

# Agenda Item 8

**East Midlands LAF Chairs Meeting  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Lincolnshire County Council Offices, Lincoln  
Notes of the meeting**

**Attendees:**

John Law, South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF – Chair for the meeting  
Hugh McClintock, Nottingham City LAF  
Terry Howard, Peak District LAF  
Chris Padley, Mid Lincolnshire LAF  
Terry Kirby, Leicestershire LAF  
Peter Hiley, Nottinghamshire LAF  
Bob Eglinton, Leicester City LAF  
Phil Robinson, Natural England  
Jane Barrett, Natural England  
Kristina Gould, Natural England  
Mandy Sims, East Midlands LAF Co-ordinator

**Apologies:**

Ray Wootten, South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF  
Edwina Edwards, Peak District LAF  
John Disney, Derby & Derbyshire LAF  
David Lyne, Leicester City LAF  
Mary Mills, Nottinghamshire LAF  
Northamptonshire LAF

Thanks to hosts, Rutland & South Lincs. LAF, and in particular, Andrea Brown of Lincolnshire County Council.

**1. Welcome and introductions**

John welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made.

**2. Minutes and matters arising**

The minutes from the October 2014 meeting were approved as a true record.

**Matters arising**

Approaches to LEPs and LNPs – picked up in Natural England update

Problems with Modification order process – Mandy fed back Lyndsay's update to the effect that she has received a few responses so far and intends to give a little further time before preparing a further report with perhaps some helpful suggestions.

Experience of Huddle – Chris commented that he and others find it unintuitive to use and many agreed. Mandy suggested 'picking and choosing' what you want from it rather than being intimidated by the whole thing.

**Action: Suggestion for possibly further training – to be taken forward to next meeting**

Deregulation Bill – Terry H concerned that the supposed changes to make claims for Lost Ways etc, easier to make are still not clear at this stage. Chris commented that it really needs a single person who understands it and can write well to send round a simple explanation, ideally at the stage where the contents of the Bill look set and then when the Bill has taken effect.

**Action: Phil to ask colleagues at NE (Andy Macintosh) if this can be provided.**

### **3. Update from Natural England**

#### **Phil began the update:**

Loss of Regional Coordinator posts – Phil explained that, in spite of this loss, NE's remit on LAFs remains the same and he hopes that most of the RC work will continue, though thinks that it may be different from region to region.

A likely change will be that the LAFs may have to take more responsibility for the Regional Meetings: providing a venue (as usual), organising an agenda, taking notes etc. Phil confirmed that it would be unusual for a local contact to attend local LAF meetings but would be happy to attend if invited for a specific reason.

Kristina confirmed that she will be taking over the lead contact for most of the East Midlands LAFs, with Jane probably remaining the contact for Northamptonshire, and a question over Fiona 'keeping' South Lincs and Rutland. (John commented that the LAF would like to 'keep' Fiona.)

Kristina expressed positivity about taking things forward regarding coordination with LAFs. She said that NE could offer venues for Regional Meetings at its offices in Nottingham and Lincoln.

Jane explained that her area includes Bedfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

Contacting LEPs and LNPs – Phil confirmed that NE will be sending a letter to LNPs explaining how LAFs work, encouraging LNPs to work in partnership with them.

There was some discussion about the work of LEPs (to boost economic growth) and LNPs (to develop a framework for environmental orgs working cohesively)

Hugh commented that it would be good to see case studies where LAFs have influenced LNPs. Chris commented that putting effort into LNPs seems not such a good place as into the Health Agenda, which perhaps has more synergy with LAFs. Peter remarked that he had attended an inaugural LNP meeting in the area and all participating bodies had been expected to contribute a sum of money, which had put the LAF off.

Phil summarised that NE advice is for LAFs to do what they can in approaching LNPs and use this as a springboard for influencing LEPs

Coastal path – There is £5 million over 5 years allocated to this project and have been internal changes in NE to help deliver this.

Chris was concerned that those delivering this are in good communication with local groups (not just LAFs) e.g. a countryside park on the coast in Lincs. Phil replied that he was very confident that that good communication would happen. Terry H concerned about certain land where, under HLS, permission has been granted to replace like fence for like, but the fence erected has restricted access. Phil confirmed that any issues like these should be reported and NE would be pleased to be informed.

Phil confirmed that under HLS land managers are instructed to consult LAFs (though this does not always happen).

John commented that Leicestershire LAF is looking at all open access areas for any issues of non-compliance and these are being reported to Highways authority.

Kristina confirmed that NE are pleased to be advised by LAFs on matters and she can be a point of contact, redirecting calls to the right people where necessary.

Paths For Communities – the final report is on Huddle

#### **4. Update from Regional Coordinator**

Mandy confirmed that, in regards to future contact:

All national matters or anything to do with Huddle – contact [Rob.Leek@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Rob.Leek@naturalengland.org.uk)

All other matters – contact Local Contact (Kristina, Jane or Fiona) but cc Rob Leek in

#### **Natural England contacts are as follows (at present – this may change):**

Fiona Taylor – South Lincs. and Rutland LAF – as before ([fiona.taylor2@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:fiona.taylor2@naturalengland.org.uk))

Kristina Gould – Leicester City, Leicestershire, Derby & Derbyshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Peak District, Mid-Lincolnshire LAFs ([kristina.gould@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:kristina.gould@naturalengland.org.uk))

Jane Barrett – Northamptonshire LAF ([jane.barrett@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:jane.barrett@naturalengland.org.uk))

LAF Toolkit – a very useful and developing collection of ‘guidance’ for LAFs – on Huddle

Annual Review Form 2014/15 – as a reminder, the deadline for completing this is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and should either be sent to Rob Leek, or uploaded to Huddle (with a note to Rob).

#### **5. Future of public access in Stewardship schemes**

John reported that the West and Mid-Berkshire LAF wrote to Dan Rogerson (Parliamentary Under Secretary for water, food, Rural Affairs and Resources Management) expressing concern about funding for permissive access ceasing in 2020, as they felt they had a lot of routes to deal with. The letter and response are on Huddle.

The Chair of the LAF and John have agreed to talk to their LAFs and, if keen, to produce a discussion document on this matter. East Mids LAFs may receive info about this in the future.

#### **6. Network Rail’s railway crossing diversions / closures and the LAF response**

Chris expressed that there are problems with this in Lincolnshire and was interested to hear whether people experiencing problems around the region. He has found National Rail to be mostly very reasonable when looking for a solution to a level crossing closure. However, a recent court case concerning one such closure has been very hostile and unreasonable. Others commented that National Rail seem to be being reasonable on the whole.

Chris noted that National Rail seem happy to spend money where needed, and wanted all to be aware that NR’s long-term goal is to close all level crossings – perhaps not always appropriate?

#### **7. Lost Ways**

John presented this item. The 2 Lincolnshire LAFs in the region have joined together to look at this subject. Interested to know other LAFs ways of tackling it.

Cross-working between South lincs and Rutland, Mid-Lincs, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Nott City, Derby & Derbyshire (unsure in Leicester City)

In Leicestershire, Stan Warren and sub-group are doing a lot of work, researching and planning a course of action – waiting for outcome of Deregulation Bill

Peak District – There are 6-7 highway authorities so it can be difficult.

## **8. Nottinghamshire County Council Highways Department Outsourcing**

Peter outlined the plans so far: firstly a consultation and now a proposal to outsource the department to a company owned by the Council (in partnership with Cornwall Council?)

One of Peter's concerns was about whether money made by the company would come back into Notts or whether it would go to the wider company.

There was general concern about the situation expressed at the meeting. Mandy described how there have been mixed outcomes where this has happened in other parts of the country. Terry H commented that it would be good for the LAF to get in early and advise the Council on the best way of taking things forward.

## **9. Countryside for All**

John described how South Lincs & Rutland and Mid-Lincs LAFs have been working together on this. They have garnered the following interested organisations: National Forest – Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire; Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust; Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust; Canal & River Trust East Midlands; Woodland Trust; Nottinghamshire County Council; Leicestershire district council.

The LAFs delivered a one day course for outside organisations to undertake their own accessibility audits and create their own route literature in the same standardised format. John showed the meeting the programme and feedback summary. Funding came from Public Health budget  
I feel your LAFs and people with disabilities in your areas would benefit

The disability sub group recognised some time ago that more needed for people with dementia and their carers. John and Stan from the Leicester City LAF investigated the Dementia Friendly walks the Leicester City Council were undertaking with Dementia Adventure.

From that the Mid Lincs and South Lincs & Rutland LAF Disability sub group requested funding from the Public Health Manager to run "Dementia Friendly Walk Leader Training". The two day course was run early March. The LAFs have succeeded in obtaining funding for a further three one day courses. This will provide 56 trained walk leaders for people with Dementia.

John passed round the programme and some further info. We also watched a video about Dementia Adventure's work and a roll-on powerpoint promoting the accessibility of walks in the area.

John offered to visit LAF meetings to discuss this project and answer any questions

North East Lincs – A separate Highway Authority is also keen to run these courses

Leicestershire - Less money is available, though hoping to do some work through district councils  
Chris commented on John's energy in achieving all this! One small point that, on the circular walks maps, it would be good to show links to other footpaths- it might encourage people to go on other walks, or with Ramblers etc. Keen to uncover good examples of scientific research showing clear outcomes of walking etc. Hugh knows of a summary produced by Dr Adrian Davies.

**Action: Hugh to circulate the contact – DONE BELOW**

**Details of the ‘essential evidence’ bulletins produced by Dr. Adrian Davies of UWE and Bristol City Council which I mentioned at today’s East Midlands LAF Chairs meeting in Lincoln can be found at <http://www.travelwest.info/evidence> together with details of how to subscribe - Hugh.**

Terry K commented that can be a symbiosis in hooking two things together to encourage people to both e.g. farmers’ market and guided walk.

**10. LAF Round ups**

**Peak District –**

- Promoting contributions to the Access Fund and developing improvements to open access land. (10 year review of access land has been postponed until 2019)
- Managing events in the National Park
- Exploring links between access and health
- Considering opportunities for enhancing access for all
- Developing green lanes and managing recreational motor vehicles
- Cycling strategy work
- Advice re future management of NPA properties and trails
- Monitoring progress on ROWIPs delivery
- Volunteering opps
- Considering impact of declining resources for ROWs
- Working with neighbouring LAFs, access and highways authorities
- Training opps in conjunction with NE etc
- Promoting the LAF
- Increase use of Huddle
- Pleased to have a rep on LAF for water access
- PDNPA is dedicating much of its woodland to open access under section 16

**Nottingham City –**

- Progress made on ROWIP – did not get publicised properly so was delayed.
- Active Guided Walks sub-group – nearly completed 3<sup>rd</sup> walk – ideas for new ones also (possibly producing some in relation to new tram works)
- Historical ROWs sub-group – looking in the archives
- Have had interesting speakers at LAF meetings – looking forward to one about ‘human scale shared streets’
- Planning Policy sub-group – working on recent relevant work
- Two bridge projects (joint with Notts LAF) – one completed recently; the other, more ambitious project on hold as money from Historical Bridge Fund now not forthcoming. NCC interested because of green links in regen area, but for the future.

**Leicestershire –**

- Been occupied with Lost Ways – see earlier notes
- Visiting various sites to note any access issues and reporting to landowners.
- Helpful as all LAF members belong to special interest groups so can make good connections

- County Farms Estate – prior to the tenancy ending, the LAF consults with the County Council, putting forward views about possible dedication of ROWs – one newly dedicated.

#### **Mid-Lincolnshire –**

- Much covered in earlier agenda
- Unrecorded ways - much work done by strong horse riding and horse driving members of LAF
- A perception that some historic documents in council offices are under threat (Lincs has lost some important maps) – the documents need to be formally transferred to archives
- In North Lincs, been an issue involving a bridleway crossing a main road at a dangerous point. There is a sensible diversion possible but the landowner is not keen.

#### **Nottinghamshire –**

- Level crossings been a cause of LAF work
- Working with Nott City LAF over bridge project – see above
- Some ROWs that cross into Derbyshire are being dealt with by Notts.
- Aware that possible new tramway will affect the county
- Ongoing A453 crossing points issue

#### **Leicester City –**

- A major plan afoot to regenerate waterside area with moves to improve access. Will be challenging to achieve.
- Concept of shared space has come up – it will be important to choose the most appropriate road/s for this
- The city owns 2 golf courses and has decided to cotton-wool one of them – so may be sold possibly for housing – concern to the LAF

#### **South Lincolnshire & Rutland –**

- We should receive the outcome this week from one of our proposals
- Countryside for All – see notes from earlier in agenda - four further C4A routes to be printed by the end of this month; Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust ready to send one route to the printers; Identifying 5 more routes for this year; promoting C4A using slide show at health centres, events etc.
- Starting 'Listening for a walk' project – aiming to do all C4A routes; examining listening posts (scepticism from some)
- Looking at issues raised with the NE Outdoors For All working group regarding using one of their websites

#### **AOB**

Thanks offered to Mandy for her role as Regional Coordinator  
Meeting closed at 2.30 p.m.

#### **Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September  
Natural England offices, Apex Court, City Link, Nottingham NG2 4LA

**Action: Kristina to look into using Nottingham NE offices - DONE.**

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