

Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday 20 May 2026 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Ms Vicky Allen (VA) - Chair
 Mr Chris Faircliffe (CF)
 Mr Roy Denney (RD)
 Mr Peter Williams (PW)
 Mr Brian Sutton (BS)
 Mr Mike Gamble (MG)
 Mr Mike Bates (MB)
 Mrs Sue Bicknall (SB)
 Mr Michael Miller (MM)
 Mr Steve Charlish (SCh)

Officers, all representing the Council

Edwin McWilliam (EM), Access Manager
 Piers Lindley (PL), Senior Access Development Officer
 Karen Brown, E&T Business Support (minutes)

		Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies VA welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Alex Pyper, Andy Travis, Dave Pollard and Simon Constantinou. The meeting discussed the protocol for members missing three meetings and EM explained that such cases can be raised by any Member, potentially leading to removal if absences continue.	
3.	Declarations of Interest The members confirmed there were no declarations of interest.	
4.	To advise of items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent Contact List Revision	
5.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2026 were approved, subject to an amendment to Minute 14 (Community Archaeology Group) to include Mr Mike Bates in the Group.	

6.	Matters Arising Charnwood Forest Geopark RD reported that the Geo Park is awaiting final approval from international inspectors with formal international status expected by the end of next year which may bring increased protection and funding. MM raised the need for digital overlays for mapping of the Geopark border suitable for GIS use. MM noted the importance of such overlays for identifying paths crossing the park. MM had emailed Jack Matthews but not had received a response. RD agreed to follow this up for MM. The group discussed the appropriateness of installing way markers at the Geopark border. Jack Matthews had previously explained the border's intentional opacity and suggested signage would be more suitable after international designation. Discussion took place on the negotiation of permissive paths within the Geopark, the challenges of getting them onto Ordnance Survey maps and the limitations of formalising transient paths. Local Government Reorganisation EM confirmed that the local government reorganisation announcement is expected in July. In response to a question regarding legislative cut-off date for footpaths, EM explained that primary legislation is required to change the cut-off date for recording rights of way and current correspondence from Defra indicates no imminent legislative action. There was a discussion about historical evidence and possible exemptions and the Secretary of State's authority to defer the cut-off date. Unless deferred the cut-off will be 1st January 2031.	RD
7.	Reports from Committees/Working Groups • Planning and Travel Committee (VA) Need for Working Group - Stretton Hall SUE (VA) - Isley SUE (VA) The status of Stretton Hall and Isley Woodhouse developments were discussed, noting their inclusion in local plans and the importance of rights of way considerations in planning reviews. EM outlined the efforts to ensure public rights of way and bridleways are considered in development master plans highlighting challenges with multiple developers and the need for holistic access solutions. A closed footpath off Beveridge Lane in Ellistown was discussed. PL/MM to circulate a plan to show where the footpaths should be. It was agreed to form a sub-group to look at the detail of the proposals for Stretton Hall, to be convened by VA and open to all interested members. It was felt beneficial to invite Urban & Civic (the developers) and SLR consultants to attend an early sub-group consultation/planning meeting in June before formal applications are submitted. This would	PL/MM VA

	be hosted by Leicestershire County Council. KB to book in a room for this. MB reported he had produced his own survey on areas of Stretton Hall that have been raised which was circulated to colleagues yesterday. Any other issues he would be happy to go out to the site. • Unrecorded Ways (RD) Not discussed.	KB
8.	Reports from Outside Bodies • Charnwood Forest Regional Park This was covered under Matters Arising above.	
9.	Correspondence Nothing to report.	
10.	Orders Update including Worthington Link • Discussion took place on the Worthington Link however it was clarified that the LLAF operates at a strategic level and does not take up individual issues. • PL reported on a claimed footpath (Footpath N111) at Scotlands Playing Fields, Coalville, that has been added to the Definitive Map. The Order was placed before a Planning Inspector for determination as an opposed Order, but in the event, the objector, Network Rail, withdrew its objection, and the Order was confirmed. • PL reported on objections to modification orders at Manor Close, Oadby and The Old Holloway at Claybrooke Parva, both being sent to PINS for resolution. • In response to a question from RD, it was noted that improvements had been achieved in day-to-day processing of diversion and event orders, owing to increased staff resources becoming available in the Legal Services Team. Processing of DMMOs is still slow owing to a lack of resources in the PROW Team and competing demands on officer time.	
11.	ROWIP – Action Plan Update It was decided a ROWIP working group should be convened for early September to feedback to the October LLAF on progress on the action plan and next year's priorities. VA/KB to agree date and notify colleagues.	VA/KB
12.	New Priority Areas EM announced substantial new funding from local transport and sustainable travel grants, potentially doubling the annual review budget and enabling expanded path improvement programmes. EM introduced Members to MAIP (Multimodal Areas Improvement Plan)	

	looking at areas going across our service provisions, i.e. buses, public rights of way, carriageway and footway work etc to tie together a series of improvements that lead to more people travel and go around in a more sustainable way. EM agreed to distribute the maps to Members once finalised. Members discussed recent and upcoming path improvements, including the use of flexi-pave surfaces for semi-urban tracks, and the importance of meeting agreed standards in Section 106 agreements. EM described ongoing bridge replacement projects, with a focus on long-term maintenance and safety and noted the significant capital expenditure required for these works. A bid has been submitted for network improvements to a 40-mile extension to the Leicestershire Round in the Melton Mowbray area, being developed by the Leicestershire Footpath Association with the assistance of LCC. BS raised concerns about deteriorating grass verges, unsafe walking conditions and the need for improved maintenance, with EM confirming bids for funding to test verge improvements for walkers. EM to find out more information from relevant officers about potential funding and improvements for grass verges for walkers and riders. Discussion took place on hedge cutting responsibilities, and it was clarified that hedge maintenance is the responsibility of landowners, while grass verges are not, and discussed the County Council's postcard scheme for encouraging hedge trimming.	EM EM
13.	AOB which the Chairperson has decided to take as urgent Contact List Revision: KB agreed to circulate an updated contact list for the newly constituted forum, Members to include their parish or area and interests for addressing local issues.	All
14.	Future meetings The next Forum meeting date was agreed as: Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 2.00 pm	