

## WEST SUSSEX LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

At a meeting of the Forum held at Park North, Horsham District Council, Horsham on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

Present: Mr. I. Elliott (Chairman)

Mrs. H. Baldwin	Mr. D. Deedman	Mrs. R. Perrin
Mr. P. Belden	Mr. S. Evans	Mr. N. Sloan
Mr. R. Bidwell	Mrs. A. Janes	Mr. W. Trinick
Mr. P. Brown	Mr. T. Passmore	Mr. T. Whitbread
		Mr. T. White

In attendance: Tricia Butcher, Cath Hart, Lucy Miles, Tim Squire, Keith Tyrell, Andy Whitnall.

Officers in attendance: Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Christine Luff, David Marshall, Rosemary Pugh, Roland Seber.

### APOLOGIES

27. Apologies for absence were received from Bill Acraman, John Couzens, Glynn Jones and Shirley Wright.

### WELCOME

28. The Chairman welcomed Tricia Butcher, Chairman, High Weald Sub-Forum, Cath Hart, Access Officer, Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, Lucy Miles, Forum Officer, Kent Local Access Forum, Tim Squire, Rights of Way Officer, Brighton and Hove City Council and Secretary of the Brighton and Hove Access Forum, Keith Tyrell, Access Officer, South Downs Access Forum, Andy Whitnall, Access Officer, East Sussex Local Access Forum.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

29. There were no declarations of interest.

### MINUTES

30. Resolved – That the minutes of the West Sussex Local Access Forum meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed as a correct record.
31. The Forum noted that responses to DEFRA consultations under sections 42 and 38 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 had been dispatched.

32. It was noted that a letter had been sent to DEFRA in support of Hampshire Countryside Access Forum on the issue of excepted land. Neither Hampshire Countryside Access Forum or West Sussex Local Access Forum had received a reply.

#### MATTERS ARISING

33. On minute 13 (Annual Report), the Forum noted that the Annual Report 2003/2004 had been printed and that it would be distributed by the end of July. Copies of the Annual Report were circulated at the meeting.

**Action: Rosemary Pugh**

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SUB-FORUMS

34. The Forum noted that the South Downs Access Forum (SDAF) had agreed to adopt its original terms of reference and the position taken by the West Sussex Local Access Forum.

#### STANDING ORDERS FOR WEST SUSSEX LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

35. The Chairman reported that standing orders were being prepared for the West Sussex Local Access Forum (WSLAF). The standing orders would help to identify WSLAF as an independent body.

**Action: Mark Henshall**

#### RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

36. Cath Hart presented a report on the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) for Hampshire (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members were given details about the methods used for research and production of the two pilot ROWIPs in the Forest of Bere and the Forest of Eversley. Cath Hart explained that in addition to the 3000 miles of rights of way in the county, other resources used by the public for countryside recreation e.g. Forestry Commission land were also reviewed. Using the experience gained from the pilot plans it was recognised that local knowledge and staff involvement was highly beneficial and the proposed process for the remaining five plans for Hampshire reflected this.
37. Cath Hart advised that the role of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum (HCAF) had been to provide advice on strategic matters relating to the Countryside Access Plan approach as well as actively contributing towards pilot plans through workshops and individual member research. The HCAF were asked to decide on the prioritisation of key issues for the two pilot projects. It was intended that the final pilot access plans would be completed following public consultation by the winter of this year. Cath Hart added that for the remaining 5 Access Plans, strategic advice would continue to be sought from the HCAF but that more locally based focus groups of users and landowners would be formed to guide and give input on the plans.

38. The Chairman enquired about how the South Downs area of Hampshire would be integrated into the Access Plans. Cath Hart advised that members and officers of the SDAF and the East Hampshire JAC would provide local knowledge and advice.
39. Members discussed the issue of conflict between landowners and the public in the countryside. Cath Hart advised that education of the public and in particular informing the public about acceptable behaviour in the countryside was considered to be an important role for the local access forums.
40. Members agreed that a separate survey to obtain the specific views of landowners and providers of access be carried out. Lisa Creaye-Griffin agreed to consult the National Farmers' Union and the Country Landowners Association about the best way to contact and liaise with farmers and landowners in order to obtain their views.

**Action: Lisa Creaye-Griffin**

41. Members received and noted a report on the survey to rights of way users and landowners in West Sussex (copy attached to the signed minutes). There was some doubt amongst members about the usefulness of the quantitative data and it was suggested that qualitative information would have been more beneficial.
42. Resolved – that the West Sussex Highway Authority be advised that the following four key themes should be the priorities for its Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
  - Maintain the existing rights of way network to a high standard
  - Improve links to and between communities for all users
  - Provide routes to encourage sustainable transport
  - Creation of safe, circular routes for all users.
43. David Marshall advised that any plan must be set in the context of what is actually deliverable and that the timescale of the inspection and maintenance programme of the rights of way network be borne in mind.
44. Resolved – that all the other issues raised in the West Sussex Local Access Forum's Rights of Way Improvement Plan survey report, views of the sub-forums and the West Sussex Local Access Forum workshops be passed to the Highway Authority as live issues requiring attention.
45. Lisa Creaye-Griffin advised that an initial draft of the West Sussex ROWIP would be completed by November 2004. The plan would be map based and divided into four chapters based on the four sub-forum areas. In order for the WSLAF to advise and give input to the plan it was proposed that a small group of members be set up to meet regularly with officers of the Highway Authority. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman (Ronnie Perrin), Ann Janes, Nigel Sloan and William Trinick form the group and that Trevor Passmore would be asked to join in the absence of a member with a landowner area of interest.

**Action: Roland Seber**

## MEANS OF REACHING ACCESS LAND (COMMON LAND) – AN UPDATE

46. The Forum received and noted a report on the three parcels of registered common land that have no direct access via the existing public highway/rights of way network, (copy attached to the signed minutes).

### 1. CL116 Pads Wood, Compton

47. Christine Luff reported that the landowner, Mr Bray, had agreed to permissive use of an existing track to Pads Wood. He would not wish parking to be allowed in his private car park. David Marshall advised that part of the route was a cross country course used by horse riders and that cyclists also used the route. Apart from being valuable as a means of reaching the common land, it is a particularly attractive route in its own right.

### 2. CL308 Waltham Brooks, Coldwaltham

48. Christine Luff advised that there was little likelihood of an agreement being made to create access to this island site in the foreseeable future. Where no agreement can be achieved, under Section 58 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Countryside Agency can make application to the Secretary of State for a creation order. Members agreed that this site did not warrant taking action to pursue a creation order at present. The ROWIP would note the lack of access.

### 3. CL130 Marehill Common, Pulborough

49. Christine Luff reported that the landowners – the Trustees of the Leaconfield Estate had indicated that they were prepared to allow access to the registered common land by way of the tarmacked access drive or the twitten from footpath 2335. Discussions were continuing.

## FORUM OFFICER'S REPORT

50. The Forum received and noted a report by the Forum Officer (copy attached to the signed minutes).
51. Roland Seber reported that the bid for grant aid from the Access Incentive Grant Scheme had been successful. He advised that priority would be given to sites which were most sensitive in terms of nature conservation and high visitor pressure.
53. Rosemary Pugh reported that a letter from the Chairman to all parish councils was to be included in the next edition of the County Circular due to be published later this month.
54. In reponse to questions asked by the sub-forums, Christine Luff advised that permissive paths would be shown on Ordnance Survey maps but only if a formal agreement had been entered into.
55. On the suggestion that the number of Rights of Way Committee meetings be increased Christine Luff explained that it would not be possible to generate the extra

work/reports that would be needed to justify additional meetings with current staffing levels.

56. Phil Beldon requested that West Sussex County Council as the Highway Authority write to the Countryside Agency to fund a 'launch event' at the time of the commencement date (September 19<sup>th</sup> 2004) for opening access land. He suggested that this event be tailored to the characteristics of the south east. It was agreed that the Highway Authority would be asked to co-ordinate efforts to organise such an event with other neighbouring local authorities in area 1, East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and Surrey County Council.

**Action: Lisa Creaye-Griffin**

#### SOUTHDOWN ACCESS FORUM – MAPPING SUBGROUPS

57. A document on general principles produced by the SDAF, on behalf of its mapping sub-group was tabled and noted.
58. Resolved – that, given the late tabling of this document, the principles would be forwarded by the Forum to the Highway Authority, without commitment, requesting its views on the application of those principles. A report, taking account of the response of the Highway Authority, should be prepared for the October meeting of the Forum by the Forum's Access Officer.

**Action: Roland Seber**

#### MOTORISED VEHICLES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

59. It was agreed that the item on motorised vehicles in the countryside be deferred to the next meeting due to the absence of the members of the forum whose the areas of interest were particularly relevant to this discussion.

#### AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

60. The agenda for the next meeting will include:
- A report on the guidelines produced by the SDAF mapping sub-groups
  - A discussion paper on motorised vehicles in the countryside
  - A draft of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

#### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

61. The next meeting of the West Sussex Local Access Forum will be held at 10.30 am on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2004 at Billingshurst Village Hall

CHAIRMAN