

**16<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**General Report**

**1. Discovering Lost Ways**

- 1.1 Natural England (NE) has recommended to the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) that it intends to withdraw from this archive research and refocus effort towards a re-evaluation of the relevant law and procedures. Confirmation has been received from Defra that the Minister has approved the approach, and supports NE's proposal to withdraw from its programme of active research and establish an Advisory Group to explore possible ways in which completion of the Definitive Map could be made more feasible.
- 1.2 An independently-chaired Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) is to be established, seeking to develop an agreed package of measures that would, in their view, achieve real and lasting progress in recording rights of way. The SWG will be meeting the stakeholders who participated in review workshops at the end of April 2008. Gavin Stark is the NE lead for the SWG ([gavin.stark@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:gavin.stark@naturalengland.org.uk), telephone 01905 363 428, or go to the web site at for more details [www.naturalengland.org.uk/liseure/access/default.htm](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/liseure/access/default.htm)). E-bulletin no 6, March 2008, and letter from Defra will be available to view at the meeting.
- 1.3 Work to consider if the List of Streets can be added to the Definitive Map is a low priority for West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and there is currently no timetable in place to take it further. However, should any identified threatened lost way become known, this could be brought forward.

**2. NE National Trails Review**

- 2.1 The Secretary has contacted NE for the Forum to be included in their review of the approach of the National Trail Network in England, which represents a critical part of NE's inheritance from their founding bodies. Details available to view at the meeting.

**3. NE Support for Local Access Forums (LAFs)**

- 3.1 LAF officers are concerned that NE LAF support currently provided by Nicola Trafford will no longer be available once she leaves that role as no replacement had yet been identified. The LAF regional representative has written a strong letter to NE asking them to reconsider their position. A copy will be available to view at the meeting.

- 3.2 Matthew Balfour (Chair, Kent CAF) and Alan Marlow (Vice-Chair, Hants CAF) will be representing the South East region at the English National Access Forum (ENAF) meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **4. 'A Sense of Freedom'**

- 4.1 NE have produced a publication called 'A Sense of Freedom' which is a collection of personal stories from disabled people, with a range of impairments, about their experiences in the natural environment. The publication is aimed at raising awareness, social and health benefits from accessing the natural environment, barriers that are faced, and inspiration for further improvements to access. A hard copy is available to view at the meeting and additional copies are available on request to the Secretary.

#### **5. Parish Walks**

- 5.1 June 16 is 'Sussex Day', when communities are encouraged to celebrate the county's rich heritage and take pride in where they live. An excellent way for people to do this is to explore the local area, discovering local rights of way and green spaces, as part of a guided walk. West Sussex County Council is therefore encouraging Local/Parish Councils (PCs) to organise a guided walk on Monday 16 June, or, if more convenient, on one of the week-end days either side of Sussex Day.
- 5.2 PCs should register an interest in leading a walk by Monday 14th April, after which further information to help PCs organise their walks will be available. Walks will be promoted locally and through WSCC's website (link from [www.westsussex.gov.uk/walking](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/walking) and also <http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/leisure-and-tourism/whats-on.en> ).
- 5.3 As WSCC is corresponding with PCs for the Parish Walks initiative, the opportunity has also been taken to ask them to provide any information they have on locally promoted routes (leaflets/ booklets and on the web) to ensure any information WSCC has is current, and to find out about new initiatives.

#### **6. Exploring West Sussex - Walks/rides/events May-September 2008**

- 6.1 The 2008 summer edition of Exploring West Sussex detailing 198 walks/rides and events in West Sussex is now available. It is on sale at West Sussex libraries, Tourist Information Centres and Sussex Stationers bookshops for £1.50 and available to download from <http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/leisure-and-tourism/walking-cycling-and-horse-riding/walking-and-cycling---guided-walks-and-rides.en> . This edition includes a questionnaire for feedback on the booklet and programme

## **7. West Sussex Rural Strategy**

- 7.1 The West Sussex Rural Strategy is now on the Internet to download. (<http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/environment/rf/Strategy2007-2017.pdf>) The Strategy has so far been endorsed by WSCC and Chichester and Arun District Councils. The next stage is to complete the Action Plan and identify any gaps there are between what is being delivered and what is needed. It is hoped to report on the Action Plan to the autumn meeting of the West Sussex Rural Forum.

## **8. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Rights of Way (ROW) Committee Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and Other Items of Interest to the Forum**

- 8.1 Itchingfield – creation of new bridleway leaving Footpath 1628/1 and upgrade of Footpath 1628/1 to bridleway
- 8.2 A copy of the full unconfirmed ROW Committee Minutes will be available to view at the meeting.
- 8.3 Graffham bridleway 952 Traffic Regulation Order – The North Chichester County Local Committee has agreed to allow horse-drawn carriages under five feet in width to use the byeway between Cocking and Graffham.
- 8.4 Pitshill – the proposed diversion/extinguishments were refused at a Public Inquiry by the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. That decision is currently subject to challenge by way of Judicial Review, the outcome of which is not yet known.

## **9. CAFWS Questionnaire**

- 9.1 The responses received from Forum members to the Questionnaires have been analysed and members have received a summary for information. The feedback proved useful in identifying coaching/presentation needs on access and items for future work programmes.

## **10. Suggested Themes for the Autumn and Winter CAFWS Meetings**

- 10.1 Autumn (29<sup>th</sup> October 2008, Pulborough)
- Use of volunteers (local groups, SDJC, parishes etc)
  - Process for involvement of parishes
  - Promoting access including Walking in West Sussex Working Group
- 10.2 Winter (28<sup>th</sup> January 2009)
- High Weald AONB presentation
  - Effectiveness of Access Land Project

## **11. Neighbouring LAFs**

- 11.1 Neighbouring LAFs have either recently held meetings or have meetings scheduled. Members are welcome to attend neighbouring

meetings. Please contact Fiona MacLeod if you are interested. Agenda items of interest since the last CAFWS meeting include:

11.2 Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=b1116054>

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)
- National LAF Meeting
- Forman Street Gating Order
- South Downs Access Forum (SDAF) update
- South Downs Way Management Plan consultation

Date of next meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008

11.3 East Sussex Local Access Forum – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/localaccessforum/default.htm>

- RoWIP Implementation and Progress
- Projects Identified
- Future Role of the Forum

Date of next meeting 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008

11.4 Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008

<http://www.countrysideaccessforum.hants.org.uk/>

- Site visit to Hampshire Wildlife Trust's Winnall Moors nature reserve to consider proposed improvements
- Report back from the first national meeting between LAF members
- Launch of the new definitive map
- Adoption of a new diversions policy and related guidance
- A Forum-run version of Discovering Lost Ways
- Planning for a Parish Council event this year
- Updates on various dog projects, including research in Winchester, improvements at Danebury and pilot projects at other sites
- Progress on producing and delivering the CAPs

Date of next meeting; 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

11.5 Surrey Local Access Forum (SLAF) – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008

[http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/SCCWebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE\\_RTF/Surrey+Countryside+Access+Forum?opendocument](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/SCCWebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Surrey+Countryside+Access+Forum?opendocument)

- Election of Vice-Chairman
- Foot and Mouth
- List of Streets sub group
- Access Management Grant Scheme
- Planning Applications
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Interim Strategic Development Delivery Plan

Date of next meeting; 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008

**12. Documents available to view at the meeting**

12.1 The following may be of interest to Forum Members:

- Responses to consultations made since the last meeting
- Discovering Lost Ways E Bulletin
- Defra letter regarding cancellation of Discovering Lost Ways
- Discovering Lost Ways – outcome of review and recommendations for the way forward
- NE letter on Review of Approach to National Trails
- Letter to NE regarding future LAF support and previous correspondence
- Covering letter from NE and the 'Sense of Freedom' publication
- Exploring West Sussex 2008
- West Sussex Rural Strategy
- ROW Committee unconfirmed minutes 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and associated reports
- Output from LAF regional event held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008
- Draft Marine Bill summary papers and Access Newsletter
- South Downs Management Plan

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16<sup>th</sup> April 2008