

Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS)

At a meeting of the Forum held at Clair Hall, Haywards Heath, on 4th October 2006.

Present:

Mrs R Perrin (Chairman)

Mr B Acraman	Mrs H Baldwin	Mrs J Beuzeval
Mr P Brown	Mr D Deedman	Mr J Emrich
Mr S Evans	Mrs M Gue	Mrs A Janes
Mr G Jones	Mr D Ribbens	Mr T White
Mr D Whyberd	Mrs S Wright	

WSCC Officers: David Marshall, Christine Luff, Jane Noble, Fiona MacLeod

Presenters: - Patrick McKernan, South East Native Woodlands Officer
James Ort, South Downs Access Forum

Apologies:-

69. Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Belden, Mr T Passmore and Mr N Sloan.
70. The Chairman advised the Forum that she had received a letter of resignation from Mr P Longley, Low Weald sub fora and confirmed that Mr P Quinton was no longer a member of the main Forum.

Welcome

71. The Chairman welcomed the speakers, observers and members of the public to the meeting.
72. The Chairman introduced the four new members of the Forum (Mrs J Beuzeval, Mr J Emrich, Mrs M Gue and Mr D Whyberd) who in turn gave a brief resume of their interests and background.

Declarations of Interest

73. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

74. **Resolved:** That the minutes of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex meeting held on 21st June 2006 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

75. The Forum Secretary updated members on item 12 Shoreham slipway. She had now been advised by the County Local Committee (CLC) that this item has been deferred until further notice from the meeting to be held on 7th December. This was to enable the topic to be given a full hearing with representatives from planning and port authorities attending.
76. David Marshall confirmed that the new signage following the reclassification of RUPPs to Restricted Byways had been included as part of the routine maintenance process. The South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) is responsible for maintaining signage within the South Downs AONB and the majority of Restricted Byways in West Sussex fall within the AONB. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is working with the SDJC to explore the most appropriate measures to be taken towards using the new signage in their area. Consideration is being given towards the possibility of attaching a notice to newly signed Restricted Byways offering information to the public regarding their new legal status.
77. Jane Noble had spoken to the WSCC cycle training team who advised that road safety is their paramount concern. The topic of cyclist etiquette was raised during a recent workshop on the South Downs Way Management Plan and speakers on cycling on the South Downs had attended the recent South Downs Access Forum meeting. A suggestion raised at the workshop was that bells could be provided for cyclists as part of an education programme.
78. Mr Whyberd commented that cyclists often travel at high speed and are difficult to hear from behind and queried whether other users should be expected to move out of the way. This is equally relevant to walkers and equestrians.
79. Christine Luff clarified that the law requires cyclists using bridleways to give way to pedestrians and persons on horseback.
80. Glynn Jones thanked Jane Noble for her investigations into this matter.
81. **Resolved – that the Forum Secretary write to Natural England and lobby for a Code of Conduct for cyclists to be introduced.**
82. In response to a question from Mr Deedman, Christine Luff advised that 63 Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) applications received since January 2005 have been programmed for checking for possible exemption under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Urgent Matters

83. There were no urgent matters for the Forum to discuss.

Accessible Natural Greenspace in the South East Region

84. Patrick McKernan presented an insight into the recently completed project on mapping and analysing accessible greenspace in the South East.
85. The Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission funded the project in partnership with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
86. All accessible greenspace greater than two hectares in the South East had been mapped and analysed. Mr McKernan emphasised that although this data is very useful, there is no substitution for knowledge on the ground
87. Various maps with overlapping levels of details were shown to the Forum regarding the type and size of greenspace available to meet varying criteria.
 - Woodland accounts for 57% of the mapped greenspace.
 - In West Sussex there is a noticeable gap of mapped accessible green space in an area south of Crawley extending down into the Low Weald
 - All areas of 'access' land that have been identified as part of this project that are to be put forward to OS for inclusion on its maps are in public ownership.
88. It was observed that distances had been measured in kilometres, although most signage on the ground was measured in miles.
89. The final report is due for publication in October and further work will be undertaken by Natural England.
90. Following publication the local data will be released to access managers and available for use together with a 'tool kit'.
91. James Ort commented that as Natural England plan to use the model there is a risk that potentially new high quality access may be overlooked if the map showed the area as having sufficient access already available.
92. Patrick McKernon responded that the model should not be used as the sole arbiter and that Natural England are aware of such concerns.
- 93. Resolved – Forum Secretary to raise Forum concerns with Natural England**

Mapping Open Access

94. James Ort gave a presentation on the recently completed South Downs Open Access Mapping Project, funded by a grant from the South Downs Sustainable Development Fund, the South Downs Society, Sussex Area Ramblers' Association and Paul Millmore.
95. The project looked at mapping all non CROW Act access land that did not already appear on Ordnance Survey (OS) Explorer Series maps.

96. A contractor was commissioned on a 3-month term from the South Downs Joint Committee to gather and map the permissive access land throughout the proposed South Downs National Park Boundary. Approximately 4000ha of identified land had been submitted to OS. The South Downs Joint Committee had also signed an agreement with the OS allowing it to pass on a wealth of data in the future. It was hoped that the South Downs Access Forum could help identify any inaccuracies on the maps and get them changed.
97. The Q&A session is summarised below:
- The OS are very flexible regarding the use of data and subsequent outcomes. For example, access entry points, picnic sites, and toilets can now be added to Explorer Series maps and if considered appropriate, car parks could be taken out if they were being overused.
 - The OS would consider mapping permissive access land that had a 5 year minimum agreement
 - This is not a pilot, as equivalent mapping had been completed in other parts of the country.

South Downs Management Plan Consultation

98. The Forum considered the Comments Log of members responses. (copy attached to the signed minutes)
99. Jane Noble highlighted that she was disappointed with the low level of response received on both this and the Draft Diversity Plan and welcomed members feedback on the reasons.
100. Several members commented that they had already responded to various consultations on behalf of the organisations they represent, and had received the same documentation from external bodies such as Parish Councils for comment. As a result, this had led to time constraints and duplication of effort.
101. The Chairman suggested that, as members need to be given the opportunity to comment from a Forum perspective, there would be scope for them to submit a précis of their comments that were relevant to the Forum. Where this is not appropriate, the Comments Log should still be used.
102. Alternatively, a workshop could be run on consultations if requested by members.
- 103. Resolved – members to provide either a précis of salient points from documentation sent to other external organisations, or use the Comments Log, whichever is the most appropriate format.**
104. The Forum agreed that although Tricia Butcher does not sit on the Forum she should be included in the consultation process as Chairman of the High Weald sub forum.

105. The Questionnaire relating to Ambition 8 on Recreation and Access was reviewed at the meeting and results documented. Members commented that public transport would need to be subsidised although this would not necessarily control the growth of car use.

Draft Diversity Action Plan Consultation

106. The Forum noted the response sent by Jane Noble on their behalf. (copy attached to the signed minutes)

CAFWS Annual Report

107. Jane Noble advised the Forum that the Annual Report had been delayed at the printers and will be sent out under separate cover.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

108. Jane Noble notified the Forum that the Cabinet Member had now approved the Draft Plan, and that it would be issued for public consultation on 18th October 2006. The end date for the consultation will be confirmed with the covering letter to go out with the Draft Plan.
109. A workshop had been arranged for members on 13th December to assist in the consultation process from a Forum perspective. Members were asked to use the Comments Log rather than the generic questionnaire. David Marshall emphasised that this meeting is critical as consideration of the Draft Plan is the most important piece of work for the Forum to date.
110. Input from the sub fora would be important and welcomed at the workshop, given the valuable role they have played to date. It was agreed that the sub fora chairmen would arrange mini workshops and feedback into the main December workshop.
111. It would be necessary for the sub fora to support these meetings themselves. The Low and High Wealds will hold a joint workshop.
112. The Chairman suggested that members should consider recommending an additional section in the RoWIP called Future Ambitions, which in effect would be a 'wish list' from the Forum.
113. Members discussed the Questionnaire and an additional box for general comments will be added. A test run will be carried out before going to print.

Action: Forum Secretary to arrange Workshop

'Connect 2' Big Lottery Living Landmarks Project

114. Jane Noble told members that Sustrans had invited suggestions from the WSCC for their 'Connect 2' project that had been shortlisted for the Big Lottery Living Landmark Award in Autumn 2007. WSCC would like the Forum's input before making its response to the request.

115. The Forum discussed various potentially suitable projects for consideration, including the Old Tollbridge, Shoreham, Petersfield to Rogate disused railway track, and the Downs Link extension.
116. The Vice-Chairman pointed out that the Forum needs to be realistic regarding timescales for submission of projects (end of October 2006) and that many schemes had already been identified in the RoWIP.
- 117 Resolved – Jane Noble to report back to the WSCC officer responsible for responding to Sustrans with members suggestions.**

General Report

118. The Forum noted a general report on a range of issues and interest to the Forum (copy attached to the signed minutes)
119. The Forum agreed that the new regional Newsletter created by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) should continue, together with increased local training opportunities
- 120 Resolved – Forum Secretary to write to Natural England to encourage their continuing support for the Newsletter and localised training**

Matters Suitable for Publicity

121. The Annual Report and appropriate covering letter will provide a vehicle to further publicise the Forum and its activities, including input into the RoWIP.

Agenda items for consideration for the next Meeting of the Forum

122. The Forum Secretary confirmed that Steve Brown and John Kilford had agreed to speak on the planning system. A speaker from District Council will also be sought.
123. The RoWIP consultation process: report back on the responses received.

Date of Next Meeting

124. The next meeting of the Countryside Access Forum will be held at 10.30am on Wednesday 24th January 2007 at the Village Hall, Billingshurst.
125. Future meeting dates confirmed as:
- Wednesday 18th April 2007
 - Wednesday 18th July 2007
 - Wednesday 17th October 2007
 - Wednesday 23rd January 2008
126. Venues to be confirmed at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm

Chairman