

1. WSCC Public Rights of Way staffing

- 1.1 **Countryside Services Manager** - Charlotte Weller will not be returning as Countryside Services Manager, having secured the new position of Highways Operations Manager with responsibility amongst other things for Highways Hub (public reports) and Service Improvement including new processes for Community Highways Schemes and Community led Traffic Regulations Orders.
- 1.2 **Access Rangers** - Adverts will be live shortly to recruit a part-time (3 days/week) Access Ranger for Area 3 (Midhurst and surroundings down to the coast at Bognor) until September 2023, to cover while Kevin Dewitt is on secondment delivering the England Coast Path in West Sussex, and a permanent full-time Access Ranger for Area 6 (from Crawley to Shoreham in the east of the county).

2. Improvement Projects – update**2.1 Friars Oak development – Footpath 5k Woodside Underpass, Hassocks**

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) gave prior approval to Network Rail's (NR) application for a new subway structure at Woodside Crossing in January. It was noted that whilst there is a desire from the West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to upgrade the Footpath (FP) to Bridleway (BW), no decision had been made, and there was no approved scheme to do this. As such, the application was determined based on the current position that this is a FP, but if at some point in the future the FP is upgraded to a BW, there was nothing in the application that precluded this happening.

Following the approval of the subway structure, in March NR made an application to WSCC to divert part of FP5k where it crosses the railway line to run through the subway. As part of the consultation, it was noted that NR have communicated that they are supportive of upgrading FP 5k to BW where it passes through the newly constructed underpass, an upgrade also supported by WSCC and MSDC. WSLAF responded supporting the upgrade, and WSCC are in discussions with NR.

2.2 A24 Worthing to Horsham Corridor Feasibility Study

WSLAF completed and returned the initial feedback form for this Study in March. TB has subsequently spoken with Jamie Dallen (WSCC) who advised that the Study would be in three parts. Phase 1 – background issues, being conducted at present which will include a Walking, Cycling, Horse Riding Assessment (WCHA), to take place over the summer when they will be looking for more input from Stakeholders. Phase 2 – design work and Phase 3 –public consultation.

There is no funding in place at present. WSCC will have to make a business case to obtain funding, which will need to cover all modes (vehicles and NMUs (non-motorised users), so there will be a need for compromise, a 'one size fits all' approach.

2.3 **NMU crossing of the A283 at Washington (LTIP0173)**

The signal controlled crossing for all NMUs requested is only acceptable to some stakeholders (National Trust and South Downs National Park Authority) if it has minimal visual impact.

3. **Centurion Way – improved access**

- 3.1 A replacement accessibility ramp has been built so residents and visitors can continue to enjoy the Centurion Way path. The previous ramp was replaced with an earth embankment design, which has been seeded and will soon blend with the surrounding environment. This design will also enable future maintenance costs to be minimised and has meant the path could be made wider.

4. **2026 cut-off date dropped**

- 4.1 Sections 53 to 56 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW Act) 2000 set out the process for claiming old, unclaimed historic rights of way—crucially, with a cut-off date of 1 January 2026. Defra has decided to repeal the 2026 cut-off date. It feels that this strikes some balance across stakeholder concerns and interests, while recognising that it doesn't deliver on all the benefits originally envisaged.
- 4.2 Defra remains committed to seeking to make improvements to rights of way processes and procedures where possible and appropriate to do so.

5. **Changes to the Highways Code**

- 5.1 On 29 January 2022, rules for all types of road users changed in The Highway Code to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses. The changes follow a public consultation run in 2020 that received more than 20,000 responses. To read the full changes, or find out what each amendment means, visit the [government's website](#). Below are some of the key areas affected by the changes:

1. Hierarchy of road users
2. People crossing the road at junctions
3. Walking, cycling or riding in shared spaces
4. Positioning in the road when cycling
5. Overtaking when driving or cycling
6. People cycling at junctions
7. People cycling, riding a horse and driving horse-drawn vehicles on roundabouts.

6. **WSCC Rights of Way – Definitive Map changes**

- 6.1 There have been just three changes made to the Definitive Map since the last formal WSLAF meeting:
- **Thakeham Footpath 2487_1** – Diversion due to a development
 - **Tillington Permissive footpath P43** – 880m new permissive footpath from Coxland Cottages, past the reservoir, meeting up with footpath 1017 down the river.
 - **Kirdford Footpath 614_1** – Diversion

6.2 Information about the Planning and Rights of Way Committee, including meeting dates and papers can be found on the [Planning and Rights of Way Committee web pages](#).

7. WSCC matters

7.1 The public can subscribe to receive information about the work of the County Council via it's [eNewsletter service](#). Subscription topics relevant to WSLAF include:

- Highways, Transport and Planning
- Members' information (The Bulletin) - includes lists of decisions by Cabinet Members plus key decisions by officers, topics to be discussed at meetings open to the public in the next week.
- Planning and Rights of Way Committee

8. WSLAF Future Meetings

8.1 All formal meetings will generally start at 10.30am. Dates for October 2022 and April 2023 are still to be scheduled but are likely to be in person or hybrid (in person and on-line) meetings.

9. Neighbouring Local Access Forums (LAFs)

9.1 [South Downs Local Access Forum](#) (SDLAF)

The recent meeting of SDLAF was held on 16 March 2022. It was a hybrid meeting with some people attending the meeting in Midhurst and others joining on-line.

9.2 [Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum](#)

The website shows the last meeting was held on 9 December 2021.

9.3 [East Sussex Local Access Forum](#) (ESLAF)

The last meeting was held on 1 March 2022 on and the next meeting is scheduled for

9.4 [Hampshire Countryside Access Forum](#) (HCAF)

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 7 June 2022.

9.5 [Surrey Countryside Access Forum](#) (SLAF)

The next meeting of SLAF is 25 April 2022 and will be a hybrid meeting (in person and on-line).

Jane Noble, Forum Officer