

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS
FORUM
22 JULY 2014**

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillor D McNally

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council: None present

Representing Independent Members: Chris Allison, Sandra Harrison, Ray Shipley, Colin Smith and Richard Graham

Officers: Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Chris Miller (Countryside Access Manager), Kate Percival (Environmental Services Senior Officer, Strategy and Partnerships) and Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer)

1 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO THE FORUM

Questions asked by members of the public of the Forum prior to the formal business on the agenda included:-

1. What was the latest situation in connection with the High Level Stewardship scheme?
2. What was being done to improve public access in the Huttoft area and on the east coast?
3. When problems of public access were reported there was a lack of action by the County Council.
4. What responsibility had farmers to maintain public access across their land?
5. What was the law in connection with bulls in fields where there was public access?
6. Was it possible to use private finance to fund the cost of repairing or refurbishing new bridges?

Responses to the questions asked by the public included:-

1. The financing of Permissive Paths would be considered at the next meeting of the Forum. With regard to the High Level Stewardship scheme because of EU rules the British Government was not allowed to allocate funds for the scheme and schemes up for renewal would not be renewed.
2. Public access on the east coast had been a problem for some time due to neglect and lack of enforcement. This was one of the outcomes of the Public Rights of Way Survey conducted for the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park. It was hoped in the future to increase funding to deal with complaints and access issues but this issue would take some time to address.
3. The system of reporting and responding to complaints at the Council was explained.

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
22 JULY 2014**

4. Farmers had a responsibility to maintain public access across their land. Reports of inaccessible routes across agricultural land were investigated and the necessary enforcement action taken by the County Council.
5. Laws existed in connection with bulls in fields.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Chris Padley be appointed Chairman of the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum for the ensuing year.

3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

As no member of the Forum put their name forward to serve as Vice-Chairman it was agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting. NOTED.

4 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I Colquhoun, Mrs A Healey and Pete Skipworth.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FORUM HELD ON 15
APRIL 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 15 April 2014, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 PAST CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman stated that he had nothing to report on this item and that members were well aware of issues raised and discussed at meetings of the Forum during the past year.

8 LINCOLNSHIRE COASTAL COUNTRY PARK - PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
SURVEY

The Forum received a report which provided a summary of the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park Public Rights of Way Survey carried out in late January and early February 2014. The purpose of the survey was to provide a detailed assessment of the condition of the network and identify any potential improvements. The overall pass rate for public access in the Coastal Country Park was 46.22% compared to

MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
22 JULY 2014

71.98% for the 2013 county wide survey. The majority of the routes in the Country Park had failed for more than one reason and these were detailed in the report.

Responses to comments made by the Forum included:-

1. Routes of public access in the Country Park footpath had been examined in their entirety.
2. An action plan was being prepared to examine circular routes in the Country Park and the public and Parish Councils would be consulted.
3. A Task Group had been established to examine access and recreation in the Country Park and there was an Advisory Panel which met once a year and consulted with the Parish Councils about public access issues.
4. Following the results of the survey additional funding for two more bridges had been obtained.
5. It was proposed to appoint a specialist to progress matters in the Country Park.
6. The minutes of the Task Group to examine access would be made available on the County Council's website.
7. Improvements to public access to enable people to walk to local facilities were being examined.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Forum be noted and taken into consideration in improvements to public access in the Country Park.

9 JOINT ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Forum received its Joint Annual Report for 2013/14 which covered the geographical areas of both the Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums.

Responses to comments made by the Forum included:-

1. Every effort was made by the County Council to try and fill vacancies on the Forum including through the use of the County News and the Council's website.
2. Getting landowners appointed as members on the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum was an issue.
3. With regard to priorities for the year ahead only Sandra Harrison had submitted comments and her comment about the need for the training of Parish and Town Councillors about public access was the most relevant.
4. When new County Councillors were elected they were given an opportunity to attend training sessions on public access.
5. The most useful contact points were Parish Clerks for the dissemination of information.
6. The Forums' role in advising Councils about footpaths.
7. Owing to a reduction in resources to maintain public access in recent years it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Council to maintain all footpaths.
8. 120 volunteers helped to maintain footpaths and there were 90 Parish Council partnerships.

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
22 JULY 2014**

9. Land owners and farmers were already involved in the maintenance of public access and more could be done with additional resources.

The Forum supported the suggestion that the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils should be used as a conduit to train new Parish and Town Councillors about public access issues.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Joint Annual Report 2013/14 be approved.

(b) That the suggestion to use Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils as a conduit to train new Parish and Town Councillors about public access issues, be supported.

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

The Forum received a report from North East Lincolnshire Council in connection with their Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Forum welcomed the Council's efforts to improve access and make crossings for pedestrians safer in their area.

RESOLVED

That a letter be sent to North East Lincolnshire Council thanking them for their efforts to improve access and make crossings safer for pedestrians in their area.

11 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Forum received a report from Lincolnshire County Council outlining progress made in the implementation of their Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Officers stated that the emphasis of ROWIP 1 had been on making improvements to public access in urban areas.

Leaflets about walks in the Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park were circulated.

ROWIP 2 was still being prepared and consulted upon and would not be finalised until the end of September 2014.

Officers agreed to investigate putting information about routine maintenance in a separate report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE PROGRESS OF DEFINITIVE MAP
MODIFICATION ORDERS

The Forum received a report from North East Lincolnshire Council in connection with progress of their Definitive Map Modification Orders. NOTED.

13 PROGRESS OF DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS WORK
FROM OCTOBER 2006 - 20TH JUNE 2014

The Forum received a report from Lincolnshire County Council in connection with progress of their Definitive Map Modification Order work from October 2006 to 20 June 2014.

A request to prioritise a Definitive Map Modification Order had been received in connection with a claimed footpath between Homeyard Farm and Hermitage Farm in the Glentworth/Harpswell area. NOTED.

14 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE PROGRESS OF PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

The Forum received a report from North East Lincolnshire Council in connection with progress of their Public Path Orders. NOTED.

15 LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PROGRESS OF PUBLIC PATH
ORDERS

The Forum received a report from Lincolnshire County Council in connection with the progress of Public Path Orders in their area.

Officers informed the Forum that a Public Inquiry in connection with the closure of the public access at Ballast Hole, Lincoln was due to be held in February 2015.

The Forum expressed concern that Network Rail might be closing public access across railway lines for their own convenience and it was agreed to have this item on the agenda for future meetings.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report be noted.

(b) That public access across railway lines be added to the agenda for consideration at future meetings.

16 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FORUM

RESOLVED

**MID-LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
22 JULY 2014**

That the next meeting of the Forum be arranged for 2pm on Tuesday 28 October 2014 at a venue to be decided within North East Lincolnshire. If possible, it was hoped to include a viewing of one or more of locations where the North East Lincolnshire Council was seeking to improve safety of bridleway/main road crossings with diversion and creation orders.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm