



**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND
RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
16 APRIL 2014**

PRESENT: R WOOTTEN (CHAIRMAN)

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillor D Brailsford

Representing Rutland County Council: Councillor Brian Montgomery

Representing Independent Members: Mr I Cox, Mr A Gibbon, Mrs R Harris, Mr A Hill, Mr J Law, Mr P Marshall, Mrs A Morley and Mr J Williams

Officers: Stuart Crook (Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council); Judith Gilbert (Democratic Services Officer, Lincolnshire County Council) and Andy Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer, Lincolnshire County Council)

Vicky Allen (Leicestershire and Rutland Bridleways Association); Amanda Jenkins (South Lincolnshire Fenlands Project Officer); Alex Pyper (British Horse Society) and Fiona Taylor (Natural England).

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Bryan Bowles, Barbara Smitheringale, Audrey Morley (Independent Members) and Chris Miller (Lincolnshire County Council).

38 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 January 2014 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 34 – correction of spelling of "Greetham" and "Thistleton"

39 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

At this point in the meeting the Chairman introduced and accepted presentations from Amanda Jenkins, South Lincolnshire Fenlands Project Officer and Fiona Taylor, Natural England.

Presentation from South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership

The Forum was informed that the South Lincolnshire Fenlands Partnership was actively working to promote the enhancement and re-creation of an iconic fenland

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landscape and its wildlife within highly productive and important Lincolnshire farmlands. Their aim was to recreate fenland and other wetlands centred on the nature reserves of Baston, Thurlby and Willow Tree Fen near Bourne to benefit both people and wildlife. As part of the fenland recreation and restoration the Partnership would be

- Extending and improving access to our green spaces for visitors, tourists and local communities
- Protecting and enhancing the fenlands environmental, archaeological and historic heritage
- Enhancing the areas unique and iconic fen landscape
- Creating space for wildlife
- Investigating efficient water management in the area
- Promoting environment and business within local communities; and
- Developing ways to adapt to and reduce the impacts of climate change

The Forum was invited to submit comments and ideas regarding this Project and it was noted that the Partnership had made contact with staff from Lincolnshire County Council as well as a number of other Bodies in the County. The Forum was informed that the Partnership had been ongoing for around ten years.

Natural England Update

The Forum received a presentation from the East of England Grants Officer who explained that the project was trying to gain external funding for improvements to access in the Rutland and Lincolnshire areas and hoped that a small working group could help with this work. It was agreed that information on the project be forwarded to the Chairman and John Law and Brian Montgomery would help to co-ordinate a working group.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman circulated a leaflet to the Forum giving details of the Wolds Walking Festival which would be taking place between the 17 May 2014 and 1 June 2014.

The Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Bridleways Association expressed concern at the lack of cross boundary communication between Highways/Rights of Way bodies. The Chairman agreed to raise this issue with Lincolnshire County Council Highways in order to ensure that the Leicestershire and Rutland Bridleways Association were kept fully informed of any changes to bridle routes which would affect them.

It was noted that a letter was still to be sent to the Lincolnshire Wolds Office inviting them to attend a meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum.

RESOLVED

That the verbal reports be noted.

40 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS & RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
UPDATE

The Forum received the following information.

41 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Stuart Crook, Rutland County Council reported that the Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan had not yet started due to other work priorities being set for him. It was hoped that an update of the Plan would be available at the next meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED

That this information be noted.

42 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Andy Savage, Lincolnshire County Council, informed the Forum that the Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan was in the very early stages of planning and confirmed that it had been included in the 2014/2015 budget proposals. It was hoped that there would be a programme of improvement schemes announced during the summer months.

RESOLVED

That the information be noted.

43 DRAFT LINCOLNSHIRE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014 -
2019

Consideration was given to The Draft Lincolnshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2014 – 2019 which provided the Forum with the following:

- Legislative Framework
- Regional and National Policy
- LCC Organisational Strategy
- Local Transport Plan 4
- Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan
- Green Infrastructure Plans and Strategies
- Different Users and their needs
- Network Analysis
- Review of the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 – Stakeholder Consultation

It was noted that the overall vision for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 was split into three themes, namely:

Theme 1

- Network Improvements which would involve
 - Infrastructure Improvements
 - Enforcement
 - Safety
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Unclassified County Roads
 - Planning Context

Theme 2

- Improved Customer Service which would involve
 - Reporting
 - Mapping of Public Rights of Way
 - Technology
 - Customer Focussed Policies and Working Practices
 - Information Provision

Theme 3

- Social Inclusion which would involve
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Community Involvement
 - Parish Councils
 - Health Agenda

The Forum was given an opportunity to ask questions relating to the Draft Report presented and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Figures for motor vehicles off-roading needed to be included in the report;
- Rights of Way budget likely to be reduced in future years;
- Rural Payments Authority were tightening up their process and landowners were not now automatically receiving their full rural payment entitlements if enforcement action had been taken against them;
- The Rural Payments Authority process was likely to change in the near future;
- Increased heavy traffic was noted in Leasingham due to the development of an anaerobic digester in the area;
- Lincolnshire County Council would be working with Network Rail to address safety concerns over rail crossings;
- A single mapping layer of all unsurfaced roads in the County was going to be produced;
- Lincolnshire County Council would work closely with Developers to maximise opportunities for improved access in proposed developments;
- Concern was expressed that no resolution dates were being given to complainants who had reported Rights of Way issues although it was

- acknowledged where the complaint related to an enforcement issue, this may be resolved naturally – ie after harvest, ploughing etc;
- It was noted that the Countryside Microsite was being currently revamped and incorporated into the main Lincolnshire County Council website;
 - The Countryside Access Map needed to be more reliable as it often broke down;
 - Cross boundary issues should be identified;
 - There was no set national standard relating to Rights of Way mapping although it was noted that one private company was looking at incorporating all Rights of Way mapping into one database;
 - Rights of Way needed to be made more accessible to users and the disabled;
 - Volunteer groups were being used to assist in the management of the Rights of Way network and this was likely to continue in the future as budgets for Rights of Way were likely to be reduced further;
 - Ramblers' Association had undertaken condition surveys on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council;
 - The County Council would be considering how to improve the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme;
 - Rights of Way were currently part of the Health and Wellbeing Agenda and needed to be improved in order to encourage people to exercise;
 - Needed to look more widely at our key partners in order to secure funding;
 - It was suggested that young people in local schools, officer cadets, and disadvantaged young people could help maintain and improve the countryside. Youngsters would gain extra knowledge from this activity plus there was a minimal cost implication to Lincolnshire County Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

44 DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

The Forum received the information as outlined below which related to the Definitive Map Modification Orders.

45 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Stuart Crook, Rutland County Council, reported that Wardley B79 had been declined. There were four Definitive Map Modification Orders outstanding namely, Barbers Lane (Preston), Braunston, Thorpe-by-Water and Oakham.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

46 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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The Forum received a report on the progress of Lincolnshire County Council's Definitive Map Modification Orders.

There were currently two cases which had been submitted to the Secretary of State namely, Waddington RB 10 and Saltfleet/Skidbrooke public bridleway from Sea View to Gowts Farm. It was noted for the latter a Public Inquiry was due to be held on the 16 September 2014.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

47 PUBLIC PATH ORDERS PROGRESS REPORT

The Forum received the information as outlined below which related to the progress of Public Path Orders.

48 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Stuart Crook, Rutland County Council presented an update to the Forum which outlined the current position with regard to Public Path Orders made. It was noted that there were eight outstanding Orders with three waiting for the Order to be drafted. It was noted that Uppingham E307 was still waiting to be referred to the Planning Inspectorate and that concurrent creation extinguishment orders had been for the proposed bridleway creation at Egleton.

49 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Andy Savage, Lincolnshire County Council presented to the Forum an update on the current situation with regard to the progress of Public Path Orders. It was noted that nine applications had been received since 1 April 2013, five of which were applications to have paths diverted. Requests for footpath extinguishments had been made in the villages of Ewerby, Little Hale, Spilsby and Londonthorpe.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

50 NETWORK RAIL

The Forum received an update from John Law, Forum Member, asking for an updated position with regard to Rights of Way in close proximity of railway lines. Andy Savage, Lincolnshire County Council, stated that the County Council was currently working with Network Rail on three public path diversion proposals at Lincoln, Claypole and Tallington.

RESOLVED

That a representative from Network Rail be invited to a future meeting in order to give the Forum a full update.

51 RUTLAND WATER BRIDLEWAY ACCESS

The Forum received a report from Rosemary Harris, Forum Member, which requested use of the Manton – Egleton cycle track as a bridleway. It was noted that the cycle track from the A6003 to the bird watching centre at Egleton was suitable for immediate use by horse riders. It was also noted that this track was well screened from Rutland Water along its entire length of approximately one mile and an access to this route for horseriders would link the communities of Manton, Gunthorpe, Egleton and Brooke without the need for horseriders to use busy and dangerous parts of the A6003. It was reported that there would be no problem with access issues as the cycle track was a vehicle-width track with additional space on either side. Photographic evidence was shown to the Forum for information.

The Forum noted that approaches had been made to Rutland County Council previously in order for an access link to be made available for horseriders without success. Approaches had been made to Rutland Water and the Anglian Water Authority also but the British Horse Society felt that permission had not been given due to advice being received by authorities from Natural England having concern over the bird population in the area and health and safety issues concerning the simultaneous use of bikes and horses. It was noted that the Rutland Water Partnership had also been approached regarding access for horses. It was observed that the landowner had legal obligation to protect sites from certain activities which could have a detrimental effect on wildlife in the area.

(Mrs Audrey Morley joined the meeting at 7.15 pm)

It was noted that in the vicinity of Rutland Water there were four footpaths and two bridleways which, to date, had not yet been officially linked although permits for horseriding were available in areas of the Hambleton peninsula.

The Forum was reminded that an invitation had been extended in the past for Anglian Water to attend the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum meeting an invitation which had been declined.

It was noted that Rutland County Council had completed a survey of public footpaths and bridleways in the area of Manton/Egleton and it was agreed that this information be shared with the British Horse Society.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That this item be discussed at the next meeting.

52 DISABILITY SUB-GROUP UPDATE

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John Law, Disability Sub-Group Member, reported that Willingham Woods walks had progressed well and were now completed and there were two leaflets promoting these walks currently with the printer and would be available shortly for distribution. It was noted that information on walks around Willingham Woods would be promoted in the next edition of County News and the Disability Sub-Group were looking for ideas from Forum Members on how these walks could be promoted more widely in the next few months.

It was noted that the Rutland Water and Exton walks were currently on target for completion.

Walk at Gibraltar Point entitled "Destruction by Waves" progressing well. It was also indicated that Rutland County Council were liaising with two landowners over possible routes in this area.

It was noted that a workshop had been held in Durham and 25 delegates attended from Disability Awareness Groups throughout the Country and they were encouraged at the work undertaken in connection with walks suitable for the disabled.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update be noted.

53 TRAVEL4RUTLAND PROJECT UPDATE

Stuart Crook, Public Rights of Way Officer, Rutland County Council reported that construction of the following cycle tracks had now been completed:-

- Greetham
- Oakham/Ashwell
- Uppingham/Lyddington

The cycle tracks potentially being constructed in the current financial year were shown on a plan presented to the Forum. However, not all those shown on the plan would be built and the final decision on which routes would be supported would be taken by Rutland County Council Cabinet in May.

It was noted that the application for Egleton Road received an objection so had not been completed.

Stuart Crook agreed to circulate information on the above to members for the Forum.

54 EAST MIDLANDS CHAIRS MEETING FEEDBACK

John Law, Forum Member, reported that he had given feedback to the East Midlands Chairs Meeting with regard to the Lincolnshire Wolds Walking Festival and the Durham Conference. It was noted that the Fieldfare Trust had invited John Law to assist them with editing photographs of the trails as well as checking routes prior to them being used.

At this point in the meeting Paul Marshall expressed concern at the amount of sand which had blown onto the Skegness foreshore which was hindering wheelchairs and scooter users from accessing the foreshore.

Concern was also expressed at the length of time it would take in allocating Skegness – Claimed Public Footpath along Sea Bank adjacent to North Shore Golf Course to an officer on the Definitive Map team.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

55 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the following future meetings would take place

Wednesday 9 July 2014 – 6 pm – County Offices, Lincoln – (Annual General Meeting)

Wednesday 8 October 2014 – 6 pm – South Kesteven District Council Offices, Grantham

The Forum asked that they be informed of any changes to these dates as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.43 pm