

Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Mr Chris Faircliffe (CF) - Chair
 Mr Roy Denney (RD) – Vice-Chair
 Mr Peter Williams (PW)
 Ms Vicky Allen (VA)
 Mrs Maggie Wright (MW)
 Mr Mike Gamble (MG)
 Mr Michael Miller (MM)

Officers, all representing the Council

Mr E McWilliam (EM)
 Mr P Lindley (PL)
 Mr T Lenihan (TL) – agenda item 7
 Mrs K Brown (minutes)

		Action
1.	Welcome CF welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Introductions Introductions were made outlining interests represented.	
3.	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from John Howells, Brian Sutton, George Keeping, Mike Bates and Sue Bicknell.	
4.	Declarations of Interest The members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.	
5.	Previous Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2023 were agreed.	
6.	Matters arising not on the agenda Discussion took place on temporary closing of routes for repair and EM agreed to circulate information on 'routes closed' to the LLAF.	EM

	<p>RD circulated a copy of The Countryside Code summary to the meeting. RD updated on the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange which was now subject to an inquiry; the Midland Main Line upgrade continues to move forward and the replacement bridge at Kibworth opening in March 2024.</p>	
7.	<p>LCWIP Guest Speaker</p> <p>EM introduced Tony Lenihan, Safe and Sustainable Travel Co-ordinator to the meeting. TL explained there was a joint website with the City to help the county and city travel smarter through more sustainable and active methods e.g. walk, public transport and reduce single occupancy of car journeys 5 miles or less. TL said that both the county and city work alongside schools, businesses and communities and there are a range of initiatives and projects ongoing to effect that change.</p> <p>TL explained that Active Travel England had been tasked with delivering the Government's objective of ensuring 50% of trips are walked, cycled or wheeled by 2030. As part of this objective local authorities were asked to assess their own active travel capabilities and this would be measured to determine what funding was received. TL reported that a Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum was held and would welcome feedback on this.</p> <p>TL briefed the meeting on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and stated that the Market Harborough area was now complete and available on the LCC website.</p> <p>LLAF members shared their views on routes for horse riders, security for e-bikes, joint ticketing for buses and cycle networks.</p> <p>TL agreed to attend a future LLAf meeting to give an update.</p>	
8.	<p>ROWIP Update</p> <p>EM gave an update on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan which was due to be updated. EM stated that the plan would be co-ordinated through the LCC's policy team and would work in parallel with the Local Transport Plan 4 coming up. EM added that the plan would be place before the LTP 4 and help on this would be provided by an external body following the process. EM highlighted that LLAf members would be consulted on the ROWIP in the first instance.</p> <p>CF asked about timescales for implementation of the improvement plan. EM said that it would possibly be the autumn of 2024 and would look at it being a 10 year plan. EM agreed to email the current Improvement Plan out to LLAf members.</p>	EM
9.	<p>Planning and Travel Update (RD)</p>	

	RD commented that there were local plans circulating but had not been asked to comment on. No further update on the Charnwood plan.	
10.	<p>Update on BHS Lost Ways Project (VA)</p> <p>VA gave an update on the project and commented that there had been a lot of claims on unsurfaced roads which could possibly affect the de-regulation bid. Discussion took place on this and PL stated that there had been 125 applications which were safe from harm. VA commented that the BHS would like to do more but resources is a problem.</p> <p>VA reported that in other parts of the country where blue lines had been painted on road surfaces as a traffic calming measure, some horse riders had found that their horses had been alarmed and become skittish by the colour blue. It was concluded that more information needed to be gathered on this phenomenon.</p>	
11.	<p>Update on Unrecorded Ways Group</p> <p>The Unrecorded Ways Group gave an update on their work and projected onto the screen two new claims which were discussed. It was agreed that MM/RD/PL would meet to discuss further.</p>	MM/RD/ PL
12.	<p>Orders Update</p> <p>PL reported that there had been a public inquiry into a claimed public footpath that went in a circular direction around field edges and through woods to the south-west of Ashby starting on Willesley Lane. In addition, it provided a very well used link from residential areas off Willesley Lane, to the Hicks Lodge cycle Centre and Forest England woodland. PL stated that the Inspector confirmed the Modification Order, and this footpath (Footpath P114) has now been added to the Definitive Map. PL also reported on the ongoing Inspectorate's determination of an application to have a public footpath added to the Definitive Map along Read's close (back lane) Slawston. After the initial Inquiry, the Inspector decided, provisionally to only add one part of the lane to the Definitive Map which is the section forming the link to existing Footpath B38.</p> <p><i>Update since the meeting:</i> After further representations submitted to the Planning Inspectorate from the County Council and members of the public, a newly appointed inspector, on the basis of what she considered new evidence, determined that the whole three sides of Read's Close should be added to the Definitive Map as a Restricted Byway. This decision is also interim and open to further submissions of evidence from the landowners, should they wish to challenge it, so the matter has still not been concluded.</p>	
13.	Charnwood Forest Update	

	<p>RD informed the group that the LFA had produced a Charnwood Forest map and guide to the area and was out this week at a cost of only £6.99 because of lottery support.</p> <p>The meeting noted that Charnwood Forest Geopark now had a website and maps available.</p>	
14.	<p>Deregulation Act Guidance</p> <p>It was noted that the decision by the previous Government to abandon completely the 2026 cut-off date had recently been reversed by the current Government. It had been indicated that the Government intend to extend the cut-off date to 2031, so far it has only introduced a statutory instrument to activate the 2026 cut off date. No action has so far been taken to enact an extension to 2031, so 2026 is currently the only definitive date for the cut-off.</p> <p>Discussion took place concerning landowners not having been served notice by applicants in most of the British Horse Society Modification Order applications. Such applications fulfil the requirements of Schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in terms of what must be considered bon a fide applications and therefore the routes concerned are considered to be safe from potential retrospective extinguishment at 2026 (presuming the government proceeds with the necessary secondary legislation on that basis). These applications are therefore suitable for inclusion of the online formal Register of Definitive Map modification Order applications. However, because notices have not yet been served on any landowners that might have interest in the land over which the claimed routes pass, under current legislation, the Authority cannot, and is not obliged to make any efforts to research them or determine them.</p> <p>EM questioned whether this was fair and reasonable on the potential landowners as the first time they might become aware of such applications is from them being informed by a third party of a claim, who had seen details of it on the online register; so they could be among the last people to become aware of a claim effecting them. EM/PL to discuss if it is feasible/practicable to inform potential landowners of applications that might affect them, though LCC would not necessarily know who they are, as many such tracks and ways would not have registered ownership and there would be at least 125 applications to deal with.</p>	EM/PL
15.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>MG raised the huge barriers, for people with disabilities, in accessing the countryside. MG to provide examples of these.</p>	MG
16.	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of LLAF had previously been agreed as Thursday 25 January 2024, 2.00 pm at County Hall.</p>	

