

18th July 2007

General Report

1. CAFWS Web Site Has Been Updated

1.1 The enhanced web site can be accessed at: www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws . Members are welcome to provide suggestions for future enhancements

2. Access Newsletter from the Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

2.1 The Newsletters covered the following topics: -

- Wildfire special edition (May)
- Consultation paper on improving access to the English coast

2.2 Copies will be available to view at the meeting and further details can be found on the www.defra.gov.uk web site.

3. Environment Agency (EA)

3.1 Recent articles have appeared in the media regarding the potential restructure of its offices in the South, and in particular the risk of closure of the Worthing office. Howard Davison, Regional Director, commented that operations would not be affected in Sussex or anywhere else and the EA will still have the same responsibilities to the environment and the local communities.

3.2 Rupert Clubb, the previous area manager for Sussex, has now taken up his new role as Director for Transport and Environment at East Sussex County Council in Lewes.

3.3 Defra announced in June 2007 that the EA is to oversee management of all flood and erosion risk on the English coast. The press release stated that the new role will increase accountability and clarity for the public and held ensure that work is properly prioritised and managed so that record levels of investment are used to best effect.

4. Sussex Pathwatch Initiative

4.1 A Sussex Pathwatch (a partnership with the aim to reduce illegal and misuse of the countryside) meeting was held on 22 June. Launched in May 2006, in the pilot area of Chichester District, the scheme is already recording successes. Illegal motorised activity is estimated to have reduced by between 50% and 75% in Graffham Parish since the launch. Throughout the District, 120 warning letters have been sent to offenders, five Section 59 warnings have been issued and two prosecutions are pending. In addition to this, through the reports received, hot spots have been identified and Police Community

Support Officers have subsequently been patrolling these areas, leading to a reduction in activity.

4.2 At the meeting:

- It was emphasised that it is important for people to continue reporting incidents (0845 60 70 999 or www.southdownsonline.org/pathwatch), ensuring an incident number is obtained, as without the base information police resources will not be forthcoming .
- The group briefly discussed the TRO consultation on restricted byway Graffham 952.
- The SDJC Officer explained that wooden 'No motorised vehicles' signs will be erected on restricted byways within the South Downs, that continue to have a problem with vehicle use.
- It was reported that a Press Release has been sent to relevant parishes and organisations which resulted in an article in the Chichester District Council newsletter 'Initiatives'.

4.3 Police Officers from other areas (Arundel and Horsham were mentioned) will be invited to the next meeting on October 25th.

4.4 PC Mark Hillman reported he will be retiring in 10 months. His enthusiasm and input has been greatly appreciated and a letter will be sent to the Sussex Police to this effect and highlighting the need for this work to be continued.

5. WSCC Rights of Way (ROW) Committee Meeting 4th June 2007 and Other Items of Interest to the Forum

5.1 The following recommendations were agreed as a result of the meeting:-

- Agenda Item 6a: Highways Act 1980 Section 119 – Rusper Footpath 1496/2 Diversion and Public Path Creation Order to provide a new footpath link
- Agenda item 7: Highways Act 1980 Section 25 – Horsham - to create a new bridleway and upgrade footpaths 1672/1 and part of 1672 to bridleway
- Agenda Item 8: Angmering – to enter into a Permissive Public Path Creation to allow cyclists to use part of footpath 2127
- Agenda Item 11a: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Section 53(2) – Eastergate - to add footpath from Elm Grove South to footpath 321
- Agenda Item 11b: 11a: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Section 53(2) – Nuthurst – to add bridleway along West Drive, Sedgwick Park
- Agenda Item 11c: 11a: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Section 53(2) – Upper Beeding – to alter bridleway 2758 to Byway Open to All traffic (BOAT); to delete a section of

bridleway 2758; subject to confirmation of the BOAT order, the County Local Committee be requested to consider making a Traffic regulation Order to prohibit vehicular use

- 5.2 The Pitshill Inquiry dates have been confirmed as 16-19th October and the Inquiry will be held at Lodsworth Village Hall.

6. Public Rights of Way – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Diversion Orders

- 6.1 The SSSI diversion provisions in Schedule 6 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) commenced on 21 May 2007.

- 6.2 Further regulations came into force on 1 July 2007 prescribing a number of procedural matters to provide clarity on the operation of these new powers. The new powers enable Natural England to apply to a highway authority to divert public rights of way where the public use of the highway is causing, or continued public use is likely to cause, damage to the special interest feature of a SSSI

7. Access to Inland Waterways Bill

- 7.1 The Bill had been due for a second reading in the House of Commons on 29th June. However, this did not take place and a new date of

8. Regional Event for LAF Members

- 8.1 Natural England had previously confirmed that they will continue to support LAFs. The Forum is pleased to note that a regional event is being planned for LAF members in October this year. This will include sessions on coastal access, LAF role in ROWIP implementation, managing dog walkers, effective charring, and LAF involvement in Natural England's strategy.

- 8.2 Letter from the Minister for Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs, Barry Gardiner, MP, on the RoWIP implementation available to view at the meeting.

- 8.3 The spring quarterly regional newsletter has been issued.

9. Neighbouring LAFs

- 9.1 The 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:

- 9.2 Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum –18 July 2007

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

- RoWIP update
- Obstructions on pavements
- Stanmer House planning application
- New routes planned

- Date of next meeting (AGM) 25 October 2007
- 9.3 East Sussex Local Access Forum –12th June 2007
<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/localaccessforum/default.htm>
 - RoWIP update
 - Planning and public rights of way
 - Gating Orders
 - Date of next meeting
- 9.4 Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) –27th June 2007
<http://www.countrysideaccessforum.hants.org.uk/>
 - Site visit looking at motor vehicle use, followed by consideration of a draft policy for Hampshire County Council
 - Report from the definitive map task group
 - Response to the coastal access consultation
 - Southampton City Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan
 - Progress on the audit of access for dog walkers near Winchester
 - Access for dog walkers at Danebury
 - Response to the consultation on the 'Right to Apply' for diversions and extinguishments
 - Annual Report
- 9.5 Surrey Local Access Forum – (SLAF) –23 April 2007
 - http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/SCCWebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Surrey+Countryside+Access+Forum?opendocument
 - RoWIP
 - New LAF regulations and guidance
 - Section 15 of the Commons Act
 - Access to Inland Waterways
 - Date of next meeting 23 July 2007

10. Documents available to view at the meeting

The following may be of interest to Forum Members:

- A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests (Defra)
- Consultation on Proposals to improve access to the English coast (Defra)
- SSSI Diversion Orders (Defra)
- Press release on EA taking over coastal flood and erosion role (Defra)
- Access Newsletters (Defra)
- Letter from Barry Gardiner, MP, on implementation of RoWIPs
- Walking West Sussex Festival 10th-14th October 2007, based at the Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton
- Discovering Lost Ways e-bulletin
- Brighton & Hove LAF Annual Report
- Hants Countryside Access Forum Annual Report.
- Minutes of neighbouring LAFS (as available)
- Minutes of Rights of Way meeting held 4th June and associated reports

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