



JLAF 10

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 07JUL06

Date: Friday, 7th July 2006

Time: 2:00pm

Venue: Somerdale Lodge, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU.

Present: Kay Bath, Ann Fay, Peter Gould, Bob Hall, Cllr Chris Jackson (Bristol City Council), Robert Killen, Alun Morgan (JLAF Chair), Ray Newbiggin (JLAF Vice Chair), Ron Phelps, Margaret Wilson, Robin Winfield (JLAF members)

Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Richard Sanders (Sustrans), Paula Spiers (Avon Frome Partnership), Chris Weedon (Forest of Avon), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

| | | Action |
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| 1 | Introductions | |
| 2 | JLAF appointments and membership Two new members have been appointed to the JLAF: Kay Bath and Bob Hall. Pete Hart is no longer a member of the JLAF. The other JLAF memberships remain the same, as outlined in the background papers. | |
| 3 | Apologies Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), David Colbourne, Bill Dawson, John Gunnery, Mark McGuinness, Adam Stratton, Ken Scott, Andrew Short, Cllr Peter Tyzack (South Gloucestershire Council), Janet Wallis, (JLAF members) Tina Bath (Mendip Hills AONB), Cllr Pat Hockey (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Sir Elgar Jenkins (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Cllr Alistair Murdoch (NFU), John Roy (Bristol City Council), Alison Sherwin (Bath & North East Somerset Council) | |
| 4 | Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest raised under this item. | |
| 5 | Minutes of the last meeting on 3rd March 2006 The minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting | |
| 6 | Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda There were no matters raised under this item. | |
| 7 | Draft Annual Report JLAF Third Annual Report 2005-2006 The draft annual report as included in the background papers was <i>agreed</i> . The Chair described how some other Local Access Forums produce a glossy Annual Report that serves to advertise the work of the LAF and raise awareness of the JLAF as well as fulfill the requirements of regulations. The | |

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| | <p>members of the JLAF are asked to let the Secretary know if they think such an approach would be worthwhile. The Secretary will investigate whether this approach would be possible.</p> | Members Secretary |
| 8 | <p>Access Land The JLAF was briefed on the work completed on Access Land under the 2005/2006 Access Management Grant Scheme. Approximately £32000 of signs and other works were installed. Many of the works improved access to the sites along existing public rights of way and improved access on new areas of access land. Works that have been included in an application made under the 2006/2007 scheme were described.</p> <p>The Secretary will investigate whether maps of the Access Land sites that have been signed can be published on the council websites.</p> <p>The Chair reported on a review of Access Land in England and Wales that was undertaken by the National Audit Office. The main points made in the report were that the cost of mapping and introducing the access right were approximately double original estimates. Much of the land is now accessible, though often there is no new infrastructure in place (at the time of the review). It was emphasised that there is limited data on whether Access Land is being used by the public.</p> <p>The Chair asked members to report to the Secretary on their experiences if they visit Access Land, particularly if they can report on how much the new Access is being used.</p> <p>The report is available at: http://www.nao.org.uk/pn/05-06/05061046.htm or by contacting the Secretary.</p> <p>The Chair reported that there had been no response to the letter sent from the JLAF to the owner of the access land at Lansdown near Bath. The matter was discussed by members, particularly on the advantages and disadvantages of requiring access and including some improvements on the site. It was agreed that the JLAF Chair would write to the Executive Member of Bath & North East Somerset Council who is responsible for Access Land requesting that he makes a decision on whether access to the site will be formalised and improved.</p> | <p>Secretary</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Chair</p> |
| 9 | <p>Research Project: Dedication of Land for Public Access Chris Weedon, Forest of Avon</p> <p>Chris Weedon reported that the application by the Forest of Avon to the Countryside Agency to undertake this research project had been successful. The Dedication of Land for Public Access project will be a two year project with a new post advertised in the national press shortly. The project will investigate options for the dedication by landowners of Access Land, including the use of grants. The project is being undertaken in two other areas: Durham and Hampshire.</p> <p>Chris thanked the Chair and the JLAF for the letter of support that had been sent. He also invited any JLAF members to contact him if they would like to be involved in the project.</p> <p>Further details are in the background papers, but there were several points of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the project should be careful in its use of the terms 'access' and 'access land' as they can be ambiguous and can cause some confusion. • What the nature of the new access would be – areas or routes. The new dedications could be for either and might include the installation of gates and fencing as well as the route itself. Each proposed scheme will be designed appropriately. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There might be some reservations from landowners in dedicating land for permanent access, and committing to a 20 year agreement as there are alternative schemes such as under Higher Level Stewardship. • The grants that will be available under this research project are for access only, and this might be an advantage over other grants such as HLS. • It was emphasised that landowners should be involved at the earliest opportunity – in contrast to the process for Access Land Mapping – and the Forest of Avon should contact the CLA and NFU directly. • Similarly the FoA should involve Public Rights of Way sections at all stages. | |
| <p>10</p> | <p>Avon Frome Feasibility Study Paula Spiers, Avon Frome Development Officer based at Bristol City Council</p> <p>Paula introduced the work that had been undertaken by the Avon Frome Partnership, then introduced the consultation on the partnership’s ten-year plan (background paper). This plan has three main themes: Events, Education and Interpretation; a Regional Trails Network; and Sustainable Management. The partnership is also investigating an application to the Big Lottery Fund this autumn in order to implement the plan. In response to a query, it was explained that the plan is designed to be flexible so that it can both attract funding and guide work.</p> <p>The JLAF agreed that the work identified in the framework would be valuable and expressed its support. It was <i>agreed</i> that the Chair would write a letter of support from the JLAF when it would be helpful.</p> | <p>Chair</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>Enforcement of Public Rights of Way (PROW) This item was added to the agenda after the last meeting, as it has been a prominent item on the agenda of the South Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way Liaison Meeting. Each council summarised their enforcement policies in responding to a question about the use of prosecutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Gloucestershire’s PROW enforcement policy includes three steps of action: giving advice, issuing of notices, prosecution. These are undertaken in turn following the policy. Prosecution will be considered if the other steps of action fail and if other conditions are met: “Prosecution - In some circumstances the Council will prosecute if it believes it to be in the public interest to do so and this may be undertaken in tandem with the service of Notices...” South Gloucestershire Council have not undertaken any prosecutions under this policy. • Bath & North East Somerset’s PROW enforcement policy is similar to South Gloucestershire’s. The four steps of action are: giving advice, issuing of notices, issuing cautions and prosecution. Again, there are steps to be taken before prosecutions are considered. Bath & North East Somerset Council has undertaken one prosecution since the policy has been adopted. • It is understood that there is currently no PROW Enforcement Officer in Bristol City Council, whilst there is a high demand for enforcement action. [UPDATE following meeting: Bristol City Council’s enforcement policy is similar. There have been no prosecutions so far undertaken but it is something that would be considered, again following the enforcement policy it would be the final available action.] <p>All councils emphasise how the policy must be centred on seeking discussion and agreement with landowners before legal action is taken. In that the enforcement policies are similar it was suggested that where possible and advantageous, the councils should consider whether each new policy being developed could be adopted jointly by all three councils.</p> | <p>Councils</p> |

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| <p>12</p> | <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) The Chair summarised the recent ROWIP working group meeting where the Local Assessment area of Brislington was discussed whilst the Vice-Chair provided a background to the Timsbury local assessment area, the subject of the next working group meeting on the 20th July. The paths in Timsbury are in a rural setting and were well used, whilst the routes in Brislington were not well used, even though there were lots of areas with public access and a large resident population in the area. There was the potential for increasing use in Brislington by joining the existing public access with routes, and by effectively marketing (as a local 'tourism' asset), so that demand could be increased where there was an existing supply of outdoors access.</p> <p>There are further local assessment area meetings as follows – JLAF members were encouraged to contact the Secretary with the areas and meetings they would like to be involved in. The meetings are, however, open for any member to attend:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JLAF ROWIP working group – Timsbury Parish Thursday, the 20th July 2006 at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber of Keynsham Town Hall</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JLAF ROWIP working group – Sodbury Parish Tuesday the 19th of September 2006 at 10:00am at Riverside Offices, Chipping Sodbury</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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</p> <p>The findings of these meetings would be discussed by the JLAF at a future full meeting. The Chair suggested that the JLAF could write a report that could accompany the Rights of Way Improvement Plan with its strategic view of where the JLAF should push for improvements. It was highlighted that there are clear areas of work being undertaken where links might be made, including the ROWIP, Access Land Dedication research project and the Avon Frome Feasibility study considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Some views on how to meet the vision for the ROWIP were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the diversity of the PROW network – that the network of routes is unusual is its charm – i.e. a reason not to rationalise; • Increase the utility of the PROW network by filling in missing links; • Increase [disabled] accessibility on the network – this is an issue whose time has come; • Increase the safety of paths – for example, where paths end where there is significant road traffic. | <p>Members</p> |
| <p>13</p> | <p>Updates (for information): Items were addressed within the meeting if points were raised by members.</p> <p>a. Somerset sub-regional LAFs meeting, 19th April 2006 This was attended by the JLAF Chair, who reported that the meeting was interesting, particularly because there were two or less members from each LAF and there was therefore useful discussion. Discussion points are summarised in the background papers. It was noted at that meeting that LAFs can require a great deal of work from members, for instance that attending this meeting equated to a full day of work.</p> <p>b. Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups It was suggested that 'JLAF' be a standing item on all Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups to encourage links between them and the JLAF.</p> <p>c. Bath & North East Somerset Horse Riding Strategy: Horse</p> | |

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| | <p>Riding Trail No points raised.</p> <p>d. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 No points raised.</p> <p>e. National Countryside Access Forum (NCAF) meetings No points raised.</p> <p>f. Defra Ministerial Changes No points raised.</p> | |
| 14 | <p>Chair's Statement The Chair made the following statement:</p> <p>"1. Today is a significant date for the JLAF – it marks our 3rd Anniversary – and though there is still a great deal to do, I hope you will agree we have made significant progress.</p> <p>2. September is also a significant date for me it marks my 75th Birthday and reminds me that it is time I moved over to allow a younger and more active Chairman to continue our progress.</p> <p>3. So the first item at our meeting on 3rd November will be an election firstly for our new Chairman – and all of you are entitled to put your names forward to Chris for consideration. I shall propose Ray Newbigin as a possible successor.</p> <p>4. After much discussion, I feel there is a need now for two deputies if possible – a Vice-Chair and a Deputy Chair to reflect the increased level of work, so please consider putting yourself forward for one of the posts.</p> <p>5. Let me conclude by saying how much I have enjoyed working with all of you. It has not only been very worthwhile – but also very enjoyable."</p> <p>JLAF Members are to consider whether they would like to be involved as Chair of the JLAF, as Vice Chair of the JLAF, or in another position nominally 'Deputy Chair'. Interested members are encouraged to contact the Secretary and an election will be held at the beginning of the next main meeting of the JLAF on the 3rd November 2006.</p> | JLAF members |
| 15 | <p>Any Other Business No items were raised under this item</p> | |
| 16 | <p>The next meeting JLAF11 on the 3rd November 2006 at The Carter Room, Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items Election of Chair and Vice Chair Rights of Way Improvement Plan Working Group meetings Enforcement NCAF meeting dates</p> <p><i>Agenda items for the next or subsequent meetings:</i> Update on the Forest of Avon bid for the dedication research project Cross compliance Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act To use the Annual Report as publicity for the JLAF Review of Access Land</p> <p>Subsequent Meeting Dates The dates for the next year of main meetings are on the Background Papers for the meeting.</p> | |
| 17 | Close | |