

**REPORT REFERENCE:- 2.0**

(Meeting held at South Kesteven District Council Offices, Grantham)

**PRESENT:**

Representing Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors David Brailsford and Ray Wootten.

Representing Rutland County Council: Councillor Brian Montgomery.

Representing Independent Members: Bryan Bowles, Ian Cox, John Law, Alan Gibbon, Rosemary Harris, Alec Hill, Audrey Morely, Gordon Norris, Barbara Smitheringale and John Williams.

Officers: Cheryl Hall (Democratic Services Officer, Lincolnshire County Council), Chris Miller (Countryside Access Manager, Lincolnshire County Council), Andrew Savage (Senior Countryside Access Officer, Lincolnshire County Council).

Also in attendance: Elizabeth Barnicott (Natural England).

1. ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ray Wootten be elected as Temporary Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum, for this meeting only.

**COUNCILLOR RAY 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 2012/2013 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from George Keeping and William Cross.

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
4 JULY 2012**

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2012

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum held on 18 April 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to 'and questions' being removed from the second paragraph on page four of the minutes.

5. COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

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

i) Lincolnshire County Council

A report by 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 Lincolnshire Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Appended to the report were the Countryside Access and Rights of Way Improvement Plan Action Plan and a Consultation Letter.

The Improvement Plan split into four key themes, as follows: -

- sustainable transport;
- health and wellbeing;
- rural economy and tourism;
- social issues.

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted: -

- The Lindsey Trail had formerly been opened by Edward Leigh, MP, at a ceremony at Market Rasen Race Course on Saturday, 16 June 2012;
- The consultation exercises for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 was due to commence on 16 July 2012, for a period of 12 weeks. A copy of the consultation letter was appended to the report;
- It was queried whether where target dates had slipped, whether a revised date could be included within the Action Plan;
- Definitive map modification applications could be accessed on Lincolnshire County Council's website.

ii) Rutland County Council

A report by Rutland County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer was considered, which provided an updated version of the action plan for the current Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6. MID LINCOLNSHIRE AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS – JOINT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

Lincolnshire County Council's Senior Countryside Access Officer presented the Joint Annual Report 2011/12 for both the Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums. It was noted that there was a need to complete a pro-forma from Natural England in connection with the work of the Local Access Forums, which had to be completed by the end of October 2012. The Forum agreed to consider the completion of the pro-forma at the next meeting of the Forum.

Elizabeth Barnicott, Natural England, provided an update, together with a presentation, on "Paths for Communities Project". She responded to comments from Members adding that questions posed by an application would be highlighted on the Natural England's website (<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/rightsofway/p4c.aspx>).

It was queried how this Project had been publicised to members of the public. Further to this, it was suggested that information in relation to the Project should be detailed in the next issue of Lincolnshire County Council's 'County News' and it was agreed that this possibility would be explored. It was noted that a flyer, which provided information on the Project, had been emailed to all parish councils. It was suggested that a copy of the flyer was emailed to the Rutland County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer for distribution to parish councils located within the County of Rutland.

RESOLVED

That the Mid Lincolnshire and South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forums – Joint Annual Report 2011/12 be noted.

4

**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
4 JULY 2012**

7. DEPARTMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
CONSULTATION – “IMPROVEMENTS TO THE POLICY AND LEGAL  
FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY”

The Countryside Access Manager, Lincolnshire County Council, presented details of a consultation document from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in connection with improvements to the Policy and Legal Framework for Public Rights of Way. The deadline for responses was 6 August 2012. Accompanying the consultation documentation was a response already submitted by the Leicestershire Local Access Forum.

John Law volunteered at the meeting to coordinate the Forum’s response to the consultation document and he requested that comments were emailed to him by Wednesday, 18 July 2012. It was suggested that Leicestershire Local Access Forum’s response was used as a starting point.

RESOLVED

That Members of the Forum be requested to email any comments on the consultation document to John Law.

8. LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION – “LOCAL TRANSPORT  
PLAN”

The Countryside Access Manager, Lincolnshire County Council, presented details of a Lincolnshire County Council Consultation, entitled “Working Towards the 4<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan”. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 27 July 2012.

It was requested whether the consultation deadline could be extended to allow sufficient time for the Forum to form a response and it was also requested whether the consultation questions could be emailed to the Forum as part of an excel spread sheet, so an average of the responses could be formulated. The Countryside Access Manager agreed to explore this possibility.

RESOLVED

That the Countryside Access Manager be requested to explore the possibility of an extension to the consultation deadline and an excel spread sheet being produced and emailed to the Forum for completion.

9. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

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

i) Lincolnshire County Council

The Forum received a report by the Countryside Access 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 either of its own volition or following an application to do so from the public.

The Countryside Access Manager reported that Network Rail had contacted the County Council regarding level crossings, in terms of potentially closing or diverting Public Rights of Way. This would take up a significant amount of officer time in a team that was already significantly restricted following cuts in national funding and the implementation of the local core offer.

ii) Rutland County Council

Consideration was given to an update report on those Public Path Order applications currently in Rutland County Council's system.

RESOLVED

That the report and update be noted.

10. DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDERS

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

i) Lincolnshire County Council

A report by the Council's Countryside Access 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.

ii) Rutland County Council

An update report on those Definitive Map Modification Order applications currently in Rutland County Council's system was considered.

**6**  
**SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND RUTLAND**  
**LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**  
**4 JULY 2012**

RESOLVED

That the report and update be noted.

11. HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

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

Further to minute number 42 of the previous meeting of the Forum, Members were provided with an opportunity to comment on the wording of a News Release and Advice Note regarding Higher Level Stewardship Schemes. It was noted that the Mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum had requested at its meeting on 3 July 2012, that a joint News Release was issued from both Forums. Members of the Forum supported this suggestion.

It was agreed that there should be contact details for representation of both Rutland County Council and Lincolnshire County Council on the documentation. Further to this, John Williams volunteered to have his name listed from a Rutland's perspective and Councillor Ray Wootten volunteered from a Lincolnshire perspective.

It was queried whether mention should be made to the 'Paths for Communities Project' in the News Release and it was subsequently agreed that this should be separated from the Higher Level Stewardship Schemes, to avoid any potential confusion.

RESOLVED

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the suggested amendments/additions be made to the News Release.

12. CROPPING AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

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

The Forum was advised that there had, on several occasions, been public rights of way that had been blocked by farmer's crops and therefore members of the public being unable to use them. The process for reporting blocked public rights of way to the County Council was explained to the Forum in detail.

In answer to a question, Members were advised that there had not been any prosecutions made in the last five years. It was noted that the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transport was due to sign a decision on 16 July 2012 in relation to the

Revision of Public Rights of Way Enforcement Policy and Associated Officer Guidance Notes.

It was noted that the National Farmers' Union publicised the importance of adhering to the Public Rights of Way requirements in its publications.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

13. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Further to the Election of a Temporary Chairman, minute number 1 as above refers, Councillor Ray Wootten agreed to act as Chairman for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ray Wootten be elected as Chairman of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum for the 2012/2013 municipal year.

14. DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum be held on 10 October 2012 at 6.30 p.m. in Rutland.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.