

Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday 25 January at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Mr Roy Denney (RD) – Vice-Chair
 Ms Vicky Allen (VA)
 Mr Mike Gamble (MG)
 Mr Michael Miller (MM)
 Mr Brian Sutton (BS)
 Mrs Maggie Wright (MW)
 Mr Mike Bates (MB)

Officers, all representing the Council.

Mr E McWilliam (EM)
 Mr P Lindley (PL)
 Ms E Odabas (EO)
 Mrs K Smith (minutes)

		Action
1.	Welcome & Introductions RD welcomed everyone to the meeting. Due to the apologies from the Chair, RD chaired the meeting. Introductions made and outlining interests represented.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Chris Faircliffe, John Howells, George Keeping, Sue Bicknell and Peter Williams.	
3.	Declarations of Interest The members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.	
4.	Election of Chairman Chair indicated that Chris Faircliffe would be willing to continue as Chair. RD proposed and it was unanimously agreed that he continue as Chair.	
5.	Election of Vice-Chairman Roy Denney confirmed he would be willing to continue as Vice Chair. VA proposed, MG seconded and it was agreed that RD would continue as Vice Chair.	

6.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2023 were approved.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters arising not on the agenda.</p> <p>MG has emailed RD in connection with ROW to be included in the Leicester District Plan. RD noted.</p>	
8.	<p>Election of Chairmen of any committees</p> <p><i>Standing Committee</i> Only Standing committee is the Planning and Travel Committee, all existing members will continue with matters normally handled by exchange of email. RD will continue to be Chair.</p> <p><i>Subgroups</i> Working Parties - Research into lost Ways, noted these were self-elected and all members of this group are welcome to attend.</p>	
9.	<p>Appointment of representatives/observers on outside bodies</p> <p>Noted that this was not something usually needed.</p> <p>Acknowledged the Charnwood Forest Steering Group and that RD & JH would continue to be part of this group.</p> <p>Canal Group Trust – no representative.</p>	
10.	<p>Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Nothing immediate to report although noted that a number of local plans being moved along. VA raised concerns that often issues with Public Rights of Way adjacent to building site areas. Often during works these become wrongly signed as walking and cycling routes when they are bridleways or bridleways being ignored completely. Most notable issues where ROW are just outside the construction area. Statutory Duty upon the contractor to include accurate ROW availability in their plan and that members should raise this with the LPA when absent and contractor will be required to re-submit their plan. RD noted that there were mentioned as examples, particular issues in Blaby and that there was a need to look at the network as a whole during the planning process. <p>PL confirmed contractors often asked for Section 106 funding but now tend to ask under S278 Agreement of the Highways Act. Local Authority cannot apply conditions to a developer they cannot fulfil, but where they cannot find another way to maintain the ROW there should be a route through provided. The planning framework LCWIPS does provide for the developer to contribute to a ROW. EM said</p>	

	<p>mostly the system is working but recognised that some things do get missed. Issues noted in the Loughborough Garendon Park development. EM confirmed that the developer has been asked to re-submit plans. RD asked for sight of this and this would be referred to working group.</p> <p>MW raised ROW being lost in solar and battery farms development. Funding available (£250m community funding is available), but nothing included in the Plan often a gentleman's agreement rather than being conditional to make routes at least accessible. Also, biodiversity net gain is something else which can be included. Agreed that these were things that should be continued to be kept on the agenda so we can enforce what we can do where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lost and Unrecorded Ways BHS system discussed and noted availability to all to gather information. Availability of on-line material is making task easier but feeling that application process is slowing down. <p>Noted that RD had resigned as Organiser Coordinator for the Ramblers Association.</p> <p>BS recorded that there was a lack of transparency with information. He had been made aware of a possibility of a site around Isley Walton for development and then it was published by the BBC on a website that 4500 homes to go up which also superseded field work on footpaths that had been undertaken.</p> <p>MM offered to look at maps for new areas identified for development in NW Leics geolocate them and link the planning overlays with QGIS.</p> <p>EM and PL indicated that they were prepared to conduct a pilot on NW Leics site using QGIS and overlays. Agreed that this was a worthy project to be added to next agenda. Noted that claimed ROW are disclosed when planning.</p> <p>Agreed that informal groups such as BHS and the Ramblers Society should be consulted when schemes are put together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canals No update. Charnwood Forest RD confirmed that the Charnwood Forest map was now available for sale. Charnwood Project confirmed that there is to be a permitted path at Mount St Bernard's Abbey to Charley Estate. 	<p>EM</p> <p>RD</p> <p>MM</p> <p>EM/PL</p>
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	<p>Car park complete at the Outwoods.</p> <p>Bradgate Park Deer park to Old John path project will go ahead to provide a more secure walking surface (not a bridleway).</p> <p>9 major projects within a 5-year plan which is expected to be extended.</p> <p>Noted that match funding of £5.5m was available.</p> <p>A reminder needed to be issued to notify archaeology if anything was uncovered during construction. An application to be a geopark had been submitted. Fossils have been found at an undisclosed location and archaeology was working to preserve them.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Cut-off Date Update and Orders</p> <p>Cut off Date EM confirmed that the cut-off date has been pushed forward to 2031 to allow for new claims. Unrecorded highways before 1949 would be extinguished.</p> <p>Overall guidance will include the right to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply for a right to apply for a path to be extinguished. • Regulations for applications planning expectorates for recovery for spurious claims. • New and revised register to include wildlife registers. • Cost for publishing path movements was expensive and would move online although moving to online would be of benefit. • Definitive map Modification Reform • A simplified process for considering applications expected. <p>Noted that the delay with the process leaves farmers in limbo although most aspects should be known in this calendar year.</p> <p>Orders PL updated one at Slawston, a claim for public footpath at Reeds Close has gone to Public enquiry.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>LCWIP Progress Update</p> <p>EM reported that they are looking at major urban areas and existing infrastructure to address what is coming up in planning. Efforts to increase Walk and Ride routes and find investment.</p> <p>Noted that Bradgate Park offered limited cycling routes and little appetite to look at ideas submitted. EW confirmed that it would be dependent upon outside funding.</p>	

	<p>EM confirmed that routes around Loughborough area and South Leicestershire are being engaged with by the public and planned for adoption next year. Also being looked during the year are Melton, Market Harborough and North Leicester.</p> <p>EM suggested that a special meeting could be held to discuss what might be considered. Agreed as part of Work Programmes.</p>	RD
13.	<p>ROWIP Progress Update</p> <p>PL confirmed that a report was submitted, the County were in the process of commissioning assistance to produce a plan to complete later this year. Local Authority funding secured. RD requested early access.</p> <p>EM noted that the challenges with a lot of infrastructure considerations are greater than when the plan was written.</p> <p>RD asked if NHS colleagues could be involved as part of their active for health campaigns to support funding. Yes, this is being explored.</p> <p>VA enquired about surfacing in sub-urban areas and noted that BHS recommends when surfacing ROW, that a self-draining flexible product be used.</p> <p>EM reported that the Highways Design guide under review and would take this into account.</p> <p>Noted grass verges under-utilised yet often unsafe for pedestrians and horses. Noted that in respect of grass verges from hedge to hedge – responsibility of Highways, hedge to ditch is the farmer. Can the authority re-visit how verges are managed. Confirmed an opportunity for someone from this group to meet with a LA officer to discuss. Item next meeting.</p>	PL EM / MB
14.	<p>Work Programme – Access Land</p> <p>Agreed some working subgroups needed to be set up to address the amount of work needed. Recommend whole group invitations to these subgroups.</p> <p>Open access area inspection needs to be revitalised, revisited and need new younger members to be seconded for this task. Task is to go around and make sure availability to the public, assess works and liaise with landlords and LA. We possibly pass this to user groups involved with an appeal to get involved. Issue guidelines for those participating. EM to put forward those of highest priority.</p>	EM EM/ALL
15.	<p>Recruitment Group</p> <p>EO introduced herself as new to LCC. EO would like to be involved with the work of this group. Will send emails to Parish</p>	EO

	Councils and parent groups to encourage people to the group.	
16.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Meetings schedule agreed to stay at 3 meetings per annum and current spacing works well to allow for work to be undertaken.</p> <p>BHS with John Gray cleared Old Mere Lane, near Oadby A6 last week and a good example of collaborative working. "Wombles" to be encouraged.</p> <p>EM noted that this activity was not known about and suggested that a forum to notify volunteer activities (wombles etc) so LCC had visibility over where things are happening. EM to ask EO to set this up.</p> <p>Noted Voluntary Action Leicester run things but no central register of voluntary teams.</p> <p>VA requested consideration be given to a canal boat litter pick in Leicester City following the flood and also a litter pick on the Barrow to Mountsorrel Bridleway which floods bringing so much debris.</p>	EM/EO
17.	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of LLAF was agreed as Thursday 23 May at 2.00 pm at County Hall.</p>	