



West Sussex Local Access Forum

Annual Report: April 2021 – May 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the WSLAF Annual Report which I hope you will find of interest. Forum Meetings have continued to be on-line during the last year due to the Covid pandemic, but it is hoped that they will return to face-to-face meetings during 2022.

We have continued to respond to a range of consultations providing independent and balanced advice on our core aim to improve access for all. We have also continued with our work on and involvement with many projects which will span over a number of years. The speakers to the Forum gave interesting and informative presentations.

Thank you to the Forum Members for their interest and commitment and a special thanks to our Forum Officer, Jane Noble, for her continuing support, help and assistance.

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. We have welcomed two new members over the year.

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

- Public Path Orders – Ami Dye, WSCC Rights of Way Officer
- Downs Link/A281 Crossing - Andy Ekinsmyth WSCC Head of Transport and Network Operations

- Planning Matters – Donna Trethewey WSCC Planning & Communities Officer
- Public Rights of Way Annual Report – Nick Scott, WSCC Principal Rights of Way Officer
- England Coast Path (ECP), delivery in West Sussex – Kevin Dewitt, ECP Project Officer



Summary of WSLAF work

As in previous years the Forum's work this year has been associated with its core aim to improve public access to the countryside for informal outdoor leisure mainly using the public rights of way and greater access network.

The most appropriate mechanism for WSLAF to achieve this is via the planning process (i.e. through strategic planning applications), road improvement consultations and ensuring relevant policies are included in Local Plans. We have to bear in mind that many of the areas concerned are living and working environments and we seek to provide balanced advice to try to ensure responsible use and respect for those working and living in these areas.

Consultations and advice

The Forum has responded to a considerable number of consultations over the past year. These have predominantly concerned highway matters and our response has been related to the effect the proposals have on public access and how it could be improved and enhanced. Although there were statistically fewer consultations on major housing developments this year, this is likely to increase again in the future due to the significant pressure in West Sussex for development of this type.



The consultations the Forum responded to include:

- A259 Bognor Regis to Littlehampton Proposed Enhancements consultation – WSCC Highways
- West Sussex Local Transport Plan Review 2022-2036 - WSCC
- South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Design Guide SPD Consultation – SDNPA
- Arundel to Ford Pathway – Arun District Council
- Lyminster Bypass – WSCC Highways
- A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis Corridor Feasibility Study – WSCC Highways

- Rampion 2 Offshore Windfarm – Rampion
- Agriculture Act 2020 & Environment Land Management Schemes – DEFRA
- A281/Downs Link Crossing – WSCC Highways
- Woodside Underpass Hassocks – Network Rail and Mid Sussex District Council
- A24 Worthing to Horsham Corridor Feasibility study – WSCC Highways
- Lyminster to Crossbush Feasibility Study – WSCC Highways
- A27 Arundel Bypass Consultation – Highways England
- New Place Farm Development Pulborough – Horsham District Council



A281/Downs Link Crossing

Following the tragic fatality that occurred at this crossing in 2020 WSLAF gave evidence to the Coroner at the Inquest. On receipt of the Coroner's Report WSLAF wrote to WSCC to state our desire that a feasibility study be conducted as soon as possible to determine the best way to improve non-motorised user safety at the crossing, emphasising our strong support for the installation of a bridge. WSCC commissioned consultants to look at the options to improve safety and the Forum has been in regular contact with Officers concerning the progress of the report and costs of the options whilst WSCC has continued work to identify funding options. The report was circulated to WSLAF in May 2022, but further studies are required to provide better cost estimates. WSCC will be invited to attend the next Formal meeting to discuss the contents of the report and the further information that will be available.

Rampion 2

The planning for the Rampion 2 Windfarm off the coast from Worthing progressed throughout the year. Our representative on the PRoW Project Liaison Group has continued to monitor and comment on the effects on the access network of the proposal to lay underground cables from Climping up to Bolney. The Forum is trying to ensure that easy access is maintained as far as possible during the course of the sites and that reinstatement of the ground will be to a high standard on completion.



Looking Forward

Consultations on major housing developments, road building works and improvements will require a response from WSLAF during next year due to the ongoing pressure from development throughout West Sussex. A close relationship with WSCC's new Planning & Communities Officer is proving beneficial in this area. We will continue with our aim to provide balanced and independent advice on public access.

Some of the projects currently of interest will continue beyond 2022 and WSLAF will maintain its monitoring and advising until the projects have been completed.



Contact the Forum/further information

WSLAF meeting dates, agenda, minutes, work programme, consultation responses and a 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.

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