

Notes

of the Informal Virtual Meeting of the

North Somerset Local Access Forum

Tuesday 31 January 2023

Held via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Commenced: 18.05

Meeting Concluded: 19.10

Councillors:

Mike Bird
Robert Payne

Ann Harley

Independent Members:

Rights of Way and Access Land Users

P Marianne McAleer

P Sheila Dixon

P Nikki Barton

P Jonathan Brownett

P Julie Main (Chair)

P Tina Hamilton

Landowning Interests

Vacancy

P John Harris

Robert Parsons

A Bernard Gray

P Richard Jones

Vacancy

Other Interests

Gillian Hopkins

Vacancy

Vacancy

P James Tonkin

Vacancy

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 20 **Welcome and apologies for absence (Agenda Item 1)**

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

LAF 21 Declaration of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 2)
Julie Main (the Chair) advised she was a member of the British Horse Society.
Richard Jones advised he owned a property affected by the Strawberry Line extensions in Yatton.
Jonathan Brownett advised he worked for Natural England, involved in the England Coastal Path.

LAF 22 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 October 2022 (Agenda Item 3)

LAF 14 DMMO Review – Julie Main provided an update in relation to a number of routes, which were restricted byways proposed to be opened for all public. All 24 applications were raised by the Trail Riders Association and did not follow the formal process, having submitted a map only, and had been given opportunities to rectify but did not.

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

LAF 23 Secretary's Report (oral report) (Agenda Item 4)

The Secretary apologised that the Buddy List had not yet been circulated to LAF members. Updates were provided on:

The PRoW Improvement Plan

The Secretary informed members that the plan was now live, covering work to be carried out over the next 10 years. A report submitted to the Executive on 8 February 2023 recommended that another £100k would be provided next financial year to help further improve the PRoW Network (including surfacing projects), and Parish Councils had nominated routes they would most like improved.

DMMO Review

The Secretary noted there was to be focus on outstanding DMMO applications this year, including a fine tuning to the application process to minimise incomplete submissions.

Strawberry Line Project

Members were advised that the project was still in its infancy but would eventually have more prevalence at future LAF.

Membership

The Secretary had received an indication of a potential new member for the next meeting.

Resolved: that the Buddy List be circulated to members.

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

The Access Officer provided updates on:

England Coastal Path

Members were advised that a decision had not yet been made by Natural England regarding the opening of Chapter 5 and Chapter 4 which were previously left unopened due to increased pressure on Chapter 6. North Somerset Council would be able to claim maintenance money if the Chapters opened. The Officer gave an estimated timescale for a potential decision after Easter 2023.

PRoW Bridges

Natural England had provided funding for Chapter 5 in Clevedon which was awaiting scaffolding approvals. St Andrew's Drive, also in Clevedon, received funding for a 7-8m wooden structure replacement. Pillhay was granted funding for pontoons and new structure along the top of its banks, subject to consent and approval from the Environment Agency.

National Grid

The Access Officer informed Members that work was being carried out to manage rights of way where new National Grid string cables were installed, including one closure in Hewish. Work currently running to schedule, minus a delay in Kenn Moor which had been pushed back to be the final instalment.

Annual Report

Members were advised that they would receive a hard copy of the Annual Report via post, with 30 available.

Questions were raised around the reuse of temporary structures, including a bridge used for Hinkley Point. The Officer was unable to give a definitive response and assured Members that a follow up would be provided.

A question regarding the use of hedging machines was raised, with Members concerned about the removal of native trees in hedgerows. The Officer informed Members that only the internal face of the hedge was trimmed, rather than the hedge centre where these trees grew. The aim of hedge trimming was reiterated as the removal of spring growth to allow safe access for road users, and Members were reassured that North Somerset Council had planted 30k new trees over the last 3 years.

Resolved: that the Annual Report be distributed to Members.

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

The Chair provided updates on:

Bristol City CAZ

The Chair shared a concern that the only way to avoid the CAZ was to divert

through North Somerset villages. Transportation of horses was subject to charge, and Airport users appeared to be following the same route, with Taxis to follow suit once their exemption ended in March. Members suggested liaison with Highways officers to ensure sufficient monitoring was taking place, including the reporting of any near misses, as they shared the Chair's concern for road users' safety.

British Horse Society

The Chair thanked North Somerset Council staff on behalf of the BHS for the extensive work carried out on the bridleway at Butcombe, and noted that a small amount of funding had been granted for 8-10 mobile signs to promote the 'Dead Slow' campaign. Members were advised that the BHS would display the signs in particular hotspots to promote road safety between vehicles and horses.

LAF 26 Sub-committee Reports (Agenda Item 7) Landowner's meeting

There was no representation from the National Trust at the meeting. Members asked for new LAF members to be provided with maps to help support the meetings.

Site visit on 16/12 with Mr Glendell

The local equestrian community were in favour of Mr. Glendell's proposal of a new route to link to other routes in use in Clevedon but needed more specific details to arrive at a final decision. Officers advised Mr. Glendell to submit a report containing details of the number of riders, types of usage, the reasons why problems occurred with the route previously and conflicts with user types etc. Councillors who were not Members of the LAF asked to be invited to future site visits.

LAF 27 Notification of Items of business – to be considered at the next meeting (Agenda Item 8)

LAF 28 Date of Next Meetings during the 2022/23 Municipal Year (Agenda item 9)

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

- Tuesday 25 April 2023 at 6.00 pm

Chairman
