

(Meeting held at the Fire/Police Station at Market Rasen)

Present:- Chris Padley (Chairman).

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

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council: Councillor I Colquhoun.

Representing Independent Members: Dr Chris Allison, Sheila Brookes, Ron Flintham, Richard Graham, Ray Shipley, Pete Skipworth, Colin Smith and Irene Unsworth.

Officers: Lincolnshire County Council – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), and Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer); North East Lincolnshire Council – Nicola Hardy (Public Rights of Way Mapping Officer).

23. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public enquired whether it was the County Council's policy not to erect signage warning that a Public Right of Way (PROW) was closed.

Andrew Savage stated that he would notify the Forum if there was a County Council policy in connection with the erection of signage to warn that a PROW was closed adding that this was the responsibility of Highways Divisional Officers.

It was the view of the member of public that the Council ought to have a policy.

RESOLVED

That Andrew Savage investigate if there is a County Council policy in connection with the erection of signage to warn of the closure of a PROW.

24. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Alison Healey.

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 3 July 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 3 JULY 2012

(a) Minute 1, Contacting the Council by the Public

The Forum agreed to discuss this matter under minute 31.

(b) Minute 6 (b) Access Developments in the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park Area

Andrew Savage presented a report, on behalf of Chris Miller, in connection with access issues in the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park, adding that the County Council was aiming to improve the access in the Park through infrastructure and access network improvements.

The Forum was asked to appoint a representative to represent it on the Coastal Country Park Task Team which was being set up to examine access issues in the Park.

It was noted that the Council was seeking one representative to serve on the Task Team, both Richard Graham and Colin Smith put their names forward to represent the Forum.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Council be informed that Richard Graham and Colin Smith wish to represent the Forum on the Coastal Country Park Task Team.

(b) That Richard Graham and Colin Smith report on progress of the Task Team to the Forum.

(c) Minute 10 - Access to Huddle

The Chairman stated that Huddle was open to all Local Access Forum members and that any member who was interested in using the site should contact either Andrew Savage or Chris Miller.

(d) Minute 11 – Joint Annual Report – Pro-forma

Andrew Savage stated the pro-forma from Natural England was required to be completed and returned to Natural England by the end of October 2012.

The Forum agreed that achievements, together with publicity leaflets produced by the County Council, should be listed and enclosed in the response to Natural England and that one of the aims of the Forum for next year was to ensure that footpaths accessible for the disabled were still accessible and maintained.

It was agreed that members should send their comments on the “Forward Look” section of the pro-forma to Andrew Savage before the end of October 2012. The final version of the pro-forma would be circulated to members.

RESOLVED

That members forward any comments on the “Forward Look” section of the pro-forma to Andrew Savage and that the final version be circulated to members.

(e) Minute 15 – Signage of Unsurfaced, Unclassified County Roads

A report by Chris Miller in connection with signage of unsurfaced unclassified County Roads had been circulated. The report outlined the history on the establishment of a policy by the County Council on the signage of these routes. The Forum agreed that signage was helpful to both the public and landowners but did need to conform with the regulations.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

(f) Minute 16 – Clarification Required of Forestry Commission Open Access Restrictions

The Chairman stated that he would write to the Forestry Commission, on behalf of the Forum to request that the Commission should provide specific details about the closure of a PROW and the duration of a closure, when tree felling took place.

(g) Minute 20 – PROW across railway lines

Chris Miller to be reminded to produce a report for the next meeting on PROWs across railway lines following any request of Network Rail to change access arrangements.

27. COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Forum received progress reports on the Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan from North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Councils.

The Forum noted the concerns about the effects of major road schemes on PROWS, particularly the A180 and the Lincoln Eastern Bypass and improvements to multi-user routes in North East Lincolnshire.

The Forum stated that there was a need for the Local Access Forums to be consulted on the effect of road schemes on PROWS during the planning process.

Nicola Hardy stated that North East Lincolnshire was in the process of updating its Definitive Map and was reviewing its Enforcement Policy which would come to this meeting for comment.

Andrew Savage reported on improved maintenance and enforcement works particularly to the urban fringe and urban areas and promotional routes, with the aim

of meeting the wider social objectives of the County Council. He stated that with regard to ROWIP(2) the consultation period ended on 12 October 2012 and requested members should let him have their comments.

RESOLVED

That the reports and comments made by the Forum be noted, in particular the need for the Local Access Forums to be consulted on the effect of new road schemes on PROWS at an early stage during the planning process.

28. PROGRESS OF DEFINITIVE MAP ORDERS FROM OCTOBER 2006 – 19 JUNE 2012

The Forum received progress reports on Definitive Map Orders from October 2006 to 19 June 2012 from North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Councils.

The Forum expressed concern about the number of BOATS being created in Lincolnshire but noted that this was not in the control of the County Council. (The issue of BOATS was discussed in more detail in minute 30).

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

29. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORT 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 MARCH 2013

The Forum received progress reports on Public Path Orders from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 from North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire County Councils.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

30. BOATS AND THE USE OF 4X4s

Pete Skipworth stated that there seemed to be a lot of BOATS being created and, that if this was the case, he enquired why 4x4s were using unofficial routes. He stated that damage and criminal activity was taking place and cited examples of damage done in the Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. He asked if it was the policy to erect signs to warn 4x4 users not to use the unofficial routes and added that they would not be insured if they used these routes.

Comments made by the Forum included the need to report any criminal damage to the Police as they monitored “hot spots” and would take appropriate action; the need for the County Council to record any damage; that Green Lanes were used for criminal activity and that Huddle should be used to ascertain the views of other Local Access Forms on this matter.

RESOLVED

(a) That criminal damage and illegal use by 4x4s should be reported to the Police as this will enable the Police to monitor “hot spots”.

(b) That Huddle be used to ascertain the views of other Local Access Forums on the use by 4x4s of Green Lanes.

31. PROBLEMS REPORTING FOOTPATH ISSUES BY EMAIL AND HAVE REVERTED TO SENDING A FORM TO JONATHAN STOCKDALE

Pete Skipworth stated that he had experienced problems in reporting problems about footpaths with the County Council and he had reverted to sending a form to Jonathan Stockdale at the County Council. Jonathan Stockdale had confirmed that there had been some problems in reporting these problems.

Comments by the Forum included the need for the County Council to have a simpler IT system which would allow members of the public to report problems with footpaths; that sometimes a response was not always received from Jonathan Stockdale and that the use of the official County Council reporting system, while slow, at least promised a response.

Andrew Savage stated that the issues raised by the Forum were being examined by the County Council's IT section adding that sometimes the problem laid with the complainant's own PC and that an alternative solution of reporting a problem was through the Council's Customer Services Centre.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by the Forum be noted.

32. THE CHAIRMAN'S MEETING WITH THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

The Chairman referred to his forthcoming meeting with the Assistant Director of Highways and Transportation and enquired if members had any particular items they wished him to raise with him.

The Forum agreed that the following issues should be considered:-

1. The effects of 4x4 use of Green Lanes, e.g environmental and criminal damage.
2. Provision of bridges in the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park including the legal responsibility of Internal Drainage Boards to provide bridges.
3. The need for LAFs to be consulted on the effects of new roads on PROWS.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman report back to the Forum on the outcome of his discussions with the Assistant Director of Highways and Transportation

33. SEWSTERN LANE – THE DRIFT - UPDATE

The Forum received a report from Chris Miller on the latest situation in connection with Sewstern Lane, an Unclassified County Road. Andrew Savage stated that Chris Miller, together with the Highways Officer and Natural England, were examining solutions to overcome the damage being caused by 4x4s using the Lane adding that a permanent closure of the Lane was being investigated. The County Council was seeking the support of the Forum to proposals to protect this Sewstern Lane.

Comments made by the Forum included:-

1. The serious environmental damage being caused by 4x4s and quadbikes.
2. The difficulty of taking enforcement action.
3. The installation of concrete posts to prevent access.
4. The need to involve the Police.
5. The need for a permanent closure of the Lane.
6. The need to protect the SSSI.
7. The installation of hard surfacing and drainage.
8. The need to prosecute and if necessary seize vehicles by the police.

Andrew Savage stated that the weather conditions during the Spring and Summer had aggravated the state of Sewstern Lane; the difficulties of enforcement; that the installation of concrete posts would need to be removable to allow maintenance and the need to use local material to make repairs.

The Forum agreed to give their support to the County Council to whatever action it decided it took to protect Sewstern Lane and that the Forum should be kept informed of developments.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Forum is aware of the problems of Sewstern Lane being used illegally by 4x4s and other vehicles and gives its support to any action taken by the County Council to protect the Lane.

(b) That the Forum be kept informed of developments.

34. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

2.00pm on Tuesday 15 January 2013 at Horncastle College.

35. LINDSEY TRAIL – AWARD CEREMONY IN LONDON

Andrew Savage stated that the County Council was to be presented with an award for the Lindsey Trail by the British Horse Society.

36. FUNDING BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Eran Bauer informed the meeting of Lincolnshire County Council's funding portal. The Lincolnshire Funding Portal was an online hub of grants and funding

information. It had a user friendly website that allowed you to quickly and easily filter through hundreds of grant schemes and find funding suitable for projects or organisations.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm