

Contact: Miss Roz Hime
Direct Dial: 01275 888094
E-mail: Roz.Hime@n-somerset.gov.uk
Date: 14 April 2022

Dear Sir or Madam

North Somerset Local Access Forum held in Room G08, Castlewood, Clevedon on Tuesday 26 April 2022 at 6.00pm

A meeting of the Forum will take place as indicated above. The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours faithfully

N P Brain

Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer ^{RMH}

To: Members of the Forum

Councillors: Mike Bird, Ann Harley, Robert Payne

Independent Members:

Rights of Way and Access Land Users	
Nikki Barton	Jonathan Brownett
Sheila Dixon	Tina Hamilton
Julie Main (Chair)	Marianne McAleer
Landowning Interests	
Bernard Gray	John Harris
Richard Jones	Robert Parsons
Vacancy (National Trust)	Vacancy
Other Interests	
Gillian Hopkins	Peter McAleer
Rhiannon Robinson (Vice Chair)	James Tonkin
Vacancy	Vacancy

***THE QUORUM IS SEVEN MEMBERS, WITH ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH INTEREST GROUP. IF SEVEN OR MORE MEMBERS ARE PRESENT BUT NOT ALL OF THE INTEREST GROUPS ARE REPRESENTED, THE QUORUM SHALL NOT BE MET (EXTRACT FROM THE NSLAF CONDUCT OF BUSINESS)**

This document and associated papers can be made available in a different format on request.

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest by Members

3. Notes of previous meetings

20 July 2021 and 26 October 2021, recommendations for approval to be ratified 25 January 2022, to approve as a correct record (copy attached)

4. Banwell Bypass Project

Presentation by Maduabuchi Ani, Jennifer Devereux and Joseph Burnell from the Project Team

5. Secretary's Report

- i. Definitive Map 2026 Cut-off date for historic paths (attached)
- ii. Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) Register Backlog
- iii. Buddy System Update

6. Access Officer's Report

- i. England Coast Path
- ii. Strawberry Line
- iii. Byway Open to All Traffic LA19/82/20 between Watery Lane and Pinchay Lane

7. Chair's Report

- i. Natural England support for Local Access Forums
- ii. Banwell Bypass Consultation Response (attached)

8. Vice-Chair's Report

- i. Somerset Jubilee Jaunt

9. Sub-Committee Reports

10. Notification of Items of business – to be considered at the next meeting

11. Any other Business (notified to the Chairman by noon on date of meeting)

12. Dates of future meetings during the 2022-23 Municipal Year

- Tuesday 5 July 2022 at 6.00pm (AGM, site visit to be decided)
- Tuesday 25 October 2022 at 6.00pm
- Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 6.00pm
- Tuesday 25 April 2023 at 6.00pm

Agenda Item 5 - Secretary's Report

5i. Definitive Map 2026 Cut-off date for historic paths

DEFRA Repeal of 2026 Cut Off

In a surprise move, DEFRA has announced that the 2026 cut-off date for recording historic rights of way, as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, will be repealed. With such a backlog of rights of way applications within local councils, there was concern among many user groups that the 2026 deadline would see many historic access rights lost to an administrative process, rather than because of rational analysis.

A Defra spokesperson said:

“As we have recognised in our 25 Year Environment Plan, public access is key to connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing.

“The Government has decided to take forward a streamlined package of measures in order to help enhance the way that rights of way are recorded and managed.”

The Defra statement reads:

‘We will repeal the 2026 cut-off date for recording historic rights of way, as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to allow more time for paths to be identified and added to the public rights of way network, as well as providing the ‘right to apply’ for landowners to divert or extinguish rights of way in certain circumstances. These measures, along with accompanying guidance, will be implemented as soon as reasonably practical.’

To date nothing further has been issued.

Agenda Item 7 – Chair’s Report

7ii Banwell Bypass Consultation Response

Good morning

I am responding on behalf of the North Somerset Local Access Forum (LAF).

I attended the Teams meeting on the 3rd March to represent with LAF, and other members of the LAF attended a previous meeting in July last year.

During the July meeting, they were told that they would be contacted again when the consultation got to the stage where additional user input would be required (specifically horse rider input), as at the time three options for routes were being looked at. They were not contacted again until the invite was sent out for the meeting on the 3rd March, at which time there was just the one proposed route. There were a number of horse riders, and people with an interest in horse riding, or business in relation to horses, who attended the meeting on the 3rd, and they were quite upset that they hadn't been contacted to provide feedback on the requirements from a horse-riding perspective. This included someone who runs a livery yard close by and who had not been consulted and also a representative from the British Horse Society (BHS) Access team, who again had not been consulted. I am sure that they themselves will be providing their own responses.

From a Local Access Forum perspective, the 'cycle / footpath' route which adjoins the proposed bypass route, offering a safer method of travel, should also include horse riders. Again, the team involved in the proposals, do not appear to have realised how important the area is to horse riders and how any safe off road routes would be eagerly used by horse riders as well. Horse riders / carriage drivers are also vulnerable road users, and therefore any safe off-road routes should also include them.

As there is no real definition of a multi-user route, the LAF have put together our own definition, we define multi-user routes as follows:

'A multi-user public right of way is one which permits the following groups of vulnerable non-motorised users to use it: walkers, cyclists and horse riders; the exception to non-motorised users is for the use of electric wheelchairs and mobility vehicles to ensure those with more limited mobility are also included.'

Therefore, when looking at any strategy for any new routes proposed by the Council, or upgrades to existing rights of way, the above definition should be utilised unless there is a compelling reason why it should not. This would both ensure that all vulnerable user groups are catered for and represents the best value for both the public and public money as it applies to the widest possible range of users.

In addition, by omitting one specific group of vulnerable road users from parts of the route, this could be seen as discriminatory, as many horse riders are female, or who may not be able to do other forms off exercise due to health or age. In the British Horse Society 'Benefits of Horse-Riding Survey', it was found that the majority (90% plus) of horse riders are female and more than a third (37%) were above 45 years of age. Therefore, Horse riding is especially well placed to play a valuable role in initiatives to

Agenda Item 7 – Chair’s Report

7ii Banwell Bypass Consultation Response

encourage increased physical activity amongst women of all ages. In addition, horse riders with a long-standing illness or disability who took part in the survey were also able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or disability.

Finally, newly released BHS statistics show road incidents involving horses and vehicles are continuing to rise with 1,037 incidents reported to the equine charity over the past year, 81% of which occurred due to vehicles passing by too closely, with almost half subject to road rage. This also amounts for at least 2 horses being hit by cars a day, with 203 incidents occurred in the South West alone.

We hope that our comments with regards to the consultation are taken on board and that this route is made available to all vulnerable user groups, including horse riders. In terms of the route itself and the various crossings and proposals, I am sure local users will know in more detail the impact from the ground and therefore their comments / feedback should also be taken on board.

The Banwell Bypass has been a long time in the making, and it is a great opportunity for North Somerset Council to get it right for everyone.

Thanks

Julie Main
Chairperson, North Somerset Local Access Forum
24 March 2022