

Agenda Item 2



MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM 17 SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT:

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors D C Hoyes MBE and D McNally

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council: Councillor Iain Colquhoun

Representing Independent Members: R Shipley, C Allison, S Brookes, C Padley and R Graham

Officers: Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer) and Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Chris Padley be elected Chairman of the Forum to the annual general meeting on 22 July 2014.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Dr Chris Allison be elected Vice-Chairman of the Forum to the annual general meeting on 22 July 2014.

3 WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER - COUNTY COUNCILLOR DANIEL MCNALLY

The Chairman, on behalf of the Forum, welcomed County Councillor Daniel McNally, from Lincolnshire County Council, as a new member on the Forum.

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Healey, Pete Skipworth, Colin Smith and Irene Unsworth.

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
17 SEPTEMBER 2013**

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON 23
APRIL 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 23 April, 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the deletion of "R Shipley" in the list of attendees.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (IF NOT ALREADY ON THE
AGENDA)

7 SPA TRAIL PROPOSALS PRESENTATION

Andrew Savage stated that while there was still an aspiration to complete the Spa Trail from Woodhall Spa Town Centre to the Water Rail there were no proposals at this stage to finalise the route due to the reasons outlined at the meeting of the Forum on 23 April 2013.

8 LOCATION OF COUNTY ESTATE FARMS - MAP TO BE TABLED ON THE
DAY OF THE MEETING

(NOTE: Councillor D C Hoyes MBE requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was Chairman of the County Farms Committee, that all land owned by the Council was let on a commercial basis, that the farms were generating as much income for the County Council as possible and that all of the tenant farmers were requested to protect footpaths).

Andrew Savage circulated a map showing the location of the County Farms which, in the main, were located in the south of the county. The Forum was reminded that the South Lincs Local Access Forum had set up a Sub Group to examine opportunities to improve access.

Andrew Savage stated that work was on going in consultation with Jim Hogg, the County Council's Head of Strategic Asset Management, but it was clear there were not as many opportunities for access due to the remoteness of the farms from the public rights of way network and many of the landholdings were small.

Comments made by the Forum included that the maps circulated at the meeting were too small in scale, did not show the efforts being made to indicate access to footpaths that might exist and that the purpose of the exercise was to examine if there were any opportunities for access.

Andrew Savage stated that the overview maps were not sufficiently detailed and therefore not possible to see things in context and that it was highly unlikely that any new footpath could be created until the expiration of any tenancy agreement.

The Forum agreed that Andrew Savage would provide plans of the County's Farms' landholdings in the Mid Lincs Local Access Forum area.

RESOLVED

That Andrew Savage provide plans of the County's Farms' landholdings in the Mid Lincs Local Access Forum area.

9 PAST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chris Padley stated that the Forum was carrying out its statutory duties.

Comments made by the Forum included the difficulties of recruiting members to the Forum which seemed unusual in a large rural county like Lincolnshire. It was questioned whether this was due to the fact that people did not know the role of Local Access Forums and that there might be some merit in changing the title of them to enable the public understand their role. The Forum noted that the title of Local Access Forums had been raised at a recent meeting of the East Midlands region of Local Access Forums and it was suggested that the matter should be raised at a meeting of the East Midlands Chairs of Local Access Forums.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman raise the problems of recruitment to the Local Access Forums and whether it was possible to change their name to help the public better understand their role.

10 JOINT ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

Andrew Savage presented the Joint Annual Report for 2012/13 of the Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums.

He stated that District Councillor Sandra Harrison from East Lindsey District Council had recently been appointed to the Forum.

The Forum commented on the priorities for the year ahead including:-

1. The need for improved engagement with volunteers.
2. The need to involve uniformed organisations to clear footpaths, e.g. the scouts.
3. The need to improve the efficiency of handling legal orders.
4. The need for better engagement with District Planning Authorities. (See minute 16 of this meeting for more details of the discussion of this item)
5. A recruitment drive to increase membership of Local Access Forums and improved publicity to explain their role.

RESOLVED

That the Joint Annual Report for 2012/13 be noted and that the comments made by the Forum in connection with priorities for the year ahead be considered by officers.

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
17 SEPTEMBER 2013**

11 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Forum received a report from Nicola Hardy in connection North East Lincolnshire's Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Councillor Iain Colquhoun stated that the final advertisement for the reinstatement of footpath 72 Waltham had been done but not the actual reinstatement itself. Owing to objections received this case was likely to end up with the Secretary of State.
NOTED.

12 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Andrew Savage presented a report on progress made in implementing the Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP1) and progress with ROWIP2. There was a concentration on the improvement and promotion of footpaths in and around villages and urban areas. Aon+, the Highways Agency Contractor, were currently assessing the locations where Public Rights of Way joined and crossed the A1. It was envisaged that this would result in safety improvements at locations where public paths crossed the A1.

Andrew Savage responded to comments made by the Forum stating that the Council made use of surveys by the Ramblers to examine the performance of the maintenance of footpaths, that £80k had been allocated in the current financial year for improvements to public paths and added that various agencies carried out different roles in the maintenance of footpaths. NOTED.

13 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

The Forum received a report from Nicola Hardy on progress in connection with Definitive Map Modification Orders in North East Lincolnshire.

Councillor Iain Colquhoun referred to Bridleway No. 21, part of the local route known as the " Wanderlust Way ", which, at present, when it came to the A18 from Ashby-cum-Fenby, riders had to travel along the A18 southwards for 50 yards or so and then cross the road to pick up the on-going route to East Ravendale via Bridleway 138. As part of the RoWIP the plan was to have a direct crossing point at the end of No 21. The new section would then run along the side of the A18 to link up with 138.

He stated that he did not know what the situation was in connection with the landowner and the new route was out for consultation at the moment. NOTED.

14 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS - OCTOBER 2006 - JUNE 2013

The Forum received a report from Chris Miller in connection with progress of Definitive Map Modification Orders in Lincolnshire for the period from October 2006 to 24 June 2013.

A Member was of the view that progress in finalising Orders had stalled and questioned whether this was due to the inefficiencies in the current system rather than the lack of resources. NOTED.

15 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE PUBLIC PATHS ORDERS

The Forum received a progress report from Nicola Hardy on progress of Public Path Orders made in North East Lincolnshire. NOTED.

16 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

The Forum received a progress report from Chris Miller on Public Path Orders in Lincolnshire. It was noted that no new Orders had been made since the last meeting but that there had been few applications. NOTED.

17 TO CONSIDER THE WAY DISTRICT COUNCILS CONSULTED ON RIGHTS OF WAY PLANNING MATTERS

Chris Padley stated that he had requested this item as he was concerned about the relationship between the Local Access Forums and District Planning Authorities when it came to examining the effects of planning applications on Public Rights of Way and the views of the Forum were sought.

Comments by the Forum included:-

1. If the Forum was being asked to give advice to Planning Authorities then it would require the necessary resources to help in this process.
2. It was important that Local Access Forums were consulted about the implications of the diversion of a footpath due to a planning application. However, there was also the question of at what stage Local Forums were consulted as it was not practicable for Forums to be consulted on every planning application.
3. Lack of coordination in addressing the implications of planning applications of footpaths which led to some footpaths losing their route.
4. District Planning Authorities needed to be made aware of the existence and role of Local Access Forums which were able to give advice.
5. A representative of a planning authority should be invited to attend a meeting of the Forum.
6. It was noted that some local authorities had a good record in consulting such bodies as the Ramblers in connection with planning applications.

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
17 SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Forum agreed that District Councillor Sandra Harrison would provide an opportunity to seek her views on how best to improve communication between District Planning Authorities and Local Access Forums.

The Forum also agreed that it would be useful to seek Chris Miller's views on the best forward on this matter, at the next meeting, for example, by an approach to either East or West Lindsey Planning Authorities to seek their views.

RESOLVED

That this matter be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

18 LINCOLNSHIRE COASTAL COUNTRY PARK PROGRESS REPORT

The Forum received a report from Colin Smith and Richard Graham in connection with their attendance at a meeting of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park Task Team on 13 May 2013. The report outlined progress in the development of the Country Park. However, it was clear from the meeting that the development of footpaths in the Park seemed to be a secondary consideration. It was suggested that Richard Graham and Colin Smith should attend the next meeting of the Task Team with a proposal to form a Sub Group to examine footpaths in the Park.

The Forum welcomed developments in the Country Park and appreciated the efforts made to develop the park into a high quality venue similar to other high facilities in Norfolk.

The Forum agreed that footpaths in the area were inadequate and gave their support to Richard Graham and Colin Smith proposing the establishment of a Sub Group to examine the provision of footpaths.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Forum be noted and the Richard Graham and Colin Smith's proposal to set up a Sub Group to examine the provision of footpaths in the Country Park, be supported.

19 THE DRIFT (LINCOLNSHIRE/LEICESTERSHIRE BORDER) - LATEST SITUATION

Chris Padley referred to the latest developments in connection with "The Drift", a Green Lane and SSSI, located on the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire border. He stated that the problems in this area were generic to other areas.

He added that a Traffic Regulation Order had been put in place to restrict use of the Green Lane during the winter months to deter 4x4s because of the damage they had caused.

Chris Padley stated that this Forum had done a good job in alerting the authorities to the problems being caused.

MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
17 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Forum referred to the damage caused by 4x4s and the accompanying anti-social behaviour. Reference was made to the receipt of a letter from Mark Heaton, Traffic Engineer for the area, in connection with further consultations on the matter. NOTED.

20 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

21 January 2014 at 2pm at Market Rasen Town Council

15 April 2014 at 6pm at the County Offices, Lincoln

22 July 2014 – meet at 5.30pm for a walk around the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park and meeting proper at 6pm at Anderby Village Hall. (Kate Percival, Project Leader for the Country Park, to be invited to the walk and to the meeting).

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm

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