

Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local (Countryside) Access Forums Joint Annual Report 2013/ 14



Chairman's Introduction

South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum

Welcome to the Joint Annual Report of the Lincolnshire Local Access Forums for 2013/14.

It has been a positive year for the Forum. Meetings have proven invaluable in strengthening working relationships with the appointing authorities, Natural England and other bodies.

I would like to thank all of our members for their contribution to meetings and their excellent attendance in spite of heavy travel commitments. My thanks also to the officers of Lincolnshire and Rutland County Councils for providing advice and secretarial support throughout the year.

We continue to see the membership grow with expertise and in August we welcomed Paul Marshall to the forum to represent the needs of disabled users.

The past year has seen a great deal of activity from the forum's sub groups. The disabled access sub group has been working enthusiastically on the production of an 'Access for All' pack aimed at disabled users and families with pushchairs. I am sure that when the leaflets will provide a useful resource for countryside users in the coming years. The County Farms sub group has been examining the current provision of access on Lincolnshire's County Farms estate and the potential for providing further access. Whilst no additional routes have been created so far, this is considered to be an important area of work for members to be involved in.

Looking forward, 2014/15 promises to be a busy year. We will continue to work closely with both our local authorities and the LAF will also be involved in the development of the next Rights of Way Improvement Plans for both Lincolnshire and Rutland. These will be extremely important documents, shaping countryside access and service delivery in the challenging years ahead.

County Councillor Ray Wootten

Chair

South Lincolnshire and Rutland
Local (Countryside) Access Forum

Role and Purpose of Local Access Forums

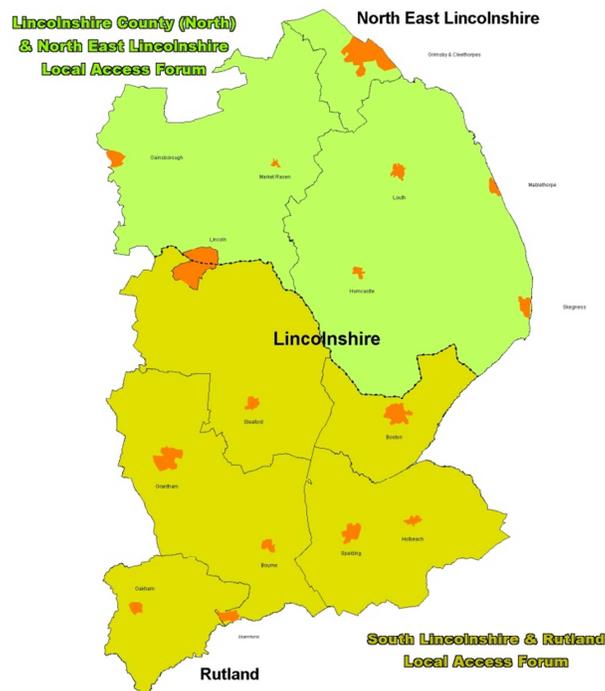
Local Access Forums (LAFs) are statutory bodies established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Two LAFs were established in 2003, covering Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Rutland. The Mid Lincolnshire LAF (Mid Lincs Forum) is a joint forum between Lincolnshire County Council and North East Lincolnshire Council. The South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF (South Lincs Forum) is a joint forum between Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council.

Lincolnshire County Council provides a secretariat service to both Local Access Forums.

Local Access Forums provide independent advice to the local authorities and other relevant bodies on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open- air recreation, in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests.

The Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums provide advice on three main areas:

- the development of recreation and access strategies which cater for a wide range of people;
- improving the rights of way network; and
- the implementation, management and review of the statutory right of access to the countryside.



Membership of Local Access Forums

Each LAF consists of up to 18 members representing a wide range of interests, including rights of way users, land managers and farmers, rural business, health, heritage, nature conservation, tourism, transport, disability groups and minority groups.

Members are appointed for up to three years and the appointing authorities are required to maintain a balance of interests on each forum.

A list of members is shown in the membership section of the Annual Report.

Changes in membership and appointments

-Mid Lincs Forum

County Councillor Eran Bauer retired from the forum in May 2013 and was replaced by County Councillor Daniel McNally in June 2013.

Sandra Harrison was appointed to the forum in September 2014 to represent the interests of horse riders.

-South Lincs Forum

Barbara Smitheringale was appointed to the forum in July 2012 to represent the interests of disabled users.

-Chair Appointments

Chris Padley was re-elected as Chair of the Mid Lincs Forum and Dr. Christopher Allison was elected as the Vice-Chair at the July Annual General Meeting. County Councillor Ray Wootten was elected as Chair of the South Lincs Forum and John Williams elected as the Vice-Chair.

Review of meetings and discussions of the past year

Meeting Details

The South Lincs and Rutland LAF held 4 full meetings during the reporting period. The Mid Lincs LAF held 3 meetings (the July meeting was cancelled as the meeting would not have been quorate). Meetings have been held at the following venues:

Mid Lincs LAF	South Lincs and Rutland LAF
23 April 2013 – Horncastle	10 April 2013 – Stamford
-	3 July 2013 – Gibraltar Point
17 September 2013 - Lincoln	9 October 2013 - Sleaford
21 January 2014 – Market Rasen	15 January 2014 – Lincoln

The average attendance rate for the Mid Lincs LAF during the reporting period was 67% and the South Lincs and Rutland LAF was 74%.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe local access forum meetings and members of the public and other interested parties who would like to raise items for consideration by the forums may do so by contacting the Secretary. Agendas and minutes can be viewed on Lincolnshire County Council's website by searching the Committee Records System at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/laf

Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP)

Lincolnshire County Council

Both forums have continued to receive updates on the implementation of the first Lincolnshire RoWIP. Improvement works have again concentrated on promoted routes, popular areas of the county and routes in the vicinity of villages and towns. Over 3km of paths have been improved during the reporting period and works have also taken place to improve the accessibility of a bridge at Saltfleet.

Progress on the development of the Second Lincolnshire RoWIP has continued throughout the year. The second ROWIP will have an increased emphasis on community involvement and partnership work as a result of the County Council's decreased capability to deliver the plan on its own.

Three broad themes have emerged for the future development of the Lincolnshire PRow network.

Theme 1 – Network Improvements

Theme 2 – Improved Customer Service

Theme 3 – Social Inclusion

The process of developing the Second RoWIP has been influenced by a number of factors including significant changes in national policy, County Council priorities and the potential for a further reduction in funding in the coming years.

It is anticipated that the Second Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be published in autumn 2014.

North East Lincolnshire Council

Particular focus has been given to addressing those routes that intersect with busy trafficked roads within the Borough, as highlighted as a Key Action within the North East Lincolnshire Council RoWIP. In this respect, working in partnership with the Casualty Reduction Officer for Humberside Police, legal orders have been made to divert sections of two key promoted routes, forming part of the Nev Cole Way and the Wanderlust Way, to provide a safer crossing point on the A18 Barton Street and remove the need for users to cross the Stallingborough Interchange which currently has no footway provision for pedestrians.

In addition, having reviewed current policies and procedures, officers have produced a new Enforcement Policy which has now been formally adopted. Having a more robust policy will enable officers to undertake necessary enforcement action using a consistent, well documented approach.

Rutland County Council

The first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Rutland was published in October 2007. Written to be a five year plan it was originally anticipated that a new plan (ROWIP2) would have been published by this time. However changes in national policy and unprecedented budget reductions affecting local government have both affected delivery of the first plan and delayed publication of its replacement, which is now expected by the end of 2014.

In the meantime the County Council continues to be guided by the existing plan and although Rutland County Council is no longer able to deliver some of the proposed improvements, maintenance projects are being prioritised that make the greatest contributions to the plans objectives. Forum members have been provided with regular updates on the delivery of the larger schemes, particularly when they have been part of a wider council project, such as the work financed by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

Motor Vehicles in the Countryside

The Mid Lincs LAF has continued to show an active interest in the use of motor vehicles in the countryside.

The Forum invited PC Nick Willey, Rural Crimes Officer, Lincolnshire Police, to discuss the issue of motor vehicles. PC Willey is the first point of contact for rural crime and is responsible for co-ordinating efforts to tackle rural issues. During the meeting the forum discussed their general concerns regarding the use of motor vehicles in the countryside by a minority 4X4 drivers and trail riders.

Members have continued to receive regular updates of the ongoing management The Drift (Sewstern Lane). In 1986 the ancient highway was registered as a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its rare and species rich calcareous grassland. A significant increase in the use of motor vehicles in recent years has led to a severe deterioration in the condition of the lane. The Mid Lincs LAF gave consideration to the outcome of a decision made by Lincolnshire County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee in December 2013, regarding the prohibition of motor vehicles on the section of the Drift extending from Denton to Skillington.

Access for the Disabled

The Disability sub group was established in 2012 to consider the needs of disabled users. The sub group has been working throughout the year on the development of a series of access for all leaflets aimed at disabled users and families with pushchairs. Funding for the leaflets has been provided by the Public Health Department, Lincolnshire County Council.

The sub group has now published (May 2014) a pack of 4 leaflets including routes at;

- Normanton, Rutland
- Exton, Rutland
- Willingham Woods, Nr Market Rasen

- Mareham Pastures, Sleaford

Each leaflet provides detailed information the route, including path surfaces, path gradients and cross-slopes, as well as the location of seats, gates and steps. Information regarding parking and on site facilities is also included. It is proposed to produce additional access for all leaflets in the coming year.

Access on the County Farms Estate

Lincolnshire County Council owns and manages an extensive County Farms estate of approximately 7,396 hectares. The estate is split into 150 individual estates and is concentrated mainly in the south east of the county.

The South Lincs and Rutland LAF established a working group to examine the current provision of access on the County Farms estate and the potential for creating additional routes.

The sub group found limited opportunities to provide additional access as many of the county farms are situated in remote areas of the county and are often isolated from the countryside access network. The group have so far identified one potential new at Boston connecting Boston Public Footpath No. 1 and Wyberton Road.

Other Topics Discussed

- Review of County Council approach to rail crossings and its relationship with Network Rail.
- The way District Councils consult on applications involving public rights of way
- Travel4Rutland Project
- The East Midlands LAF Chairs meeting
- The provision of information relating to unavailable public rights of way
- The Lincoln Eastern Bypass – Public Inquiry

Presentations

The Mid Lincs and LAF received two presentations during the reporting period;

- PC Nick Willey, Rural Crimes Officer, Lincolnshire Police, regarding the use of motor vehicles in the countryside.
- Andy Jee, Lincolnshire Waterways project manager regarding Spa Trail proposals.

The South Lincs and Rutland LAF also received two presentations during the reporting period;

- Phil Garner, Health Improvement Principal, Public Health, Lincolnshire County Council, regarding the role of the public health department.
- Fiona Taylor, Natural England providing a Natural England access update.

Forum Expenditure

Mid Lincs Forum

Democratic Services support	£1,200.00
Member travel expenses	£ 152.00
Total	£1,352.00

South Lincs and Rutland Forum

Democratic Services support	£1,200.00
Member travel expenses	£1,284.23
Sub Total	£2,484.23
Total	£3,836.23

Membership

Mid Lincolnshire Local (Countryside) Access Forum		
Name	Area of Interest	End Date of Appointment
Sheila Brookes	Carriage driving	July 2015
Alison Healey	Land Management/ Horse riding, Health	July 2015
Christopher Padley	Walking, Cycling	July 2014
Raymond Shipley	Conservation/ Game keeping	July 2016
Peter Skipworth	Walking, Conservation, Tourism	July 2014
Irene Unsworth	Farming, Rural Business	July 2014
Dr. Christopher Allison	Walking	July 2015
Colin Smith	Walking, Health Walking	July 2014
Richard Graham	Health Walking, Walking	July 2015
Sandra Harrison (3)	Horse riding	Sept 2016
Councillor IB Colquhoun	Local Authority Representative	n/a
Councillor E. N. Bauer (1)	Local Authority Representative	n/a
Councillor D. C. Hoyes	Local Authority Representative	n/a
Councillor D. McNally (2)	Local Authority Representative	n/a

- (1) Cllr Eran Bauer retired from the forum in May 2013
 (2) Cllr Daniel McNally appointed to the forum in June 2013
 (3) Sandra Harrison appointed to the forum September 2013

South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local (Countryside) Access Forum		
Name	Area of Interest	End Date of Appointment
Bryan Bowles	Farming / Land Management	July 2015
Rosemary Harris	Landowner, Local History	July 2016
Barbara Smitheringale	Walking, tourism	July 2015
Audrey Morley	Farming, Horse Riding	July 2015
William Cross	Land Management	July 2014
Alec Hill	Recreational Motoring	July 2016
Gordon Norris	Walking, Access for people with disabilities	July 2015
Alan Gibbon	Walking	July 2014
John Williams	Walking	July 2015
John Law	Other Interests	July 2014
Ian Cox	Countryside Management	July 2015
Paul Marshall (1)	Disabled Access	August 2016
Councillor B. Montgomery	Local Authority Representative	n/a
Councillor R. Wootten	Local Authority Representative	n/a
Councillor D. Brailsford	Local Authority Representative	n/a

(1) Paul Marshall appointed to the forum in August 2013

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Further information about the work of the Local Access Forums is available at
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/countryside