

## **General Report**

### **1. CAFWS has a New Web Site Link!**

- 1.1 A shortcut has been created to take you straight to the CAFWS web pages: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws)

### **2. Natural England (NE).**

- 2.1 Jonathan Mitchell left NE at the end of March 2007. Jonathan had proved to have a very good understanding of our role and the variety of difficulties we face, and has shown how effectively NE could support Local Access Forums (LAFs) in the south east region.
- 2.2 Ongoing work to support LAFs in our region will now be carried out by Nicola Trafford and Nicola Harper. They co-ordinate the regional training and also produce the LAF newsletter, the next edition of which is expected in early summer.  
([nicola.trafford@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:nicola.trafford@naturalengland.org.uk))  
([nicola.harper@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:nicola.harper@naturalengland.org.uk))
- 2.3 The LAF 'members handbook' is now expected to be drafted in April/May 2007 with publication in the autumn. David Gear, NE, is leading this national activity.

### **3. National Access Forum (NCAF)**

- 3.1 NCAF ceased to exist when the Countryside Agency was incorporated into Natural England in October 2006. It has been acknowledged that a body will be needed to provide NE with advice on access issues and that this body will also have an important role in liaising with LAFs. Formal consultation is taking place with the NE Board and members of the former NCAF. It is expected that a LAF member from each region will be invited to attend meetings but as yet it is unclear if this will be as a member or observer.

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

- 4.1 The February 2007 Newsletters covered the following topics: -
- Natural England agrees advice on improving access to the English coast
  - Consultation on protection of common land in England
  - New Regulations covering LAFs
  - New guidance for LAFs
  - Quantifying the socio and economic value of rights of way
  - Freedom to choose

- 4.2 Copies will be available to view at the meeting and further details can be found on the [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) web site.

## **5. Sussex Pathwatch Initiative**

- 5.1 Sussex Pathwatch is being piloted in Chichester District. At a meeting held on 22 February 2007, PC Hillman reported that the hotspots for illegal/misuse of vehicles in the countryside were: Monument Lane, Racton; Hambrook Gravel pits, where the landowner is hardening defences to prevent access; Goodwood Estate car parks; South Downs Way between Cocking and Duncton Hill; Lurgashall; Fernhurst; Harting; Marley Heights; and Chapel Common where a Section 59 warning had been issued and reports had been reduced. Generally those attending (including Parish Council representatives) felt there had been a decrease in activity with Graffham representatives reported 75% less activity. Police Community Support Officers have attended some locations in response to reports but have yet to apprehend anyone.
- 5.2. Signposting of Restricted Byways is currently undertaken by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) using wooden finger-posts. Some people at the meeting felt more prominent signs/notices are needed to ensure people are aware Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPS) have been replaced by Restricted Byways and therefore public vehicles are not legally allowed to use the routes. Angela Shepherd, SDJC, will investigate options.
- 5.3 PC Hillman outlined the process when an incident is reported. The information is verified and the status of the land involved is clarified. Where a registration number is reported this is checked on the Police National Computer (PNC) and the registered owner is sent a letter informing them of the complaint and a T51/1 form requesting the identity of the driver at the time of the incident. The driver is subject of a verbal warning or a Section 59 warning (Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) with a motor vehicle, under the Police Reform Act 2002). This warning is recorded on the PNC to alert other officers. The Section 59 Warning lasts for 12 months and if further incidents of ASB with a motor vehicle involving the driver are reported the vehicle will be seized. The owner has to pay £105 to recover the vehicle immediately and £12 a day thereafter. The vehicle can be seized each time ASB is reported and the 12 months extends from that subsequent date. After 28 days the vehicle will be crushed.
- 5.4. People are encouraged to continue reporting incidents - 0845 6070999 or [www.southdownsonline.org/pathwatch](http://www.southdownsonline.org/pathwatch). Press Releases to advertise the scheme are being sent to relevant publications and organisations.
- 5.5. The next meeting will be held in June 2007.

## **6. WSCC Rights of Way (ROW) Committee Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and Items of Interest to the Forum**

6.1 The following recommendation was agreed as a result of the meeting:-

- **Agenda Item 7: Highways Act 1980 Section 26 – Bolney: A23 Public Path Creation Order**

The RoW Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and Development on a proposal to create by order a new footpath (using Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980) utilising the existing concrete farm accommodation track to link the western ends of Footpath nos. 15 and 16 at Bolney. The owners of the land were not agreeable to the proposal to establish the link, which would have restored safe public pedestrian continuity westwards by giving walkers access to a grade separated crossing of the A23.

The Committee voted not to accept the recommendation by 5 votes to 4 and therefore resolved that an order, under Section 26 of the Highways Act 1980, to create a new footpath link to the western ends of Footpaths 15 and 16 at Bolney should not be made.

## **7. WSCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)**

7.1 The final version of the Plan is scheduled for Cabinet Member approval in May, after which it will be published.

## **8. Access to Inland Waterways Bill**

8.1 The Bill was due to have its second reading in the House of Commons on 23 March. Due to time constraints, the second reading has been re-scheduled to Friday 18 May 2007.

## **9. South Downs Way Walk**

9.1 The annual South Downs Way walk will run from 1-9 June 2007. Organised by Footprints of Sussex on behalf of WSCC, the walk starts at Beachy Head in East Sussex and finishes nine days later at the statue of King Alfred in Winchester. Further details from 01903 813381 or [www.southdownsway.com](http://www.southdownsway.com)

## **10. Walking West Sussex Festival**

10.1 The Weald and Downland Museum, Singleton, will be the base for the WSCC Walks Festival which runs from 10-14 October 2007. Further details will be available from 01903 812727, [festivalwalks@btinternet.com](mailto:festivalwalks@btinternet.com) or [www.westsussex.gov.uk/walking](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/walking)

## **11. Serpents Trail**

- 11.1 The leaflet for the 64 mile route that snakes through the Sussex greensand hills, passing close to Haslemere, Petersfield, Petworth and Midhurst, is now available. For further details please contact the South Downs Joint Committee on 01243 558700.

## **12. Literary Trail**

- 12.1 A new and exciting walking trail through the heart of West Sussex was launched by Louise Goldsmith, WSCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy, on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April. Further information about this 55 mile route from Horsham to Chichester can be found by visiting [www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk](http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk) or by calling 01903 813381.

## **13. Accessible Natural Greenspace**

- 13.1 Natural England and the Forestry Commission have published 'An analysis of accessible natural greenspace provision in the South East' outlining the results of a major analysis of natural greenspace provision across the region. Patrick McKernan gave a presentation to The Forum on this project at the October 2006 meeting. The report can be downloaded in pdf format from: - [www.forestry.gov.uk/southeastengland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/southeastengland)

## **14. Neighbouring LAFs**

- 14.1 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:

- 14.2 Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

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

- Presentations by Bill Jenman, South Downs National Trail Manager, and Adam Bates, Head of Tourism, Brighton & Hove County Council
- Contribution to the South Downs Access Forum
- National Parks Authority consultation
- Stanmer House planning application
- Date of next meeting 31 May 2007

- 14.3 East Sussex Local Access Forum – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007

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

- Rights of Way & Countryside Management Group Structure and Budget
- Byway Claims
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Draft Consultation Progress Report (approx 200 responses)
- Date of next meeting 12 June 2007 which includes presentation on fund bidding

- 14.4 Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) –4<sup>th</sup> April 2007  
<http://www.countrysideaccessforum.hants.org.uk/>
- Coastal access discussion and site visit with New Forest Access Forum members
  - Hampshire Wildlife Trust policy on public access
  - Report back from the vehicles task group
  - Management of public access at sites near Winchester
- 14.5 Surrey Local Access Forum – (SLAF) – 22 January 2007
- [http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE\\_RTF/Countryside+Access+Forum?opendocument](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Countryside+Access+Forum?opendocument)
  - Draft Sustainable Countryside Access in Surrey
  - RoWIP
  - Natural England support for LAFs
  - Rural Payments Agency
  - Equestrian use of Commons
  - Date of next meeting 23 April

## 15. Documents available to view at the meeting

The following may be of interest to Forum Members:

- CAFWS response on the WSCC RoWIP and a summary of statistics from the consultation questionnaire
- Correspondence regarding the WSCC Fundamental Service Review
- Correspondence regarding WSCC funding of the RoWIP
- Letter from Barry Gardiner, MP, Minister for Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs
- Responses from CAFWS, WSCC and the South Downs Joint Committee regarding the Commons Act (2006) consultation
- West Sussex Design Principles
- 2005/6 CAFWS Annual Report
- Brighton & Hove RoWIP
- Solent Countryside Access Plan (CAP)
- Access Newsletters from DEFRA
- British Canoe Union literature
- Walking West Sussex Festival 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> October 2007, based at the Weald & Downland Museum, Singleton
- Discovering Lost Ways e-bulletin
- An analysis of accessible natural greenspace provision in the South East
- Minutes of the Southern Local Access Forum Officers Group meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> March
- Minutes of neighbouring LAFs (as available)
- Minutes of Rights of Way meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and associated reports

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April 2007