

Notes

of Inquorate Meeting of the

North Somerset Local Access Forum

Tuesday 25 April 2023

Castlewood

Meeting Commenced: 18.03

Meeting Concluded: 20.14

Councillors:

A Mike Bird

A Ann Harley

A Robert Payne

Independent Members:

Rights of Way and Access Land Users

A Marianne McAleer

P Jonathan Brownett

A Sheila Dixon

P Julie Main (Chair)

P Nikki Barton

P Tina Hamilton

Landowning Interests

Vacancy

Bernard Gray

P John Harris

P Richard Jones

P Robert Parsons

Vacancy

Other Interests

Gillian Hopkins

P James Tonkin

P Nigel Bourne

Vacancy

Vacancy

A Rhiannon Robinson (Vice
Chair)

Officers

P Elaine Bowman
(Place)

P Andy Carroll
(Place)

P Harriet Isherwood
(Corporate Services)

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

LAF Welcome and apologies for absence (Agenda Item 1)

29

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and the apologies were noted.

LAF Public Participation

30 Greg Glendell presented the proposal of the Trails Trust, mentioning prejudice against horse riders and cyclists, who could not ride anywhere off road in Clevedon. The Trust was hoping to bypass DMMO queues by using Express Dedication. The Secretary clarified that suitability must be taken into consideration by the Landowner, so work needed to be done with them to assess the route and its usage. The conflict with a route for children to get to a local school during the week was mentioned as a potential hinderance. The Chair noted that Express Dedication had not previously been used by North Somerset Council, and that a Permissive Route may be more appropriate. A second site visit was encouraged, inviting Councillors and relevant North Somerset Council employees for an informal consultation.

LAF Declaration of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 2)

31 Jonathan Brownett advised he worked for Natural England, involved in the England Coastal Path.
James Tonkin advised he was Chair of the Planning & Regulatory Committee.
Julie Main (the Chair) advised she was a member of the British Horse Society.

LAF Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 January 2023 (Agenda Item 3)

32

Recommended: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record (to be ratified at the next formal Forum meeting).

LAF Secretary's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 4)

33

Updates were provided on:

The Buddy System

The list was sent out in March but received few responses, so the Secretary asked for more vacancies to be filled if possible. The intention of the list was clarified to give Parish councils a contact to bring access issues to outside of North Somerset Council.

PRoW Budget

The Secretary noted that PRoW received an annual revenue budget of £43,000 which was constrained. She mentioned that the National Grid funding had not yet been exhausted, and so the remaining £50,000 could be used for gates, bridges, and other necessary access improvements. Councillors from North Somerset Council agreed in the 2023 Budget Review to grant PRoW extra funding of £100,000 to be used for some larger capital projects. The Secretary also noted the receipt of £12,000 funding from UKSPF to purchase some pedestrian counters to aid data collection, and in turn improve footfall. It was suggested that the data be outsourced to a University for analysis.

Deregulation Bill

Preparations were being made ahead of the implementation of the previously repealed bill regarding DMMOs, which had been granted an extension until 2031 to allow for COVID backlogs to be tackled. The backlog in North Somerset Council was minimal compared most neighbouring authorities but was likely to increase as previously determined cases may potentially require revisiting.

LAF 34 Access Officer's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 5)

The Access Officer provided updates on:

Bridges

The Officer presented photographs of the bridge recently constructed at Lover's Walk in Clevedon which was planning to open within a few weeks. An opening date was to be published by the Communications team. The structures team had also designed a new bridge at Marshalls Field in Clevedon which was created from plastic to prevent rot and eliminate the need for maintenance. Pillhay Bridge in Hewish had buckled and was the next structure intended to be replaced with polydeck.

Annual Report

A final paper copy of the Report was circulated to all present members and were to be circulated electronically to Parish councillors.

Chapter 4 Coastal Path photos

To be discussed at the next meeting due to technical issues.

EPIC Healthcare Long Ashton

The Officer noted that a large ranch style data centre was in planning to be constructed, with opportunities to improve access points in the future.

LAF 35 Chair's report (oral report) (Agenda Item 6)

The Chair provided updates on:

Natural England LAF Support

A new officer had been appointed by Natural England to support LAF, with a new Sharepoint to be created for LAFs to communicate.

Bridleway Access Strawberry Hill

An informal suggestion was made to add the issue to the next PRow agenda.

Signage (parish council responsibilities)

Parish councils had funding to purchase signage but were not permitted to erect them without a certified Highways contractor, so could donate them to NSC for installation.

LAF 36 Sub-committee Reports (Agenda Item 7)

The National Trust was unrepresented and LAF would like to recruit new members.

LAF 37 Notification of Items of business – to be considered at the next meeting (Agenda Item 8)

AGM

Portbury DCO

Photographs of beaver bridges at Wick St. Lawrence

LAF 38

Date of Next Meetings during the 2023/24 Municipal Year (Agenda item 9)

Concluded: that the Forum would meet on the following dates:

AGM

Tuesday 24 October 6pm

Tuesday 30 January 2024 6pm

Tuesday 23 April 2024 6pm

Chairman
