

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 6 January 2020.

PRESENT

Member

Mr. J. Howells (Chairman)
Mr R. Denney (Vice Chair)
Ms. V. Allen
Mr. C. Faircliffe
Mrs. H. Edwards
Mr. M. Gamble
Mr. T. Kirby
Mr. D. Nichols
Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Mr. B. Sutton

Officers

Mr. E. McWilliam (LCC)
Mr. A. Patel (Forest Bid)
Mrs. K. McCabe (LCC)
Mrs. A. Adams (LCC)

1. The Chairman's welcome and opening remarks

Mr Howells welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mrs. A. Pyper, Mrs. H. Brown and Mr S. Fisher.

3. Election of new Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr. Howells is standing down as Chairman and therefore an election for a new Chairman was necessary. Mr Denney proposed that Mr Faircliffe be nominated, the members supported this and he was elected as the new chair. In the absence of any candidates for the Vice Chairman role, Mr Denney volunteered to continue in the role for another year.

4. New Chairman's comments

Mr Faircliffe said that he understands that people who attend the forum are passionate, but he hopes that nobody interrupts each other in any future meetings and asked for the meetings to be conducted in an orderly manner.

5. Declarations of interest

The members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd July 2019

Mr Sutton confirmed he is happy to remain a member and therefore a request to alter previous minutes regarding his removal was raised. Mrs Adams agreed to note the change rather than remove the relevant sentence.

7. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

8. Requests for urgent items to be debated at the Chairman's discretion

None.

9. Guest speakers - Chairman of Forest Bid (Mr Attle) - TBC

Mr Patel thanked members for the invitation to the meeting. He said that the formal decision from the Heritage Lottery Fund should be made in March but there will be inspections beforehand. Mr Patel said he is new to the heritage and nature world and would welcome many more people appreciating these aspects. He also brought up the fact that organisations such as LLAF rely heavily on volunteers.

The Chairman applauded the plan and wished Mr Patel good luck with the bid.

Mrs Allen asked Mr Patel to thank his staff for their efforts.

Mr Kirby asked Mr Patel if transport heritage people from Great Central Railway would be able to help as well. Mr Patel said he believes it should be possible.

Discussion regarding traffic problems in Woodhouse Eaves and how to persuade more people to use public transport rather than cars.

Mr Patel thanked everyone for their hard work.

10. Reports from committees and working groups

a) Planning and Travel Committee

Mr. Denney had nothing to add.

b) Network Opportunities Committee

Mr. Denney had nothing to add.

11. Reports from representatives on outside bodies.

a) River Soar and Grand Union Partnership

Mrs. H. Edwards has not attended any meetings recently, she has been in touch with Lucie Holemer who advised her that they are switching to task and finish groups which unrecorded ways may have links to. Lucie is going to meet with Mr. McWilliam to discuss routes along the Soar and to look at what the specific aspirations are. Mr Denney said that the partnership needs to include City Council in those discussions as well.

b) National Forest and Recreation Group

Mr Denney had nothing to add.

c) EMLAF Chairs meeting

Ms Allen said that October meeting was cancelled, the next meeting is scheduled for March.

d) Charnwood Forest Regional Steering Group

Mr Denney has nothing to add.

e) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Forum

Ms Allen has nothing to report.

12. Committees for the coming year and their brief

Mr Denney is happy to continue to provide updates on Planning & Travel. He said he will update the entire group with any updates.

Mr Howells agreed to take over the Unrecorded Ways.

Updates regarding both groups to be provided at the next meeting.

13. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies

- a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Forum – Ms Allen to continue.
- b) River Soar and Grand Union Partnership – Mrs Edwards to continue.
- c) National Forest and Recreation Group – Mr Denney to continue.
- d) Charnwood Forest Regional Steering Group – Mr Denney and Mr Howells to continue.

14. Correspondence

There was no additional correspondence to consider.

15. Access to LCC records

Mr McWilliam provided a summary from the earlier workshop he had delivered and gave an update on the key areas, it still requires a lot of work.. He thanked Mr Gamble who helped him with preparing the data. Mr McWilliam also mentioned the productive work which had been carried out by Stan Warren. Mr McWilliam said Mr Gamble will organise distribution of the database which will be distributed using Qgis.

Discussion about responsibility of maintaining PROW, Mr McWilliam mentioned that Parish Council do have powers and that the Council has to be careful how it spends with limited funds. Mr Denney commented that he believes Parish Councils should do a lot more enforcing than they do currently.

Mrs Edwards enquired if she is able to share the database with the River Soar Partnership. It was decided that it is better that Mr McWilliam discusses with the partnership what specific data is required rather than provide the database and have no control over what data is being shared and with whom.

16. Annual Report

Mr Denney said the report has been prepared and will be shared on the website rather than posted to members.

17. Recruitment and Quoracy

It was decided that the Chairman and Mr McWilliam should meet and discuss the process of selecting future members and volunteers.

Mr Denney made a comment that he does not believe the Council informs Parish Councils sufficiently what they can and should do for their community. He said there is more work to be done to get better results for all the parties involved.

The Chairman committed to finding out what quoracy is necessary for the meetings and updating the group next time they gather.

18. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (30 mins)

Mr McWilliam brought up the concept of path hierarchy and how beneficial it is as the Council prioritise all its maintenance.

Ms Allen mentioned that some of the bridleways suffer due to cyclists use, Mr Gamble disputed this comment.

Mr McWilliam suggested that the group should think about most accurate performance indicators and how they can encourage more volunteers including the young.

19. Open Access Surveys (Heather Brown)

Deferred to the next meeting due to Mrs Brown's unattendance.

20. Future work programme

Agreed legal requirement should be checked.

21. Any other items which the Chairperson has decided to take as urgent.

None.

22. Dates of future meetings (previously agreed subject to room availability)

All agreed. Meeting closed at 7:05pm.