

(www.leics.gov.uk/laf)

Contributing organisations

Unrecorded Ways Working Group

Date: 08.08.2017
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The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF)* has set up a sub-committee (the Unrecorded Ways Group) to expedite the research into and claiming of Unrecorded Routes and Rights based on historic evidence before they are lost forever under the provisions of the 2000 Countryside & Rights of Way Act, which imposes a cut-off date of December 31st 2025 for claiming such routes or rights.

While it is recognised that User Groups are in many instances carrying out such research, it is felt that the LLAF sub-committee can usefully expedite the process within Leicestershire by :

- a) attracting, training and supporting volunteer researchers who may not be associated with any user group.
- b) recognising potential routes or parishes where research may prove fruitful for the benefit of the public by increasing opportunities for walking or riding.
- c) preventing duplication of research activity.
- d) obtaining research material in digital form and making it available to researchers.
- e) preparing and submitting DMMO Applications where research results justify this action.

LLAF has no funding, therefore work carried out so far to expedite research work as indicated above has largely been constrained by having to be cost free.

Leicestershire County Council Rights of Way Team are supporting this initiative by the provision of meeting rooms, free access to their modern Highway Records, and free copies of their digitised records. They have also promised financial assistance where material held in archives has to be photographed, copied or purchased in digital form.

However, it must be recognised that local authorities are under increasing pressure to cut costs, and therefore there is no guarantee that they will be able to fund the project to the full extent of expenditure required throughout its 8+ year life-span to support the amount of research required to maximise the public benefit in adding new routes and rights to the Definitive Map.

The sub-committee anticipate therefore that additional funding will be required from other sources, in particular user groups, and is therefore appealing to your organisation to supplement our funds as far as you are able. Funding may be required throughout the life of the project (i.e. up to 2026, and even beyond if outstanding claims require additional supporting evidence after the cut-off

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date). As initial funds drop below a reasonable working level, we will repeat our appeal for further contributions.

We recognise that the majority of user groups are registered charities which have to satisfy Charity Commission rules on passing funds to other groups; our understanding is that this is acceptable, as we are working in line with the aims of such charities in protecting and improving the rights of Way network.

Arrangements are in hand for LCC to administer the fund; a Volunteer Expenses Claim Form has been drawn up and agreed; and a procedure for the checking and payment of expenses is almost finalised – researchers claiming expenses will have to list what research has been undertaken and its outcome (which unfortunately we recognise may not always be positive). All material expenses will only be approved if a receipt is submitted with the claim. Travelling expenses will only be paid for exceptional journeys, and at standard local authority rates. The Unrecorded Ways Group has nominated 5 members (representing different user groups), any two of whom are required to approve any claim.

It is intended that there will be regular financial reports presented to the Sub-Committee, which will be made available to all funding bodies.

The next meeting of the sub-committee is at 1930 on September 6th at the offices of Glenfield Parish Council, Park House, Stamford Street (LE3 8DL) – directions attached. It will review and agree a ‘cascaded’ training presentation for all volunteers who have not attended the external training sessions sponsored by the Ramblers’ and the British Horse Society. We would urge all user groups who are likely to fund the project to send a representative to this meeting.

We will be pleased to discuss any concerns and clarify any questions you may have, but look forward to your support. We would like an initial contribution (or firm commitment) to be made by October 1st 2017, as we are shortly contacting user groups and local history groups and anticipate new researchers coming forward who will require funding.

(*) Local Access Forums are independent statutory bodies, set up as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, existing to represent the interests of everyone concerned with access to the countryside and public rights of way network, including footpaths, bridleways, byways, cycleways and areas of open access.

John Howells

Chairman, Leicestershire Local Access Forum

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