

REPORT REFERENCE:- **3.0**

(MEETING HELD AT ANDERBY VILLAGE HALL, ANDERBY)

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors Eran Bauer and Denis Hoyes MBE

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council: Councillor Iain Colquhoun

Representing Independent Members: Dr Chris Allison, Ron Flintham, Alison Healey, Chris Padley, Ray Shipley, Peter Skipworth and Colin Smith

Officers: Lincolnshire County Council – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), and Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer)

Apologies for absence: Sheila Brookes and Irene Unsworth

1. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the public asked questions in connection with the following matters:-

1. Access and maintenance issues in connection with footpaths in the vicinity of the new country park on the east coast.
2. The opening of the Lincoln Trail.

Andrew Savage responded that it was proposed to improve the infrastructure by the construction of new bridges as part of the development of the new country park on the east coast which, in turn, would improve access to footpaths proposed for the area.

Andrew Savage stated that it was proposed to open the Lincoln Trail in Spring 2012 and when all of the improvements had been completed the Trail would be publicised.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Chris Padley be elected Chairman of the Forum for the next municipal year.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of certain members of the Forum it was -

RESOLVED

That consideration of the election of Vice-Chairman be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

4. NEW AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE FORUM

The Chairman stated that Mary Finch and Anne Welburn had retired from the Forum and he welcomed Ron Flintham as a new member to his first meeting of the Forum. Ron Flintham thanked the Chairman for his welcome and stated that he presented a radio show on Lincoln City Radio for the disabled and would take the opportunity to publicise countryside issues on the show.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 12 April 2011, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MOD LAND AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (minute 49, Mid Lincs Access Forum, 12 April 2011)

Councillor Eran Bauer stated that he would bring a report to the next meeting on access to MoD land at the former RAF base at Fulbeck. NOTED.

6. DISCOVERING LOST WAYS (minute 21, Mid Lincs Access Forum, 12 October 2010)

Alison Healey reported progress in setting up a group in the Spilsby area to carry out work on the Discovery Lost Ways project. Andrew Savage stated that the County Council was prepared to offer support for the project. NOTED.

7. PROGRESS OF DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS (minute 54, Mid Lincs Access Forum, 12 April 2011)

Councillor Iain Colquhoun stated that following the inaccessibility of a route running through port land the land owner was now examining a permissive route for local people. NOTED.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman presented his reply to Richard Benyon MP, Minister of State for Natural Environment and Fisheries in response to the Minister's circular letter to the chairs of Local Access of 5 April 2011. He welcomed feedback from members on his response. NOTED.

9. MEETING WITH PAUL COATHUP, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT) – FOR SUGGESTIONS/REQUESTS FOR BUSINESS

The Chairman stated that he and the Chairman of the South Lincolnshire Access Forum were due to meet Paul Coathup on 21 October 2011, as part of an annual meeting to discuss matters affecting the two Forums and asked members to let him know if they wished to raise any issues at this meeting.

Issues raised by members included the following:-

1. Future funding.
2. The need for advice to disabled groups about access to footpaths.
3. The statutory duties of the local authority in connection with the provision of facilities for the disabled.

Andrew Savage agreed to send a copy of the information pack for the disabled to Ron Flintham. NOTED.

10. JOINT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Andrew Savage presented the Joint Annual Report 2010/11. In response to comments by the Forum the report would be published on both the County and North East Lincolnshire Council's websites.

RESOLVED

That the Joint Annual Report 2010/11 be adopted.

11. THE NATURAL CHOICE: SECURING THE VALUE OF NATURE

Andrew Savage presented a report on the Government's White Paper outlining the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years, backed up with practical action to deliver that ambition.

Following an enquiry about the timescales involved with the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which was designed to help transport authorities to do more to encourage, amongst others, walking and cycling, Steve Blagg agreed to send a copy of the report presented to the County Council's Highways, Transport and Technology Scrutiny Committee on the matter, to the Forum. The Chairman stated that the Forum should provide feedback to the County Council on the Fund.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that Steve Blagg email a copy of the report to on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund presented to the County Council's Highways, Transport and Technology Scrutiny Committee, to the Forum.

12. EAST WYKEHAM HLS STEWARDSHIP

Pete Skipworth stated that East Wykeham was an open access site under a stewardship scheme run by Natural England which was now closed to the public. He stated that these schemes were run for ten years and part of the deal was that the farmer had hedging and other services supplied. However after ten years the farmer could close the land off as with East Wykeham.

He stated that when the scheme was running the public had access except for ten days when the farmer had to put up a notice stating the land was temporarily closed.

(Miriam Smith) The wife of the representative of the Ramblers seemed to take-up these areas as a project which was good as he felt that care was needed not to lose them as they enhanced many walks.

Pete Skipworth had contacted Natural England who had referred him to the local representative Emma Heald.

Colin Smith stated that the Ramblers were trying to get the Government to reverse their decision on withdrawing funding for these sites and that the Ramblers were examining the condition and recording the number of sites in Lincolnshire. He hoped that the ten year expiry period would be extended on many of the current sites.

Andrew Savage stated that the Countryside Access Maps had been amended to show the existence of these accesses. NOTED.

13. ACCESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM – FUTURE PRIORITIES

Andrew Savage presented a report in connection the future workload priorities of the Access Development Team.

Andrew Savage stated that the effects of the Comprehensive Spending Review made it essential that the County Council evaluated the services it could provide in the future and emphasised the importance of using volunteers in the future. A variety of options were currently being considered to increase public participation including using volunteers for path surveys, forming an adopt-a-path scheme and using volunteer groups to undertake practical maintenance works. NOTED.

14. FORWARD WORK PROPOSALS 2011 ONWARD

Andrew Savage presented a report on proposals for future working on maintenance and enforcement issues for public rights of way in light of workforce change. He stated that the South Lincolnshire Local Access Forum had set up a Sub Group to examine the Priorities and report back to that Forum.

Comments made by the Forum on the Priorities included the lack of transparency in Priorities 3 and 4, detailed in the report.

The Forum agreed to participate in the Sub Group established by the South Lincolnshire Forum and Dr Chris Allison and Pete Skipworth volunteered to serve on the Sub Group. It was noted that the deadline for comments was 31 August 2011.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that Dr Chris Allison and Pete Skipworth be nominated to the Sub Group established by the South Lincolnshire Local Access Forum to examine the new proposals for prioritising Lincolnshire's Rights of Ways.

15. COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Reports were received on the implementation of the Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. NOTED.

16. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORTS

Reports were received on the progress made on resolving Public Path Orders. NOTED.

17. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

2pm on Tuesday 11 October 2011 at Caistor Heritage Centre

The meeting closed at 4.45pm