

Notes

of Inquorate Meeting of the

North Somerset Local Access Forum

Tuesday 4 July 2023

Churchill Skittle Alley

Meeting Commenced: 18.10

Meeting Concluded: 18.57

Councillors:

A Dan Thomas A
A

Independent Members:

Rights of Way and Access Land Users

A Marianne McAleer P Jonathan Brownett
P Sheila Dixon P Julie Main (Chair)
P Nikki Barton Tina Hamilton

Landowning Interests

Vacancy Bernard Gray
John Harris Richard Jones
A Robert Parsons Vacancy

Other Interests

Gillian Hopkins A James Tonkin
A Nigel Bourne Vacancy
Vacancy A

Officers

A Elaine Bowman P Andy Carroll
(Development & Environment) (Development & Environment)
Dave? P Harriet Isherwood
(Corporate Services)

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

LAF Welcome and apologies for absence (Agenda Item 1)

1

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

LAF 2 Public Participation (Agenda Item 2)

None.

LAF 3 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair (Agenda Item 3)

3

Recommended: that the item be deferred to the next meeting due to quoracy.

LAF 4

4

Declaration of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 4)

Jonathan Brownett advised he worked for Natural England, involved in the England Coastal Path.

Julie Main (the Chair) advised she was a member of the British Horse Society.

LAF 5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 April 2023 (Agenda Item 5)

5

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

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

6

Updates were provided on:

Coast Path

Members were advised of the Chapter 4 and 5 opening on July 20th, and that Chapter 6 was the last section yet to open, after objections had caused a delay. Enquiries about sponsored walks across the entire length.

Bridges

The Access Officer showed photos of the new polydeck bridge at Lovers Walk, noting it had cost around £180,000, and had around 30 years longevity due to its resistance to UV degradation. The Officer also confirmed that work on the Pillhay bridge at Hewish was to be completed on July 5th.

Rights of Way cutbacks

The Panel were informed that 19 miles of cutbacks had been carried out so far this year, and that the Coast Path cutbacks were not yet finished. A final tally was to be provided at the next meeting.

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

7

The Chair provided updates on:

Responsible Dog Ownership Day in Dartmoor

The Chair gave a brief summary of main points raised at the event, including:

- that Devon and Cornwall Police had dog liaison officers who work on livestock and human attacks, but not dog-on-dog attacks. The Chair advised she would confirm the details of Avon&Somerset officers.

- that there had been a large increase in dog ownership since COVID.
- that there was a Panel working for the Government which had proposed increasing fines for dog-related crimes, enforcing muzzling and dog control orders, tightening breed-specific laws, running awareness courses with the Blue Cross, and using darting as the method of seizing dogs.
- that Teignmouth had enforced a blanket PSPO, detailing a dog walking restriction of no more than 6 dogs at once which was to be reduced to 4; a condition forbidding dog leads longer than 1m, and a requirement for all dog-walkers to carry waste bags.
- that Livestock avoidance training was being promoted to combat livestock attacks, as well as the use of electric collars. It was noted that issuing fines and displaying signs were fairly ineffective.
- that Dartmoor had trained wardens to have discussions with dog owners about why dogs should be kept on leads, and were bringing these conversations into schools. Dartmoor had also invested in common signage across their land, dog play areas, and enforcing days where dogs were prohibited from being off leads.
- that an organisation called Dorset Dogs were working to promote good dog behaviour in the countryside by reframing the negatives, incorporating behavioural science, distributing free doggie bags, hosting dog festivals, and organising guided dog walks.
- that 'gameification' had been suggested as a method of encouraging dog-walkers to dispose of waste correctly, by using different dog waste bins to vote for a cause. The Chair suggested this could be trialled when the current bins needed replacing.

Centralised co-ordination of LAFs

The Chair had discussed the lack of centralisation with two other LAF chairs from the South West, but had received no response from the Central LAF Officer regarding the issue.

- LAF 8** **Notification of Items of business – to be considered at the next meeting (Agenda Item 8)**
National England Shaun the Sheep countryside code.
Clevedon Bridleways.

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

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

Tuesday 24 October 6pm
Tuesday 30 January 2024 6pm
Tuesday 23 April 2024 6pm

Chairman

DRAFT