



**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND  
RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
29 APRIL 2015**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R WOOTTEN (CHAIRMAN)**

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: None

Representing Rutland County Council: Councillor William J Cross

Representing Independent Members: John Law, Councillor William Cross, Bryan Bowles, Rosemary Harris, Alec Hill, John Williams, Dr Rebecca Johnson, Paul Marshall and Barbara Smitheringale

Officers: Chris Miller (Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager, Lincolnshire County Council), Andy Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer, Lincolnshire County Council), Stuart Crook (Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer, Lincolnshire County Council) and Sean Kent (Group Manager Environmental Services)

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ian Cox and Mrs Audrey Morley.

43 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum, held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015, were agreed with no amendments.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

44a Minute No. 32a - Hedge between Newstead Mill and Belmesthorpe  
Chris Miller, Countryside Access and Definitive Maps Manager, confirmed that this work was now complete but that the verges were now subject to fly tipping, unfortunately.

RESOLVED

That this item be closed as the works were now complete.

**45 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
UPDATE****45a Rutland County Council**

Stuart Crook, Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council, introduced the item, advising that they were currently waiting to hear back from Natural England about a number of discrepancies observed in the MENE (Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment) data. A condition survey of the whole of the Rutland network was proposed in order to complete the plans the network assessment. A job description was also being put together to enable the appointment of a temporary member of staff to undertake this work. Although a consultant could be appointed to do this quickly, there would be a considerable cost implication. Otherwise, a temporary member of staff could be appointed, for a smaller cost, but this would take longer to do. Further information should be available at the next meeting.

Members raised no questions on this item.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

**45b Lincolnshire County Council**

Consideration was given to a report from Lincolnshire County Council which outlined the progress made in the implementation of the Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Andy Savage, Senior Countryside Access Officer, introduced the report and explained that consideration was being given to the budget for the next year and that officers were in the process of identifying suitable schemes for the year. Focus was on urban fringe areas and heritage sites and it was hoped these would be identified in coming months.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Although it would be difficult to quantify the works undertaken to-date, Members requested a spreadsheet which highlighted what schemes had been done or underway to give them an indication of the workload of officers;
- A project was ongoing to quantify the bridge stock. It was thought that 90% of bridges were timber built and had a deterioration rate in excess of the maintenance programme. The development of an asset management programme was also being considered;
- Network Rail was looking at a programme of closures. Out of 117 rail crossings approximately 91 were level crossings and there was a drive from central Government to try and remove those crossings. Not all had suitable alternatives and but strategic options were being considered;
- The Secretary of State suggested that Network Rail work more closely with Local Access Forums during their discussions in respect of crossings. Parish

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Councils would be contacted as part of the consultation process for closure of level crossings.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

46     DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

46a     Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to a report from Rutland County Council.

Stuart Crook, Public Rights of Way Officer, introduced the report.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Further information or decision was still outstanding from legal colleagues in relation to Preston and, therefore, no progress had been made;
- In Braunston, legal had been instructed to publish an Order but both involved parties had indicated a willingness to appeal or object;
- The case at Thorpe-by-Water was a deviation from an existing route. The owner had fenced off the riverbank and so this required a modification order;

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

46b     Lincolnshire County Council

Consideration was given to a report from Lincolnshire County Council which detailed the progress of Definitive Map Modification Order work since the inception of the current prioritisation policy (October 2006 to April 2015) including current caseloads).

Chris Miller, Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager, introduced the report and referred Members to the table on page 45 of the agenda pack.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- 16 cases were being dealt with and 155 waiting to be dealt with;
- In respect to Skegness, evidence would be collated to enable a case to be built around the original submission. A recommendation would then be made to the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager whether an Order would be required. If no objection was received, it would be added but if an objection was received the case would be submitted to the Secretary of State following which a Public Inquiry would take place which would be a lengthy process. If the Order was confirmed without any objection this could be complete within 12 months but would take considerably longer if objections were received;
- The Chairman asked about the 26 year old case and was advised that when legislation was drawn up in the late 1970's/early 1980's, the Local Authority did

not provide any resources to deal with it which had resulted in a constant backlog. The priority order had meant that this case was regularly superseded by other applications;

- It was hoped that the Deregulation Bill would improve the situation as the onus would be put back to the Local Authority for decisions;
- In the cast at Wrangle, notice had been served as Officers were able to establish the details of the current owners under the Highways Act for its removal within 28 days. If the owners did not take action, the Local Authority could do it and issue an invoice to the owners or instigate legal action.

#### RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

#### 47 PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORT

##### 47a Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to a report from Rutland County Council which provided an update on Public Path Orders in the county.

Stuart Crook, Public Rights of Way Officer, introduced the report by confirming that the oldest case had now been finalised.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- Clarification was given in regard to Path Ref E268 in respect of a potential revocation order. A planning application had been received for two office blocks and the diversion order was made under the Planning Act. One of the blocks had been built but the other was not but the path now diverted around the block which was not built. It is an unusual case where potential options were being considered;
- In Lyddington, E314, the path already there was not followed and it had been decided to divert the path to match the "unofficial" route currently being taken;
- In Clipsham, E315, the order is to move a Definitive Map to where people have been walking for over 20 years and it was felt that this was low priority for Legal Services as there were no issues, either with ramblers or the owners. Although it was acknowledged that Legal Services in Peterborough had a small team, Members felt it was important to write to them to ascertain the delay in dealing with these orders;

#### RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the Chairman write to Legal Services on behalf of Forum Members to ascertain the delays in dealing with these orders.

##### 47b Lincolnshire County Council

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Consideration was given to a report from Lincolnshire County Council which provides an update on the progress of Public Path Orders in the county.

Chris Miller, Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager, introduced the report.

Members had no questions in relation to this report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

**48     LOST WAYS SUB-GROUP**

John Law, Vice Chairman of the Forum, advised that the Lost Ways Sub-Group held its first meeting in advance of the meeting of the Forum. The draft remit of the Sub-Group was put together and this would be presented to the Forum once finalised.

The frequency of the meetings had not yet been decided.

There were no questions for the Vice Chairman.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

**49     EAST MIDLANDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM CHAIRS MEETING**

The Chairman thanked John Law, Vice Chairman, for attending the East Midlands Local Access Forum Chairs Meeting on his behalf.

The notes of the meeting had been included in the agenda pack for Members information. It was particularly noted that the LAF Coordinator post was no longer in existence and that Mandy Sims had now, regrettably, left. Natural England would not, in future, take notes for the meetings but they would be willing to provide a conference room for use. The next meeting would be held in Nottingham but it was stressed that Chairs would have to produce their own agendas and minutes going forward.

Leicestershire LAF was more advanced as a Forum so the Vice Chairman was looking to build a better relationship with neighbouring LAFs/counties.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

**50     FUTURE OF PUBLIC ACCESS IN STEWARDSHIP SCHEMES**

The Vice Chairman introduced the report which provided options in regard to the future of public access in stewardship schemes. The following were proposed:-

1. That the voice of the LAF be heard (Welsh and Scottish LAFs have the right to advise government directly) as need some way of advising DEFRA what the English LAFs would like;
2. Reinstating Permissive Access Funding for easy access routes (for the disabled as seen at the moment). It was felt to be essential that people with disabilities had the same, if not more, access to the countryside than at present.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- It was suggested to link with the Health and Wellbeing Boards in the East Midlands. It had been hoped that a number of LAFs would receive a discussion paper, a form of consultation, and have meetings to discuss further. It was felt that this could be done remotely by sharing information and thoughts electronically thereby keeping costs to a minimum;
- It was agreed that an enormous amount of work had been done and the Forum were supportive of putting these thoughts to Government as a joint view with other LAFs;
- Work would be required to unite groups including BHS, ramblers, LAFs, etc, to try and get the recognition of permissive access by DEFRA.

RESOLVED

That the proposals suggested above be unanimously agreed.

## 51 COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL

Consideration was given to a report by the Vice Chairman on Countryside for All.

Vice Chairman, John Law, introduced the report and thanked Paul Marshall and Gordon Norris for the work to-date. He confirmed that the chosen four route maps had been printed and packaged with some being delivered to Whisby and more included in with Choice Unlimited, recently launched in Leicestershire.

A presentation was then given regarding Dementia Friendly Walks.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- As well as leaflets, it was hoped to implement plinths on some routes so that walker could both see and hear maps/routes. The Chairman of the Round Table in Skegness had offered £500 funding towards this;
- It was agreed that more publicity was required and the Chairman encouraged the group to consider options and to utilise the press office;
- Although the publicity was labelled "Walks in Lincolnshire" it was felt that Rutland should also be included;
- A meeting had been held with the Blind Association and Vista, among others, and they were looking to develop "listen for walk". There was an example of this type of resource on the Lincolnshire website and in a response from Natural England, it was suggested that a "one stop" website for walks was

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needed. Although a number of suggestions had been received from Natural England, it was important to have a discussion with representatives from disability groups on those;

- Funding would be sought for this as it was thought that Area Teams may have access to funds for schemes of this nature;
- It was suggested to contact radio stations to promote this and also local Mobility Centres who sell or hired out mobility scooter.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

52     FUNDING

Consideration was given to a Discussion Document in relation to Funding Countryside Access.

The Chairman suggested that this be brought back to the next meeting to give Members the opportunity consider the paper and to enable the Vice Chairman to provide any further information which may be available.

RESOLVED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting for consideration.

53     HORSE RIDING ROUTE MAPS

Although the relevant information had been sent to Members via email, the Forum felt it would be have been helpful to have the documents as part of the agenda pack. As a result, the Chairman suggested to defer this to the next meeting to enable a full discussion.

RESOLVED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting for consideration.

54     LOCAL ACCESS FORUM SURVEY 2014-15

The Chairman confirmed that he had received notification of a survey which had a response date of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The Clerk to the Forum advised that the link provided in the email came up with an error message and was unable to access the survey itself. Officers advised they would try to access the survey before the deadline.

RESOLVED

To endeavour to access the survey before the deadline date.

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55 NEXT MEETING OF THE SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE & RUTLAND LOCAL  
ACCESS FORUM

As agreed at the last meeting, the next meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum would be held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 at 6.00pm. The meeting was to be held at Barratt Court, Skegness and would include a presentation on Coastal Access by Mr Paul Marshall.

56 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman welcomed Sean Kent to the meeting and asked him to address the Forum.

Mr Kent explained that, following a senior management review, waste disposal and natural environment now came under his remit. There were plans to walk the Coastal Access Route in May and his intent was to feedback findings at the next meeting of this Forum. Although it was unlikely that funding would be available from Natural England, Mr Kent noted that his budget was considerable and therefore he would try to support the Countryside Access and Definitive Map team going forward.

The Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm