

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008**

**General Report**

**1. Sustrans wins £50m through the People's £50 Millions Lottery Giveaway – Shoreham footbridge set to benefit**

1.1 Renewing the narrow Shoreham Harbour footbridge is the local scheme included in Sustran's successful Connect2 bid. The Sustrans success means it will contribute an estimated £770,000 towards replacing the 1920s footbridge in Shoreham High Street, but other finance will be needed. It aims to improve pedestrian/cycle connections from the beach to the town centre, Shoreham station and other local destinations, including schools. This will create such a direct and convenient network of routes that walking and cycling will become the natural way of covering many journeys in this area. It will connect to, and further enhance, the east - west coastal route which extends as far as Worthing. A timescale for the work has yet to be announced.

1.2 Renewing the bridge at Shoreham is one of 79 schemes which the national cycling charity Sustrans will help finance.

**2. Permissive Access - Environmental Stewardship, Higher Level Scheme; Crows Hall Farm (near Lavant)**

2.1 West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) has recently been notified that a permissive footpath has been agreed, through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding, at Crows Hall Farm. This route links bridleway numbers 481 and 475 (approx grid ref 483433 111925) – details are available to view at the meeting.

2.2 Permissive access through Stewardship is welcome to make links in the network, however in this case it appears there is a missed opportunity to provide access for cyclists and horse riders. Jane Noble, WSSCC Senior Access Officer, has been in contact with Natural England to ask if this route can be upgraded to a permissive bridleway. She has also requested to be consulted on future applications.

**3. A27 Equestrian Crossings**

3.1 Interroute, working on behalf of the Highways Agency, has confirmed that the construction of the equestrian crossing at Castle Goring is currently programmed for the 2009/10 financial year, and the crossing at Hammerpot is programmed for the 2010/11 financial year. Both of these improvement schemes are subject to the availability of funding.

3.2 Maps of the approximate areas of the crossings will be available to view at the meeting.

#### **4. WSCC Walking West Sussex Festival 2007 and 2008**

- 4.1 136 feedback questionnaires were returned from the 275 walkers who took part in the Festival (nearly 50% return rate). Only 2% of respondents said they wouldn't come again. 40% were experienced walkers (confident using maps) and 49% described themselves as intermediate walkers; happy walking, but unconfident exploring new areas without a leader. Full results are available to view at the meeting. A picture summary of the Walking West Sussex Festival 2007 is also available to view at the meeting.
- 4.2 Plans are underway for the next Walking West Sussex Festival to be based at Amberley Museum between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2008. As well as appealing to existing walkers the Festival will concentrate on broadening walking audiences and it is hoped Poems and Puddings, WSCCs arts based project, will once again be a partner. It is also planned to include sessions on map reading for the less confident walker.

#### **5. Access Newsletters – LAF Members (Natural England), Defra**

- 5.1 Access Newsletter 28; December 2007 - Defra.

The latest edition of the Access newsletter reports that the summary of responses to the Consultation on Proposals to Improve Access to the English Coast has now been published. From analysis of the responses the Government concluded that the overall weight of the responses supported Natural England's recommendation that new legislation was the best way forward for improving access to the coast. It has therefore been announced that the Government intends to legislate so that the public will have the right to walk around the English coast for the first time. Detail of the legislation is now being developed and further work is being undertaken to look at some of the main areas of concern that came out of the consultation, including issues of liability, costs, compensation, estuaries and higher rights. Visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coast-access/index.htm> for further information.

- 5.2 Copies of the Newsletter 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.
- 5.3 The recreation, rights of way and open access elements of Defra's work have now been combined into a new Recreation and Access Team wef 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007. The revised team structure will be available to view at the meeting.
- 5.4 The Winter edition of the South East Regional LAF Newsletter produced by Natural England (NE) has been sent to CAFWS members for information. The Newsletter includes an article on Strategic Development co-written by the CAFWS Secretary.

#### **6. Regional Event for LAF Members organised by NE**

- 6.1 The provisional date for all day training event is Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008 and will be held in London. The event will be open to

two members per LAF and is likely to have workshop sessions in the afternoon.

## **7. Best Value Performance Indicators 178 (BVPI 178) – Rights of Way**

7.1 BVPI178, which measures the percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public, has been removed from the national portfolio of performance indicators.

7.2 BVPIs are a statutory set of indicators developed by Government Departments to measure the performance of local authorities, that is, all local authorities must measure themselves against BVPIs. The data is collected and audited annually by the Audit Commission.

## **8. Development Planning - Green Infrastructure**

8.1 'Green infrastructure' is a term now commonly associated with development planning. It is an all encompassing term which includes all physical aspects of the natural environment including water, soils, air, biodiversity, sustainability and landscape and as well more 'people based' aspects such as recreation and tourism.

8.2 The need to incorporate and plan for green infrastructure is now high on the agenda and if 'planned in' from the start with everything from linking open space areas, land bridges across roads, using channels and streams as corridors through development, access and recreation routes and areas etc. then many benefits will result.

## **9. Access Acronyms**

9.1 WSCC has produced a document of many access related acronyms – copies have previously been circulated to Forum Members but further copies can be obtained from Fiona MacLeod or can be viewed on the CAFWS website. [www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cafws)

## **10. WSCC Rights of Way (ROW) Committee Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and Other Items of Interest to the Forum**

10.1 Following a Public Inquiry regarding access at Pitshill, the Inspector had upheld the objections to the diversion and extinguishment orders made by Chichester District Council on Footpaths 1027/1, 1049, 1052 and Bridleway 1027 and had declined to confirm the orders.

10.2 A copy of the full unconfirmed ROW Committee Minutes will be available to view at the meeting.

10.3 At their December 2007 meeting, North Chichester County Local Committee approved the WSCC recommendation to advertise the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) regarding Cocking, Graffham and Heyshott Restricted Byway 952.

## 11. Temporary Path Closures

- 11.1 It is the County Council's aim to keep paths open wherever possible, minimising inconvenience to the public. Unfortunately it is sometimes necessary to close public rights of way to the public. Closures are made through TROs which can either be permanent (although the term 'permanent' is not used in the legislation) or temporary. All closures details, including dates of closure, maps showing route/s affected and alternative routes if available are available on site and on the WSCC website ([www.westsussex.gov.uk/prow](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/prow)). The list of temporary closures will also be available to view at the meeting. At the current time (10/1/08) there are 15 paths listed.
- 11.2 In all cases the main reason for this is to protect the safety of the public, for example:
- a path may have suffered damage and as a result become unsafe for use, perhaps due to the collapse of a bridge structure
  - a path may be closed while improvement works to the surface improve future usability are carried out
  - a path to may be closed while works adjacent to or over a public path take place, for example due to a residential development.
- 11.3 WSCC has a TRO policy which is available on its website (<http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/TROPolicyDec2005.pdf>), however this mainly deals with permanent TROs. A copy will be available to view at the meeting.

## 12 Neighbouring LAFs

- 12.1 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:
- 12.2 Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum – 25 October 2007 (AGM)
- <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=b1116054>
- Election of Chairman and Vice-chairman
  - CRoW Act 200 – Section 69 commencement
  - RoWIP – Final version relevant to B&H Committee 8th November 2007
  - Discovering Lost Ways – NE can't expect LAFs to be involved without resources; urban paths
  - SDAF – ideas to revitalise Sub Forum
  - Developers Contributions Supplementary Planning Guidance has been is drafted for LDF
  - Future work programme
- Date of next meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008
- 12.3 East Sussex Local Access Forum – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007
- <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/localaccessforum/default.htm>

- New Interreg Funding Bid
  - Future management of the Forum (NB - Andrew Whitnall has now left East Sussex. The new contact for LAF is [rachel.solomons@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.solomons@eastsussex.gov.uk) and for RoWIP it is [andrew.legresley@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.legresley@eastsussex.gov.uk) )
  - RoWIP launch photo opportunity at nearby Wealdway
  - Report on RoW Parish Event
  - South Downs Access Forum Report for information
  - Response to consultation; NCN21
  - Access Development & Forum Officer's Report
- Date of next meeting 5th March 2008

#### 12.4 Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) –17<sup>th</sup> October 2007

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

- Site Visit with Groundwork Solent to Country Park under construction at Alver Valley, Gosport
- Forum Officers report; Small Grants Scheme
- Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman
- Response to consultations; Coastal Access and right to apply for diversions and extinguishments
- Update on works to open up and promote Open Access Land
- LTP projects, assessing possible projects for funding
- Work programme for 2008
- Dogs in the countryside
- RoWIP updates (Countryside Access Plans, Southampton and Portsmouth)

Date of next meeting; 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008

#### 12.5 Surrey Local Access Forum (SLAF) – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007

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

- Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Access Management, presentation by Natural England
- Disposal of Surplus Land
- Local Development Framework; to draft a statement for possible inclusion in each of the 11 borough/district council's Local Development Frameworks
- Discovering Lost Ways – to respond to Discovering Lost Ways consultation
- Foot & Mouth; to review Defra and Surrey County Council's (SCC) response to recent outbreak
- Consider recent Government guidance concerning a new standard application form for planning applications
- Approve the Annual Report
- Work plan for 2008

Date of next meeting; 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008

### **13. Documents available to view at the meeting**

#### 13.1 The following may be of interest to Forum Members:

- ·Summary of responses to the consultation proposals to improve access to the English Coast; Defra 2007
- ·High Weald Forest Design plan information
- ·South Downs Way Management Plan; consultation draft
- ·CRoW Act 2000 Section 69 + Guidance notes; Making stiles and gates easier for those with mobility problems
- ·Sustrans Connect2; Projects in successful bid – April 2007
- ·Permissive access – details of HLS access at Crows Hall Farm
- ·Equestrian crossings of A27; Maps of Castle Goring and Hammerpot – locations of proposed crossings
- ·Walking West Sussex Festival 2007 - Feedback questionnaire response summary and picture summary
- ·Access Newsletter No 29; Defra
- ·Defra Recreation and Access team structure
- ·From the 4 Corners; SE LAF regional newsletter; Natural England LAF – Winter 2007
- ·Access acronyms
- ·WSCC TRO policy and unavailable paths list
- ·Minutes of Rights of Way meeting held 19th November 2007 and associated reports
- ·Minutes of neighbouring LAF meetings (as available)
- ·Neighbouring LAFs meeting dates 2008
- ·Brighton and Hove LAF Annual Report
- ·Waymark; magazine of the Institute of Public Rights of Way (IPROW) Management – Autumn 2007
- ·Press articles mentioning CAFWS members;
- ·-Bike ban would block horse-drawn carriages (Re; Graffham 952)
- ·-Ramblers hit out at 'Cereal Offender' farmers who block county footpaths

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