

## **South Lincolnshire and Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forums' Meetings on 12 and 18 July 2017**

### **COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL – A Report by John Law, a representative on the South Lincolnshire Local Access Forum**

#### **1. COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL ROUTES**

##### **1.1. Lincolnshire**

We are now aiming to have details of the 5 new route leaflet details with the designer/printer by the end of July. It has been confirmed that the track from the Casthorpe Road to the Grantham Canal towpath belongs to Lincolnshire County Council. Unfortunately money is not readily available to upgrade the track and access gate. It has been decided to provide the route leaflet to reflect the current state of the route. When the road from the towpath has been placed on the definitive map we will work with Lincolnshire County Council the Canal and River Trust to obtain funding for improvements.

Progress on the Freiston Shore RSPB route leaflet has come to a stop, as we are hoping to include information about the new World War 2 Museum which is adjacent to the site. The Museum, besides being an excellent museum offers disabled toilet facilities, a fully accessible site and a cafe is planned when funds become available. We believe providing information about the Museum in the Freiston Shore leaflet, will encourage more people to use the route on the RSPB site. As soon as the organisation's charitable status is resolved, we will finalise the leaflet. If we do not receive this information by the end of July we will finalise the leaflet without the Museum's information.

Now funding has been won for Woodhall Spa Airfield route, we will be looking to carry out the survey for this route later in the year.

Funding has also been secured to produce folders for the Lincolnshire route leaflets. The capacity of the existing folder has now become inadequate due to the number of route leaflets we now have. We aim to have the new folders available for use during August.

***Action: Chris Miller – Please make the sub group aware of when the route from Casthorpe Road to the Grantham Canal towpath is placed on the definitive map.***

***Chris Miller – Please let the sub group know when the funding is received from the Nineveh Charitable Trust.***

## **1.2. Rutland**

The success of the Rutland leaflets and folder is displayed in the Choice Unlimited section of this report in 5.3.

## **2. INCLUSIVE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS COURSE**

Nineveh Charitable Trust has provided funding for the Inclusive Countryside Access course. The course will take place at the Whisby education centre 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017. We will be discussing with the trainer how we can spend more time on the practical side during the day.

## **3. WOODLAND TRUST**

A meeting took place between John Law and Louise Tuffin, a regional manager responsible for 16 counties including South Lincolnshire and Rutland. The minutes of this meeting have been circulated prior to this meeting. The aim of the meeting was to persuade the Woodland Trust to create route leaflets in Countryside For All format for their most accessible countryside routes. We are still in conversation over this matter and have asked for a meeting with the CEO to explain the reasons the most accessible routes should be in Countryside For All format. Another region including north Lincolnshire has requested that 10 members of their staff are included in the Inclusive Countryside Access course which we have won funding for.

The Woodland Trust is aiming by 2025 to have 10 top level visitor sites, 250 "Welcome" sites and the remainder would be described as locally loved. The Welcome sites would include car parks, signed and have waymark routes. The welcome sites in South Lincolnshire will include Alma Park, Londonthorpe and The Pinewoods. Gorse Field in Rutland will become a Welcome site.

We have asked if the George Henry Wood can have an accessible route suitable for people with wheelchairs. The following is an extract from the response we have had *"The biggest barrier for access is the parking situation; currently there is a layby people park in that is in fairly poor condition. It has been recognised that parking needs to be looked at for the wood, but the Trust won't be in a position to do this for a few years yet. In addition, the deer fencing onsite necessitates the need for the current kissing gates to remain in place for a while yet. So in a few years it is likely that we review the whole site in terms of its visitor offer, which will include access considerations, but there isn't scope to do anything in the near future I'm afraid."* The sub group will be asking if an outline plan of a route can be drafted, if any trees are on the route can be cleared whilst they are still young saplings. This will reduce the work and cost required for the future route.

An example of the Woodland Trust's draft new access statement has been received. We will be going back to them pointing out where the statement is lacking in information for the disabled.

## **DEMENTIA FRIENDLY WALKS – RUTLAND**

Monthly walks are taking place at the Lodge Trust. We are advertising for further volunteers to receive the funded training. This training has been booked for early July but is dependent on the number of volunteers that are interested in taking part. We previously booked the training for April but only had one person interested. We have advertised the training places in a number of places and with a number of organisations.

### **4. CHOICE UNLIMITED EVENT**

#### **4.1. Rutland**

Voluntary Action Rutland has joined the working group. This should help ensure the event is an annual event for many years to come. The next meeting of the working group is 29<sup>th</sup> June. We are looking to finalise the venue, date and how we include the Local Offer into the event. The sub group also has a meeting 5<sup>th</sup> July where we will be discussing how we can improve our display to encourage more disabled people and children to take part in activities. As outcomes of these meetings were not available prior to this report being submitted a verbal update will be provided at the LAF meeting.

***ACTION: John – Provide an update on the outcomes of the Working Group meeting and the Countryside For All sub group meeting.***

#### **5.2 Lincolnshire**

We are currently building a small working group to help us take the project forward. Those who have currently agreed to be part of the working group besides the LAF are: Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service, Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council Adult Care and Community Wellbeing Service through the Public Health Locality Lead, Lincolnshire Voiceability, Tonic Health and Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum.

After visiting the Springfield event Centre and having discussions with the Centre managers we have decided, if we get the backing and funding, to hold the Choice Unlimited event at that venue in May 2018. LCIL, the organisation which delivers the event has been kept in the loop with progress. Once the members of the working group have been finalised a meeting will be held with LCIL. We have been asked to include a representative of TED (Taste, Eat and Drink project running until 2021) East Lindsey in the working group. If TED want to be involved it will be mainly as an observer. The focus of this working group will be on Spalding. Depending on the outcome of the Spalding event and ensuring it becoming an annual event, we may then look at other locations to hold a Choice Unlimited event in Lincolnshire.

### **5.3 Leicester Tigers Event**

We had three tables at the event, one funded by Leicestershire County Council, one funded by Rutland County Council and one funded by a private donor. Thanks must go to Stan Warren (Leicester City and Leicestershire LAF) for helping to set up the displays and John Howells (Leicestershire LAF chair) who assisted John Law by speaking to the people visiting our display. The purpose at being at the event was to encourage disabled people, their carers and the elderly to visit and enjoy the countryside. Our aim was to engage with the visitors, talk about their interests, talk about countryside activities and signpost them to the relevant leaflets or organisations which could help them pursue their countryside interests. The activities we promoted included countryside for all routes, Walking for Health, Dementia Friendly Strolls, horse riding, carriage driving, cycling and sailing as well as some other activities. We also had a number of park leaflets. We were kept busy for most of the day, although there were times when we were waiting for visitors. At times we could have done with three of us working at the display. The location of our display within the hall was excellent. We used a TV, laptop computer and a static display. Part of our remit was to attract potential accessibility ambassadors and we used the computer display to promote this as well as a screen show by LCIL. Next year we will be able to use all our display tables and equipment to focus on all aspects of promoting countryside access for the disabled. There were a number of areas we felt we could improve on:

- A banner stating what we represent

- Only allow leaflets on our display which represent our message

- Seek funding of a table from Leicester City Council via the Leicester City LAF to promote Leicester parks

- Ensure district councils promote their Walking for Health and Dementia Friendly Strolls

- Use the large screen for the promotion headlines

- Use the computer screen to promote details of individual activities. This is currently being reviewed by the Lincolnshire and Rutland LAFs Countryside for All sub group.

The Leicestershire LAF members are being asked on 4 July whether their organisations would be willing to fund two banners. These banners would not be LAF specific and this would enable them to be used at any event for the disabled across the three counties.

***ACTION: John Law – Provide a verbal update on the outcome of funding for banners.***

Following the event at Leicester an email providing feedback was sent to Active Rutland, each of the Leicestershire districts and Leicestershire County Council Public Health. Everything on display from Lincolnshire and Rutland was well received. Below is the extract from the email:

*Good morning*

*I hope you have enjoyed your break. On copy is John Howells, Chair of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LAF) and Stan Warren who represents the Leicester City and Leicestershire LAF. Both John and Stan worked on the display with me at the Choice Unlimited event. Also on copy is John Costor from LCIL and Sandra Pugh from Ellesmere College. LCIL deliver the Choice Unlimited event. I am providing you with feedback from the event, to enable the local access forums and yourselves deliver an even better event for the disabled, their carers and the elderly next year.*

### **Dementia Friendly Walks/Strolls**

*We only received leaflets from Rutland which displayed the Rutland programme. There was a lot of interest from individuals and representatives of carers organisations. Whilst some of the people lived in the Rutland area, there was disappointment from many who had picked up a leaflet to find there was nothing for Leicestershire. We asked those outside Rutland to send us their email address to enable us to forward the relevant programmes to them. To date we have not received their contact details. This does stress the importance of having the relevant promotional material available on the day of the event.*

### **Walking For Health**

*We received leaflets from Rutland and Leicester City displaying the Walking For Health programme. Once again these leaflets were taken quickly but there was disappointment that no districts had provided their walks programme.*

### **Trips, Slips and Falls**

*This set of leaflets was provided by North West Leicestershire. This leaflet did not really belong on our display however the leaflets were soon picked up by individuals and care organisations. There were many good comments from all sectors about the information on the leaflet. Two people did say when they had rang the phone number on the leaflet, they never received a response. These leaflets and other questions from the public did show the need for the districts, City and County Council to have a display and answer questions from those who attend the event in the future.*

### **Countryside For All route leaflets**

*The leaflets for Rutland and Lincolnshire were quickly taken up by individuals and organisations examples of the route leaflets can be seen at:*

*<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside/visiting/visiting-the-countryside/countryside-for-all/120947.article> We were also asked for Countryside*

*For All leaflets for Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Norfolk. This information will be fed back to the relevant LAFs. There was tremendous disappointment that there were no leaflets for Leicestershire. We spent a fair amount of time with 17 people explaining the Countryside For All leaflets and showing them the access information. All were asked, "If you had these type of leaflets for Leicestershire would it encourage you to get out in the countryside? All replied yes to this question. Some other comments from those we spoke to in relation to the lack of Countryside For All leaflets in Leicestershire are displayed below:*

*Many said they did not visit country parks or the countryside as they felt it may not be accessible*

*Many did not know of Watermead Country Park*

*Three said they visited Bradgate Park as it was the only accessible countryside they knew. Two stated they liked Bradgate Park but as it was the only place they could go, they did tend to get fed up of it.*

*Many asked why there were no route leaflets for Leicestershire*

*One said it was shameful Leicestershire had no route leaflets*

*Two said it was disgusting that Leicestershire had no route leaflets*

*Lincolnshire has 16 Countryside For All leaflets and will have a further 5 by the end of the year. There are also organisations in Lincolnshire budgeting to produce these leaflets in the future. Rutland currently has 3 leaflets with three organisations aiming to add further route leaflets for the County. The funding for the route leaflets initially came from council funds for both counties. Funds for the leaflets have since been provided by charitable bodies, private sponsorship, Anglian Water and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. It will be a great shame if we have no Leicestershire route leaflets of Countryside For All standard available for next year's Choice Unlimited event. Leicestershire has many very accessible countryside routes. The lack of promotion of these sites/routes in the Countryside For All format, makes accessible sites inaccessible. Please contact me for further information if you are interested in providing Countryside For All leaflets for your most accessible sites.*

## **Cycling**

*A number of enquiries were received in relation to cycling for the disabled at Rutland Water. I believe Wheels For All were also received a lot of interest. One member of the public who was disabled told me that hiring a bike at Rutland Water had encouraged him to buy his own bike and he now cycles on a regular basis. Both Lincolnshire CC through Lincolnshire Sports and Rutland CC have purchased bikes for the disabled and these are hired out through cycle hire centres. It would be useful if Leicestershire CC and Leicester Shire and Rutland Sports could investigate whether this is a possibility at Hicks Lodge.*

## **School children**

*There was a noticeable lack of disabled school children at the event. At the Rutland event, although it was in school holidays, they contributed to the event in a number of ways. I believe that this encouraged other disabled children to join the clubs which were promoting the activities. There is no reason why disabled children cannot take part and visit these events in school time. It is important that they are aware of the opportunities from an early age. I realise that Ellesmere College and Birkett House do a very good job in helping their students but seeing things in a different environment can generate interest. Both Ellesmere and Birkett House sites are close to the City Choice Unlimited venue. Creating a display for Ellesmere and Birkett House and helping out at these displays at Choice Unlimited would be a valued experience for the students. Encouraging other disabled school children to attend with their parents or as a party would also prove useful. I have to admit that I have not managed to attend the Local Offer Live event. I believe this has been a good showcase for disabled children. The Choice Unlimited event provides another opportunity for disabled children and they should be encouraged to take part and attend.*

*If you wish to discuss how you could benefit from a display at Choice Unlimited next year please contact John Costor (on copy).*

*The local access forums promote many aspects of countryside access. Whilst the feedback above has covered some of our observations, a full report will be provided under Countryside For All at the next LAF meeting, this will then be available as a public document. As mentioned in the opening paragraph we are looking at how we can improve the local access forums display at the next Choice Unlimited event to encourage disabled people to enjoy activities in the countryside.*

*One closing thought which touched me, was a girl in her late teens or early twenties who was in a wheelchair and looking for places to go in the Leicestershire countryside without being dependent on other people to go with her. She had recently been to some "wheelchair friendly" routes, to find they were definitely not suitable for her. My thoughts are, if we do not provide route leaflets in Countryside For All format for Leicestershire, even the disabled who are very determined in venturing out into the countryside will give up.*

*Should you have any queries in relation to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.*

*Kind regards*

*John*

*John Law*

*Member of the Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums, Countryside For All sub group*

The email was sent to 3<sup>rd</sup> May, we have only had one response. This was from Blaby District Council. They have requested four weeks notice in future to enable them to provide us with leaflets and walk programmes. We will take this comment on board for the next event.

We have received some **VERY GOOD NEWS** since the email was sent. The next Leicester Choice Unlimited event will combine with the Local Offer Live event. The Local Offer has been ran as a separate event by Leicester City and Leicestershire County Council for families who have children with disabilities or special educational needs. We were concerned with the lack of children at the Leicester Choice Unlimited event. However it does mean we have to work harder to get sponsorship to pay for I – Spy books or similar to give out at these events. This combined event will ensure we see disabled children and their parents and special school representatives at the 2018 event.

## **5. FUNDING BIDS**

### **5.1. Nineveh Charitable Trust**

As mentioned previously we have been successful in obtaining a grant from the Nineveh Trust. This will allow us to fund an Inclusive Countryside Access course, a larger capacity folder for the Lincolnshire Countryside for All leaflets and a Countryside for All route leaflet for Woodhall Spa airfield.

### **5.2. Replenishment of current leaflets**

Whilst we currently have ample stock of the Rutland leaflets, a number of Lincolnshire leaflets will be at their reorder level next year. As it takes time to gain funding from grants, we will start to look for suitable funders to approach this year. Initially we will ask site owners to see if they are prepared to fund the leaflets.

### **5.3. I-Spy In the Countryside**

Neither Severn Trent Water or Leicester City Football Club are able to provide the £410 required for the 300 booklets to give out to children with disabilities at the Choice Unlimited events, to encourage them and their parents to explore the countryside. We are looking at other avenues to obtain this funding. If we are successful we may include in the order of the 300 a variety of I-Spy booklets representing the countryside. If anyone has any ideas of funding bodies which might prove useful please let the sub group know.

***ACTION: All – Provide information on any funding group which is likely to fund obtaining I-Spy booklets to hand out to disabled children.***

### **5.4. Chapel Six Marshes**

Although the route surface improvements have been priced, we have worked with LCC to identify how we can improve the interest on the site. LCC may submit an



application to the East Coast Community Fund for financing this project. If the LCC is not able to apply for this funding we will be applying for funding from this source.

#### **5.5. Ashing Lane Nature Reserve**

We are still waiting for the key players of the Nettleham Woodland Trust to be available to enable us to arrange a meeting to discuss the car park improvements and extension of the all ability path. Further news re the state of the surface of Ashing Lane and the planned maintenance is awaited.

***Action: Chris Miller- Please provide an update for the next LAF meeting***

#### **5.6. Chambers Farm Wood**

We are working with the Forestry Commission to see how we can extend the all ability trail and improve the current route.

#### **5.7. Coastal Country Park**

A site meeting has been arranged with LCC on 12<sup>th</sup> July to discuss how we can improve access for the disabled in the coastal country park.

***ACTION: John/Richard – Provide verbal update***

#### **6. ACCESSIBILITY AMBASSADORS**

We will be trying to attract ambassadors for Leicestershire and Rutland at a Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living event which is being held 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

***ACTION: John – Provide verbal update***

#### **8. SENSORY TRAILS AND GREEN SPACES**

Due to workload this project has not progressed any further.

#### **9. DISABILITY SUB GROUP CHANGE OF NAME and LOGO**

We are now using “Countryside For All” as our name. We are still trying to find time to create a logo. We are keen to see the new LAF logos, if we get agreement early enough we will be able to get them printed on our five new route leaflets.

***ACTION: All – Agree on the new LAF logo.***

#### **10. GRUFFALO SPOTTERS TRAIL**

We are still waiting for information from the Forestry Commission in relation to the Gruffalo spotters trail. We will continue to chase this up as we feel that it is a very useful way of encouraging children to get into the countryside.

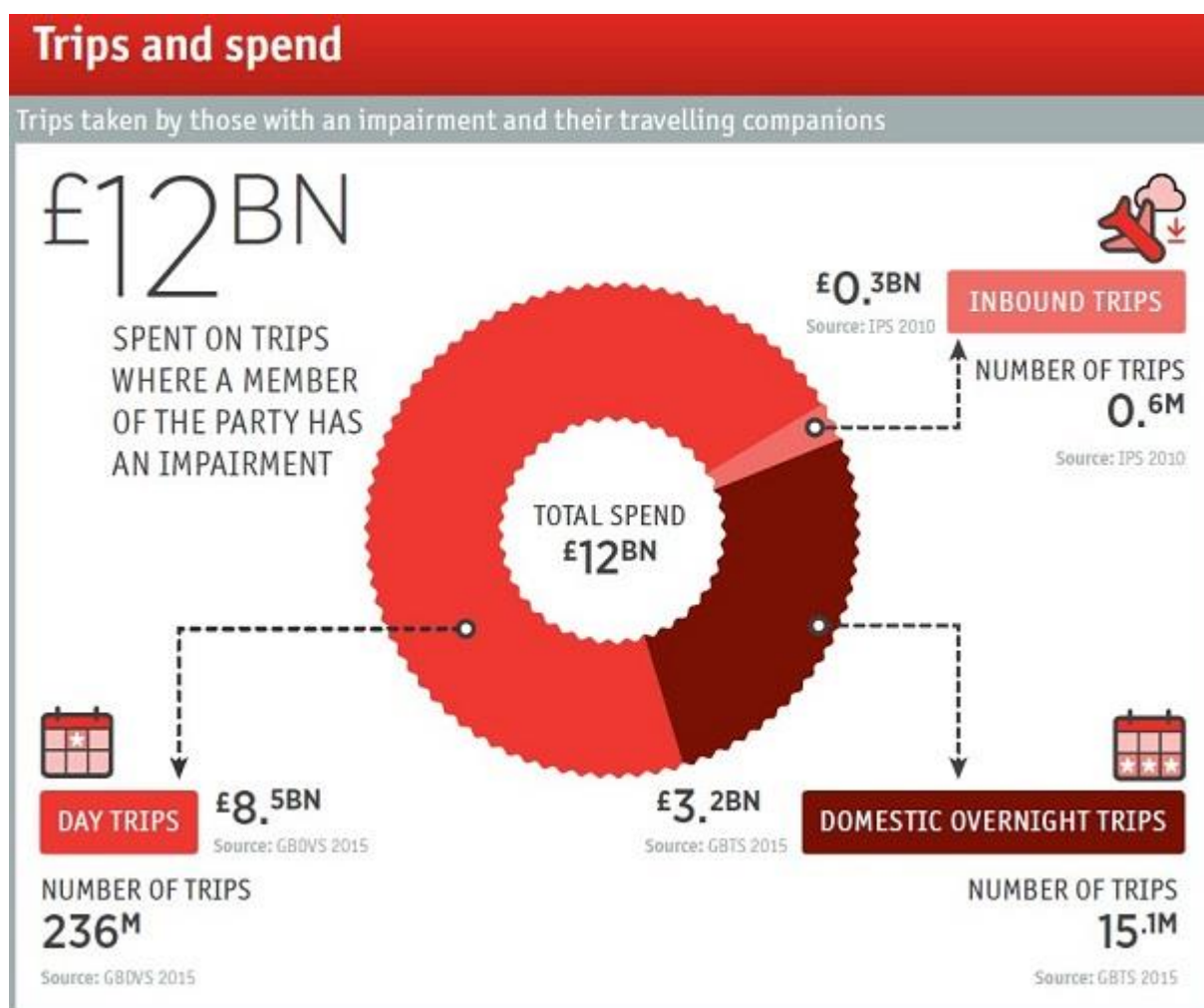
***ACTION: John – Provide a verbal update***

## 11. VISIT ENGLAND PURPLE POUND

Discussions by email have been taking place with Visit England, the reason for this was initially for enquiring for funding for a National Countryside For All web site. Visit England suggested we looked at their web site displaying “Understanding the accessible tourism market”. This certainly gives another reason for us to keep a focus on countryside for all. Details from the Visit England web site are shown overleaf (figures from 2015):

### Understanding the accessible tourism market

Good accessibility benefits all visitors. Disabled people have the greatest need for accessible facilities and services but only around 8% use a wheelchair, with many more having other mobility, hearing or visual impairments. People with health conditions and impairments – and their travelling companions – spend £12 billion a year on tourism in England.



- In 2015, nearly one in five tourism day trips in England were taken by people with impairment and their travelling companions, spending £8.5 billion.

- In 2015, 18% of all overnight trips by British residents in England were taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions, worth £3.2 billion.
- Over half a million people with a health condition or impairment visit England from abroad each year, spending around £3 million.

In addition to this, our research reveals that visitors who make up the accessible tourism market are:

More likely to take longer trips

- Find seaside destinations particularly appealing
- Anecdotally very loyal

## **12. VISIT ENGLAND AND THE COUNTRYSIDE FOR ALL WEB SITE**

We continue to have an exchange of emails with Visit England in relation to a Countryside For All routes nationwide to be hosted on their web site.

***ACTION: John – Provide verbal update***

## **13. CHANGING PLACES TOILETS**

When examining the toilet facilities with Springfield Event Centre it was learnt that grants for the refurbished toilets had been received from both the District and County Council. This did include disabled toilets but not “changing places toilets”. Changing places toilets defined by Mencap are for “people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably” The Leicestershire Ashfield school Youtube clip highlights this need. We only have changing places toilets in Lincolnshire in the following locations in Lincolnshire:

|            |                               |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| Lincoln    | The Showroom                  |
| Lincoln    | North Kesteven Leisure Centre |
| Lincoln    | Yarborough Leisure Centre     |
| Horncastle | Swimming Pool                 |
| Boston     | Princess Royal Sports Arena   |
| Louth      | Meridian Leisure Centre       |
| Grantham   | Jubilee Church Life Centre    |
| Skegness   | Briar Way Public Conveniences |

In Rutland we only have one Changing Places Toilet which is in Oakham. Rutland Water is a major attraction for outdoor activities. It is disappointing that it has no Changing Places Toilet.

Clearly we need more of these facilities, especially at the coastal resorts. This will help us to encourage disabled people to enjoy our countryside and coastal attractions. It will also help benefit the local economy. To ensure there is a growth in

these facilities organisations requesting grants should be made aware of this need and provided help in obtaining funding for this cause.

All the UK Changing Places Toilets are identified on the Changing Places web site which belongs to Mencap. Mencap have authorised us to have the changing places web address on the walk leaflets. They have also asked if we would like to be added to their list of supporters on their 'Changing Places' website [http://www.changing-places.org/about\\_us/supporters\\_of\\_the\\_campaign.aspx](http://www.changing-places.org/about_us/supporters_of_the_campaign.aspx). If we are to act as a supporter they will place both county council's web address on the list. This is clearly a matter for both county councils to consider.

***ACTION: Chairman - Can a letter be written to the appropriate member/officer and ask when organisations apply for funding to improve facilities, they are made aware of the need for changing places toilets?***

***Chairman – Can a letter be written to the appropriate members/officers for the Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council to be included in the list of supporters on the “C hanging Places” web site?***

***Chairman – Can a letter be written to Anglian Water to see if they have any plans to construct a Changing Places Toilet at Rutland Water?***

#### **14. APPROACHING ORGANISATIONS FOR ANNUAL FUNDING**

As discussed at the last meeting, we will initially be aiming for funding partners for Rutland. We aim to discuss costs of the Rutland Choice Unlimited event with LCIL before approaching potential funding partners.