

West Sussex Access Forum
Annual Report: April 2019 – April 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the WSLAF Annual report covering on this occasion a two-year period. For the whole of 2019 the Forum operated normally, but in 2020 the affect and implications of the Covid pandemic required the cancellation of our April, July and October meetings. In December, following a series of trials to test the technology, the Forum met successfully on-line. Despite the difficulties in 2020, Members continued to engage with, and respond to, a large number of planning applications and consultations.

The Forum received some very interesting presentations, consultations and projects and the main topics are highlighted and mentioned within the report. We undertook a programme of training for our new members to provide background information and knowledge of our work, and this training will continue.

I would like to thank our Forum Officer, Jane Noble, for her continuing support and assistance and also my thanks goes to all Forum Members for their time and commitment during what has been a challenging period.

Graham Elvey
Chairman

WSLAF Meetings

WSLAF holds four meetings per year. Two Formal meetings are fully supported by WSCC and two Informal meetings are organised and run solely by WSLAF members.

The meetings covered items from our work programme and other work concerning Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and the wider access network. The meetings included the following presentations:-

- A27 Arundel By-pass – Peter Philips, Highways England
- Public Rights of Way Annual Report – Nick Scott, WSCC Principal Rights of Way Officer

Summary of WSLAF Work

Consultations and Advice

There have been a considerable number of consultations over the period of the report. The quantity of housing development and proposed road building and highway improvements continue to be major issues for access in West Sussex.

The consultations the Forum responded to included:-

- A27 Arundel By-pass – Highways England
- South Hayling to East Head England Coast Path – Natural England
- Friars Oak Development Hassocks – Mid Sussex DC
- Design Guide for New Housing Development – High Weald AONB
- 2026 Cut-off Deadline – Secretary of State, Defra
- A2300 Realignment Scheme – WSCC
- A29 Realignment Scheme – WSCC
- New Monks Farm Highway Works & 4th Arm planning applications – Adur DC & South Downs National Park Authority
- Strategic Development Site at Ford (SD8) Masterplan Document – Arun DC
- Adur and Worthing Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Adur DC
- Arun Design Guide – Arun DC
- Horsham Local Plan 2019-2036 - Horsham DC
- England Tree Strategy – Defra
- West Sussex Transport Plan Review Survey – WSCC
- Rampion 2 Offshore Windfarm – Rampion
- Scaynes Hill to Lindfield Cycle/Walkway – Scaynes Hill Sustainability Group
- West Sussex Rights of Way Management Plan - WSCC

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Access

All paths in West Sussex within this scheme were inspected to determine which would be of most benefit to add to the access network and would therefore be best to retain if possible. It is intended to contact the relevant landowners to discuss the possibility of retaining this additional access to the countryside.

A281/Downs Link Crossing

It has been a long-term aim of WSLAF to improve the safety of the Non-Motorised User (NMU) crossing over this busy trunk road. The Forum have been in contact with WSCC over many years and investigated the possibility of improving sight lines, moving speed limit positions and signage to drivers, and pushed for the installation of a signalised crossing. Tragically, a cyclist fatality occurred at the crossing in July 2020 and the Forum will be providing a statement to the Coroner of WSLAF's involvement with this situation.

Rampion 2

WSLAF have a representative in the PRoW Project Liaison Group who are involved with monitoring and commenting on the effects of the proposed cable laying route on the access network to ensure access is maintained as far as possible during the works and reinstatement to a high standard is undertaken on completion.

Looking Forward

The scale of proposed housing development and new road proposals show no sign of diminishing throughout West Sussex. The Forum will continue to provide independent and balanced comment and advice to improve and maintain access for all.

We will continue to take a pro-active interest in all proposals and developments to improve the A281Downs link crossing. The Forum will also continue with scrutinising the implications for access of the Rampion 2 Wind Farm development.

Contact the Forum/further information

WSLAF meeting dates, agenda, minutes, consultation responses and list of members can be found on the Forum's website: <http://www.wslaf.org/>

In normal circumstances members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings as observers. However, this will have to be suspended until Covid restrictions allow otherwise. We hope to be able to welcome observers to the Forum meetings as soon as possible.

Please contact the Forum Officer for further information:-

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If this information is required in an alternative format please contact us and we will try to meet your needs.