



**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND
RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
22 JULY 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R WOOTTEN (CHAIRMAN)

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: None

Representing Rutland County Council: None

Representing Independent Members: John Law, Rosemary Harris, Alec Hill, John Williams, Ian Cox, Dr Rebecca Johnson, Paul Marshall and Barbara Smitheringale

Officers: Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Stuart Crook (Public Rights of Way Officer), Chris Miller (Environmental Services Team Leader (Countryside Services)) and Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The meeting was opened by Councillor R Wootten who welcomed all present to Barratt Court in Skegness.

Nominations for the Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum were invited.

Councillor R Wootten was nominated by Mr J Williams and seconded by Mr P Marshall. No other nominations for the post of Chairman were received.

RESOLVED

That Councillor R Wootten be elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman nominated Mr J Law as Vice-Chairman and this was seconded by Mr I Cox. No other nominations for the post of Vice-Chairman were received.

The Chairman thanked Mr Law for all the hard work undertaken for the Local Access Forum and for attending a considerable number of meetings on his behalf.

RESOLVED

That Mr John Law be elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

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3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Audrey Morley and Councillor David Brailsford.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SOUTH
LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON 29
APRIL 2015

One amendment was noted by the Vice-Chairman at Minute Number 49 where paragraph 3 should read as follows:-

Leicestershire LAF was more advanced with the Lost Ways project than other LAFs in the region. The Vice Chairman was looking to ensure the neighbouring LAFs provided and were provided with cross border lost ways information.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2015, noting the amendment above, be approved by the Chairman as a correct record.

5 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(IF NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA)

There were no actions arising from the minutes of the last meeting in addition to those already listed on the agenda for consideration.

At this point of the proceedings, Councillor Wootten gave thanks to the Forum for electing him as Chairman for another year and to Mr Marshall for arranging the venue for the meeting.

The Chairman proposed to take agenda items 8, 9 and 10 as accepted, due to the number of items to be considered, unless members had any specific questions they wished to ask. This was agreed.

6 JOINT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report which provided a summary of the work of both the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum and the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum.

Andy Savage, Senior Countryside Access Officer, presented the report and confirmed that the format was the same as in previous years. The Chairmen of both forums were thanked for their introductions to the report.

Pages 25 and 26 of the report alluded to the membership of both forums and suggestions on how to successfully fill the vacancies were requested. It had been suggested at the meeting of the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum the previous evening to include something in the Parish Council update.

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Regulations stated what the minimum and maximum levels should be for fair and equal representation on Local Access Forums within each area therefore it was important to ensure those vacancies were filled. It was also important to ensure that the Forum remained quorate at each meeting.

It was suggested that Sarah Grundy, Historic Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council, to promote to all user groups. This was agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager for Lincolnshire County Council contact Sarah Grundy, Historic Environment Officer, to progress promotion of the Local Access Forums to user groups with the counties of Lincolnshire and Rutland.

7 COASTAL ACCESS

Mr Paul Marshall, South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum Member, gave a presentation on Coastal Access within Lincolnshire.

Following his retirement, Mr Marshall moved to the Skegness area to enjoy the coast but found that he was unable to use the coastal footpaths as they were inaccessible on a mobility scooter due to the sand blowing from the beach on to the footpath. On further investigation, he found it difficult to ascertain who was responsible for the footpaths as he was advised by the Council that this was the responsibility of the Environment Agency and the Environment Agency advising that it was the responsibility of the Council.

As a further example, the beach at Chapel St Leonards was privately owned and not maintained by the current owner. Two seal carcasses had been washed up on this particular beach and were left there until they became skeletons.

Following this, Mr Marshall started a group called Skegness and District Coastal Access for All and, in 2003, they met with a Councillor from West Lindsey District Council and a representative from the Environment Agency but the conclusion was not to take any action. Undeterred, the group liaised with a local farmer who used a digger to clear the footpath enabling it to be reopened.

Volunteers were then sought and support was received from Winthorpe Caravan Park and the Army Cadets which resulted in the footpath being cleared on a regular basis with the use of a Bobcat. Unfortunately, a story was published on the front page of the local newspaper about a child who had been stuck with a needle on the path. The group have since worked tirelessly to ensure that this type of incident did not reoccur.

They have linked with the Government, Surfers Against Sewerage, nearby Butlins as well as the local community and undertaken a considerable amount of work to make the footpath usable. Groups of young people from Butlins cleared 25 bags of litter in

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one afternoon, for example. Although this had made a huge difference to residents and tourists alike, the problems remained.

In addition to these problems, it had become apparent that one local campaigner was canvassing the local councils, MP and volunteers to deter people from volunteering with the message that this was the "job of the Council". As a result, volunteer numbers were dwindling and the group were now struggling to keep the momentum going.

Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism, Lincolnshire County Council, was now involved as it was proposed to open a cycle path from Gibraltar Point to Chapel St Leonards. An additional issue was the access to the coastal path on the land owned by the Golf Club, which had been previously discussed at the Local Access Forum.

The Chairman thanked Mr Marshall for his presentation and congratulated the group on their success to-date. He then asked what the Forum could do to help.

Mr Marshall requested that the route across the Golf Course be opened. Butlins were hiring bikes and mobility scooters to their guests but they were still unable to get to the town of Skegness due to the land on the Golf Course being inaccessible.

At a meeting with Natural England, the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager and the Senior Countryside Access Officer, two stretches of coast had been discussed (Norfolk to Skegness Pier and Skegness Pier to Donna Nook) and the stretch presented by Mr Marshall would be part of those discussions. He explained that Golf Courses were exempt from spreading room but not from the national trail, which this section would form part of. Should this go ahead and on completion of the trail, maintenance would become the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council although the build-up of sand on the trail had not been considered. Other issues for consideration would be cattle and the landowner responsibility to make provisions to keep their cattle away from the trail.

Natural England had asked to attend the next meeting of the Forums to discuss this issue therefore it was proposed to hold a joint meeting with the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum to discuss Deregulation.

RESOLVED

That the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager discuss the possibility of a joint meeting with the Chairmen of both the South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum and the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum.

8 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

8a Rutland County Council

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Members were comfortable with the content of the report and raised no additional questions or comments.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

8b Lincolnshire County Council

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

Members were comfortable with the content of the report and raised no additional questions or comments.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

9 DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

9a Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to a report from Rutland County Council.

Members were comfortable with the content of the report and raised no additional questions or comments.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

9b 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.

Members were comfortable with the content of the report and raised no additional questions or comments.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

10 PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORT

10a Rutland County Council

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

During discussion, the following point was noted:-

- In relation to Path Ref D85 (Langham) the owners had applied for the previous diversion when the lodge was built but had withdrawn this as the units were not on the market. Now that the units were being sold, they had resubmitted a new application which was supported by Langham Parish Council. Although this was in preliminary consultation at the present time, it was thought this would be dealt with swiftly because the definitive line had been blocked;

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

10b Lincolnshire County Council

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

Members were comfortable with the content of the report and raised no additional questions or comments.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

11 LOST WAYS SUB-GROUP

The Vice Chairman provided a verbal update and advised that he had received an email from DEFRA which he would circulate to all Members of the Forum. As the Deregulation guidelines were awaited, there was not much more to add at this time.

It was agreed that this would form part of the Deregulation discussions at the proposed joint meeting of the South Lincolnshire & Rutland Local Access Forum and the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

12 COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL SUB-GROUP

Consideration was given to a report from the Vice-Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum which provided an update on the work of the Countryside for All Sub-Group.

Due to the resignation of Mr Gordon Norris due to his heavy workload with charities for the disabled, the Forum were asked for a volunteer to assist Mr P Marshall in

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auditing and surveying the routes, in particular the use of the inclinometer. The next meeting of the sub-group was scheduled for 4th August 2015.

The sub-group had been promoting countryside for all routes, health walks, dementia friendly walks and walking using PRow to various organisations using a slide show. A meeting took place with representatives of the Lincolnshire East Clinical Commissioning Group in Skegness earlier in the day on 22 July. The Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to present the slide show to the next meeting of their GP liaison representatives. The aim is to encourage the practices to display the slideshow in their reception areas.

The Vice-Chairman asked if both county councils could provide a web page of links to businesses, such as pubs and restaurants who wish to promote their business and have accessible toilets available for their customers.

The PowerPoint presentation was available also and it was asked that this be sent to the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager so it could be added to the Lincolnshire County Council website.

The Chairman advised that he would pass on the report and contact details of the Vice-Chairman to the South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group for their information also.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted;
2. That officers would contact their respective Economic Development Teams for a list of businesses to promote the walks to also;
3. That the officers investigate the issue.

13 FUNDING

Consideration was given to information provided by the Vice-Chairman which was brought forward from the last meeting.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of progress made on this item, the Vice-Chairman proposed that this be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum.

14 JOINT DISABILITY SUB-GROUP - BID SUBMISSION

Consideration was given to a report from the Vice-Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum which provided Forum Members with the projects which would benefit from the funding should this bid be successful.

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It was thought that the outcome would be available for this meeting but this remained outstanding. Advice received suggested that the decision would be made early August 2015 therefore it was asked to defer this item to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting in anticipation of the bid outcome.

15 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS EDUCATION PACK - DOWNLOAD

Consideration was given to a report from the Vice-Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum which provided information about the education resources available in Lincolnshire.

A request was made to share the Lincolnshire Countryside Access Education Pack with other Councils. The Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager was happy for the link to be shared but stressed that the document had been designed for Lincolnshire and not generically and for other Authorities to bear that in mind.

It was agreed to be important to promote this to young people within the county but to keep the content current. The Chairman agreed to raise this with Debbie Barnes, Executive Director for Children's Services at Lincolnshire County Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

16 CONSULTATION - MAKING OUR NEEDS KNOWN AND INFLUENCING
DECISION MAKERS

The Vice-Chairman requested that Agenda Items 16 and 17 be taken together as part of the same update. This was agreed.

Consideration was given to a report and draft questionnaire from the Vice-Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum which invited discussion and comment from Forum Members.

The reports and consultation documents had been sent to various Local Access Forums for their comment. The result would then be sent to Mid and West Berkshire LAF and circulated to members for their information. If Members were in agreement, the final documents would then be sent to Kristina Gould at Natural England. Copies would also be sent to the LAFs in the East Midlands region, West Midlands region and the South East region asking them to complete the consultation documents and return them to the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum for analysis. Following the completion of the analysis the Forum would discuss how this should be taken forward.

RESOLVED

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1. That the reports for agenda items 16 and 17 be noted;
2. That the proposed process be agreed.

17 PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE PERMISSIVE ACCESS IN STEWARDSHIP SCHEMES

Please refer to minute number 17 for the details of this item as it was agreed with the Forum to take Agenda Items 16 and 17 together.

18 HORSE RIDING ROUTE MAPS

Consideration was given to a selection of maps which members were asked to comment on their style and information presented to be used whilst horse riding.

The Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager explained that these had been brought forward from the last meeting but that a decision had been made. Some compromise had been agreed with the publisher to attempt to meet all needs.

There were mixed opinions about what riders may need of their maps but Members were generally content with the option chosen.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

19 SOLAR FARMS

Dr R Johnson, South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum Member, gave a verbal address to the Forum in regard to a potential planning application for a 100 hectare solar farm in the Parish of Lenton, Keisby, Osgodby and Hanby situated in the south of Grantham.

The issue for the forum to consider was the plan to use the bridleway as construction access and the view of the company was that they had not had an issue before so would probably keep them open.

The Planning Authority was South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) and they had advised that no application had yet been submitted although an Environmental Impact Assessment had been requested. Since that assessment was undertaken the site plan had changed.

Officers advised that Planning Officers would not usually request the comments of the Local Access Forums when considering planning applications. Early engagement was always wise and it was unusual that SKDC had not suggested that the applicant contact Lincolnshire County Council. Additionally, there was a clear political stance within the County in respect of solar farms. There was nothing to prevent the Forum providing advice to the authority and planning for the Section 94 body.

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The Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager advised that he would raise the issue with Councillor C J Davie, Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism to seek his views.

The Chairman offered, as an SKDC Councillor, to make enquiries about the application and advise Dr Johnson of the position.

RESOLVED

1. That the Chairman make enquiries about this particular application to South Kesteven District Council;
2. That the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager raise this particular application with the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism, Councillor C J Davie.

20 NEXT MEETING OF THE SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The next meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum was scheduled for Wednesday 21st October 2015 at 6.00pm and was to be held in Grantham.

Further to discussions, it would be confirmed if a joint meeting would be held between the South Lincolnshire Local Access Forum and the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum on Tuesday 20th October 2015.

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting be confirmed as soon as possible.

The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm