed the new design for the route from the old station platforms down the slope to the tunnel, which is required due to the impact of the previous design on ancient woodland.

LW12 – Downs Link (Partridge Green) – This scheme aims to address the problems caused by having to walk along the side of the road at Partridge Green. Initial consideration of options has led WSCC to believe that the most sensible option is to change the crossing point of the Downs Link and potentially use the wider PRoW network. The design of this much larger project has been slipped into 2019/20 and is now being led by the Rights of Way team.

HW3 - Kilnwood Vale BW – JN reported that she understood the multi-user route from the new Pegasus crossing joining with BW 1550_1 is not to be dedicated, as it is on WSCC Highways land. TB felt this regrettable as it won't show on OS maps.

Post meeting note – The intention is to get the route formally added to the Definitive Map as a Public Bridleway.

8. WSLAF matters

a) Annual report – JN to circulate in next week

b) Meetings – CW checked everyone had seen the email that WSCC's support to WSLAF will be for 2 meetings a year. She informed members that, in addition to providing secretariat support for these meetings, JN, Forum Officer, would continue to provide support throughout the year e.g. for consultations. There was a discussion about how the Forum would operate going forward, acknowledging that the creation of the South Downs LAF had split the area covered by WSLAF, and considering comments made by email prior to the meeting by PEB. The following points were agreed:

- i. **Formal meetings** – Two formal meetings a year to be supported by WSCC. These will be held in Spring (Chichester) and Autumn (Horsham). The Spring meeting will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- ii. **Informal meetings** – these will be held in between the formal ones. These will not be supported by WSCC, other than to book rooms at WSCC venues as required and to provide basic support documents, such as maps, if needed. Members can ask questions of WSCC officers prior to the meetings if needed. Venues will be as for the following formal meeting, unless agreed by members. Members might choose to take brief notes of the meetings if they feel it is necessary and potentially rotate the Chair.
- iii. **Recruitment** – Recruitment of new members is considered key to the Forum.
WSCC (JN/CW) to produce a recruitment plan.
- iv. **Site visits** – WSCC continues to be happy to arrange site visits as part of the Formal meetings. WSCC needs to be informed of where the Forum would like to visit if they wish to do this. Site visits as part of informal meetings will be the responsibility of the Forum.
- v. **Support** – WSCC committed to provide timely support for formal meetings and other supported activities.

It was agreed meeting dates for 2019/20 would be as follows:

- Informal meeting: Jan/Feb – To be confirmed
- Formal meeting: Wednesday 24 April 2019 (AGM) – Chichester
- Informal meeting: Wednesday 17 July 2019 – Horsham
- Formal meeting: Wednesday 23 October 2019 – Horsham
- Informal meeting: Wednesday 5 February 2020 – Chichester

8. General Report – The General report was noted.

A27 Bypass – Permission has been granted by the High Court for the Judicial Review case to be heard. It will be heard in court on 27-29 November.

WSLAF members contact list – JN to circulate a current list

9. Date of next meetings:

Informal: TBC

Formal: Wednesday 24 April 2019, Chichester

The meeting closed at 13.20pm.

Action Summary

	Item	Who	When NM–next meeting
3	11. Local Plan summaries – JN to send NB Mid-Sussex and Crawley local plan summaries.	JN	14/11/18
5ai	England Coast Path – JN to respond to Natural England recommending the direct route is signed.	JN	22/11/18
5aii	Southwater Neighbourhood Plan - Comments to GE - GE collate and send response	All GE	10/11/18 16/11/18
5aiii	Railway Bridge Replacement, Bognor – JN to find out what type of bridge is proposed.	JN	NM
5aiv	Agriculture Bill – call for evidence. GE to consider and circulate details and deadline if he considers WSLAF should input.	GE	8/11/18
5b	A2300 improvements – JN to also circulate GF’s comments.	JN	14/11/18
6	Stewardship Higher Level Scheme access in West Sussex – GE to send details of Buncton Manor Farm permissive access to NB	GE	14/11/18
8a	WSLAF Annual report – JN to circulate next week	JN	9/11/18
8b	Date of meetings – Set date for informal meeting Jan/Feb 2019	GE/TB	31/11/18
9	WSLAF members contact list – JN to circulate a current list	JN	14/11/18