



## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday 9 April 2025 at 2.00 pm**

### **Present:**

Mr Roy Denney (RD) – Vice-Chair  
 Mrs Maggie Wright (MW), County Councillor  
 Mr Michael Miller (MM)  
 Mrs Sue Bicknall (SB)  
 Mr Brian Sutton (BS)  
 Mr Mike Gamble (MG)  
 Mrs Alex Pyper (AP)  
 Mr Mike Bates (MB)  
 Ms Vicky Allen (VA)  
 Mr Dave Pollard (DP)  
 Mr Steve Charlish (SC)

### **Officers, all representing the Council**

Edwin McWilliam (EM), Access Manager  
 Piers Lindley (PL), Senior Access Development Officer  
 Ellen Senior (ES), Access Officer  
 Bethany Wiseman (BW) – Senior Sustainable Travel Officer  
 Karen Brown (minutes)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  RD welcomed everyone to the meeting. Those present introduced themselves to the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received from Chris Faircliffe, John Howells, Peter Williams and Janina Holubecki.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  The members confirmed there were no declarations of interest.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Volunteer Posts &amp; Training – E-learning Health and Safety Module</b>  ES commented that RD, AP, VA and BS were invited to the Chairman's Celebration of Volunteers recently – a thank you for long service to this Forum.  ES presented Health and Safety for Volunteers Pathway e-learning. LLAF volunteers acknowledged the training and signed to confirm their attendance.	

5.	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Minutes</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2025 were agreed.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u> MM queried whether the County Council had put in a submission into the Government's New Town Taskforce. EM was not aware of any submission.</p>	
6.	<p><b>To advise of items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Forest Walking Festival</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>No correspondence to discuss.</p>	
8	<p><b>ROWIP Update and Presentation</b></p> <p>EM gave a presentation and explained that since 2002 Highways Authorities in England are required to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The plan explains how the local authority intends to make improvements to the public rights of way network in Leicestershire and how it will provide a better experience for users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders. EM explained the Plan now requires updating taking into account the Government's current legislation and guidance, latest policies and strategies and future management.</p> <p>EM commented that there have been a lot of changes on the rights of way network with the new developments and footpaths are being used a lot more.</p> <p>EM outlined the two planned engagements of consultation as part of the ROWIP – one as part of other consultations and an online survey. Social Pinpoint – a mapped based online engagement tool - was also made available for the public to highlight specific rights of way routes and how they could be improved.</p> <p>The second period of engagement will take place once the draft ROWIP has been developed taking into account earlier engagement feedback. The proposed online consultation will run for 12 weeks between 19 May to 8 August 2025 and will consist of an Online Survey. EM outlined how this consultation will be advertised and also through the Local Access Forum by possibly arranging a special meeting. Seeking approval of the document will be October 2025.</p> <p>BW informed the meeting a proposed schedule of roadshow events was being considered and these would be shared with Forum Members at a later stage. EM said these roadshow events would give an opportunity for Members to attend in their local area to gain an insight into a range of access issues in addition to countryside paths.</p>	

	<p>Discussion took place on the transport plan policies and how people move between areas. Discussion took place on grass verges and how legislation works for the local authority and landowners and the processes at District level. Discussion continued regarding Parish Council's roles in public rights of way.</p> <p>EM shared the headline figures from the Rights of Way Improvement survey with Forum members. Discussion took place on various areas from the survey including better parking facilities, signage, inaccessible stiles and mapping.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Reports from committees/working groups</b></p> <p><b>Planning and Travel Committee</b>  DP reported on a meeting held with SC, Network Rail, and the local Parish Council on 2 areas where public rights of way cross railway crossings which are proposed to be closed in the Bardon Hill area. Network Rail's argument is that increased use by new residents will increase risk of incidents on the crossings. However these crossings will provide even more important non-motorised user links between new housing as the developments expand. DP had requested Network Rail to send their risk assessment tool.</p> <p>MM shared a map of the area highlighting preliminary planning for extinguishment of crossing at N60.</p> <p>RD gave further background information to the discussion and commented there was little or no risk due to the low frequency, time tabling and low speed of trains and it was a matter of them wishing to close the footpaths without justification. RD presumed the Parish Council will be objecting and offered a supporting letter from this organisation.</p> <p>EM confirmed that LCC had not been approached with any proposal to divert the routes or permanently close them and should anything come through there will be opportunity to raise concerns as part of the legal process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land Use Policy</b>  RD explained that the Government was seeking views on its vision for land use in England and how to deliver it. A draft Land Use Policy had been previously circulated to Members and MM had also produced a summary document. Forum Members agreed for RD to combine these documents and submit as a response to the consultation which closes on 25 April. A copy of the document to be shared with Members.</li> <li>• <b>Network Railing Crossings</b>  Discussed earlier on the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Unrecorded Ways</b>  No update to report.</li> </ul>	
10	<b>AOB which the Chairperson has decided to take as urgent</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BW informed the Forum that the next Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Forum will be in October – date to be confirmed.</li> <li>• RD reported that there was no further information on the Stan Warren Way but work was ongoing with the City and Charnwood.</li> <li>• DP informed the meeting that the National Forest Walking Festival runs from 16-26 May and outlined details of walks the Leicestershire Footpath Association were leading.</li> </ul>	
<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>Member Training</b>  Dealt with previously on agenda.	
<b>12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<b>Future meetings</b>  The Forum meeting dates were agreed as:  <b>Rearranged from Wednesday 27 August to Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 2.00 pm.</b> Wednesday 26 November 2025 at 2.00 pm Wednesday 7 January 2026 at 2.00 pm  Working group meetings will be arranged as needed.	