



**Minutes of the West Sussex Local Access Forum
Wednesday 27 January 2016
Parkside, Horsham**

Present:

Bill Acraman (BA)	Graham Elvey (GE)
Helen Baldwin (HB)	Geoff Farrell (GF)
Nicol Beard (NB)	Glynn Jones (Chairman for meeting) (GJ)
Paul Brown (PB)	Derek Whittington (DRW)
Tricia Butcher (TB)	Sam Wright (SW)
Duncan Crow (DC)	David Whyberd (DW)

In attendance:

Jane Noble (JN)	Forum Officer (WSCC Senior Access Officer)
Charlotte Weller (CE)	WSCC Countryside Services Manager
Paul Vincent (PV)	Natural England (NE)
David Pearce (DP)	Natural England (NE)
Val Rawlingson (VR)	Disabled Ramblers
Bob McLellan (BM)	Disabled Ramblers

Action

1. Apologies and Welcome

GJ welcomed Paul Vincent and David Pearce from Natural England and Val Rawlingson and Bob McLellan as observers from the Disabled Ramblers.

Apologies were recorded from Roger Hobbs and Christine Johnson.

GJ reported that Derek Crush had resigned from the Forum. Members were sad to hear this and wished him well.

2. Minutes of the Forum

WSLAF minutes from 21 October 2015 were approved as accurate.

3. Actions and matters arising not covered by the agenda

None.

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

None.

5. England Coast Path - Paul Vincent/David Pearce, Natural England

An update was provided on how the England Coast Path is being delivered. There are 6 stages:

1. Prepare - Set up agreement with Access Authorities, talk to LAFs & other local stakeholders about the main issues and opportunities.

2. Develop - Write to all potentially affected landowners / interests. Design a route in consultation with owners and occupiers. All relevant options explored. Review and confirm the emerging proposals with

owners, stakeholders (including LAFs) and the Access Authority.

3. Propose - Publish proposals for 8 weeks, for objections and representations. LAFs can make formal representations, land owners can object and make representations.

4. Planning Inspectorate investigates & Secretary of State makes decision.

5. Access Authority prepares the approved route for use.

In West Sussex stage 1 is nearly complete and NE expects to move to stage 2 in Feb / March. A number of drop in events have been arranged between 3 March to 12 April 2016 – LAF members are welcome to attend. DP/PV to send JN dates and JN to circulate to Members.

JN to circulate West Sussex drop-in dates

The England Coast Path through West Sussex is likely to be completed in by 2018. The total England Coast Path will be completed by 2020

JN

The Hayling to East Head (Wittering Beach) and East Head to Shoreham sections were detailed. Matters raised by Forum included:

1. Whether the path should stay as close to the coast as possible, which in places would be on shingle, or should it be on better surfaces inland (behind houses / development). Several members of the Forum said they would prefer the path to stay as close as possible to the coast, rather than divert through housing estates etc. To be valuable, the path needs to be pleasurable

2. Management of sections where paths are underwater at high tide.

3. How important roll back will be in areas likely to suffer from future erosion.

4. The balance which needs to be achieved between the Coast Path and nature conservation.

Following the presentation there was a question and answer session:

Q – Will parish councils (PCs) be consulted?

A - PCs will be contacted in the very near future.

Comment - GF said it is important that not only those PCs that are directly on the coast be consulted but also those up to, say 10 miles, inland.

Q – What status will the route be?

A - The path will have National Trail status around all of England's coast. The new right of Coastal Access brings in 'roll back' meaning that if a section of coast erodes or slips the path isn't lost, it simply moves back with the new coastline. It will not have Public Rights of Way (PRoW) status – there is no legislation to allow PRoW to be 'rolled back'. In addition to the trail itself there will be, where appropriate, 'spreading room' giving access to the coastal margin.

Q – Will it be suitable for wheelchair users and where it does will gates be improved so they can be used by radar key holders?

A – Where possible NE will look to improve gates etc. but the whole route is unlikely to be suitable for wheelchairs.

Comment – Shingle is not suitable for wheelchairs.

Q - What happens if a landowner develops land which the England Coast Path runs over?

A – Landowners won't be prevented from developing their land. It is

likely that there will be a formal process to manage the England Coast Path through the planning application process. It is not clear how this will work.

Q - How robust will NE be with landowners that prevent access?

A - The England Coast Path is a formal route which will be approved by the Secretary of State so NE will be firm with landowners.

Q - If the England Coast Path uses an existing bridleway and has to be rolled back at some point in the future will it be rolled back with bridleway status?

A - When the England Coast Path is rolled back it will not transfer the rights of other PRow which it may have followed previously. Therefore bridleway rights will not be rolled back.

Q - Is NE working with Sustrans as they have done a lot of leg work for the NCN2

A - Not yet.

Q - How many people are working to deliver the England Coast Path?

A - Around 90 across the UK.

Comment - it would be worth reviewing the Local Plans to identify areas of significant future development so the England Coast Path can be created with the future in mind. NE should also consider if Community Infrastructure Levy money can be used.

6. WSLAF Matters

a) Recruitment

JN sent letters before the last meeting to a wide variety of organisations with a landownership or management interest including NT, SWT, RSPB, and the two AONBs. Jason Lavender (JL), from the High Weald AONB has expressed an interest in his private capacity as the trustee for the Bellhurst Trust. The Trust commercially manages approximately 1,300 acres of woodland and farmland in an environmentally responsible way and is generally very supportive of public access to the countryside. The Forum thought JL would be a good addition to the Forum.

Action - JN to contact JL JN

JN will be writing a letter to all PCs asking if they know any suitable landowners / managers who may consider joining WSLAF

Action - JN to write to PCs JN

NB said she had spoken to a couple of people and will pass names to JN to follow up.

Action - NB to send names to JN NB

Action - JN to make contact JN

b) Annual Report (*item not on agenda*)

TB asked if there would be an annual report. JN said there would and asked members to look at the last copy (on web) and send suitable articles to her. JN will then draft the report and send it to members for comment and amendment before publishing.

Action - All to send JN articles for Annual Report All

Action - JN to draft annual report JN

7. Current / Future Consultations and advice given

a) **Current Consultations** - The Forum noted that there were no

current consultations to respond to.

b) **Consultation responses sent** - The Forum noted that responses had been submitted on the:

- i) South Downs Local Plan
- ii) Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan

c) **Neighbourhood Plans – Forum line to take**

JN confirmed to the Forum that she circulated Neighbourhood Plan consultations when she was directly contacted. She asked how the Forum would like to respond to Neighbourhood Plan consultations in the future.

A discussion followed and it was agreed that a bespoke response, ideally with local input, is best.

It was also agreed that a more generic position statement should be developed for use when members do not have any local knowledge. TB offered to draft a suitable position statement, with input from SW, GF and PB.

Action – TB with input from SW, GJF PB, to draft Position Statement TB, SW, GF, PB

There was some concern that most Neighbourhood Plans are already completed or in progress. JN to investigate what the current situation is.

Action – JN to contact Planning Authorities JN

d) **Local Plan Updates**

Crawley – Crawley Borough Council adopted the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 - 2030 as its development plan for Crawley in December 2015.

Horsham – Horsham District Council adopted the Horsham District Planning Framework, setting out planning strategy for years up to 2031, in November 2015.

Chichester – Chichester District Council is consulting on Draft Chichester Site Allocation Development Plan Document 2014 – 2029. The deadline for responses is 18th February.

Action – TB to contact RH regarding possible WSLAF general response. TB

Adur - Adur District Council is consulting on Proposed Amendments to the New Monks Farm Allocation within the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014. Since the publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan some changes have been proposed to this allocation. The current proposal has moved the new roundabout on the A27 eastwards to a more central location between the airport and New Monks Farm site. WSLAF would like to make sure safe access across the A27 to the SDNP for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is provided. This could be achieved by improvements to the Sussex Pad junction, where the present signalised crossing is used by all NMUs to link existing PRoW.

Action – CW to confirm to TB which organisation is leading on the design of the scheme CW

Action – TB / SW to draft response when the scheme is consulted on TB, SW

8. Are you a cyclist or a person who cycles?

GF, Forum Member and Chairman of the West Sussex Cycling Forum, gave a presentation on cycling. He explained that the Cycling Forum wants to raise the profile of cycling, and to get those who cycle to cycle more and those that don't to get on a bike. He outlined the different types of cyclist and their differing needs. He shared the views of one of

his Cycle Forum colleagues that cyclists in the countryside need sealed surfaced on strategic routes such as the Downs Link and that stone surfaces won't attract new cyclists as bikes get clogged and clothes dirty.

During the post-presentation discussion TB and GE expressed the opinion that equestrians and walkers don't want tarmac everywhere. The surface needs to be appropriate to the environment and enjoyable for all users. GF agreed that compromise was required.

It was also mentioned that with a really good smooth surface cyclists go faster which can lead to conflict with other users.

GJ summarised the discussion: 1) the surface has to be appropriate to the intended use, 2) compromise is needed by all, 3) sealed surfaced are very expensive and there is not enough funding.

9. Improvement Projects

a) North of the Downs Projects

TB gave a verbal progress update on projects

HW 3 - Crawley, Kilnwood Vale development, Pegasus crossing of A264. The crossing has been designed. All users, including equestrians, will cross in two stages and have to wait in the central island. This is different to the Pegasus at Horsham (Wickhurst Green development), where equestrians cross in one stage. TB considers it unsafe for horses to be kept waiting on the central reservation of this very busy road and would like more info on design to ensure wait time is as little as possible. CW will provide TB with contact details of WSCC Officer working on project.

Action – CW to provide information to TB CW

HW 127 - Horsham, Wickhurst Green development. New east-west link road opened in December, and the Pegasus crossing is open and in use. Project status to be changed to complete.

HW 135 - Balcombe, New BW (3727) Greentrees Farm. NE has informed WSCC they will not consent to the works to surface the sunken track section of the bridleway. NE believes the work would damage the special features of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). NE has suggested consideration be given to diverting the bridleway onto the nearby field edge (this would need landowner agreement).

NE has previously given permission for surfacing at other SSSI sites in the County. Officers are seeking legal advice on the matter.

WSCC cannot deliver the work without NE consent so the route will not be surfaced as part of the 2016/17 Capital programme.

BA asked CW for a briefing on the matter as Local Member.

TB confirmed she would be writing to the WSCC Access Ranger on behalf of BHS to express her concerns. CW suggested the Forum may want to write a letter to the Access Ranger as well.

HW 136 - Slaugham, New eastern BW link from underpass.

BA/TB/Jon Perks (JP), WSCC, met on site with Peter Phillips (PP), Highways England (HE), in early December to consider an option for the link route across HE land. It was a positive and helpful meeting. PP to investigate further.

HW 12 - Slaugham, Warninglid Lane, Off-road bridleway link (17S to 16S) north of B2115. WSLAF sent a letter to the landowner in

October requesting a meeting. A reply has been received in late November advising that the landowner has written to WSCC Director of Highways & Transport asking her what can be done.

CW confirmed that a response had been sent from WSCC confirming support to the request for a meeting from WSLAF. TB informed the forum that she had heard nothing further, but a new gate has been installed recently at the entrance to the proposed behind-the hedge route.

b) South of the Downs Project List

GF reported that a meeting had been held with HB, Sue Stokes and JN. Following this he has asked Sustrans for an update on projects they are involved with and JN has spoken to JP. The list will be updates.

c) WSCC Cycling and Walking Task and finish Group- submitting project ideas

Sustrans has, on behalf of WSCC, developed a system for capturing project ideas from stakeholders. WSLAF needs to submit suitable RoW Improvement Plan projects from the North and South of the Downs project lists.

DW clarified that he represents WSLAF on the Task and Finish Group but is not inputting WSLAF projects into the system. TB and GE confirmed they would be willing to submit schemes on behalf of WSLAF.

Action – CW to make sure TB and GE are on the circulation list CW

Action – TB / GE to submit suitable projects TB/GE

10. South Downs Local Access Forum

The last meeting of the SDLAF was on 12 January 2016. GJ outlined items of interest to WSALF including:

- **Hampshire Byways** - Hampshire County Council is consulting on an Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO), which will be to prohibit use of the route by motorised vehicles, except for those who have a permit
- **South Downs Way** - Equipment has been loaned by Google to Streetmap the SDW. This will allow people to see the Trail and to assess whether it's suitable for them to walk or ride.
- **South Downs Local Plan** - The revised Local Plan document will be consulted on in autumn 2016 Adoption of the Local Plan is being aimed for by summer 2017.
- **A27 Improvement Proposals** The proposed improvements to the A27 near Chichester can be found online. A public consultation on the proposals will take place in spring 2016.
- **Proposed Works Iping and Trotton Common** – The Sussex Wildlife Trust is proposing to fence Iping and Trotton Commons to allowing grazing which will improve the habitat. Many access points have been included in the proposal and they include mounting blocks for horse riders.
- **Worthing Downland Dedication** - Approximately 80 hectares of new access land has been dedicated by Worthing Borough Council adjacent to Cissbury Ring, connecting with the existing access land there. The land is being grazed by cattle.

11. General Report

Forum Members noted the General Report. HB asked if the Centurion

Way extension would link to West Dean. DW replied that this is the longer term ambition.

JN alerted members to the proposed dates and subjects for meetings in the coming year;

Wed 20/04/16	Chichester	WSCC PROW Annual Report
Wed 13/7/16	Horsham	Deregulation Act
Wed 19/10/16	Chichester	TBC
Wed 25/1/17	Horsham	TBC

JN has been advised that the proposed date for the next meeting (Wednesday 20 April) clashes with a WSCC Members training day. JN to investigate alternative dates. Revised dates will be circulated and publish on the web.

Action – JN to confirm date for meeting in April JN

12. AGM – Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

GJ handed over control of the meeting to JN.

JN confirmed she had one person willing to stand as Chairman and one for Vice-Chairman. After asking if anyone else would like to be considered for the post of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Sam Wright and Graham Elvey were voted in to these positions respectively.

JN thanked GJ for chairing meetings over the past year.

13. Date of Next Meeting

TBC