



Minutes of a Meeting of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday 7 January 2026 at 2.00 pm

Present:

- Ms Vicky Allen (VA)
- 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)
- Mr Simon Constantinou (SC)
- Mr Andy Travis (AT)

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.	The Chairman’s Welcome and Opening Remarks CF welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Alex Pyper, John Howells and Dave Pollard.	
3.	An Officer of the Appointing Authority takes Chair for the Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman EM asked the meeting for any nominations for the Chair position. Vicky Allen expressed her willingness to serve as Chair for the forthcoming year and provided a short overview of her previous experience in similar roles. The nomination was proposed and it was unanimously agreed by members of the Forum. EM asked for any nominations for the Vice-Chair position. Mike Gamble volunteered for the position which was proposed and it was unanimously agreed by members of the Forum. It was noted that the advertisement for Forum members had not received a positive response. EM encouraged non-official attendees interested in joining the group to contact the PROW office for the relevant application forms.	

4.	<p>The New Chairman's Opening Remarks</p> <p>VA reminded members that the meeting is being recorded and encouraged them to speak clearly and concisely.</p>	
5.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The members confirmed there were no declarations of interest.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2025 were agreed.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Charnwood Forest Geopark An update was provided on the application for UNESCO Geopark status, which is in its final stages, with LLAF hoping for successful international recognition.</p> <p>The Isley Woodhouse New Town/The Proposed Stretton Hall New Town Discussion took place on the status of the Isley Woodhouse New Town and the proposed Stretton Hall New Town. It was noted that Isley Woodhouse was still under review and Stretton had not been selected as a government site though prior work on these sites may be useful in the future.</p> <p>LLAF members emphasised the importance of engaging with planning applications at the earliest possible stage and often before formal applications are submitted to influence outcomes and protect local interests.</p>	
7.	<p>To advise of items which the Chairperson has agreed to take as urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence received by VA from DfT re Barrow Farm, Desford Road, Kirby Muxloe 	
8.	<p>New Members</p> <p>Each attendee introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their interests and in which particular part of the county.</p> <p>On behalf of those present, VA expressed her thanks and gratitude to Chris Faircliffe and Roy Denny for their long service to the LLAF.</p> <p>The Forum recognised Leicestershire's rights of way system as the best and thanked LCC staff.</p> <p>It was noted that for any attendee wishing to become a new member on the Forum there was an online application form and a requirement to sign up on the volunteer system. KB to arrange with Ellen Senior for those</p>	

	<p>interested.</p> <p>Engagement with Parish Councils was discussed and it was agreed to look at sending the signed-off ROWIP action plan to all parish councils to inform them of the Forum's existence and activities for the next 10 years.</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>EM</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Reports from committees/working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Planning and Travel Committee (RD) RD stated his intention to step down from chairing this committee prompting discussion on forming a new working sub-group to handle planning application work and correspondence.</p> <p>Discussion clarified that 'lost ways' and 'unrecorded ways' are often used interchangeably, though the government and LLAF may use different terms for similar ideas. A small fund managed by the Ramblers is available to support research and projects related to lost and unrecorded ways.</p> <p>VA agreed to take on the leadership of the planning and travel working group, with support from other members for a collaborative approach.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the merits of using WhatsApp versus email for internal communication and it was agreed to trial a WhatsApp group for more efficient co-ordination whilst considering GDPR and FOI implications. It was agreed to set up a WhatsApp Group for the working group.</p> <p>• Unrecorded Ways (RD) RD stated that the group stopped functioning after the deadline for claiming footpaths was abandoned in practice, leaving the status of many paths in flux and requiring ongoing case by case management.</p> <p>The LLAF formally thanked RD for his contributions to the working groups.</p> 	<p>MG</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Reports from Outside Bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Charnwood Forest Regional Park (RD & JH) RD reiterated the process for Geopark status as discussed previously. RD would continue as the representative on this group.</p> 	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Committees/Working Groups and their Chairmen for the coming year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Planning and Travel Committee – reconstructed This had been discussed previously under agenda item 9.</p> 	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>No correspondence has been received.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Archaeology Group MM was acknowledged as the Forum’s representative for the Community Archaeology Group recognising his contribution to walking and evidence gathering. • Wildlife Trust Committee PW was nominated and seconded as a potential representative on the Wildlife Trust Committee, subject to appropriateness and confidentiality considerations. 	
15.	<p>ROWIP</p> <p>EM stated that Members approved the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and associated action plan, which is now in operation for the next 10 years. The key element for LLAF is the action plan itself which outlines specific intentions for the coming year and next 10 years. It was agreed that the action plan would be shared with Members. EM noted that the action plan requires annual approval by LLAF members, as well as their input regarding expenditure and prioritisation of funding areas.</p> <p>EM raised the ongoing concerns about the safety of public rights of way where they cross carriageways, including the need for signage and infrastructure at road crossings and the formation of a sub-group to address these issues. It was suggested that those Members not on the LFA feed through to those that are.</p> <p>Members discussed the challenges of justifying investment in low usage but dangerous crossings, the need for statistical evidence, and the potential for overlapping area-based funding to address safety improvements.</p> <p>MM highlighted the importance of consulting Parish Councils, particularly regarding significant pathways crossing the Parish, to ensure they are maintained and preserved properly and in certain instances talk with landowners about maintaining permissive paths. MM also commented on looking at Parish Councils’ neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>EM stated that the neighbourhood plans are submitted to the office, where they are reviewed as part of the process. Past consultations have generated significant feedback and ideas for improvement. It was noted that many neighbourhood plans that do not adequately address rights of way and activists should ensure future plans are compliant and include relevant provisions.</p> <p>Members discussed the difficulties in securing funding for rural rights of way improvements, noting disparities between high population and rural areas, and the potential for parish councils to raise funds through precepts.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the statutory powers of Parish Councils under the Highways Act to carry out works on footpaths and bridleways with encouragement for greater parish involvement.</p>	EM/KB
16.	LCWIP	

	EM reported on Multimodal Infrastructure Plans looking at particular areas of the County to see how various areas of service can be integrated to improve transport. EM will report back at a future LLAF meeting on progress and asked for the Forum to be directly engaged in this process.	EM
17.	Local Government Reorganisation EM stated he had no new update on LGR.	
18.	Area Surveys Discussion took place on overdue area surveys of all open access areas. EM will talk to PL and the subject will be added to the next meeting agenda.	PL/KB

19.	AOB which the Chairperson has decided to take as urgent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correspondence from DfT received by VA VA outlined a letter received regarding a footpath running alongside Barrow Hill Farm in Desford Road, Kirby Muxloe, which was shared with PL.	
20.	Future meetings The Forum meeting dates were agreed as: Wednesday 20 May 2026 at 2.00 pm Wednesday 21 October 2026 at 2.00 pm	