

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 27 April 2016.

PRESENT

Mr. T. Kirby (in the Chair)

Ms. V. Allen
Ms. H. Brown
Mr. R. Denney
Mr. C. Faircliffe

Mr. M. Gamble
Mr. J. Howells
Mrs. A. Pyper
Mr. S. Warren

20. Welcome by Chairperson and apologies received.

The Chairman welcomed those present and welcomed Helena Edwards who would be observing the meeting. Apologies had been received from Mr. J. Law, Mrs. R. Camamile CC, Mr. A. Hillier-Fry, and Mr. B. Sutton.

21. Election of Vice-Chair.

The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum for the period ending January 2017.

Mr Roy Denney was nominated for the position by Mr Chris Faircliffe and seconded by Mr Terry Kirby. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Roy Denney be elected Vice-Chairman of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum for the period ending January 2017.

22. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27 April were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

23. To advise of any items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent.

The Chairman agreed to take one item as urgent to be considered elsewhere on the agenda.

24. Declarations of interest.

Members were invited to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

25. Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy.

The Forum received an update from Lee Quincy on the recently published Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy. A copy of the Strategy, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i). The Strategy set out the long-term Government ambition to 2040 to increase walking and cycling across the country with the key objective of making walking or cycling a natural choice for travellers;
- (ii). There would be £50 million for 'Bikeability' schemes across the country. The County Council had already received some of this funding to deliver levels 1-3 in schools. The Forum was advised that the scheme content was set at a national level, however if members felt that it would be useful to include sessions on footpath/shared space behaviour then this would be raised with the trainers;
- (iii). An access fund of £80 million would be allocated based on applications from local authorities, the application process for which would be opened later in 2016. At present £20 million was already available and the County Council had submitted a bid for £500,000 to build on the sustainable transport improvements already made in the Hinckley area. However in real terms the funding represented a significant cut in funding for local authorities;
- (iv). Some funding was available to contribute to walking and cycling from the Local Enterprise Partnerships, one of the key successes in this area being funding for the Hinckley Area Project. The key focus of the LEP at present was on economic growth in Coalville, the Leicestershire Urban Area, Loughborough, and South West Leicestershire. All highways improvements in these areas would include improvements to sustainable transport networks;
- (v). Consultation on the Cycling and Walking Strategy had opened on the 27 March and would close on the 23 May. However it was felt that the Local Access Forum had nothing further to add to its initial consultation response before the Strategy was published. It was intended that a final Strategy would be produced later in 2016;
- (vi). Members of the Forum expressed concern that narrow footpaths in rural areas meant it was difficult to encourage schoolchildren to walk or cycle to school. The Forum was advised that in the current financial climate the County Council could only bid for funding for highways improvements where it would potentially contribute to economic growth.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy be noted.

26. Reports from committees and working groups.

The Forum received an update from the committees and working groups. A copy of the updates, marked 'Agenda Item 8', are filed with these minutes.

The Forum was shown a picture of the Rutland Choice Unlimited event including a stand on Dementia Friendly Walks. The Forum thanked John Law for the work he had put into the project.

The BHS would be asked to provide training on Unrecorded Ways. This would require access to facilities with IT facilities to show a Powerpoint presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the updates from committees and working groups be noted.

27. Reports from representatives on outside bodies.

The Forum received an update from Forum members sitting on outside bodies. A copy of the updates, marked 'Agenda Item 8', were filed with these minutes.

The Chairman had attended the East Midlands LAF Chair meetings and a number of Forum's were facing similar issues.

RESOLVED:

That the updates from representatives on outside bodies be noted.

28. Open Access Update - Mountsorrel Site Visit

The Forum received an update from the members who had attended the Mountsorrel site visit.

It was felt that there was no clear access to the four open access sites on Mountsorrel, resulting in finding more access points than they were previously aware of. Sections of the paths and bridleways were not ideal for horseriders, and it was not clear whether one of the paths was still usable. It was felt that some signage would be beneficial. Vicky Allen agreed to be the lead on writing the report on the site visit.

There was one more major open access site to review, and members would also reconsider reviewing sites which had already been visited.

29. LLAF National Report.

The Forum received a copy of the Local Access Forum National Report. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

30. Feedback from the National Conference (Terry Kirby and Stan Warren).

The Forum received feedback from Terry Kirby and Stan Warren on the LAF National Conference. The Forum was advised that if any members wished to have a PowerPoint presentation from the conference, they should contact Stan Warren.

It was felt that some groups had been confrontational, rather than trying to work together to achieve their aims. Although these groups had the right intentions to begin with, the approach had not been helpful to improving disabled access to rights of way.

It was hoped that the next conference would be held in one location with all Local Access Forum's.

31. Orders update (Edwin McWilliam).

The Forum received an update on the latest public path and modification orders. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes. Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i). The diversions requested at the Staunton Harold Estate had been passed onto the Secretary of State for consideration due to the objections received to the diversions;
- (ii). Members expressed concern over bridleway accessibility next to the A453 and a stretch of the bridleway not having any fencing. Officers agreed to pass on these concerns;
- (iii). Network Rail had requested to make a number of changes to footpaths across Leicestershire, and it was likely that there would be changes in the Market Harborough area with the line speed improvements. There were a number of ongoing discussions with Network Rail generally regarding rights of ways affected by rail works and engineering.

RESOLVED:

That the orders update be noted.

32. Correspondence sent and received since the previous meeting.

The Forum received a copy of the correspondence sent and received since the previous meeting. It was noted that the Annual Review Form would need to be taken forward.

RESOLVED:

The Forum noted the correspondence sent and received since the previous meeting.

33. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled to take place on Monday 4 July at 5.30pm at County Hall.