



JLAF 07

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 01JUL05

Date: Friday, 1st July 2005

Time: 2:00pm

Venue: The Carter Room, Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU.

Present: David Colbourne, Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), William Dawson, Ann Fay, Cllr Howard Gawler (South Gloucestershire Council), Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Robert Killen, Mark McGuinness, Alun Morgan (JLAF Chair), Ray Newbigin (JLAF Vice Chair), Christopher Orlik (Bristol City Council), Ron Phelps, Ken Scott, Janet Wallis (JLAF members)

Tina Bath (Mendip Hills AONB), Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Amanda Goverd (Wansdyke Bridleways and Byways Association), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Ann Partridge (South Gloucestershire Council), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Anita Walker (South Gloucestershire Council)

Action

1	<p>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair Members decided that the period of office for the chair and vice chair should be two years. The period of offices of the chair and vice chair will therefore be until the election of a chair and vice chair respectively at the first meeting of the JLAF after 30th June 2007. Alun Morgan was elected chair and Ray Newbigin was elected vice chair. The meeting was handed over to Alun Morgan.</p>	
2	<p>New JLAF Appointments New members have been appointed to the JLAF: Peter Gould, Mark McGuinness, Ken Scott and Margaret Wilson. Bill Blyth, Rae Harris, Angela Nicoll and Chris Weedon are no longer members of the JLAF. The Chair proposed that a letter be sent to the four previous members thanking them for their contributions to the JLAF over the past two years and welcoming them to future JLAF meetings. This was agreed.</p>	Chair
3	<p>Introductions</p>	
4	<p>Apologies Peter Hart, Andrew Short, Adam Stratton, Margaret Wilson, Robin Winfield, Paul Wynne (JLAF members)</p> <p>Denise Chandler (Wiltshire County Council), Mark Connelly (Cotswolds Conservation Board), Oliver Giles (Kennet and Avon Canal Rural Transport Partnership), Cllr Pat Hockey (South Gloucestershire Council), John Nickerson (Avon Wildlife Trust), Richard Phillips (North Somerset Council), Tamsin Phipps (British Canoe Union), Jo Ronald (Cotswold Way), John Roy (Bristol City Council), Chris Weedon (Forest of Avon),</p>	
5	<p>Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest raised under this item.</p>	
6	<p>Minutes of the last meeting on 4th March 2005 The minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting</p>	

7	<p>Draft Annual Report JLAF Second Annual Report 2004-2005</p> <p>It was suggested that at 'Meetings of the JLAF' it be made clear that there were three meetings of the JLAF Access Land discussion group during the year. The Report was approved subject to the above amendment.</p>	Secretary
8	<p>Access Land Site visit of 24th May 2005 and proposed letter</p> <p>There was a summary of a meeting by the access land discussion group to view an area of access land at Lansdown on the northern edge of Bath. The piece of land was highlighted as being particularly valuable, having similar potential to the Bath Skyline on the southern edge of Bath. There are difficulties in the authority reaching agreement for access land improvements on this piece of access land that is in private ownership. It was suggested that the JLAF, as an independent body, send a letter to the landowners. A draft of this letter was considered by the meeting.</p> <p>Discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of mapping access land, suggesting that the consultation process should have been sufficient for an objection to be lodged. The necessity of any mention of the mapping process in the letter was questioned. • The diplomatic tone of the letter was complimented, though a discussion on the importance of adherence to legal obligations was raised. It was suggested that as a first approach, an emollient tone would be most appropriate. It was also suggested that it would be most likely to result in improved access. • The nature of improvements to access, with support for the suggestion of a route across the top (northern) edge of the site that would link the public footpaths with the park and ride side of the site. • The council policy of the use of stiles, as in the letter. In brief summary, the council, and the Access Management Grant Scheme, aim for the least restrictive option, so kissing gates in preference to stiles. It was suggested that the letter be changed to 'crossing points' to recognise this policy. <p>The JLAF supported the sending of letter to the landowner, with suggested amendments.</p> <p>It was requested that the authorities give the JLAF a summary of the works planned or carried out on access land in the area.</p>	Chair/ Secretary Authorities
9	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</p> <p>There will be a joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (the ROWIP) produced by Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils. This was introduced as an important piece of work for the JLAF to be involved in over the next two years. This agenda item had as a prompt a letter of ROWIP suggestions from Ann Fay (Background paper).</p> <p>The officers suggested that the ROWIP could help to improve communication across council departments, could be an opportunity for long term projects given its 10 year lifespan but also suggested that there were no resources yet allocated for implementing the ROWIP. It was suggested that members might wish to look at draft ROWIPs produced elsewhere, particularly at the different interpretation of the government's guidance, and to report back any ideas or thoughts on improvements that they see elsewhere. It was suggested that members are consulted regularly, perhaps every six months, during the preparation of the ROWIP.</p>	

	<p>Discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity for members to submit the ideas that they know about on the ground, similar to those ideas contained in the letter. For example, they might identify a gap in the network where a short link would make a very significant difference, perhaps through the use of roadside verges or the provision of a new bridge or crossing. • The balance between an aspirational general ROWIP and a ROWIP with specific pieces of work or actions identified, rather than with more nebulous 'targets'. • The balance between general actions, and site by site projects. A concern was that of blight, and the commencement of use on routes identified in a ROWIP where there had been no work undertaken or no agreement with landowners. • As the ROWIP has a maximum 10 year term it should consider work for a longer period, perhaps for a generation. • The ROWIP should be realistic, but not be too constrained by resources available at the moment, as resources in 10 years time cannot be predicted. • A suggestion that flexibility for PROWs and other access would help farming, for example in the making of diversion orders, where there could be advantages for both landowners and users. Factors related to this included paths in the landscape being an historic legacy. • The resources available for ROWIP implementation, and the ongoing maintenance of any projects – it was suggested that there had to be an increase in budgets and for there to be sufficient resources for maintenance – an example was given of a route where children had to wear Wellington boots to school where a route was overgrown in the summer. It was highlighted that reported issues could not always be dealt with currently. There was an appeal that works were not put off until the ROWIP was published. • In response to a question 'can you identify three [horse related] improvements that you would like to see made?', many specific examples of anomalies and gaps in the bridleway network and dangerous road crossings in South Gloucestershire were identified, shown on a map of the area. Such improvements could also be identified by cyclists, walkers and other users. <p>All members were asked that over the next three months they compile their ideas for improvements for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and to send them into the secretary in time for the November meeting. These would be compiled and the March meeting of the JLAF would be dedicated to discussing them.</p> <p>It was requested that the Secretary send a list of draft ROWIPs prepared elsewhere to the members.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Secretary</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Development of a Public Path Order policy for Bath & North East Somerset</p> <p>Will Steel introduced the item and paper as a discussion document that relates to priorities for public path orders, relating to the resources involved in public path orders, and the stance taken by the local authority (to promote, oppose or remain neutral) on public path order applications. There was discussion on what the public interest in these matters would be, for example on the difficulty in establishing when a change to a route might be in both the public and the landowners' interest. The paper also questioned whether there should be physical specifications for new routes (created or diverted). It was requested that where possible, all three authorities agreed such policies jointly.</p> <p>Members were requested to email any comments they wished to make on the paper by the end of the month. The JLAF would be consulted on any draft policy document that will follow the discussion paper.</p>	<p>Members</p>

<p>11</p>	<p>Updates:</p> <p>a. Defra Ministerial Changes</p> <p>Jim Knight MP (Dorset South) is the new minister in Defra who covers access issues. Members were asked to pass to the secretary any news that might be of use to other members or to the authorities.</p> <p>b. Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill</p> <p>The re-organisation of the countryside functions nationally to create Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities might affect work in the JLAF's area of interest. It was requested that the secretary keep members informed of this.</p> <p>Part 6 of the Bill follows from the Defra consultation on mechanically propelled vehicles eighteen months ago that the JLAF responded to. The bill, if passed as an Act, will restrict the recording of many public rights of way to 'restricted byways' i.e. not for use by mechanically propelled vehicles.</p> <p>c. Bath & North East Somerset Strategy for Horse Riding</p> <p>Will Steel updated members, particularly on the opening of routes for the use of horse riders. A draft code of conduct for users and a risk assessment methodology has been prepared and will be consulted on.</p> <p>d. Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy</p> <p>Bristol City Council is now undertaking a survey of residents and users of parks and green spaces in Bristol. This will be used to develop a Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. The JLAF might want to be involved in the preparation of this strategy at a later date. The contact at Bristol City Council is Jane Greenaway, telephone 0117 922 2694 or email parksdepartment@bristol-city.gov.uk.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Secretary</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Bristol PROW Liaison Group</p> <p>It was stated that there should be involvement by officers from every council in each meeting of the JLAF, particularly as the JLAF becomes involved in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and particularly where Bristol is the authority with the most residents. This is important to enable the JLAF to maintain strong links with each authority and with each liaison group.</p>	<p>Authorities</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was a request that meeting papers and minutes be distributed to members earlier.</p> <p>It was noted that the area cycle maps discussed at the previous meetings had still not been published. The secretary said that the authorities should be publishing them in approximately 1-2 months. The secretary agreed to send copies to each JLAF member when they were published.</p> <p>A member reported that the Ordnance Survey mapping showed some National Trust land to the south of Bath incorrectly as access land.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>The next meeting JLAF08 (in Bristol on the 4th November 2005)</p> <p>It was proposed that the next meeting be held in the same location, Fry Club, Keynsham, in lieu of a Bristol location, as it was central to all three authorities. Following meeting dates are in the background papers.</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>Close</p>	