



**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND  
RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
3 JULY 2013**

**PRESENT:**

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors R Wootten.

Representing Rutland County Council: Councillor B Montgomery.

Representing Independent Members: B Bowles, W Cross, A Gibbon, G Norris, J Williams and J Law.

Officers: Katrina Cope (Democratic and Civic Services Team Leader, Lincolnshire County Council), Stuart Crook (Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council), Chris Miller (Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager, Lincolnshire County Council) and Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer, Lincolnshire County Council).

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor R Wootten be elected as Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Access Forum for the 2013/2014 municipal year.

COUNCILLOR R WOOTTEN IN THE CHAIR

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That John Williams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum for the 2013/2014 municipal year.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Brailsford, Rosemary Harris, Mrs Audrey Morley and Mrs Barbara Smitheringale.

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4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 APRIL 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum held on 10 April 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the last word of the first sentence of Minute No. 48 being amended to 'walks' and the words 'and rides' being added to concluded the sentence.

5 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Further to the last meeting of the Local Access Forum, an update on the following areas was received:-

(a) Minute Number 41: Bridleway Issue - Stamford

The Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager provided the Local Access Forum with an update concerning Minute No 41 from the meeting held on 10 April 2013 concerning the bridleway issue at Stamford.

The Local Access Forum was advised that work was still on going as a result of the transfer of the bridleway from Cambridgeshire to Lincolnshire. A more comprehensive update would be provided for the next meeting.

(b) Minute Number 46(i): Barbers Lane, Preston, Rutland

The Chairman offered his apologies for not having written to the Leader of Rutland County Council expressing the concerns of the forum in respect of Barbers Lane footpath, Preston.

The Chairman advised that a letter would be sent before the next meeting; and that a copy would be forwarded to the Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council for information.

6 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

Lincolnshire County Council's Senior Countryside Access Officer presented the Local Access Forum with a copy of the 'Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local (Countryside) Access Forums Joint Annual Report 2012/13.

In guiding the Local Access Forum through the report, particular reference was made to:

- The Chairman's Introduction on page 11 which provided a summary of the work of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum;
- Membership of the Local Access Forums – It was highlighted that there were vacancies and that any nominees would be welcomed; and
- Forum Expenditure, full details of the costs were shown on page 17 of the agenda.

During discussion, the following issues were highlighted:-

- Motor Vehicles in the Countryside, it was noted that Mark Heaton from Lincolnshire County Council was leading on the specific matter of "The Drift" near Grantham with Natural England. It was noted further that the third Traffic Order for this route was still to go through consultation;
- Advertising of vacancies on the Local Access Forums, Members were advised that the positions were advertised on Countryside websites, and County News; and
- The effectiveness of the Rutland and Lincolnshire Local Access Forum in its current form. Some discussion took place as to whether South Lincolnshire had more in common with North Lincolnshire rather than Rutland. It was agreed that the issue of forum and membership should be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager advised that the matter would be kept under review.

The Chairman on behalf of the Local Access Forum extended thanks to the Senior Countryside Access Officer for his comprehensive report.

#### RESOLVED

That the Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local (Countryside) Access Forums Joint Annual Report 2012/13 be noted.

#### 7 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS & RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Members of the Local Access Forum were provided with updates on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in respect of Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows:-

##### (a) Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to an update report from the Public Rights of Way Officer (Rutland County Council), which was tabled at the meeting.

Members of the Local Access Forum were advised that there had been little, or no change made since the last meeting.

Members were advised of the following issues:-

- That a second officer had now been appointed;
- That the Rights of Way Improvement Plan had expired in 2012 and as the new officer settled into their role, it was hoped that work would commence on the plan;
- That currently work was being undertaken in respect of the 'Ploughing and Cropping Enforcement' policy. The new proposal involved refining the

- repeat offence definition to data received in the previous two years for any land under the same ownership; and
- The Path Prioritisation Scheme was in the process of being developed and it was hoped that this would be ready for the forum to consider at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED**

That the report and update be noted.

**(b) Lincolnshire County Council**

A report from the Lincolnshire County Council's Senior Countryside Access Officer was considered, which provided the Local Access Forum with an update on the progress made in the implementation of the Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Detailed at Appendix A was a copy of the ROWIP – Year Action Plan.

It was reported highways divisions had continued to make general improvements through improved maintenance and enforcements works. Paragraph 2 of the report provided details of works carried out during the April 2007 to April 2013.

It was also reported that Improvement Schemes had now commenced on the 2013/14 improvement programme, full details of works taking place were detailed in the report.

Members were advised that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 had been completed and would be presented to the October meeting.

The Local Access Forum was also advised that the contractor for the Highways Agency was undertaking an audit of road crossings on the A46 Lincoln to Newark and on the A1. It was highlighted that this information would help to prioritise works and discussion for improvements.

**RESOLVED**

That the report and update be noted.

**8 DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS**

The Local Access Forum were provided with updates on Definitive Map Modification Order work in respect of Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows:-

(a) Rutland County Council

A report from the Public Rights of Way Officer (Rutland County Council) was considered by the Local Access Forum, which advised that since the last meeting there had been no progress made with regard to Definitive Map Modifications Order, since the last meeting.

It was reported that the council were still waiting for the consultant's report relating to the Ketton Order.

Discussion ensued, from which reference was made the length of time taken to process Modification Orders. It was agreed that the Chairman should write a letter to the Portfolio Holder expressing the Forums concerns.

RESOLVED

That the report and updated be noted.

(b) Lincolnshire County Council

A report by the Council's Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager was considered, which detailed the progress of Definitive Map Modification Order work since the inception of the current prioritisation policy, together with an overview of current caseloads.

Appendix A to the report provided a full breakdown in relation to cases resolved and new cases received since 2006. Cases highlighted to the Local Access Forums included Anderby (Page 52); Wrangle (Page 54); and Waddington and Wickenby (Page 56).

Appendix B provided the Local Access Forum with a list of the 'Active Caseload' being dealt with by officers at Lincolnshire County Council.

It was highlighted to members of the Local Access Forum that the government had published a draft De-Regulation Bill. The Bill if adopted would enable Councils to have power to move things forward quicker, for instance, by being able to deal with irrelevant objections.

RESOLVED

That the report and update be noted.

9 PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORT

Members of the Local Access Forum were provided with updates on Public Path Order work in respect of Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council, as follows:-

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Consideration was given to an update report from the Public Rights of Way Officer (Rutland County Council), which advised the Local Access Forum about Public Path Order applications currently in Rutland County Council's system. It was highlighted the Stretton Order was due to be published on 4 July 2013; and that the Exton Order would be published next week.

## RESOLVED

That the report and updated be noted.

(b) Lincolnshire County Council

The Forum received a report by the Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager, Lincolnshire County Council, which detailed the progress of Public Path Order Work in respect of the Council's power to divert, extinguish or create public rights of way.

The Countryside Access & Definitive Map Manager reported that the current focus for work was on more strategic issues such as rails crossing diversions at Tallington, Lincoln and Whisby and also on environmental issues as at Donna Nook and wider green infrastructure projects such as the Coastal Country Park and Witham Valley Country Park.

## RESOLVED

That the report and update be noted.

10 HIGH LEVEL STEWARDSHIP

This item was introduced by John Law, who had requested its inclusion on the agenda for this meeting.

Further to Minutes number 48 of the meeting held on 10 April 2013, the Local Access Forum received an update concerning the draft document sent to Andrew MacKintosh at Natural England. Positive comments had been received advising that the report had proven to be very helpful.

It was noted that clarification with regard to funding would be known later in the year.

11 COUNTY FARM ESTATES UPDATE

Further to minute number 49 of the of the previous meeting of the Forum, John Law advised Local Access Forum members that the first sub-group meeting was due to held on Thursday 11 July 2013 and that a full report would be presented to the next meeting.

12     PLANNING APPLICATIONS

This item was introduced by John Law, who advised members that South East Lincolnshire Local Plan had missed out Public Rights of Way completely.

Discussion ensued as to the best way forward to ensure that Public Rights of Way were protected which included some the following issues:-

- When should Public Rights of Way be included on a Planning application? It was noted that officers were currently involved in the process, but it was felt that ROW could be dealt with at pre-planning stage which would mean that the Order could be done at the same time as Planning Permission was granted;
- More involvement in delegated decisions to officers;
- The need to focus on the role of the Forum and how it should link into the access issue; and
- That a Local Access Forum was not a statutory consultee.

RESOLVED

That the Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager be requested to provide information relating to the current local planning policies across Lincolnshire for the Forum to review.

13     ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised Local Access Forum members that the Local Access Forums Annual Conference was no longer going to be held, due to the cost of holding such an event. It was highlighted however, that there would be a Chairman's meeting.

Brian Bowles brought to the Local Access Forums attention the effect of the Coastal Access Path to areas such as Gibraltar Point. Some discussion took place as to the location of the path; some members felt that the path would be better if situated more inland. It was highlighted that the whole purpose of the path was to be as close to the shoreline as possible. The Countryside Access and Definitive Map Manager advised that it was rumoured that following the recent spending review announcements by the Government that Natural England were possibly looking into withdrawing funding to the coastal access path, so the location of the path might not be an issue going forward.

Further to minute number 44(i) of the meeting held on 10 April 2013, Gordon Norris enquired if the forum had any objection to John Law joining the Access Group. Local Access Forum members extended their support to John Law joining the Access Group.

Members were also advised that there were six walks that needed walking for disabled access. It was noted that members of the Access Group would be trained by Debby Braund, which would save time and money.

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Members were asked for suggestions to assist in funding the maps for the disabled paths; suggestions put forward were WREN; parish groups, Environmental Trusts, Local Lions groups and potentially the Big Society Fund if agreed by Lincolnshire County at the meeting to be held on 12 July 2013.

14     DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum be held on Wednesday 9 October 2013 at 11.00 a.m. in Sleaford.

The meeting closed at 1.12 pm