



JLAF10: Background Papers

Agenda item 2: JLAF appointments and membership

The form for application to the JLAF has been revised: the form was simplified and reduced from nine pages to five pages, with a single explanatory page at the front of each form.

Nine of the non-Councillor memberships were available for appointment or re-appointment this spring. Following the process of advertisement for and the appointment of members of the JLAF, the membership has changed. Below is a list of the members of the JLAF as of the 1st July 2006. All applicants who were not appointed have been invited to sit as observers to the JLAF.

The next recruitment is not planned until the spring of 2008, and any vacancies arising are likely to remain until that time. However, application forms will remain available, including on the JLAF website, and can be submitted to the secretary at any time. The current regulations governing the administration of the JLAF are expected to be revised by the government this year, and the application process will be reviewed at that time.

Membership of the JLAF as at 1st July 2006

JLAF Member	Interest Category	Period of Membership
Councillor Chris Cray - Bath & North East Somerset Council	Nominated as Councillor Members	Nominated annually by each Council
Councillor Chris Jackson - Bristol City Council		
Councillor Peter Tyzack - South Gloucestershire Council		
Kay Bath	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
David Colbourne	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
William Dawson	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Ann Fay	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Peter Gould	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
John Gunnery	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Bob Hall	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Robert Killen	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Mark McGuinness	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Alun Morgan	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Ray Newbigin	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Ronald Phelps	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Kenneth Scott	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Andrew Short	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Adam Stratton	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Janet Wallis	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2009
Margaret Wilson	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Robin Winfield	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008

Agenda item 7: Draft Annual Report

JLAF Third Annual Report 2005-2006

Summary

This is a report on the third year of the Joint Local Access Forum for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire (the JLAF). This report fulfils the requirements of paragraph 12 of The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002. This report is for the period 1st July 2005 to 30th June 2006.

Membership

The JLAF has 21 voluntary memberships, that is, one councillor from each authority involved and 18 other memberships. The councillor members are appointed annually by each authority. The other 18 memberships are appointed by the three authorities together, with a reasonable balance between members with landowning interests and user interests. Members are also appointed to represent other interests. Members are now appointed for a period of 3 years, with appointments expiring in 2 out of 3 years. There was one resignation from the JLAF in the third year.

At the meeting of the JLAF on the 1st July 2005, the members re-elected Alun Morgan as Chairman and re-elected Ray Newbigin as Vice Chairman for a period of two years.

The membership of the JLAF for the year July 2005-June 2006 is shown in the table below. The membership from July 2006 is shown on the JLAF website and as the background paper for item 2 on the agenda at the JLAF10 meeting on the 7th July 2006.

JLAF Membership 2005-2006	Area of interest	Appointment Period
Councillor Chris Cray - Bath & North East Somerset Council	Nominated as Councillor Members	Nominated annually by each Council
Councillor Christopher Orlik - Bristol City Council		
Councillor Peter Tyzack - South Gloucestershire Council		
David Colbourne	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
William Dawson	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Ann Fay	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Peter Gould	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
John Gunnery	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Peter Hart	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Robert Killen	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Mark McGuinness	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Alun Morgan Chairman of the JLAF, JUL04-JUN05, JUL05-JUN07	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Ray Newbigin Vice-Chairman of the JLAF, JUL04-JUN05, JUL05-JUN07	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Ronald Phelps	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Kenneth Scott	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Andrew Short	User	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Adam Stratton	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Janet Wallis	Other	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years from 16/05/2003
Margaret Wilson	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Robin Winfield	Landowner	Appointed to the JLAF for 3 years until 30/06/2008
Paul Wynne	Landowner	Resigned from the JLAF due to other commitments

JLAF Observers

There are a number of observers of the JLAF. These are bodies or individuals that are invited to the JLAF meetings, who can provide information to the JLAF or receive advice from the JLAF. These include a member of the executive of each council, secretaries of adjacent local access forums and government and agency contacts.

Meetings of the JLAF

The JLAF held three main meetings during its second year, on 1st July 2005, 4th November 2005 and the 3rd March 2006. In addition to the three main meetings, a series of JLAF/ROWIP working group meetings have been arranged to look at Access and the potential for access in four Local Assessment Areas for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the first considered access in Brislington on the 20th June 2006. Papers for all of the meetings of the JLAF are available from the secretary and on the JLAF website, but below is a selection of subjects considered by the JLAF in its third year:

- Access Land introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, including the approach by the councils, works undertaken by the councils on the JLAF's selected priority sites, and considering the JLAF approach to access on a priority site where access improvements had not been agreed
- The development of a joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan by the three authorities
- The development of a Public Path Order Policy by Bath & North East Somerset Council
- The Bath & North East Somerset Council Strategy for Horse Riding
- The work of the Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups in each of the three authorities
- The Avon-area cycle maps
- The Joint Local Transport Plan
- Single Farm Payments and Cross Compliance
- Defra consultation on diversions of public rights of way
- National review of Local Access Forums
- Environmental Stewardship Schemes and the Rural Development Service
- The Forest of Avon bid for a research bid on Dedication of Land for Public Access

Other meetings attended by the JLAF

The JLAF Chair, Vice Chair, and secretary attended a meeting of South West England Local Access Forums on the 1st November 2005. The Chair gave a presentation to the National Countryside Access Forum on the 14th December 2005. The Chair attended a meeting of a Somerset sub-regional LAFs meeting on the 19th April 2006.

JLAF Website

A JLAF website has been maintained at www.jlaf.org.uk. The website includes all meeting papers of the JLAF, documents produced by the JLAF and other information that relates to the work of the JLAF.

JLAF Work Programme 2006/7

The following areas of work are among those that the JLAF expect to consider in the coming year:

- Access Land. Following the new right coming into force in December 2004, the JLAF maintains a statutory interest, for example in considering applications for restrictions on access land. The JLAF will continue to review access land in its area.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs). The JLAF is a statutory consultee for Rights of Way Improvement Plans, to be prepared by each authority by November 2007. It is anticipated that this will be the major area of interest for the JLAF at least over the coming two years. This will include contributing to the Local Assessment Areas through JLAF/ROWIP working groups and commenting on drafts of the ROWIP itself.
- JLAF liaison with authorities. The JLAF wishes to develop its relationship with each authority with a view to promoting the authorities' functions. Similarly, the JLAF wishes to develop its relationships with other bodies, including adjacent LAFs and the Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups arranged by each council.

JLAF Forward Programme 2006/7

The following are dates for full meetings of the JLAF, following a pattern of once every 4 months, on the first Friday of the month. Shown in italics for information are the dates of JLAF ROWIP working group meetings:

Meeting Date	Location	Agenda items submitted by	Pre-meeting, week of (suggested)	Papers available
07 JUL 2006	Somerdale Lodge, Somerdale	16 JUN 2006	19 JUN 2006	30 JUN 2006
<i>20 JUL 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – Timsbury Parish</i>			
<i>19 SEP 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – Sodbury Parish</i>			
<i>17 OCT 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – access for bridleway users in Oldbury-on-Severn Parish</i>			
03 NOV 2006	Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham	13 OCT 2006	16 OCT 2006	27 OCT 2006
02 MAR 2007	Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham	09 FEB 2007	12 FEB 2007	23 FEB 2007

Agenda item 8: Access Land

a. Update of works on Access Land

Update of works on Access Land.

Bath & North East Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council are both involved in the Countryside Agency's Access Management Grant Scheme, for implementing works on Access Land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Works have now been completed under the grant scheme for 2005/2006. The works on Access Land for the has followed the advice given by the JLAF. It includes the five sites within each council area prioritised by the JLAF. In many cases the works will introduce timber or metal kissing gates on sites where there are currently stiles or no access. This will provide significantly easier access for many people. Signs have been erected on Access Land sites with information boards for visitors including a map of the site. On two sites, Little Solsbury Hill and Bannerdown large colour interpretation boards, with annotated aerial images and colour photographs have been erected.

Following site visits with the Countryside Agency, the use of 'end of access' symbols on the sites will be reviewed, and removed or changed where they are likely to be confusing to visitors to the sites.

Bath & North East Somerset

Access Land Site: Burledge Hill

Improvements to access have been completed, including the installation of kissing gates and surfacing and revetment works to a section of footpath across the site that has been almost impassable in winter. Improvements on all entrances to the site have been completed, replacing styles with gates and kissing gates. Access signage and information boards with site plans have also been installed.

The council is applying for funding in the 06/07 scheme to further improve access to the site from the nearby village of Bishop Sutton.

Access Land Site: Castle Wood

The council is applying for funding in the 06/07 scheme to install signage and improve access with a series of kissing gates on and leading to the site.

Access Land Site: Breach Hill

Improvements are complete, and included the installation of kissing gates in place of stiles, the installation of new steps and the provision of signs and information boards with site plans.

Access Land Site: Knowle Hill

Some clearance work has been undertaken at this site, signage and information boards with site plans have been installed.

Access Land Sites: Radstock (Bristol Road, Northfield, and Waterside)

Signage with access disks and information boards with site plans have been installed on these sites. New kissing gates and a water crossing have been installed. Works were not undertaken at Southfield in Radstock as works to create suitable access to the site have not been agreed.

Access Land Site: Bannerdown

Improvements to access include the installation of access disks, a large information notice board and information boards with site plans on the public rights of way entrances to the site are complete. The funding originally provided for one large information notice board has been used to install two such boards. One of these has been installed at a newly created prominent access point with a flat surfaced access and an 'easy-latch' equipped gate to improve access on a bridleway.

Access Land Site: Field North of Engine Wood

New access land signage with site plans have been installed.

Access Land Site: Prior Park

Four new kissing gates have been installed to enable access through new field boundaries.

Access Land Site: Little Solsbury Hill

The installation of three new kissing gates to provide easier access are complete, a new steps have been installed by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens, and a large interpretation board has been installed on a main entrance, mounted on a secure oak plinth.

South Gloucestershire**Access Land Site: Spanorium Hill**

The installation of seven kissing gates and new steps on a steep bank have significantly improved access on this site, and the public rights of way leading to it that also form part of the Forest of Avon trail. Access signage have also been installed.

Access Land Site: Lower Woods

Significant improvements to access are complete, with the installation of new kissing gates and bridle/hunting gates on bridleways across the site. A short stretch of surfacing works to open a new route is also complete.

The council is applying for funding in the 06/07 scheme to further improve access to the site by improving the surface of the main route for access into the site.

Access Land Site: Broad Hill

Signage on routes leading onto the site, including boards with site plans are complete.

Access Land Site: Hanging Hill

Access Land signage has been installed.

Access Land Site: Cold Ashton

Works complete include the installation of kissing gates, a field gate with pedestrian opening and surface improvements. Also complete are signage and information boards with site plans.

b. Update on Access Land at Lansdown

No correspondence has been received by the JLAF in response to the Chair's letter of Monday 15th August 2005.

Agenda item 9: Research Project: Dedication of Land for Public Access

Chris Weedon, Forest of Avon

Dedication of Land Demonstration Project Project Summary

The Forest of Avon has made a successful bid to the Countryside Agency to manage a pilot dedication project as part of a national study. The project area will be delineated by the new extended Forest of Avon boundary, which includes the ex-Avon authorities of Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and N.E. Somerset and North Somerset but excludes the Cotswolds and Mendips AONBs.

The overall aim of this project is to test how landowners will respond to the opportunity to voluntarily dedicate land as a way of providing the public with improved access for informal outdoor recreation. The mechanism of securing voluntary dedications is Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, (CROW).

Our project is one of three chosen nationally, the other two being in Hampshire and Durham.

Key objectives of the Project:-

- A. To obtain information on the core reasons, risks and incentives that influence a landowner's decision on whether to dedicate access land.
- B. To identify the most effective way of persuading private landowners to dedicate, by using different approaches and packages.
- C. Establish when, where and in what ways voluntary dedication is a suitable mechanism to increase access on foot (e.g. walking, climbing).
- D. Establish when, where and in what ways voluntary dedication is a suitable way of relaxing general restrictions under Schedule 2 of the CROW Act, including for horse riding, cycling and for access to water.
- E. Document best practice and provide recommendations for integration of the dedication process into mainstream funding mechanisms.

The emphasis will be on securing access where need and demand can be shown, whether actual or latent. Priority areas for land dedications will include: -

- Predominately fragmented parcels of access, which could be joined together through dedication
- Areas with large scale access for people on foot, but very little opportunity for horse riders
- Areas with opportunities for dedication close to centres of population
- Areas with potential opportunities for access to and on water
- Areas with opportunities to secure permanent access to woodland (whether currently accessible or not).

Role of the Project Officer

- Undertaking a detailed assessment of the geographical project area, by developing and implementing a plan to identify and engage with landowning interests who might be prepared to consider dedication, and to identify where dedication has the potential to deliver real access/benefits in the local area
- Developing the necessary local partnerships including with the RDS, Forestry Commission, English Nature and the local access forum
- Negotiating with land managers to find and to conclude dedications and any further agreements to secure long term access in return for any public funding
- Providing support to landowners submitting dedications to the Countryside Agency's Open Access Contact Centre
- Managing project budget, but seeking Agency approval where necessary over agreed limits
- Liaising with the Agency and other pilot project officers
- Maintaining records and providing monitoring reports, reporting on the experiences of landowners during and following the dedication process.

Project Funding and Landowner Payments

The Countryside Agency will fully fund salary, costs and training of a dedicated project officer for up to two years. This officer will be part of the Forest of Avon team.

Payments will be available for landowner legal and administrative costs relating to the dedication process and to implement works on the ground required for the new access. Access infrastructure payments (on private or public land), will be based on the current Environment Stewardship Scheme rates.

The Project will also offer an up-front payment to private landowners, where this helps to secure dedications. This payment will be banded so that higher rates are paid in areas where access is in high demand. This payment is based on the Higher Level Scheme and will be conditional on the signing of a 20-year agreement between the Countryside Agency and the landowner, as set out under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Short term timetable

★ Successful Bid Confirmation	June 2006
★ Arrange Project Steering Group Meetings	July 2006
★ Advertise Project Officer Post	July / August 2006
★ Develop local partnerships with landowning interests and user groups	July – August 2006
★ Develop Plan to identify where dedication can deliver real access benefits	July – October 2006
★ Appoint Project Officer	September / October 2006

** The Forest of Avon Local Projects Manager, Chris Weedon, will develop the project until a project officer is in place.

Local Access Forums

The Forest of Avon will need the continued support from the Local Access Forums and key partners to deliver a successful project.

We are just beginning to prepare a plan for our project and would be very pleased to hear views and ideas on where targeted dedications could be negotiated to greatly enhance local access, especially in areas of high demand. It is anticipated that new dedications proposed as part of this project will be presented to the Local Access Forum for comment before being formally agreed.

Chris Weedon, Local Projects Manager, Forest of Avon
June 06

Agenda item 10: Avon Frome Feasibility Study

Paula Spiers, Avon Frome Development Officer based at Bristol City Council

On the following pages is a draft Avon Frome Feasibility Study, as background to this item. Please note that there will be some amendments between this and the final colour document, such as the addition of the logos of the partners, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council and the Forest of Avon.

Agenda item 12: Rights of Way Improvement Plan discussion.

The following text is in the Joint Local Transport Plan (page 88) as the "vision" for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP):

"The ROWIP vision is to increase the use of Local Rights of Way (LROW) by developing a network of safe and attractive routes which:

- Improves opportunities for sustainable access to essential services and facilities; and
- Meets the present and future recreational needs of all members of the community, including those with visual impairment or mobility problems."

The JLAF is invited to discuss this, with particular attention to how it could be achieved – for example, how to 'increase the use of Local Rights of Way'.

JLAF ROWIP working groups:

Below is a reminder of the dates of forthcoming meetings of the JLAF/ROWIP working groups, each concentrating on a local assessment area in turn. Please contact the secretary with details of which meeting(s) you wish to be involved in, and with any suggestions, or for more copies of guidance, maps or suggested survey forms.

JLAF ROWIP working group meeting dates (shown with main JLAF meeting dates)

Main JLAF meeting on Friday the 7th of July 2006 at Somerdale Lodge, Somerdale, Keynsham

JLAF ROWIP working group – Timsbury Parish

Thursday, the 20th July 2006 at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber of Keynsham Town Hall

JLAF ROWIP working group – Sodbury Parish

Tuesday the 19th of September 2006 at 10:00am at Riverside Offices, Chipping Sodbury

JLAF ROWIP working group – access for bridleway users in Oldbury-on-Severn Parish

Tuesday the 17th of October 2006 at 2:30pm in the Council Chamber at Castle Street, Thornbury

Main JLAF meeting on Friday the 3rd of November 2006 at Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham

Main JLAF meeting on Friday the 2nd of March 2007

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

a. Somerset sub-regional LAFs meeting, 19th April 2006

The Chair of the JLAF attended this meeting on behalf of the JLAF. The notes from the meeting follow.

First South West Sub Regional Meeting

Notes of the meeting held at Taunton on 19th April 2006

The meeting was attended by Jeff Cox - Exmoor LAF, Bob Harvey and Terry Faull - Devon LAF, John Pritchard - Dorset LAF, Sue Coles and Alan Marlow - Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, Alun Morgan, JLAF (Joint LAF for Bristol, BANES and South Gloucester), Alistair Gordon and Howard Brunton - Somerset Local Access Forum, Mike Johnson and Eric Clark - Wiltshire and Swindon Local Access Forum.

Mike Amos and William Tate - North Somerset Local Access Forum were unable to attend.

1. Members briefly described one point of good and one point of bad practise within their forum.
 - Dorset – Good that the forum successfully called for an officer post for coordinating the volunteer help. This is a positive move to engage with the public and flex the forum's independence.
 - Exmoor – Good in that the forum has meshed and brought together many varied interests. It is a negative practise that so much paper for the forum to deal with comes from central government.
 - Wiltshire & Swindon – Good practise in achieving a very useful web site for the forum completely independently of the appointing authority. Bad practise is the lack of a structured work programme and that the working relationship with the Local Authority (LA) is non-existent.
 - Hampshire – The rotating Chair has worked well. Good practise has been the success in influencing policy at strategic levels and seeing successful communication between individual users and land managers. There has not been good monitoring of the policy though. Bad practise has meant the forum has been driven by the LA officers' agenda rather than that of the forum. The forum's input to the Itchen navigation project was too late to help with a difficult area.
 - Devon – There have been problems in successfully projecting an image of a countryside forum. The forum does not feel it has sufficient information, specifically financial nor sufficient support from the Countryside Agency (CA) or Defra. On the positive side the forum is representative of both landowners and different users and does manage to achieve consensus. The new draft Guidance for LAFs is a strong document benefiting from the consultation meeting with LAF members last February.
 - JLAF – Good regional profile was helped by speaking positively at the NCAF meeting in Bristol last year and emphasising the positive role of LAFs. There is a good diverse representation on the joint forum, with the three authorities dealing with matters very differently. The forum was slow to appreciate these differing ways of working. It is bad practise not to have closer links/cooperation with the parish councils.
 - Somerset – There is good cross representation that has now gelled. The forum has been closely allied to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) but needs to step back and be strategic in tracking and monitoring it. Bad practise has been the low profile of the forum. Councillors have not been heard and the word 'countryside' should be included in the title as the forum is relatively unheard of and its role not understood.

Several general issues of note and those where the forums clearly share common ground were discussed.

- The role of the forum has been elusive. Generally members have been supportive of officers but there needs to be targets for members to aim for and achieve. These targets would be success criteria. From this is a requirement for a realistic work plan for a forum, perhaps of 3 – 5 year duration, with a clear plan of items and areas where the forum should be involved at an early stage.

- How to engage with people who do not already use rights of way. Perhaps the forums could suggest more incentives to encourage people into the countryside. The forums could engage more with the public through the structure, timing and location of their meetings. Publicity of access debates/issues is important.
- It has taken 2 – 3 years for the forums to get going but now they could be pushing their MPs and local government for funding structure and information. The current funding climates is one of 'search and apply' and the forums could encourage countryside officers to put in applications for funding sources they have heard about. Possibly the sub regional group would have more persuasive powers than individual forums might in supporting funding applications particularly with shared aims and targets.
- The thorny issue of dogs and their benefits and the problems they can cause in the countryside was one where clearly differing views between members truly reflected the disparate views between different sections of the public!

Members spent some time discussing issues relevant to their forums with forum members from their neighbours. In essence many of these topics are relevant to most forums.

Dorset/Hampshire

- The Wessex Ridgeway should be a national strategic trail with a universal status and links to other long distance routes. It would serve well for both recreational and utility journeys. The utility element of routes is often under represented or under emphasised in countryside funding but people living in rural areas also have needs for utility trips and the routes to support them. There are 'cross boundary' issues within the county council itself and the working relationship between the recreational side and the highways side is not all it should be. A large pot of funding comes through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) government money but tends to be heavily biased towards urban routes and development. This was agreed around the table to be similar in most authorities as the needs are prioritised against the resources. The 'new' money element of LTP funding is welcomed for route development but there is a need for the ROWIP to be better recognised within the LTP priorities. It should improve in LTP 3 but the forums should be active in ensuring the issue is addressed.
- Cranborne AONB Management Plan could have been stronger and LAFs could have a useful role to see what issues have arisen and what changes could be made. There is a need for a strong ROWIP to address this and the forum should flag this up to equate disparities. It was suggested that the South West Protected Landscapes Forum (part funded by RDA) could pull the threads together and that the sub regional forum should put forward the strategic suggestion for more LAF involvement. Dave Dixon is the point of contact.
- The prioritisation criteria within ROWIPs should be open and accessible and the scoring system to determine how projects are selected. A comparison across the sub regional forums would be useful.

Wilts/JLAF

- The JLAF affords snapshots within smaller areas and this can be extrapolated across the wider area. It has been important to actually identify the individuals whose responsibility it is to draft the ROWIP. There is no value in a 'waffley' document whose aspirations are undeliverable and the forum should support an 'enabling' document. With this in mind could the sub regional group support
 1. Making the process easier to produce a new ROWIP
 2. Make representations about the loss of Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and the consequent loss of routes as most landowners do not apply for the Higher Level (HLS) which does offer the opportunity for payment for the creation of permissive routes.
 3. Make the point that the NCAF is not related to LAFs and that a NLAF is needed as a logical structure to embrace the individual LAFs.

Action; Sue Coles to draft a letter to the Minister regarding NCAF. A copy to go to the SE Region LAF and also to Hilary Winter for circulation of the South West LAF region.

4. If public money is spent on permissive paths then the LAFs should encourage the inclusion of these routes on OS maps.

Somerset/Devon/Exmoor

- The forums could share more – save time and resources wasted on duplication. Share knowledge and expertise in specific fields through joint working groups. If areas have spent time focusing on particular projects or information gathering then we ought to let others know. E.g. BHS survey mapping stables and horse ownership. This group could have a sub regional site with simple information. Possibly post agreed standards and comparisons as a low-level coordination method.

Action: *Mike Johnson to possibly set up a site and Sally Vickery to circulate the address so members can send items of group interest to Mike to be included.*

- The basic facts and figures for each area – such as mileage of Rights of way, BVPI figures, usage etc. Hampshire have recently done a parish poll count for basic information. LAF volunteers undertook a series of 3 hour same day counts over a period of 3 months.
- Finding funding for projects needs time and expertise. LAFs could encourage a wider appeal of a development project by inclusion of a specific activity on the site as there is often a demand for activities– e.g. such as climbing. Then there may be a possibility of funding perhaps in partnership with Sport England. Alistair Gordon suggested that Paul Stevens of the Environment Agency was an expert in successful funding bids and may be able to help with advice. But there is a need for projects lined up and ready for funding with matched funding available or identified. It would be possible for an authority to be persuaded to 'front' a bid – Hampshire with the Ramblers Association and BHS.

Discussion points

- Accountability of LAFs will require a set of criteria against which the usefulness of LAFs can be assessed. Each forum will have different funding although the formula for determining how much each authority is given for its LAF is not transparent.

Action: *Wiltshire/Swindon had some information via a Parliamentary response and will make that available to the sub regional group*

- Forums should work at engaging the public – possibly move meetings around as Exmoor have, perhaps a specialist speaker to encourage attendance. Perhaps a future speaker could address the LAF on the PR aspect of promoting the LAF to the public (another opportunity for the group to share information/presentation).
- There is a need to include some parking facilities with certain routes if you want the public to use them. Not to create new parking areas but perhaps liaise with Village Hall committees to make the car parking already in place available to a wider public associated with walking the parish or village paths. Ideally it is not good to encourage people into the countryside by car, especially increasing the use of country lanes. But there is a need for disabled parking and in order to help with problem parking, links need to be forged with those who have the facilities already.
- Remember that not all LAF members can, or want, to give a lot of time. Important not to get carried away and alienate those who haven't as much time.

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

b. Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups

There follows a copy of the Agenda for the most recent meeting of each of the three Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups, together with the date of the next meeting. These meetings are not statutory as the JLAF is, and meetings are not held in public. If you would like further information, contact the JLAF secretary in the first instance.

South Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG)

Thursday 6th July 2006

Agenda

1. Apologies
 2. Minutes of last meeting 20th April 2006 and matters arising
 3. JLAF / ROWIP update
 4. B.H.S. award for bridleway improvements
 5. Liaison Group S .130s , Priorities and Protocols
 6. PDA Volunteer training
 7. Any Other Business
- The next meeting – 5th October 2006*

Bath & North East Somerset Council Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG)

Wednesday 19th April, 2006

Agenda

1. Welcome
 2. Apologies
 3. Notes from last meeting held on 18 January 2006 and matters arising
 4. Self closing bridle gates - how they can serve the horserider as well as the landowner
 5. Major Works on PROW 2006-07
 6. Rights of Way Improvement Plan – draft of Public Questionnaire
 7. Current PROW Legal Orders update
 8. City of Bath Definitive Map update
 9. Any other business
- The next meeting – 11th October 2006*

Bristol City Council Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG)

Thursday 1st June, 2006

Agenda

1. Minutes of PROWLG meeting on Thursday 2nd March 2006
Matters arising.
 2. Avon Frome Project update
Paula Spiers, Avon Frome Development Officer
 3. Matters raised by members
 4. PROW update
(Copy of the recent update report to PROW&G Committee on Current Claims, Public Path Orders, Actions and Public Inquiries enclosed for information)
 5. JLAF/ Rights of Way Improvement Plan update
Chris Hogg, Secretary, Joint Local Access Forum
 6. Any Other Business
- Provisional Date of the next meeting – 7th September 2006*

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

c. Bath & North East Somerset Horse Riding Strategy: Horse Riding Trial

Introduction of horse riding on pedestrian/cycle routes: The signs for the 12 month trial are due to be erected start during the week beginning 10th July and it is expected that the works will take approximately two weeks. Advance works are due to commence prior to this. The trial will commence when the signs have been erected. There will be a press release issued prior to the signs being erected to explain the trial.

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

d. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities ("NERC") Act 2006

The following *extract* has been taken from a Defra press release at:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/060330h.htm>

There follows below this a further extract from the explanatory notes from the Act.

Royal assent for Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, which creates two new organisations charged with conserving and enhancing England's valuable natural environment and giving a stronger voice to rural communities, received Royal Assent today.

Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said:

"The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act will help achieve our vision of thriving rural communities, fair access to services and a rich and diverse natural environment. At its heart is the principle of sustainable development: meeting the needs of people today while laying the foundations for future generations to enjoy and benefit from a healthy natural environment and sustainable communities.

"The Act sets up Natural England as a powerful champion for the natural environment, bringing together the strengths of English Nature, parts of the Countryside Agency, and most of the Rural Development Service to conserve and enhance our landscapes and biodiversity and importantly to help people enjoy them.

"It also establishes the Commission for Rural Communities, which will be a strong national rural adviser, advocate and watchdog, charged with ensuring Government policies are making a real difference on the ground in tackling rural disadvantage."

Jim Knight, Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity, said:

"We can now look forward with confidence to Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities taking up their full functions in October. People throughout the country will benefit from the more integrated approach offered by Natural England, while the Commission for Rural Communities will be a powerful new rural advocate unhampered by delivery functions.

"Through this Act, we have delivered our commitment to curtail the inappropriate use of byways by motor vehicles by putting an end to claims for motor vehicle access on the basis of historical use by horse-drawn vehicles. Some of the worst damage is happening in our national parks, which is why we have given National Park Authorities the power to make traffic regulation orders.

"We have also created a duty for public and statutory bodies to integrate biodiversity into their decision-making, further protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest from damage, clarified national parks legislation, and strengthened the enforcement powers of those fighting wildlife crime."

The Act also gives the Secretary of State greater flexibility in allocating funding and delegating responsibility to delivery bodies working under Defra's remit. This will help make access to grants and services simpler and easier for customers, and enable delivery to be better tailored to regional needs.

Before the provisions of the Act become "active law", they must be commenced. The majority of the Act's remaining provisions will be commenced on 1 October 2006.

Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities will also be formally established on 1 October 2006. English Nature and the Countryside Agency will be wound up on the same date.

Some of the Act's provisions will be commenced before 1 October, which will allow Natural England to set up the organisation ahead of receiving its full powers when taking over from English Nature and the Countryside Agency; and to make three urgent amendments to existing legislation around National Park designation procedures, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Rights of Way. (See below for further details.)

Notes to editors

1. The Government published its Rural Strategy 2004 in July 2004 in response to Lord Haskins' Rural Delivery Review of October 2003, which was commissioned by Secretary of State Margaret Beckett. Further information on the Rural Strategy is available at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/strategy
2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill and associated explanatory notes, together with the regulatory impact assessment, are available at www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery/bill

Notes on Commencement

3. The Bill directly commences the following sections two months after Royal Assent (30 May 2006):

- Section 59 (Criteria for designating National Parks)
- Section 99 (Natural Beauty in the Countryside)

These sections reinstate the legal basis for designating national parks to what it was prior to the November High Court judgment of *Meyrick Estate Management Ltd v Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs* [2005] EWHC 2618 (Admin) .

4. The remaining sections are commenced by Order made either by solely by the Secretary of State or in consultation with Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland ministers where provisions effect the relevant devolved administrations.

5. In April the Department will commence certain provisions in the Act to allow Natural England to be established as a "skeleton body" Precise details will be provided in due course.

6. Natural England will be given an identity in law and will be able to employ staff and enter into contracts. This will give Natural England's Board and Chief Executive the powers they need to set up Natural England ready to take on its full executive functions on 1 October.

7. As a smaller and simpler organisation, the Commission for Rural Communities is already operating as a quasi-independent division of the Countryside Agency and does not need to be set up as a skeleton body in the same way.

8. At the same time as establishing a skeleton body, Defra will commence section 98 (Financial Assistance by the Secretary of State.) This will enable the Secretary of State to provide financial assistance in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred in any matter related to or connected with a Defra function. These grant-giving powers are couched broadly and flexibly in order to enable the Secretary of State to fund any function within Defra's remit. This will, for example, enable the Secretary of State to fund directly matters such as social and economic regeneration of deprived rural areas. At present she can do this only through the Countryside Agency or another delivery agency. This section extends to Wales and Northern Ireland.

9. Section 57 adds further protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) where the relevant conservation body (for the time being in England, English Nature, but in future Natural England; in Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales) has failed to serve a notice on every owner or occupier of SSSI land, despite having taken all reasonable steps to do so. Section 56 makes a technical change to the power to denotify SSSIs. Both sections are likely to be commenced before 1st October, but further details will be made available in due course.

10. The rights of way provisions (clauses 66 to 71) will be commenced in England as soon as possible after Royal Assent. The Act fundamentally builds on the new category of highway, the "restricted byway" originally introduced by sections 47-51 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which have not yet been commenced. There is a need to co-ordinate the commencement and give adequate publicity to the two sets of legislation, and Regulations made under the 2000 Act. We are committed to commencing clauses 66 to 71 within as short a time frame as possible. Clause 72, giving traffic regulation order making powers to National Park Authorities, will be commenced on 1 October 2006 .
11. Clause 67 does not apply to claims for BOATS made before the Government made clear its intention to legislate on 20 January 2005 (19 May 2005 in Wales). BOAT claims in England made before this date will be processed under existing legislation and the rights they seek will not be extinguished should the claim be successful. Any BOAT claims made after this date will be dealt with under the new legislation with two exceptions:
- (a) Claims where the local authority has already reached the stage of determining the claim and has either decided to make a definitive map modification order or declined to do so.
- (b) Claims made by property owners seeking to establish a public right to their property because for one reason or another they have failed to establish a private right.
12. The Department aims to commence the bulk of the remaining sections on the first suitable common commencement date after Royal Assent (i.e. 1 October 2006).
13. Certain Sections (e.g. Part 7, which reformulates the Inland Waterways Advisory Council as a separate body) will be commenced later, when is it appropriate.

The following extract is taken from the explanatory notes to the Act available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruraldelivery/bill/> and specifically within this document:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/en2006/ukpgaen_20060016_en.pdf

...and concerns the provisions of the act that relate to public rights of way.

19. In relation to rights of way, following its decision that it could not implement section 34A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (introduced by Schedule 7 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), the Government published a consultation paper in December 2003, in which it proposed a series of alternative measures for tackling problems arising from the use of rights of way by mechanically propelled vehicles. In response, the Government received more than 14,000 representations, approximately half of which were from motor vehicle users. After considering these, the Government set out its conclusions and legislative proposals in the 'Framework for Action' document, which was published in January 2005. The consultation paper and 'Framework for Action' are available on Defra's website, and are currently located at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlifecountryside/cl/publicrow.htm. It is these proposals that gave rise to the main provisions of sections 66 and 67 of this Act.

20. The Act's rights of way provisions also respond to a judgment by the House of Lords (*Bakewell Management Ltd v Brandwood* [2004] UKHL 14, [2004] 2 AC 519) regarding the creation of rights of way for mechanically propelled vehicles. In that case the House of Lords held that a right of way may arise where mechanically propelled vehicles have used a route for a 20-year period, even where that use is illegal. The Act alters the law so that illegal use of this kind will not create public rights of way.

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

e. National Countryside Access Forum meetings

The last NCAF meeting was on Wednesday the 17th May 2006 in Birmingham. The next meeting date is not published. Below is the agenda from the last meeting.

22nd MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

10am on Wednesday 17th May 2006 at the Holiday Inn Birmingham City

Agenda Items

09.45 - Coffee

10.00 - Introduction and Apologies

Minutes of 21st meeting

- Matters arising from 21st meeting

10.15 - Coastal Access - Introduction. Heather Macilwaine - Senior Countryside Officer (CA)

10.20 - Coastal Access for Wales. Jont Bulbeck - Senior Access Policy Officer (CCW)

10.40 - Coastal Access for Scotland. Mark Wrightham - Secretary of National Access Forum (SNH)

11.10 - European Coastal Access. Peter Scott - Peter Scott Planning Services

11.40 - Coastal Access Defence Estates. Martin Coulson - Assistant Director, Estate Strategy and Policy (MOD)

12.00 - NCAF 22/2 (2) - Coastal Access for England. Bruce Cutts - Senior Countryside Officer (CA)

12.20 - Discussion and Break

13.00 - LUNCH

13.40 - Oral presentation from Local Access Forum. John Hall - Secretary to LAF and Bob Hunt - LAF Chairman

13.55 - Nature Conservation and Access. Graham Bathe - Access and Common Land Project Manager (English Nature) Dr Rowena Langston - Senior Research Biologist (RSPB)

14.25 - ROWIPS. Lucy Heath - Programme Manager Recreation Facilities (CA)

14.40 - The Future of Cycling in the Countryside David Moxon - CTC

14.55 - NCAF 22/10 - Report Natural England. Jeremy Worth - CA

15.00 - A.O.B and Questions from Public

15.15 - Close 22nd NCAF meeting

15.20 - Regulatory Impact Assessment Coastal Access - Asken. Ken Taylor

15.45 - CLOSE

Agenda item 11: Updates (for information)

f. Defra Ministerial Changes

The new Minister at Defra, with responsibilities that are principally the interest of the JLAF is Barry Gardner MP. Below is the relevant extract from the Defra website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/gardiner.htm>

Barry Gardiner MP, Parliamentary Secretary (Commons) (Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs)

Barry Gardiner's responsibilities cover:

- Global and national biodiversity (including Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) & Convention on Biological Diversity),
- Natural environment policy
- Natural England
- National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Countryside access, rights of way, Common Land (including Commons Bill)
- England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)
- Inland Waterways, British Waterways
- Forestry
- Sustainable Rural Communities
- Commission for Rural Communities
- Affordable Rural Housing Commission
- Horse issues

Barry Gardiner was born in Glasgow in 1957. He studied at St. Andrews University and Cambridge. In 1983, he won a John F Kennedy scholarship to do research at Harvard.

In 1987 he entered business and ran a company of international maritime arbitrators for 10 years before entering parliament as MP for Brent North in 1997.

Barry was a City Councillor in Cambridge where he chaired the Finance Committee and became the youngest mayor in the City's 800 year history. In Parliament, he has served on the Public Accounts Select Committee, and on the Broadcasting and Procedure Select Committees. He stood on the Finance Standing Committee that scrutinised the budget for 3 years in a row. He has chaired the All Party Group on Sports and Leisure and the All Party Group on Commonhold and Leasehold Reform. He founded and chaired Labour Friends of India and is a regular contributor to the Gujarati and Asian press.

Barry was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland from April 2004 to May 2005. In May 2005 he became the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Competitiveness at the Department for Trade and Industry.

He is a keen hill-walker and birdwatcher, and greatly enjoys getting out in the countryside.

Barry and his wife, Caroline, have three sons and a daughter.

Agenda item 12: The next meeting JLAF11

(in Bath & North East Somerset on the 3rd November 2006)

Proposed Agenda Items

Subsequent Meeting Dates

The following are dates for full meetings of the JLAF, following a pattern of once every 4 months, on the first Friday of the month. Shown in italics for information are the dates of JLAF ROWIP working group meetings:

Meeting Date	Location	Agenda items submitted by	Pre-meeting, week of (suggested)	Papers available
07 JUL 2006	Somerdale Lodge, Somerdale	16 JUN 2006	19 JUN 2006	30 JUN 2006
<i>20 JUL 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – Timsbury Parish</i>			
<i>19 SEP 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – Sodbury Parish</i>			
<i>17 OCT 2006</i>	<i>JLAF ROWIP working group – access for bridleway users in Oldbury-on-Severn Parish</i>			
03 NOV 2006	Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham	13 OCT 2006	16 OCT 2006	27 OCT 2006
02 MAR 2007	Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham	09 FEB 2007	12 FEB 2007	23 FEB 2007