



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday 4th July 2017.

PRESENT

Mr. J Howells (Chair)
Mr. R Denney (Vice Chair)

Ms. V. Allen
Ms. H. Brown
Mr. C. Faircliffe
Mr. M. Gamble
Mr. T. Kirby

Mrs. A. Pyper
Mr. S. Warren
Mr. A. Hillier-Fry
Ms. H. Edwards
Mr. J. Law

Mr. E. McWilliam
Mr. L. Quincey
Mrs. S. Dann

1. Welcome by Chairperson and apologies received.

The new Chairman Mr. Howells welcomed all those present and listed apologies from Mrs. Posnett CC MBE, Mr. Tame and Mr. Sutton.

The Chairman thanked the last Chairman Mr. Kirby for all his good work in the previous term.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd April 2017 were discussed and some amendments requested by Mr. Denney, which will be made before the minutes are signed off by the Chairman at the next meeting.

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The Chairman went through the minutes and the matters arising from the minutes.

It was stated that the issue of charitable status was deferred due to lack of time at the last meeting, although Mr. Law thought it would miss the deadline. This was discussed at the East Midlands Regional Chair's meeting which can be found in the pack on page 44. It was agreed that this item be added to the agenda for the meeting on 5th October 2017.

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Mr. McWilliam referred to item 4 in the minutes, last para, where it refers to the concerns regarding the future of the City LAF. He advised that he had been in contact with officers at the City and although couldn't speak on their behalf, he thought the group had not ended but was only in abeyance. Mr. McWilliam advised that he will raise the issue again.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

3. Declarations of interest and any items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman confirmed that there were 2 items that he had agreed to take as urgent business. These will be discussed later on the agenda.

4. Reports from committees and working groups

The Forum received updates from the committees and working groups.

a) Planning & Travel Committee (Mr. Denney) (page 8)

Mr. Denney gave a brief summary of his report and there were no further comments from members.

b) Network Opportunities Committee (Mr. Law) (page 37)

Woodland Trust

Mr Law advised that, following his meeting with the area managers at the Woodland Trust, there would be further information provided at the next meeting, although he gave his apologies for the next meeting as he was unable to attend.

Mr Law advised that many Regional Managers in Leicestershire and Rutland were very helpful and interested in submitting bids for funding for route improvements.

Mr Denney advised that there will be a further update on the Chronicles of Charnia HLF bid at the next meeting.

Visit England

Mr Law updated members on the interest that Visit England has on the 'Countryside for all' route leaflets. Leaflets have recently been posted to all households in Lincolnshire and Derbyshire which is an example of the importance that these County Councils have in promoting Countryside events. He suggested this could be replicated on the website to include routes and hotels etc. There is also an opportunity to include things like the Chronicles of Charnia who would benefit from this.

Changing Places Toilets

Mr Law updated members on the funding given by Councils for the provision of accessible toilets and the need to develop this in Leicestershire. Mr Law has identified some clips on uTube but unfortunately these could not be shown at the meeting. Mr Law advised that he would send round a link to the clips which were produced by Ashfield Academy and were taken at Bradgate Park. Mr Law would like the LLAF to write to the grant teams of the County and District councils, to influence applicants requiring funding to upgrade toilet facilities to include "changing places toilets" in their applications. He advised that although he won't be available for the next meeting he has asked that a vote be made at the next meeting to take this forward if everyone agrees. Members of the LLAF are requested to send a letter to the County and District councils to enquire into any available funding. Mr Law asked members to watch the clips as they really bring home the real issues faced by disabled people and their carers. Mr McWilliam agreed that when looking after children or even for yourself, having access to toilets is critical and provides dignity for all.

Link to uTube clips :

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=8eLBxoabxjA>

RESOLVED:

That a vote be taken at the next meeting on a decision to take forward the development of Changing Places Toilets

The Chairman asked that members consider at a future meeting to discuss how to tap into Public Health.

Action SD/EM/Chair

Choice Unlimited – The Event

Mr Law thanked Mr Warren and the Chairman for their support at the Event for Choice Unlimited. The Chairman updated members on the event and said that it was well attended and there were a great many requests for information from schools and colleges and other groups but stated that many did not know what was available. He said that he felt that there was so much more that could be done to inform mentally and physically disabled people of what is available.

Mrs Pyper advised that there didn't seem to be the will in Leicestershire, Councils are saying that we need to get people out of the towns but it seems to be harder than in Lincolnshire and their farms differ from those in Leicestershire with difficult gates and paths. The Chairman agreed but stated that we need to publicise those that can be accessible. He mentioned a route around Rutland Water that had been requested but this is not smooth or has gravel laid. Mr Law referred to Watermead Country Park and Bosworth.

Other issues

Mr Law asked members if they knew of any organisations that could provide funding for a couple of banners, similar to the one Mr McWilliam had brought

into this meeting but would have 'Countryside for all' on them. The Chairman stated that the cost would be about £200 per banner. Mrs Edwards stated that she had some information that she promised to forward to Mr Law on this.

Mr Denney stated that all Local Authorities are strapped for cash but he was optimistic that there are funding opportunities to be found.

Mr Gamble suggested that 3 or 4 possible routes be picked for the Forum to focus on. The Chairman stated that choosing is the easy part, the hard part is getting the landowners to officially agree and support what we do.

It was discussed that the National Forest is a waste of time currently as there is still no further progress on route leaflets for the disabled.

Mr Law gave an update on Willesley all-weather track now being developed, and stated that they have the responsibility for funding this themselves. He also gave an update on Hicks Lodge and that they have adapted bikes available there. Both Mr McWilliam and Mr Quincey highlighted that they were very impressed with the visitor numbers there. Mrs Allen raised concern that horse boxes were parked near the disabled spaces which was causing difficulties.

A discussion was held about other parks and Mrs Pyper asked about Foxton Locks as she thought they had some accessible routes across the canal east to west. Mr Law agreed with this statement.

Mr Law updated members on the Choice Unlimited event and that it will now be incorporated with the Local Offer Live event so more children would be expected to put on displays which will encourage more visitors.

c) Unrecorded Ways Committee (Stan Warren)

Mr Warren gave an update on this and requested that Mr McWilliam may be able to fill in any of the gaps in the network to create a definitive list.

He talked through the digitising of the information and suggested using cloud technology as they currently use CDs and memory sticks. Mr Denney suggested that memory sticks can hold a lot of information. Mr Gamble suggested that there are a couple of clouds that can be used for free and are relatively secure, he agreed to follow this up and report back. Mr Denney suggested that access to the cloud be restricted to only a few people. It was agreed that Mr McWilliam will continue to make the Council information currently available but he warned that the problems will occur with the speed of the internet servers used to download this information if placed on cloud account.

Mr Denney suggested that someone would need to keep a record of the money in any communal pot provided by the user groups and he and Stan Warren had been consulting with members to put together a letter to all the User Groups to satisfy their treasurers and auditors as to how these monies would be used.

RESOLVED:

That the updates from the committees and working groups be noted.

5. Reports from representatives on outside bodies

a) Heart of the Forest, Access and Connectivity Forum (Edwin McWilliam)

Mr McWilliam gave members an update on this Forum and the details of cycling routes that have or are being developed.

A discussion was held on whether these routes would be on definitive maps. Mr McWilliam stated that this was up for discussion and would depend on permissions given. Mrs Allen said that the bridle paths are the only places published that are consistently definitive.

Mr Denney asked why the Bradgate Park strategy was appended to the pack. Mr McWilliam stated that the Forum fed into this strategy so felt that it would be of interest to members.

b) River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership

The minutes of the last meeting were appended to the pack for information.

Mr Law asked if he could be added to this group. Mrs Dann suggested discussing this with him after the meeting as her team also administer this meeting.

Action SD

c) National Forest Access and Recreation Group (Roy Denney)

Mr Denney gave a quick update on this group.

d) East Midlands Local Access Forum (EMLAF) Chairs meeting update (Terry Kirby)

This had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

It was agreed that as there was a lot of information provided in these minutes that in future these minutes would be summarised for the LLAF members. The Chair was asked to produce a short summary of the minutes for the next meeting.

Action Chair

e) Charnwood Forest Regional Park Group (Roy Denney)

Mr Denney informed members that the results of the bid application should be received by the end of the year with the following 2 years being used to put the project plan together. He stated that it would be very unlikely not to be awarded the rest of the funding. There will definitely be a role for the LLAF to play in this.

f) Other meetings and Groups

Let's Talk Good Finance (page 57) was attached for information by Terry Kirby.

6. Confirmation of Committees & Working Parties & Members

A full list will be produced and sent round with the minutes for members to comment.

Action SD/EM

A discussion was held about the title Network Opportunities and whether this should be changed.

7. Events and Training update including Regional and National

The Chairman, Mr Gamble and Mr Denney attended a conference in Cambridge which the Chairman stated was very informative, professional and knowledgeable and there was a well presented training session. He informed members that another session would be arranged for later in the year and he encouraged them to attend.

The Chairman updated members on his attendance at the Birmingham National Conference where Defra informed that the cut-off date may be delayed and could be provided not in 2026 but now in 2028 or 2030.

Brexit – National England Workshop – nothing really to report from this.

Mr Kirby attended a Network Rail Matters workshop. He stated that this was well facilitated and there were many examples of heavy handed issues and the options of getting round these where a level of understanding was reached.

8. Funding and System for Unrecorded Ways Research

Mr Warren confirmed that a letter was being drafted with a document to confirm how the funds will be administered and what they will be used for and these documents will be made available by 7th August, with the Local Authority being the bankers etc.

Mr McWilliam confirmed that there will be the facility for members to use the Records Office which can be taken from this fund. The final drafts of these documents will be sent out prior to the August meeting.

9. Forum Support and Website (Edwin McWilliam)

The support for the Forum is to now being provided by Mrs Dann and her team at County Hall. Mrs Dann agreed to ensure that the minutes were turned around quickly (by 14 days) and sent out to members.

Mr McWilliam gave members an update on the changes to the County Council website and that it has gone back to basics. Mr Quincey agreed to talk to his team and see if the Forum can be promoted through his team's areas on the website. He currently publishes the sustainable transport information which includes walking

maps, cycling maps, strolls on your doorstep and Mr Quincey is happy to promote the Forum where he can.

Mr Denney asked if the profile of the Forum could be raised so that their skills could be recognised and used appropriately.

10. Correspondence

Mr Denney advised that he had attached the letter of support regarding the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid (page 62) for members' information.

Mr McWilliam advised that he had attached the Local Delivery Pilots document as he felt that in terms of health, sport and wellbeing this overlapped with certain areas of this Forum and encouraged members to look at the document.

A discussion was held around the work that Parish Councils have the powers to do around the Public Rights of Way, if they have the manpower to do it. Mr Denney asked about the cuttings that accumulate when Parish Councils cut overhanging hedges. Mrs Pyper suggested that, every village seems to have a useful person with a tractor that may be able to offer their services, they could be used to assist with adhoc tasks. Mr McWilliam advised that the Parish Council can be the eyes and ears of the County Council and can send in information and photos of issues they come across.

11. Orders update and Headland Grants

An update was given on this.

12. Any other items as taken as urgent

The Chairman agreed to take the following items as urgent on this agenda:

- Process of maintenance and upgrading of outside furniture

Mr. McWilliam stated that there is a yearly maintenance programme set, with an on-going responsive programme for interim repair. Every path is checked every 6 years and renewed as appropriate.

The Chairman asked if groups could contribute to the upgrade or replacement to a gate or access. Mr McWilliam stated that a price list could be passed to members and he would be more than happy to discuss this with interested parties.

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Mr McWilliam advised members that even though the Deregulation Enabling Legislation had still not come a decision was made to revise the plan anyway. He stated that the forum would be engaged in the process.

13. Dates of future meetings and sub groups:

5th October 2017 Venue - Framland Committee room (to be available from 4pm – meeting to start at 5.30pm)

9th January 2018 Venue to be confirmed

Sub-groups:

2nd August – venue to be confirmed

7th September (evening) – venue to be confirmed