

Minutes

of the Annual General Meeting of the

North Somerset Local Access Forum

Tuesday 9 July 2019

held at The Keep, Banwell Castle, Banwell

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm Meeting Concluded: 8:05 pm

Councillors:

A Mike Bird
Robert Payne

Ann Harley

Independent Members:

Rights of Way and Access Land Users

P Julie Main (Chair)
Jonathon Brownnett
P Barbara Bennett
P Tim Raines
P Sheila Dixon
Vacancy

Landowning Interests

P Ian Clemmett
Bernard Gray
A John Harris
P Richard Jones (Vice Chair)
P Robert Parsons
Vacancy

Other Interests

Gillian Hopkins
A John Knight
Peter McAleer
A Martin Neale
P Bob Rischmiller
P Rhiannon Robinson

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Elaine Bowman, Andy Carroll, Adam Hingston, (Development & Environment), Michèle Chesterman (Corporate Services)

LAF Election of Chair and Vice Chair (Agenda Item 1)

1

Resolved: that Julie Main be elected Chair of the Local Access Forum for the 2019/20 municipal year.

(Julie Main in the chair)

Resolved: that Richard Jones be elected Vice-Chair of the Local Access Forum for the 2019/20 municipal year.

LAF Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 4)

2

Julie Main reported that she was a member of the British Horse Society and was a District Bridleway Officer.

Jonathan Brownnett reported that he worked for Natural England who were promoting the England Coastal Path.

LAF Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 April 2019 (Agenda Item 5)

3

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

LAF Access Officer's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 6)

4

National Grid Update

The Access Officer advised that an Officer's update briefing had taken place the week commencing 1 July 2019 in connection with progress on the National Grid works which were currently on track. 8.5 km of underground cables were being installed as part of the National Grid's upgrade of the South West's electricity infrastructure.

Coastal Path Update

The Access Officer informed the Forum that on 25 July 2019 Natural England would be submitting a report to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs setting out the proposals for improved access to the coast between Aust and Brean Down. Representations must reach Natural England by midnight on Thursday 19 September 2019. Reports would be available for viewing and there would also be a press release.

A bid had been submitted to the European Union Rural Payments for capital funds to cover the period from next year until 2021.

A Coastal Path working party had been established. The Access Officer agreed to forward any reports to Ian Clemmett.

The Outdoor Recreation Network 'Open to All? Accessibility in the Outdoors' Seminar and Site Visit – Hosted by Natural England - 19 June 2019 - Rhiannon Robinson

Rhiannon Robinson, Trustee of the Disabled Ramblers, informed Members that on 19 June 2019 she attended The Outdoors Recreation Network 'Open to All?' Accessibility in the Outdoors' Seminar and Site Visit hosted by Natural England.

Throughout the day delegates heard from key policy makers, stakeholders and industry experts including representatives from National England and The Disabled Ramblers.

The morning session consisted of presentations on topics including what the legislation said and what measures were being taken to improve access for people with physical and learning disabilities and those with mental health.

In the afternoon delegates had the opportunity to visit the National Land Access Centre in Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve. There were a number of on-site demonstrations led by Natural England, British Horse Society and Forestry England and an opportunity to meet manufacturers.

Members were made aware:-

- that 20% of the population could not access green spaces because of man-made barriers.
- of the key reasons why people do not access the environment.
- of the health and mental benefits of the countryside

A discussion took place on barriers to accessing the countryside and the suitability of different gates and latching mechanisms for horse riders and disabled Tramper vehicles. Members were shown videos of gates opening (with a pivoting handle, unlatch and push either way, self-closing). Another video displayed how difficult it was to get through a gate with a disabled Tramper vehicle.

The Access Officer explained that going forwards it would be best practice to install the least restrictive gates.

Barbara Bennett raised the issue of the gate on Gypsy Lane Byeway – a 5 bar gate which was wearing thin.

Resolved: that the report be noted

Chair to circulate a leaflet on the different types of gates and latching mechanisms available.

Chair to raise the issue of the disrepair of the gate on Gypsy Lane Byeway on the website.

Rhiannon to email the notes of the seminar to the Secretary to circulate with the Minutes of the Meeting

LAF Secretary's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 7)

5

DMMO Report

The Secretary reported that all 21 directions issued by the Secretary of State had been reported to the PROW Sub Committee. There would be one public enquiry in September 2019 with a further awaiting a date from the Secretary of State. North Somerset Council had made three orders. Four appeals had been lodged. One bank of orders had recently been made in relation to Puxton Farm.

In Puxton/Hewish Banwell 5 bridleways connected to each other. There had been two objections to date concerning one section of the route. The local landowners had been informed.

The workload was constant with all timelines and dates having to be complied with.

Lucy had returned for the summer which meant research could take place on others on the register.

Uphill Nature Reserve

Elaine noted the vegetation was overgrown. She would shortly be preparing a briefing for the new Members.

Strawberry Line Extension Update

Elaine reported that at the north of Yatton a bridleway that ran from Arnolds Way to Lampley Bridge included a section of cycleway with a canter strip to the side. A small section Lampley Bridge was in other ownership. It was hoped that agreement could be reached with the landowner soon.

The next section to be looked at was between Lampley and the M5 railway corridor with an accommodation road running parallel. The aim would be to use the accommodation road however the local residents were used to using it so may be opposed to its use as a bridleway.

Up to the M5 the intention was for cyclists to use the culvert. Highways England were looking at what could be done to the culvert to make it accessible. There had been no feedback from Highways England to date so the position was not clear.

A discussion took place on the culvert including how much water it contained and whether it was possible to walk through, whether horses and scooters could gain access and if there were any noise concerns.

Elaine responded that currently there was quite a steep bank to access the culvert. With regards access it would depend on the results of the structural surveys and what the surveyor felt was feasible. If it was not feasible for horses then an alternative route would have to be taken.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

LAF 6 Chair's report (oral report) (Agenda Item 8)

The Chair proposed a vote of thanks for Peter Burden (who had not been re-elected to North Somerset Council) and Councillor James Tonkin for their previous support of the Forum.

Elaine mentioned she was arranging public rights of way training in September for the new Members and would be officially writing to welcome them. Members agreed it was vital to emphasise the link between the work the LAF does, the healthy living and the Planning agenda.

The Chair informed Members that the proposal was to re-introduce cattle on Felton Common to clear out shrubland and to return the land to its previous condition.

Resolved:

(1) that the report be noted

(2) A vote of thanks be taken for Peter Burden and Councillor James Tonkin for their previous support of the Forum..

LAF 7 Vice-Chair's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 9)

Park Run

The Vice-Chair informed Members that he had not yet made contact with the organiser of Park Run but would provide feedback to the Forum when he had done so.

On 10 July 2019 North Somerset Agricultural Society would be hosting 2500 children on the showground site to educate them on farming. Countryside Day was an agricultural education event for Primary school children in Bristol and North Somerset. Held every other year, the event aimed to educate and inspire children about where their food came from and the opportunities available in the countryside; whether for a career or leisure.

<http://www.nsas.org.uk/countryside-day/>

It was suggested that a possible venue for the 2020 AGM could be a farm setting.

The Vice-Chair informed Members that The National Farmers Union and Kennel Club had created 18000 signage and posters to be displayed at veterinary small animal practices trying to help dog owners to be responsible. There were also short messages on the National Farmers Union Website <https://www.countrysideonline.co.uk/care-for-the-countryside/dog-walking/>.

Bristol and Bath had received a grant of £200k from Nesta to set up a committee of volunteers to upgrade their parks, attract funding, encourage more people to engage with parkland and attract sponsorship and volunteers.

It was noted that local authorities could not apply for this grant as the committee to run the programme had to be comprised of volunteers.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

LAF 8 Notification of Items of business – to be considered at the next meeting (Agenda Item 10)

It was agreed that the following items be brought to the next meeting of the Forum:-

Uphill

Festival Way

England Coastal Path

National Trust – cattle on Crooks Peak

LAF 9 Any other Business (Agenda Item 11)

Barbara Bennett explained she would be drafting a letter regarding the Flush Programme – sustainable travel.

She had asked to be involve in the Neighbourhood Plan, Portishead as a formal consultee

LAF 10 Date of the next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next meeting will be 6pm on 29 October at Castlewood

Chairman
