



JLAF11: Background Papers

Agenda item 8: Rights of Way Improvement Plan a. ROWIP Update

Timetable

The statutory deadline for the councils to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is November 2007. The councils are working to produce a draft ROWIP for public consultation between May and July of next year.

Summary of work being undertaken on the ROWIP Assessment

In addition to the statutory consultation on the draft ROWIP document, the councils are carrying out extensive consultation for the ROWIP assessment, the research being undertaken in the preparation of the ROWIP. This includes:

- A comprehensive questionnaire (see item 8b of this meeting) completed by 2862 members of the public across the three council areas. The questionnaire was designed to assess the use of paths by the public, barriers to that use and the potential that improvements might yield.
- JLAF working groups on the four ROWIP local assessment areas, Brislington, Timsbury, Sodbury and Oldbury-on-Severn. Four meetings have been held considering the current access, the potential for improvements to access and ideas on how that potential might be achieved. This is due to be discussed by the JLAF under item 8c of this meeting.
- Four local consultation events, one held in each of the four ROWIP local assessment areas involving members of the public, local councils and other local interests. These will be designed to investigate and report on the current use of outdoor access, and the future potential needs for outdoor access and how that access might be achieved as relevant to the local assessment areas and the whole ROWIP area.
- One whole area event to involve those with an outdoors access interest. Delegates will include organisations and individuals with relevant interests, such as: statutory consultees, JLAF members, members of the three public rights of way liaison groups, representatives from user and landowner bodies and Councillors.
- We are also planning to organise a meeting involving the providers of outdoors access in the area. Delegates will include relevant professional and voluntary representatives who implement outdoor access provision in the area, as well as relevant contacts from departments within each of the three councils.
- In addition, the councils are carrying out surveys on the network of paths, including measuring the current and ongoing levels of use on a sample of paths across the area. This information will also allow a future assessment of the change in the use on paths over time.

Agenda item 8: Rights of Way Improvement Plan

b. Review of ROWIP Consultation Questionnaires

The councils have carried out a questionnaire survey to obtain information on the public's perspective of public paths, and the use of those paths.

A copy of the Bristol City Council version of the questionnaire follows. The same questions were sent out to residents in the three council areas through 'citizens' panels' or equivalents. A total of 2862 responses were received, and the joint results from these responses will be presented at the meeting. The raw data from this survey will be published on the JLAF website during November.

3 Public paths and routes



Who is asking the questions?

Bristol City Council's public rights of way team, working with Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils.

What do they need to know?

What is the public's level of awareness of paths and how should they be improved to encourage greater use of paths in the future.

Why are they asking the panel?

The broad geographical spread and mix of types of people who make up the panel should provide a useful snapshot of views from across the city.

What will happen with the results?

The panel's feedback will be considered alongside the results of the same survey of citizens' panels in the neighbouring authority areas, to contribute to the writing of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The following questions ask you to think about all the paths and routes in Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire (referred to in this questionnaire as "the area") that you use, or are aware of. This means paths or routes that are used by people for recreation or simply to get around; it does not include pavements alongside roads.

1 Have you used any of the following examples of paths in the area* in the past year (eg since Spring 2005)?
Tick one answer for each type of path.

- a) Alley/path between or behind properties
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- b) Canal/riverside path
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- c) Coastal path
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- d) Country park/historic property path
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3

- e) Disused railway path
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- f) Farmland path or track
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- g) Named or promoted route (for example, the River Avon Trail or the Cotswold Way)
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- h) Nature reserve or nature trail (other than woodland)
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- i) Path through a park or other public green space
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- j) Woodland path or track
Yes _1 No _2 Don't know/remember _3
- k) Other types of path (please write in)

2 During a typical year, how often do you use paths (not including pavements) in the area*? Tick one box for every way of travelling on a path.

- a) On foot – walking
 - 1 Every day
 - 2 Every week
 - 3 Every 2–3 weeks
 - 4 Every month
 - 5 Every few months
 - 6 Couple of times a year
 - 7 Never
- b) On foot – running or jogging
 - 1 Every day
 - 2 Every week
 - 3 Every 2–3 weeks
 - 4 Every month
 - 5 Every few months
 - 6 Couple of times a year
 - 7 Never

*The area means Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire

c) In a wheelchair/motorised chair

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

d) On a pedal cycle

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

e) On a skateboard/skates/rollerblades

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

f) On a horse

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

g) With a horse and carriage

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

h) On a motorbike/moped/scooter

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

i) In a car/recreational 4x4

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Every few months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Every week | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Couple of times a year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Every 2–3 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Never |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Every month | |

j) Other ways (please write in)

3a

Do you use paths for any of the following reasons? Tick all that apply and/or write in what "other" reason(s) you may have, which is not listed.

- ₁ Alternative to using the car
- ₂ Avoid/reduce traffic congestion
- ₃ Convenience (a quicker/more direct route to getting somewhere)
- ₄ Dog walking
- Enjoy the environment, get some fresh air etc.
- ₅ Gain access to places and services (eg shops, GP surgery)
- ₆ Get some space/time to think and relax
- ₇ Opportunity to meet people
- ₈ Paths offer the facilities/space I need for a specific activity (eg horse riding, cycling, motorcycling etc.)
- ₉ Physical health benefits/exercise
- ₁₀ Travel to school
- ₁₁ Travel to work
- ₁₂ No particular reasons

3b: Other reasons (please write in)

4a

Are there any particular reasons why you do not use existing paths in the area* more often? Tick every answer that applies to you and/or write in any "other" reason(s) you may have, which is not listed.

- ₁ Can be difficult to travel along/I have problems with mobility
- ₂ Concerns about my personal safety
- ₃ Concerns with coming across livestock (cattle, sheep, horses etc.)
- ₄ Fear of getting lost or trespassing on someone else's property
- ₅ Find dogs intimidating
- ₆ I don't know where many paths are
- ₇ I tend to drive to most places
- ₈ Not always well maintained (muddy, overgrown etc)
- ₉ Paths are not suitable for the use I want to make of them (eg no cycle, horse or motorised vehicle routes nearby)
- ₁₀ Paths are often blocked or obstructed
- ₁₁ Poor state of cleanliness (litter, dog mess etc)
- ₁₂ No particular reasons

4b: Other reasons (please write in)

The list below shows a number of possible ways that paths in the area* might be improved, which the councils are considering investing in. How important is each improvement to you?

5 For each possible improvement, choose a score of between 0 and 4, where 0 means you do not think the councils should invest anything and 4 means you feel the improvement deserves a lot of investment.

Score 0-4

- a) Create new paths suitable for different users (eg dog walkers, pedal cyclists, rollerbladers, horse riders)
- b) Display information signs at every path entrance/exit and along the routes
- c) Ensure dogs are kept on leads
- d) Have a web site showing maps and suggested routes
- e) Improve surfacing (eg reduce mud and make paths more even)
- f) Install better lighting
- g) Keep paths clear of litter and dog mess
- h) Print leaflets/maps, suggesting suitable routes
- i) Provide more information about how to use public transport to get to paths/routes
- j) Publicise a network of named and numbered routes so that people can travel easily throughout the area*
- k) Regular maintenance (eg pruning of bushes and better drainage)
- l) Remove stiles and other obstacles (making paths easier to access)
- m) Other improvements (please write in)

6

If the councils had made the improvements that you feel are needed (question 5), would this encourage you to use any of these sorts of paths more often? Tick one answer in each row.

- a) Alley/path between or behind properties
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- b) Byway (open to all traffic)
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- c) Bridleway/Horse Route
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- d) Canal/riverside path
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- e) Coastal path
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- f) Country park/historic property path
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- g) Cycle path
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- h) Disused railway path
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- i) Farmland path or track
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- j) Named or promoted route (for example, the River Avon Trail or the Cotswold Way)
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- k) Nature reserve or nature trail (other than woodland)
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- l) Path through a park or other public green space
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- m) Woodland path or track
₁ Yes/maybe ₂ No/probably not ₃ Not sure
- n) Other type of path (please write in)



It has been suggested that many people living in the area* do not use paths simply because they do not know they are there. This could be because the signs that are currently used to indicate the location of paths, to people who may want to use them, are not easy to recognise or understand.

If this is the case, the public rights of way team are considering creating new signs.

To help us to measure this, please answer the following question. Don't worry if you don't know the answers – it is a test of awareness, rather than general knowledge!

Different types of path allow people to use different ways of travelling along them; for example, some paths are only for people travelling on foot, while others allow people to cycle, ride a motorbike, ride a horse or even drive a car.

7a All of the signs shown below are currently used to tell people what ways of travelling they are allowed to use: can you identify what ways of travelling each sign is allowing?

For each sign, tick every way of using a route that you think is allowed – there may be more than one way of travelling allowed for each sign.

							
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)
Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Pedal cycle	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
Motorbike/ Scooter	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃
Horse	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄
Wheelchair	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
Car	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆
Horse and carriage	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇
Skateboard/ Rollerblades	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> ₈
Do not recognise sign	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉	<input type="checkbox"/> ₉
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀

7b Do you have any questions or comments about the signs that provide information about paths? Please write in.

*The area means Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire

8

If you were in an unfamiliar place and you came across a sign next to the entrance to a path, what sort of information would you want to know about the path that would help you to decide whether or not to follow it?

Tick one box according to how useful you would find each sort of information, or write in your ideas for "other" information, which is not listed.

a) Distance in kilometres (and metres)

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

b) Distance in miles (and yards)

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

c) Explanation of how the path can be used (eg by walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc.)

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

d) How long it will take to follow the path (eg "10 minutes' walk")

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

e) Map of the route, showing where you are standing

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

f) Name of the route (eg "Bristol to Bath Railway Path")

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

g) What animals you might encounter (eg dogs, livestock)

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

h) What obstacles you might encounter (eg stiles, steps, slopes, gravel)

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

i) Where the path leads to (eg "Local shops", "City centre" or "Next village")

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

j) Who to contact to report a problem with the path

₁ Very important ₂ Might be helpful ₃ Not necessary

k) Other information (please write in)

9

Over the last 3 years, do you have the impression that paths in the area* have got better, worse, or stayed the same?

Tick one box for each aspect of paths.

a) How easy the paths are to use

₁ Better ₂ About the same ₃ Worse ₄ Don't know

b) Number of paths available for the public to use

₁ Better ₂ About the same ₃ Worse ₄ Don't know

c) The amount of information available on which paths I can use and where they are

₁ Better ₂ About the same ₃ Worse ₄ Don't know

10

Do you have any comments or suggestions to make about how the councils can encourage people to use paths in the area* more regularly? Please write in your comments or questions.

Agenda item 8: Rights of Way Improvement Plan

c. Review of Local Assessment Area working group meetings

Four working group meetings have been held, each considering one Local Assessment Area for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Guidance was issued to JLAF members at their meeting on the 3rd March 2006, together with overview and detailed maps showing the public rights of way network in each area. The guidance gave an introduction to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the approach being taken by the three councils towards its preparation, including the ROWIP vision:

"The ROWIP vision is to increase the use of Local Rights of Way 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."

Joint Local Transport Plan, March 2006

The guidance suggested how JLAF members might become involved through four working group meetings. Summary notes from each of these meetings follow. These notes are in draft form, unapproved by the attendees.

Prior to each meeting, some members undertook site visits in the areas and some submitted reports to be considered at each meeting. These reports also follow.

At each meeting, a summary of each area was given by the secretary, and in some cases an example of potential improvements was demonstrated. Maps and aerial photos and other relevant information (for example the extent of nature conservation designations) were available for viewing at each meeting.

JLAF members were invited to give their views on the current access, the potential of access and ideas for how that potential might be achieved. In Oldbury-on-Severn, JLAF members were asked to consider access for bridleway users only, this was in addition to considering access for these users in the other areas.

Note that the summary notes and reports that follow include suggestions that have been made in the context of the Local Assessment Areas being used as study areas for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the findings of which are to be extrapolated in principle to the wider area. The suggestions are not an indication of an intention, or of plans or proposals for works. The points made here do not indicate or imply consensus opinion.

There follows firstly a summary of each working group meeting, then for reference the JLAF members' reports for each of:

- **Brislington**
- **Timsbury**
- **Sodbury**
- **Oldbury-on-Severn**

Brislington

Summary Notes from meeting held 2:30pm Tuesday 20th June 2006

Present: Alun Morgan (JLAF Chair), Ray Newbigin (JLAF Vice Chair), David Colbourne, Ann Fay, Peter Gould (JLAF members), Paula Spiers (Avon Frome Partnership), Francis Mann (Bristol City Council), Cheryl Hannan (B&NES), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary)

The meeting was held to invite JLAF members to give their views on the current access, the potential of access and ideas for how that potential might be achieved in Brislington. For the purposes of this exercise, Brislington is defined as:

Brislington East and West Wards in Bristol, including access to the River Avon Trail between Totterdown Bridge and the Bristol/South Gloucestershire boundary at Hanham Lock

Following an introduction, the secretary gave a presentation about Brislington, with an example of a path that with promotion and signing might provide a useful link. The Chair then invited discussion, using the reports provided by JLAF members (they follow this meeting summary) as a prompt. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- Brislington has many green areas, but a very limited number of recorded public rights of way. Many of these green areas did not appear to be used very much. Some of parts of Brislington are very attractive indeed.
- Having worked in Brislington for 20 years, the vice chair was surprised at the extent of green open space in the area.
- There is a good supply of access in the area, however there is little demand – therefore increasing demand should be a priority for improvements in the area.
- Some improvements can be made when developments occur – for example the improvements made near the new hospital – though it was queried why the whole path had not been improved. The improvement had been made as part of a nature area. There are limits on what can be included within section 106 work (the section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that facilitates additional works, sometimes off-site, to mitigate the impacts of that development). It was suggested that Council departments should improve joint-working.
- It was queried that much access in the area is not recorded as public rights of way where they might actually have public rights. It was stated that the council should dedicate routes on its land as public rights of way to protect them from further development, and to clarify routes so that they can be signed and included on Ordnance Survey mapping.
- There is potential to 'package' paths, naming routes so that they gain a local profile. An example of this is in Patchway, where leaflets have been produced. This is particularly important as it confirms to people that they are entitled to use paths, and advertises paths they might not know about. There is scope to do this in Brislington. The existing promoted route (the South Bristol Circular) goes through Brislington, and links to the River Avon Trail. These routes could be used as the backbone of a network, and link green spaces (including the River Avon, St Anne's Wood, Nightingale Valley). Linking routes to go to schools, surgeries and shopping areas. It would be important to sign these routes, including on non-public rights of way, and along roads.
- Such routes should be dedicated as public rights of way.
- High quality leaflets advertising routes placed carefully, use of the internet and effective marketing would also be useful. For example, on two routes per council area per year. These should be displayed in a range of places to attract different people – for example, libraries, tourist centres, sports centres, in Tesco, on the internet, within newspapers (both free and paid for) and council newspapers. The possibility of distributing information in local newspapers was raised. Internet sites should be effectively linked – to and from existing relevant websites.
- These could be linked to arranged monthly walks (elsewhere this has been organised with the walks shown on a calendar).
- The JLAF could develop some long term objectives for improving access and to plan development of routes in the area.

- The Avon Frome Partnership is currently working on a framework document which is likely to mention the potential of linking paths in it – this document will be introduced in full at the next JLAF meeting.
- Existing ideas should be recorded to be undertaken when funding becomes available.
- It was noted that some of Brislington is within walking distance from the city centre, but that many people might not know how close the city centre is. Therefore this should be publicised, and quality routes right into the city centre would facilitate this local recognition. This could also be the case for routes to public transport – e.g. to bus stops, and to the park and ride.
- As Brislington is on the edge of the city, routes directly into the countryside could be developed. Development threatens the green belt, the link to the countryside must be maintained – and must be part of any development (both from within (not the edge of) existing urban areas through new development to the countryside and from within new development to the countryside.
- The river forms a boundary to the north of Brislington, but also forms an excellent route into the countryside (the route, the River Avon Trail from Pill to Bath is on the northern bank of the river). Eastwood Farm could have potential for much greater use, but is isolated and a link across the river would remedy this. The ferry is not now operating and the possibility of a bridge was suggested. Otherwise, the Conham Ferry could be revived and effectively promoted so it is viable. A clear link from Eastwood Farm to Hicks Gate, linking to paths to the north of Brislington House would be excellent.
- There are also possibilities to link to Totterdown – Arnos Vale cemetery is a particular attraction.

Brislington

JLAF Member's Report: Peter Gould

Brislington is served by a local LDP (Bristol S Circular) and lies across the river from the OS recognised Monarch's Way. It has a fragmented RoW system that fails for technical reasons to show some useful paths: eg. along Brislington Brook. Several parks/open spaces

There are two significant tourist attractions: Arno's Vale and Black Castle - and two minor sites: St Anne's Well and the Church/old village

Pedestrian Entry Points

Totterdown Bridge	Link to Knowle rather than Brislington
Suspension bridge (Spine Rd)	Very valuable
Netham bridge	Horrible
St Anne's Ferry	Limited use but vi 4
Conham Ferry	Very valuable
Hicks Gate/Ironmould Lane	Only runs summer weekends vi 3
Stockwood	Needs improving/promoting
Knowle Golf Course	Needs promoting
Whitchurch Rway path	vi 6
Paths from Knowle	vi 2
Arnos Vale/ Court Park	Cemetery is over boundary

Suggested Improvements

- 1 Record all the paths in the ward including those on public land. (Public land may not remain public for ever.) Def Map Mod Orders/ Dedications as necessary .
- 2 Design a local circuit on the model of the Patchway Green Way. This need not, of course, stay religiously within ward boundaries. It should link with routes out of the city e.g. at Hicks Gate. The S Bristol circular and the Avon Walkway are obvious through routes. *(Is there an interesting link to Totterdown beyond Wells Rd? If so, Bedminster and Redcliffe are your brace of oysters, or whelks perhaps.)*

- 3 The river needs another pedestrian bridge and/or the reinstatement of Conham Ferry. (Didn't the Development Corporation propose one to Crews Hole?
- 4 Path from St Annes Bridge to Netham Bridge S bank of Avon. (It existed on the ground when last I tried to go that way but has no status.)
- 5 A "top exit" from St Anne's woods on to St Annes Park Road (Or is there one I have never found?) (Link to St Anne's Terrace and onwards)
- 6 A link to Stockwood Open Space across Knowle Golf Course (Yes, it probably wd be over the ward boundary.)
- 7 Eastwood Farm looks curiously isolated. There shd be a link from Nightingale Valley- Birchwood Rd – back of Jersey Ave.. Consider also Whitmore Ave/Bel Royal Ave/Bonville Rd : whence Ironmould Lane one way and the old village t'other. East Wood - Fox's Wood - Ironmould Lane is ambitious.

Brislington

JLAF Member's Report: Ray Newbiggin

Introduction.

1. I visited Brislington on the 12th of June 2006 to do a survey for the ROWIP. This report follows the report I made following my visit to Timsbury on the 3rd of April.
2. Before going, I did 2 hours desk research and used the two maps provided by CJH and:
 - noted that the survey area is about 3.5 square miles
 - planned 8 drive routes and decided to explore each area where I could park
 - each drive route appeared to be of interest to the ROWIP debate.

The Survey on the drive routes

1. **Stockwood Road.** At the school, very near the main A4 road, there is instant countryside. No footpaths are marked. Where a footpath should start there is a locked gate.

This is an area which could be exploited for outdoor pursuits

2. **Saint Brendans & the river Avon.** The route off Ironmonger Lane towards the Avon could be used as a nature park.

3. **To the west of Bonville Road.** This is lovely countryside, on high ground, which appears to be unused. FP 482 (1) is blocked by brambles and FP 478 is well used but there is no sign at the north end (2).

4. **Eastwood Farm Open Space.** This 65 acre farm is owned and run by Bristol City Council. It is a wonderful open space but no people were seen and it appears to be little used. Graffiti should be cleaned off the notices.

5. **Wick Road & Brislington Brook.** This area appears to be neglected and the Wicklea Centre is covered in graffiti.

6. **St. Anne's Wood & Nature's Garden.** The area is overgrown and no one was seen.

7. **Arno's Court Park.** This is a well kept, large, park.

8. **Disused station and superstore.** The Tesco store built on this green space has been joined by a new hospital and 130 allotments, each with its own chalet hut. No. 3 cycle track runs past the store and about 60% of the area remains as wild country. Deer are said to live in the wild part.

Overview of the area using keywords from the CROW Act 2000.

Rating on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 is high.

Needs of the public,

Walking	3
Cycling	1
Horse riding	0
Exercise	3
Recreation	3
Blind / Immobile	0
Safe	3
Attractive	3

Miscellaneous information

- 1 Brislington is a suburb of Bristol and has some significant green areas. This means that every household in Brislington has a maximum of 1 mile to walk to a green area.
- 2 I saw very few people on a warm Monday morning whilst I was walking around the area for 4 hours. In total, I saw 5 walkers, 2 cyclists, 2 dog-walkers and no horse riders.
- 3 From this very limited survey it would seem that there is plenty of opportunity for the inhabitants of Brislington to take the air in a conveniently located open space but few of them do so.
- 4 Perhaps the main problem facing the ROWIP in this type of area is to encourage the population to get out of doors, take some exercise and look after their own health.
- 5 It appears as though there is enough **supply** of recreational space but the **demand** needs to be encouraged.

Timsbury

Summary Notes from meeting held 2:00pm Thursday 20th July 2006

Present: Alun Morgan (JLAF Chair), Ray Newbigin (JLAF Vice Chair), Bill Dawson, Peter Gould, Bob Hall, Ron Phelps, (JLAF members), Amanda Goverd (Mendip Bridleway and Byways Association), Colin Hudson (B&NES Council), Will Steel (B&NES Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary)

The meeting was held to invite JLAF members to give their views on the current access, the potential of access and ideas for how that potential might be achieved in Timsbury parish.

Following an introduction, the Chair invited discussion, using the reports provided by JLAF members (they follow this meeting summary) as a prompt. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- There is the potential to improve some routes, or to advertise some existing routes as accessible for disabled people. For example – the path CL21/48 that has fine views from the top of The Slight. There is car parking at the Recreation Ground, but access along the short section of road where there is no pavement could be improved.
- In a conversation with a local horse rider, concerns about the necessity of using roads which were dangerous and they have a particular problem with speeding and discourteous drivers.
- Timsbury and the area around it is attractive and has the potential to attract many recreational walkers – there is the potential of local tourism.
- There is limited car parking in the area, or, the existing car parking is difficult to find.
- Another member raised the dangerous roads as a problem in the area – and that safe ways could be developed for the use of walkers/cyclists/horseriders. For example, in an urban area people would readily walk for 20 minutes, whilst a 20 minute walk in the Timsbury area might take people to Farnborough or Camerton, but the safety prohibits this. This might have impacts on fitness.
- It was emphasised that roads are not in themselves dangerous, but some road users are.
- There are limited direct non-road routes between villages, because in the past the road network would have been predominantly pedestrian so would have provided direct routes – as cars now dominate the roads (the 'higher' rights incorporate the 'lower' rights) these direct routes are no longer available so links between villages have been lost.
- The desirability of diverting existing paths to make more direct routes was discussed. Each case would depend on what would be lost – and that not all users would wish for direct routes – leisurely routes for ambles, or paths that follow rivers or reach other attractions for instance.
- Where there are pavements for pedestrians, legally horses are prohibited from using them, so with 90% of horses on the roads, it is vital that measures such as fluorescent safety clothes are worn.
- One example of a fast road is Weekesley Lane between Timsbury/ Tunley and Paulton. This could benefit from a 20mph limit, though it would be important to enforce the limit.
- There is, and will be more housing development which would increase demand on paths, and increase the traffic on local roads – some improvements should be linked to this.
- There is an area of Access Land that has the potential to be used as a semi-public village space. There are signs on the Access Land, but it is not clear that the land will be used, or if they know where it is. The access land might not attract use from outside the area, so it could be promoted for village use – for example for picnics. A solution to this might be one or two village notice boards showing paths and access land.
- The supply of access in the area is ok, but demand could be increased.
- It is difficult to get to Timsbury on public transport from Bristol. Linking routes to Timsbury from buses that run from Bristol to Wells on the A37 could be developed.
- There are many footpaths that, if upgraded to bridleways, could benefit horse riders – for example paths CL21/39, CL21/40 and CL21/41. This would require the willingness of all parties – the users, the landowners to be effective, and some of the problems that landowners face would need to be remedied. It was suggested that these paths could be restricted byways in some cases, so that horses with carts could use them.
- There are livery yards in the area, and it was suggested that these could be more proactive in obtaining improved access – in some cases the owners of livery yards might be the owners of land with public rights of way on them

- There is local demand for horse riding, about 30-60 horses within the parish, more outside of the parish.
- The mechanisms for creating or upgrading routes as bridleways was discussed – by agreement (sometimes initiated and organised by riding groups such as the BHS), by use of creation agreements, less desirably creation orders, or in some cases there may be a case for modification orders. There are also other means of creating access – for instance paid toll rides, fun ride events, or the use of Environmental Stewardship Schemes (with agreement for footpath or bridleway access) – there is an excellent example of what can be done with this at Burnett. There are permissive path agreements between the council and landowners, where access is provided for 10 years by the landowner, and the council provide stiles, gates, signs etc and where some liability is undertaken by the council.
- There are permissive routes in Timsbury, where landowners have
- The different types of access (by right, by payment, through access agreements or through permission) would be a useful subject for the full JLAF meeting to discuss.
- In response to a question, the length of an average horse ride would be about 10 miles, and circular routes are much more preferable.
- There are what were previously 'round Avon rides', now only in South Gloucestershire – these created and promoted in other areas would be excellent for horse riders. In some areas, horse-friendly B&Bs are advertised along routes.
- Horse riders are not likely to arrive in this area with horse boxes – and most horse owners do not have access to (and sometimes cannot afford) horse boxes, so routes need to be well distributed. Also, considering the time that getting ready for and after a ride and including preparing for travel will mean that once horseboxes are used, riders would be likely to travel to a more distant area for a ride, or to an event.
- The limestone link promoted route runs through the parish and runs past many villages. It might be possible to make this a high quality route, and to provide link paths from the villages into this route, so it effectively creates a high quality network of linking routes. This would create a 'spine' with linking routes. This might be applied elsewhere (other than in Timsbury), for example the .
- Some routes might already exist and would require promotion and signing only.
- There is a disused railway that runs through the parish – if it was possible to make this into a multiuse route (with horse access) it would provide an excellent route and attraction for local tourism. It would be a big scheme, but would bring large benefits. It was suggested that in many places this railway line had been fragmented, and it would therefore be a very difficult job.
- At Radford Mill, 'Jenny's Path' had been created as a disabled and wheelchair accessible route – this could be renovated.
- There is a large elderly persons home in the village – linking routes, or routes near to this might be very beneficial
- It will be important to discover the views of local people, for example of the parish councils.
- Ways of promoting and encouraging use were discussed – examples included: the involvement of local people, promoting routes and led walks in local newspapers and other publications, the involvement of local schools in promoting the countryside and access to it.

Timsbury

JLAF Member's Report: Peter Gould

Background

Village Facilities School , pub (2 pubs indeed), shops, Post Office, chippy. The economy includes light industry and care homes – not to mention a drugs trade.

Attractions

First and foremost, the scenery: a post-industrial idyll.

Timsbury itself is a pleasant large village with a variety of chapels.

The Limestone Link – joining the Cotswold and Mendip Ways – passes through this parish.

The only antiquity on the Explorer is a camp over the parish boundary to the east. A path heads towards it.

The main lure is the remains of the Somerset Coal field.

Unfortunately the relevant sheet of Godfrey's OS reprint is not yet available. Buchanan & Cossons *Industrial Archaeology of the Bristol Region* mentions the following:

For connoisseurs: Conygre collieries 667588 674583 spoil heaps ?tramways. Radford 663577 spoil heap (? Connected with Withy Mills).

The site of old slag heaps may be a specialist attraction, but almost anyone would appreciate the Coal canal/railway and Radford Mill. Both on Limestone Link and connected to Timsbury.

Bus routes

Timsbury plainly looks to Bath and Norton Radstock rather than Bristol

Roughly two hourly Mon-Sat Bath – Radstock 9 – 6 (Scanty Sunday service)

A complicated local bus service run by independent companies.. A workers' service to Bristol

Hourly Service Mon-Sat Bristol- Bath 9-6 and irregular evening (Scanty Sunday service) serves High Littleton and Farmboough. Both a long mile by Yellow Road

Recreational walkers might well use the frequent Wells bus to Clutton

In short, from Bristol I wouldn't ever start a walk there, but might well pass through or stop for lunch. From Bath it could be a start point.

Method

By map study and a selective field trip, I tried to apply the suggestions in my earlier paper on RoWIP, indulging in creative scizophrenia when the suggestion was "ask some other body" such as the Parish Council or BIAS.

This was not a survey of path condition or usage, indeed I spent half the time on roads.

Corridors through developments

Historically, little significant damage to the network has been done. Some of the sort of fossil paths I had in mind do exist CL 21/43 "Chapel walk" for example.

I do not know what plans there may be for extending Timsbury, however "The ROWIP should assert the principle that RoW links, retaining so far as possible the historic alignment and rustic character, should be designed into future developments. As a substitute, pavements alongside estate roads are not good enough."

Alternatives to motor roads

This is really a question for the Parish Council, but here is my impression.

Except for B3115 westbound and Weekesley Lane, it is not an issue for recreational walkers who would find other, pleasanter, but much longer routes between villages.

B3115 and the Yellow Road to Farmborough are both examples of the sort of country road that is dangerous for pedestrians and will presumably get worse. At the least they need lightly engineered footways – preferably in my opinion on the other side of the hedge. (One school of thought says a hedge is a shelter from traffic. The other school of thought says it is a haven for rapists, muggers and perverts.) I would accept the arguments that rather than footways they need routes cyclists and riders can share.

B3115 westbound at least as far as terminus of CL21/48. Whether to the junction with A39 is a matter of local opinion. Eastbound to Meadgate West.

Yellow Road to Farmborough seems to need a footway throughout its length.. Note, if you want a bus to Bristol, Farmborough is the obvious place to go.

Yellow Road to High Littleton seemed quite safe on a fine morning. A case for "Quiet Lane" status perhaps. There is an alternative route by existing paths

Yellow Road to Radford. Mill Lane is an alternative route. NB Don't let Sustrans or the Highways Engineers "improve" it.

Weekesley Lane needs further study: I lost my appetite for sudden death.

? Durcott Rd as a Quiet Lane

Rivers &c

NONE-

To quote my earlier paper on rivers "The Cam Brook is followed by RoWs that might be linked up (especially at Combe Hay as an alternative to the road) but it is stretching the definition to call it a river"

Silly little gaps

v.s Weekesley Lane, and B 3115.

CL21/37 to CL21/41 may be resolved by access land. I didn't spot any others on the map..

Access to access

I found one signed entrance to Access land off Radford Hill opposite terminus of CL21/41 and an unsigned entrance further up the hill. The obvious entry would be opposite terminus of CL 21/38. If there is an entrance off Mill Lane opposite terminus of CL/21/36 is the obvious point, I managed not to notice it.

Trunk Road crossings

NONE

General Conclusion

Timsbury has a serviceable RoW network for recreational walkers and industrial archaeologists which needs little change, only care and maintenance. There is no crying need to promote these paths either.. The network's principle weakness is as a utilitarian link between villages. That can be remedied by Quiet Roads and the creation of parallel bridleways.

Timsbury

JLAF Member's Report: Bob Hall

I went on a short visit to Timsbury on the morning of the 20th (just before our Keynsham meeting). Parked in Lansdown Terrace (?), not far from the School. On a casual chat with the lady whose frontage I parked on, she said that most of the paths on that (northern) side were in quite good order and well used by dog walkers.

N-side 'perambulation'.

I set off up CL21/6 to Wallmead House Farm. The waymarking on CL21/3 faltered slightly through the farm, but I gather the farmer is redoing it. (To my failing eyesight the continuation of the path towards Farmborough Common seems to be shown on the 1in 10000 on W of a field boundary, whereas the path I was directed to ('The Ash Path') was definitely on the E) Returned to the road via CL9/8 (no problem, appeared adequately used). Road walked (not nice!) to CL21/14 and CL21/6/CL21/9 to school – all fine.

S-side circuit.

Took CL21/38 to N-end of access land, which I did not see the sign for. Joined the access land via CL21/37(?), the sewage farm path), - aka 'Jenny's Path'? – though the placement of the notice board made me think initially that was the sunken bridal way, Mill Lane). There was one walker ahead with a dog. Over old railway line to pick up Limestone Trail (CL21/35) west. There are 5 or so paths meeting near ST 670578 (GR from 'Getamap'), and I paused for a moment's ponder!. I was firmly (but politely) directed by 'the scrapyard owner' across an apparently untracked track meadow (I would have taken a farm path about 20m to the south, which he had just ridden up, just N of a water feature, , and so would have ended the wrong side of the field boundary). As the field narrowed, this meander eventually turned into a proper waymarked track. A finger-post here might be justified.

A bit further on, I got distracted by the stiles on the old railway track for CL21/33. The S one was OK but the N one appeared to be just a piece of random iron fence, and was quite hard to climb. Seeing no welcoming path beyond (up N to the farm), I retreated to CL21/27 by the former railway bridge, then up CL21/32 (very clearly cut out) and CL21/31 over the hill to the road.

My impression is that most things were pretty acceptable in the area, at least for those on foot, though the 'Limestone Way' was less definite than I expected, and certainly not cut out or gated for disabled access.

Timsbury

JLAF Member's Report: Ray Newbiggin

Introduction.

1. My wife and I visited Timsbury on the 3rd of April 2006 to do a survey for the ROWIP.
2. Before going, I did 3 hours desk research and used the two maps provided by CJH and the latest OS Explorer Map and:
 - noted that the survey area is about 3.5 square miles
 - planned 8 drive routes and 4 walking routes
 - using the Explorer Map, coloured the high ground and the Cam brook and noted the Limestone Link walk skirts the southern boundary of the survey area
 - listed the points which should be noted when walking the ground.

The Survey

1. On the **drive routes** the sign posts were observed and all the ROWs crossed by roads were well signed. One field, which is just outside the designated area, is possibly unmarked and this is noted as **(1)** on the map. I say possibly, because the field could either be a winter sown cereal or winter sown grass but the paths have not been used recently and are not worn.
2. The **walking routes** are described in detail:
 - a. **CL 21 / 35 and the Byway** called Mill Lane going down from Timsbury to the Cam Brook. This is the only area I visited where there was damage: the Byway sign is at 90 degrees to the Byway, one gate is badly held shut by a rope and the stile at the mill is broken. These are marked **(2)**, **(3)** and **(4)** on the map. **CL 21 / 37**, Jenny's Path, is both scenic and well used.
 - b. **CL 21 / 48** Sleight Farm to the reservoirs is a good track with splendid views to Wales.
 - c. **Access Land** is a steep piece of land with sewage works at either end.
 - d. **CL 21 / 18**, **CL 21 / 17a** and the Ha Ha has good views of the Mendip Hills.

Dog walkers and those walking with a dog, from one observation over 4 hours on a pleasant day, is a popular activity.

3. The **bridleways** are rare yet there are at least three stables in this area. One dog walker said that his daughter had a horse but had to use the roads. **BA 4 / 11** stops at a road and is the only bridleway in the area. This situation should be improved.

4. There is no provision for **cyclists** and the roads are dangerous. The countryside is suited to cycling with "basket of eggs topography" and very few steep inclines.

5. There seems to be no provision for **blind** and partially sighted people and those with **disabilities** but some of the cart tracks to farms could possibly be designated as suitable.

6. The area is very attractive and it could attract day visitors. There is plenty of wild life and there were many cock pheasants seen.

Overview of the area using keywords from the CROW Act 2000.

Rating on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 is high.

Needs of the public,

Walking	5
Cycling	1
Horse riding	1

Exercise	5
Recreation	5
Blind / Immobile	1
Safe	4
Attractive	5

Miscellaneous information

1. I was told that there is a Timsbury walkers group that meets regularly and they could provide detailed information about the area. I may be able to help with details of this group.
2. The Radford Mill area is an attractive location which could possibly be developed for blind / immobile people. It has attractive displays and two welcoming buckets of flowering daffodils. However, it could be updated.
3. Could Conygre Hall car park be used by day visitors?
4. If day visitors are to be attracted then footpath maps, parking signs and loo signs could be provided.
5. All the roads in the area are busy and most of the drivers are discourteous to road walkers and a few are downright dangerous.

Sodbury

Summary Notes from meeting held 10:00am Tuesday 19th September 2006

Present: Ray Newbigin (JLAF Vice Chair, Chairing this meeting), Ann Fay, Peter Gould, Ron Phelps, Robin Winfield (JLAF members), George Clerk (Southwold Ramblers' Association), Nicola Chidley (S.Glos Council), Rennie Dickins (S.Glos Council), Helen Young (S.Glos Council), Francis Mann (Bristol City Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary)

The meeting was held to invite JLAF members to give their views on the current access, the potential of access and ideas for how that potential might be achieved in Sodbury parish.

Following an introduction, the Chair invited discussion, using the reports provided by JLAF members (they follow this meeting summary) as a prompt. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- There are a good number of footpaths in the area, which are in reasonable condition. There are significant physical barriers to movement in the area though, including the quarries, railway and main roads.
- There is potential to create links across these barriers. There is potential in future development in the area. The future use of land, such as quarries should be considered – with a reference to the Eden Project.
- There are four long distance trails in the parish – the Cotswold Way National Trail (national trail, developed by the Cotswold Way National Trail team with the South Glos. and other councils and the Countryside Agency (now Natural England)), the Frome Valley Walkway (Frome Partnership/Forest of Avon with councils), the Jubilee Way (local Ramblers' Associations with the council) and the Monarch's Way (the Monarch's Way Association). This density of promoted routes is unusual.
- Some of these routes are in need of work to renew signs/waymarks to make the use of them clear.
- There is some work suggested to improve these promoted routes, a suggested improvement being re-routing the alignment of the Frome Valley walkway nearer the river at St John's Way.
- Another suggestion is for the footpath, which also forms part of the Jubilee Way, to be improved across the golf course – the path goes across fairways and the routes is not clear. Signs / waymarks would be a first remedy for this.
- There is a variety of access in the parish – not just public rights of way, but access on highways, on commons, informally used routes and on council owned land. This access should be linked – for example there are various designations of access on the route of the Frome Valley Walkway.
- There was some discussion about the re-routing of promoted routes – and sometimes conflicting benefits and disadvantages – for example where the Frome Valley Walkway crosses the road in Chipping Sodbury twice in order to stay beside the river. River bank erosion had to be considered also for riverside paths.
- These promoted routes attract a greater use – in the case of the Cotswold Way international visitors from America and Holland have been met on the route. Other routes are likely to attract a local and national audience. Some users will be long-distance walkers, though much use is likely to be for local walks, including dog walking.
- There are also some parish circular walks leaflets. For horse riders, there is a ride within the 'Circular Rides in South Gloucestershire' pack that goes through the parish.
- The road-based Avon Cycleway runs near to the Sodbury, but a signed link to and from Chipping Sodbury runs through the parish and a link to Yate runs nearby.
- There is a large area of Access Land, Registered Common Land in the parish. These areas of common land area underused but a significant potential access resource. Some initial improvements would be clear informative notices on site (there were some present in the past), signs on routes to the commons, advice on car parking and rubbish collections.
- The commons are not well used, for instance on a summer weekend they are largely empty and used mainly for dog walking
- There is a group called the conservators of the commons who must have a role in any improvements.

- It is not clear (to the public) whether horses are entitled to use the commons in the area. If this was possible, and if the bylaws needed amending to accommodate horses, it is not clear of the process that would be necessary, or if it would be possible.
- There were some specific examples of problems with the maintenance or condition of bridleways in the area, for example at path number LSO55 where there are drainage problems.
- For horses, there are very few bridleways immediately from the urban area.
- In the area surrounding Sodbury there are large numbers of 'resident' horses – this should be taken into account – that improvements in Sodbury parish will benefit others – and that improvements in other parishes will be of benefit to those in Sodbury.
- There are many liverys, and other stables where a number of horses are kept. The results of a manual count of horses, undertaken by surveying the area are shown in the report submitted by Ann Fay.
- One possible bridleway improvement would be a north-south link – from Kingrove Common across a bridge over the railway, cross the main A432 and towards Sodbury Common. There are significant issues with Commons Access, Rights of access over a railway bridge and the crossing of the road.
- There is another suggested improvement, possibly a multi-use route parallel to Wickwar Road along the west edge of Stub Riding – this could have potential benefits for all users and could link to the only east-west gap between the quarries beside the B4060. Safety could be improved on this road by at least introducing a speed limit lower than the current 60mph. This idea has received ongoing discussion – materials for surfacing have at some time past been offered by the quarry.
- Another potential improvement would create a circular horse riding route from Old Sodbury with a link to path LSO62. This would use one of either footpath to bridleway upgrades, use of the quiet 'Hill Lane' an improved (Pegasus) crossing at the Cross Hands junction and verge or parallel path creation along the A46. One other strategic link where there are existing footpaths at LSL17 or LSL15 could create a good network between Sodbury (including Little and Old) Horton and Badminton. There are other informal routes in the area that exist because of the informal permitted use of the landowners, though permissions can be withdrawn.
- Bridleway routes are available for other users also – this was not clear to the public in the councils' questionnaires, where many people thought that bridleways were for the use of equestrians only.
- The practicality of such improvements were discussed – the use of agreement or compulsory arrangements for creation, the assessment of routes by modification order where routes had existing use and corresponding evidence (for instance, users leading the process of recording by compiling and submitting user evidence), the financial cost and the likely timescales.
- The following themes were suggested for consideration in the ROWIP: Resources (money, time and will), Demand and Supply, Encouragement of Tourism (local and visitor), Safety of Users, Urban edge routes, such as the a northern Bath 'skyline' walk.
- Any maintenance backlog was suggested as more important than new improvements. I.e. good maintenance is an improvement of existing stock. The maintenance of routes was discussed – a priority of improving existing routes and catching up with maintenance over the creation of new routes, and the possibility of attracting additional funding. Funding was discussed – possible sources, use of the LTP, other grants. Including proposals in the ROWIP was supported by 'don't ask, don't get'.
- Good relationships with landowners are important – there is more access available that is recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement, some of which relies on good will. It is important that new access is fair, and users and landowners work together. The appeal procedures available (but not always available) to landowners are important.
- For disabled riders, improvements such as latches, careful placing of gates away from roads and so they can be used without dismounting, and mounting blocks for horses are useful.
- There are some local problems with 4x4 and motorcycle use of paths.
- Paths can be recorded through evidence of use, it is in the interests of users to compile and submit this. There is increasing difficulty with the legislation relying on a record of 20 years use, as people are more likely to relocate many times during their lives so not be able to (individually) demonstrate full 20 years use.
- There is the potential for new pedestrian links on a bridge over the railway – a principle of using existing physical structures and introducing new access on them was suggested.
- Methods for increasing use in the area were discussed:
- Promotion and marketing/advertising of existing access (for example the common).
- Use of public transport to make routes viable – for example one way bus journeys combined with a walk back (and often a pub or other refreshments).
- Links to community transport schemes (such as call and ride schemes) for leisure trips

- Routes that link communities – for instance a walk is being arranged for Guides from Yate to Sodbury – are important. And links near built up areas – for instance the area east of Bristol/Kingswood up to Yate has access close but not adjacent to housing, but links from the housing and between those access areas and routes would increase the value of them. This is a possible area of work for the Forest of Avon and the Access Demonstration Project.
- Introducing the young to routes that are available
- Named routes (e.g. the Frome Valley walkway) are good to encourage use – it is important that these are signed along all access (i.e. not just on public rights of way) so they start where people live and see them.
- Use of a variety of mediums to promote routes – internet, the excellent printed guides produced by S Glos. council, and the distribution of these (e.g. libraries, TICs, and effective advertising of internet sites once set up and published)

Sodbury

JLAF Member's Report: Ann Fay

Using the list of headings I suggested initially, the following observations are my findings in a survey of Sodbury parish with regard to improvements for horseriders, which would also bring improvements for cyclists and walkers.

1) Bringing the network into full use.

LSO64 is a pleasant bridleway to the east of the A46, from the A46 through to Badminton. However, the A46 end starts on a busy road with no safe access. The entrance is situated on a narrow verge with a steep slope down to the gate. There is a field gate at the end of the track which carries LSO64 for part of its length and this is normally used by riders. Use of the part of the bridleway which crosses the field to the gate onto the A46 is discouraged, sometimes by a notice stating Bull in Field and by the presence of a number of horses and snow barriers. This unofficial diversion is fine for local riders but for a stranger it is not obvious. An official diversion would be good.

LSO 18, 19A, 20 are within the conurbation of Chipping Sodbury and are of limited use for riders.

2) Joining up existing paths into a coherent network.

There are no bridleways to join up but if LSO64 could be linked with footpath LSO61 this would make an excellent link to enable riders to cross from the west of the A46, where riding is very much dominated by traffic, to the east which is more traffic free. LSO55, or a path along the other side of the hedge, would also be a very good link across to Portway. There is the possibility of a link from there up to the A46 through Cross Hands Farm and the UCR to the A46 opposite Balls Lane and LSL16. A route along the top of the scarp, where it was proposed to move the Cotswold Way, would also be a possibility.

3a) Improving roadside verges.

i) The verge from the Cross Hands, Old Sodbury, on the A46 south to the junction with the Tormarton Road. This is on the Circular Rides in South Gloucestershire, Ride No.4.

ii) The verge from the Cross Hands on the A46 north to the junction with LSO64. Very narrow.

iii) The verge on the B4040, Cross Hands to Acton Turville. This road is due to be improved with safety measures and I have commented on the need for this improvement.

iv) The verge at the gate to LSO64 is narrow and slopes steeply down to the gate. See 1)

3b) Inside hedge tracks.

Wickwar Road inside the Stub Ridings. The Ridings is managed by a Trust which has so far been resistant to this suggestion. A route here would link Sodbury Common with Yate Rocks and beyond and would open up riding for people from Yate, Iron Acton and points south.

4) Safe road crossings

Cross Hands traffic lights. This crossing is on the Circular Ride 4 with good warnings given. It is the only way to get from Old Sodbury/Hill Lane to the good riding east of the A46.

5) Multi user routes.

The path through Ridgewood in Chipping Sodbury used to be accessible for horses but has been barred since the area has been developed as a Local Nature Reserve. The path is tarmac/stone dust and does not affect the woodland at all.

6) Disabled access.

For horseriders, the only usable bridleway would need attention to the gates to make them easy to open from horseback. Access is normally open at the east end through Lyegrove Farm but there are a number of gates along the length.

7) Making good past damage to the network.

N/A

8) Bringing old routes back into use.

A track from Sodbury Common to Mapleridge Lane used to be open but was gated by the occupants of Hares Farm. This accesses Mapleridge Lane opposite bridleway LHO33.

9) Open access land. Sodbury Common is an area of open access of 102 acres. Horse riding is forbidden under the bylaws enforced by the Conservators. It is generally accepted that the fringe of the Common next to the road can be ridden by horses crossing the Common but this is not legal.

Numbers of horses in Sodbury and surrounding parishes

Sodbury	122
Yate	20
Little Sodbury	21
Dodington	232
Tormarton)	
Badminton)	Over the A46, not likely to ride over to Sodbury

The next parishes outwards who would be likely to ride that way

Horton	79
Wickwar	103
Rangeworthy	76
Iron Acton	201
Westerleigh	322

From these figures it can be seen that there is a problem in thinking parochially. Why should Sodbury spend money on horseriding facilities for the riders from surrounding parishes?

Sodbury

JLAF Member's Report: Peter Gould

Background

Planned Market Town of Chipping Sodbury, a place to visit, avoiding as best you can Yate and some more expensive but equally boring estates.

Large areas of access land.

Cotswold Way: no further comment as the NTO looks after it

Monarch's Way: an unofficial path using the established network

Frome Valley Walkway: *v.i.* Rivers

Ancient monuments & Industrial Sites

Sodbury Hill Fort: well served by paths including Cotswold Way

Toll houses at CS B4060 and OS A432 milestone on A46 Notr amajor touris attraction

Airshafts – Even the most avid collector of tunnel ventilators should be satisfied vy proximity to paths.

Bus routes

From Bristol:

Weekdays basically hourly on X42 and on 342 which also runs early morning and evening services. Route is indirect.

Sunday 2hourly on 342

Saturdays have a half hourly service: alternately 342 and X42.

Other services to Yate which even has a railway station

Several independent operators

Corridors through developments

Easy escape from Yate is impossible to improve because of the quarry: once claimed to be the largest man made hole in Europe.

N & E of Chipping Sodbury is reasonable. May need formal dedication/waymarking

S of Chipping Sodbury the Ringroad is a nuisance but the railway has four grade separated crossings and might well have another.

Alternatives to motor roads

I did not detect the problems between settlements there were in Timsbury.

In modernish history all paths led to Chipping Sodbury and generally still do.

From Chipping Sodbury to Old Sodbury the A432 is safe if unpleasant. There is a clear, obviously well used, parallel path across the fields.

Crossing the common from Horton to Chipping Sodbury is established local practice. (My agrestic aunt lives there so I know.)

Rivers &c

Frome Walkway

"The Frome Valley Walkway threads through Yate to the source of the river. More detailed local knowledge than I have is needed (Southwold RA Group/Yate PC)

Again where does a river stop being a river?"

Rather than the verge of St Johns Way, the Frome Way could well run on the east bank of the river. In Chipping Sodbury it needs legal status and signage.

Silly little gaps

The Map shows a path ending at the parish boundary LH0/68 This is also the edge of the common i.e. access land. Reassuring notice for strangers if there isn't one.

Access to access

Access to the large area of Sodbury (N) Horton commons is clear so I concentrated on the smaller commons S of A 432

Colt's Green next to A432 would be more valuable were it linked to the other Sodbury Commons

To N Common, LS0/28 is uninviting. Unsigned across a workshop yard.

Not sure of the status of the track from Jct LS028/27/26 to N Common and didn't go that way to check on the ground

To S Common a new path from LS045 over the railway (existing bridge) at least to LS0/38 and ideally direct to Common

Trunk Road crossings

Strictly none but A46 and A432 are almost as bad

General Conclusions

There is a good network for walkers around Chipping Sodbury, but some extra links would be a significant improvement.

Paths are sparse on the plateau east of Old Sodbury. It looks like 18thC enclosure landscape. Whether this is a felt want I do not know. This is dullish country for walkers. (Riders who are not Beaufort Hunt followers may have stronger views.)

Sodbury

JLAF Member's Report: Bob Hall

I have deliberately written this report before reading the others.

It's useful to divide the region into about 4 – the high Cotswold plateau; the Edge and immediately around; the intervening hinterland; including much of the common land; and the area around 'the Ridge'

As a generalization, whilst the hinterland shows the main signs of urban stress (blocked paths, pecked out waymarks), the major maintenance problems from under and overgrowth, and inadequate signing are for those on the Edge.

Area 1 – High Chapperal! There are only one or two footpaths E of the A46, eg the one running generally parallel to the line of the railway tunnel, and most are reasonably findable (but I could find no waymarks or signs for LSO/63, though its line, along a metalled track, is clear). Similarly on the Western side of the A46, the tracks along by the composting centre were not always well signed, but walkable. The main problem was in trying to park and then walk from places on the A46, where the traffic speeds are intimidatingly high. One of the parking bays near the Hill Fort appears to have had an access back to the Hill Fort which it is near, (but this was only clear to me on my return from the fort, not on my initial parking there).

Area 2 – Paths of the Cotswold Edge. My first encounter with these was in trying, on a misty drizzly day, to find LSO/60 and LSO/61 downhill from their junction with LSO61, near the composting site.... And failing. I subsequently returned and walked LSO/61 from the lane near the school. It emerges very shyly from a wood and the way mark is set back into the trees too far to be easily visible. LSO/60 proved harder. I walked it from the bottom, and failed to find the right line; I then walked it from its top, as a thin track on the N bank of a gully (quite steep) in the wood. The path went, (through some fallen trees, after which it was barely discernable), until it headed for a large patch of brambles at the edge of the wood, with a just discernable stile in the middle. This brought me out on the grassy hillside about half way down. Needs a very good cutout/cleanup., or a blood-donor service.

Another path with similar unkempt characteristic was LSO/72 which starts steeply W from the A420 – the size of the initial drop from the road is hidden in an tangle of nettles and briars of uncertain depth – needs a good cutout. Stiles on the rest of the path also need a sort out.

Area 3, Paths of the Hinterland.

Several issues. On LSO/40A (East end) I was accosted on the unsuitability of council kissing gates (see appendix).

The SSE end of LSO/47A seems to go through a row of council house back gardens, and everyone I talked to seemed to think the line had been lost.

On LSO/40 near Fattingshouse Farm a marker has been defaced and a fence is across the line of the path (and the natives, though young, were not friendly!).

On the SE end of LSO32 where the finger post is down (rotten?).

Finally in the field where LSO/75 and five others congregate – the key stile for LSO/39 is set back in the hedgerow – a man could die looking! (needs some help in midfield?)

Also in this region are the commons and the golf course. I'm not sure how to make the golf-course acceptably safe – it certainly didn't feel it as I crossed. The commons, especially Sodbury Common, can feel like 'green desert' but I suspect there may in fact be significant botanical and geological variation across it (cf Parson's/Poor's' allotments in the RfoD). Perhaps a few interpretation boards are needed

Area 4, Paths of 'the Ridge'. These are well-worn and slightly capricious – however, no one is going to die here if they go wrong, (as long as they keep out the quarries!) so getting everything tidy is probably not a high priority.

Overall. An interesting and varied area – pity the Parish and District have let some of the paths get in poor condition. A few accommodations with the car-parking and access problems especially on the A46 would also help.

Appendix – on Metal wicket gates

When I put out a draft of this note, Rennie Dickson and colleagues asked me to clarify the issue of metal kissing gates, currently favoured by South Glos. This issue was raised with me by a lady landowner at the East end of LSO/40A. She made three points

- 1) there wasn't room in her field entrance (which was set back from the road) for a kissing-gate and a standard gate large enough to take a horse-box.
- 2) The present access to paths was quite adequate, and any attempt to get say wheel-chair access might literally 'frighten the horses'
- 3) Metal wicket gates are an alien and intrusive form in the countryside.

My reply to the first was that I believed it was possible to get an *integrated* standard gate and wicket gate – Rennie has since confirmed this - it is called a Bristol or Yate gate.

To the second is that year on year standards of access for the disabled should improve, including where possible for wheel-chair users (even my beloved Dovedale has had many of the roughnesses of the track at the south end smoothed over, and my Dad, himself a keen rambler in the pre-war years was the first to welcome the change).

The third, well I agree the gate is a little shiny, but I'd rather have access – my worry is what happens in 20 years time when the structure is rusting nicely, and the mesh is breaking up. (Rennie has promised me he'll come round with me to check).

Sodbury

JLAF Member's Report: Ron Phelps

The following comments on the rights of way network in the Parish of Sodbury aim to take into account the requirements of the Local Authority's Strategy for Improving Local Rights of Way. It primarily takes the view of the walker/pedestrian so should be augmented by those of other user interests.

Sodbury consists of an ancient market town hugely increased in size by modern housing. It abuts to countryside on three sides and to the much larger built-up area of Yate on the west to which it looks for shopping and entertainment facilities. There is a large amount of access land due to the existence of commons and a smaller amount of "open countryside". A first glance suggests that it is well-served by footpaths, less so by bridleways. Most of the rights of way network has huge amenity value for the local population but is in countryside that, for the most part would not attract visitors from afar.

The following features (in no particular order) should be considered when assessing the current suitability of the rights of way network:

- 1) Schools, shopping centres and entertainment facilities – Are they accessible on foot and by cyclists both within Sodbury and across the parish boundary into Yate?
- 2) Commons and Open Countryside – Are they accessible on foot? Is there a need for suggested routes across them?
- 3) Other countryside and open ground – Is there the opportunity to open up areas with footpaths?
- 4) The Quarry – Does it disrupt passage from east to west of the area?
- 5) The Railway and A432 – Do these disrupt passage? Are there safe crossing points?
- 6) Country lanes – Are they safe for walkers, cyclists and equestrians?
- 7) River Frome – Is the most made of this geographical feature?
- 8) Long distance paths and trails – Do they follow the best route and are they accessible locally?
- 9) Busy roads in countryside areas – Are they provided with adequate pavements or alternative paths?

10) The Cotswold Edge and Cotswold Way – Adequate connections?

11) Other communities within and over the parish boundary – Are there rights of way to them and between them?

The following comments referring to the above are made as the basis for discussion rather than to assert a fixed point of view:

1) Schools shopping centres etc. As these are in urban areas there appears to be adequate routes to these centres mainly on roadside pavements. However a definitive view should be sought from school governors, parent teacher associations etc.

2a) Commons. There are three main common areas: Sodbury Common, Kingrove Common and Colt's Green plus numerous roadside patches.

Sodbury Common is accessible by footpath both from Sodbury and Yate and other footpaths lead outwards to rural areas. However some confusion is caused by the signposting at the extreme northern tip which gives the impression that the track past Hares Farm is a right of way. Apparently this is not the case. If, though, it were given footpath status it would tend to open up this arm of the common and provide a valuable, safe route to paths to the north without the need to walk along Mapleridge Lane. This would have to be negotiated.

Kingrove Common is accessible from most directions and is well served by routes across it. In a perfect world there would be a link to LSO 38.

Colt's Green is accessible from the main road but not, apparently, from south of the railway line. A right of way running along the south of the railway line would open up Colt's Green and provide a connection with Old Sodbury and thus an alternative circular route. This might also provide a functional path avoiding the main road (A432) for those wishing to travel between Old Sodbury and Chipping Sodbury.

2b) Access Land. The access land is to the south of the fort south of Little Sodbury. The footpath LSO/55 has recently been moved to the west of the boundary. A positive move. However it is now necessary to re-establish entry to the access land at the northern end.

3/9) Other areas/busy roads. There appears to be a degree of permissive access to Stub Riding playing field which has a footpath, LSO/8 at the southern end of the area. A cycle path along the eastern edge would give safe access as far as the quarry and more importantly to the skate-boarding facility at Peg Hill for the safety of children.

4) The quarry. The quarry is an unavoidable feature of the Sodbury landscape! It is probably something we have to live with.

5) Railway/A432. See comments on Colt's Green above. The above ground railway is served by five crossing points! The A432 is straight with good visibility until it meets the bend and hill at Old Sodbury where narrow, banked borders may not allow for walking improvements. Consider way marking Hill Lane as an alternative.

6) Country Lanes. Portway Lane, Common Mead Lane, Dodington Lane serve small populations and do not present any particular hazard to walkers.

7/8) Astonishingly Sodbury Parish hosts 4 long distance paths – Cotswold Way, Jubilee Way, Monarch's Way and the Frome Valley Walkway. The Walkway leaves the course of the River Frome in the built-up area – to its detriment. It is understood that the solution is expensive. Access to all the trails is good and their routes are viable.

9) See 3 and 2b above.

10) The Cotswold edge is accessible on foot from Chipping Sodbury and Yate.

11) Other communities. These are Horton, Little Sodbury, Old Sodbury, Covington, Wapley and, further afield, Wickwar. There are footpaths linking these villages/hamlets. Routes may be convoluted but this is not a problem for the recreational user.

Sodbury

JLAF Member's Report: Ray Newbiggin

Introduction.

1. I visited Sodbury on the 17th of August 2006 to do a survey for the ROWIP. This report follows the reports made following my visits to Timsbury and Brislington.
2. Before going, I did 3 hours desk research and used the two maps provided by CJH and:
 - noted that the survey area is about 6 square miles, nearly two times larger than both the Timsbury and Brislington ROWIP areas
 - planned drive routes and 13 spots where I could park and look around
 - noted each drive route appeared to be of interest to the ROWIP debate.

The Survey on the drive routes

1. 11. & 13. To the east of the A46 the land is flat and uninteresting. Air shafts are clear landmarks. Bridleway LSO/62 stops at the A46 but footpath LSO/ 61 continues to Old Sodbury.

I wonder why this is so because bridleway LSO/16 (which is outside the study area) to the north of the garage on the A46 crosses the A46.

2. Coomb End has an undulating landscape with plenty of footpaths.

3. Mill Lane, which runs east to west to Kingrove Common, has farms on either side which seem to be devoted to horses (and horse boxes!) but there are no bridleways in the area. At the end of Mill Lane, Kingrove Common is Access Land and is very suitable for recreational purposes but there is no parking.

4. The access to Kingrove Common from the north along Kingrove Lane is even more restrictive but Kingrove Lane is very short so people from the nearby village can easily get on to this Common.

5. 7. 6. & 12. The B 4060 road runs south to north and the west side of the road is taken up with disused and working stone quarries. The east side of the road has football and rugby pitches, a stone quarry, open spaces and the Jubilee Way footpath leading to Sodbury Common Access land.

The disused quarry on the west side of the road is said to be dangerous and is fenced off but I wonder if it could be made into an outdoor recreational area.

8. & 9. The east/west road, Portway Lane, goes along a spur of the Common and the Monarch's Way footpath and subsidiary footpaths cross it.

10. Little Sodbury is a traditional English village with a church, an historic fort, the Cotswold Way footpath and many subsidiary footpaths and there is plenty to interest both the local resident out for a stroll and tourists.

Overview of the area using keywords from the CROW Act 2000.

Rating on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 is high.

Needs of the public,

Walking	5
Cycling	4
Horse riding	0
Exercise	4
Recreation	4
Blind / Immobile	1
Safe	4
Attractive	4

Miscellaneous information

1. I saw no people taking recreation exercise on a dull and rainy Thursday morning whilst I was driving and walking around the area for 4 hours.
2. From this very limited survey it would seem that there is plenty of opportunity for walkers and cyclists because there are plenty of footpaths and, surprisingly, roads free of traffic. The traffic-free roads compared very favourably to the roads around the Timsbury ROWIP study area.
3. There is no special provision for blind and immobile people in the area but the two Commons are accessible with the larger Sodbury Common being more easily accessible.
4. Perhaps the main problem facing the ROWIP in this area is for recreational horse riders. There are plenty of horses in the area but only one, short, linear bridleway.

Oldbury-on-Severn

Summary Notes from meeting held 2:30pm Tuesday 17th October 2006

Present: Alun Morgan (JLAF Chair), Ray Newbigin (JLAF Vice Chair), David Colbourne, Ann Fay, Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Bob Hall, Ron Phelps, Robin Winfield (JLAF members), Anita Walker (S.Glos Council), Rennie Dickins (S.Glos Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary)

Apologies: Cllr Peter Tyzack, Cllr Chris Jackson, Andy Short, Allan Taylor (Oldbury-on-Severn Parish Council)

The meeting was held to invite JLAF members to give their views on the current access, the potential of access and ideas for how that potential might be achieved. In Oldbury-on-Severn, JLAF members were asked to consider access for bridleway users only.

Following an introduction, the Chair invited Ray Newbigin to give a brief summary of his findings for Oldbury-on-Severn. Please refer also to the report that follows. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- Ray considered the parish as an outsider with little pre-existing local knowledge. From desk research using the supplied maps, the most prominent potential was for access along the tidal bank
- Any new access in the area would require capital investment as well as significant ongoing maintenance
- The visit was made on a dry summer day, and the state of the paths in the low lying areas may be very different in wet weather
- There are some very dense areas of footpaths in the village
- There are lots of horses in the area – it seems like a good area for recreational exercise with horses
- The area is nice for cycling – the roads seemed safe, and drivers were courteous and careful

The Chair suggested that 'consolidation' of paths should be discussed – considering the practical, desirable and legal aspects

The Chair invited Robin Winfield to give a brief summary of his findings for Oldbury-on-Severn. Please refer also to the report that follows. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- Robin was familiar with the parish, but visited the area specifically to prepare for this meeting
- The paths in the parish appeared to be in good condition
- Bridleway access along the tidal bank does appear to be desirable but there are significant factors, such as protection of the sea defence to a low lying area and nature conservation with national, European and international designations protecting the nature of the estuary
- There is limited parking along the estuary – there used to be informal parking at the Windbound, previously a public house, but this has now been limited – the public is now more likely to visit other areas such as Severn beach

There followed general discussion, referring to the report submitted by Ann Fay, other members' reports and the guidance issued by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), about the suggestion for the tidal bank to be used by horses, including the following discussion points:

- Livestock, mainly cows graze various stretches of the sea bank
- Any work on increasing access would need to involve bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Lower Severn Drainage Board as well as landowners
- Asera (the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities) is the steer for nature conservation issues in the estuary (please also refer to English Nature/ Countryside Council for Wales document that follows)
- English Nature (now Natural England) use the precautionary principle in assessing impacts on designated sites. It was suggested that the impact might sometimes be overclaimed.
- The main areas for wading birds are outside of the Oldbury-on-Severn area
- There have been suggestions for routes along the tidal bank previously, including for a cycle route

- Improvements made to the Severn Way recently were limited to onsite works which would improve the experience of walkers once they were on the tidal bank, rather than works that would attract extra users to the tidal bank, following guidance relating to the nature conservation designations
- There was some discussion about the suitability of the tidal bank for cycles as well as for horses (refer to report submitted by JLAF member Andy Short). Discussion considered the physical integrity of the bank – this included variously that cyclists use canal paths; that the bank was subject to tidal forces, therefore more care was needed than on inland waterways, that canal paths are designed for horses whilst the design of this bank might not have included horses or cyclists. Where horses use part of the bank currently, it is understood that they are sensitive to using the route in wet weather when damage might be caused.
- The tidal bank is used by security patrol vehicles from the power station – security might be an additional consideration when increasing access
- The possibility that there might be public bridleway rights along the bank was raised – user evidence submitted with a claim would result in those rights being investigated. There was some resulting discussion on the interplay between the user evidence, any landowners intention to dedicate and the power to do so given the constraints resulting from SSSI and other designations. Any modification order or subsequent public inquiry would need to investigate this.
- Alternative routes, such as on the landward side of the sea wall were discussed – there are potential problems with crossing rhynes and with wet ground, as well as impacts on landowners
- It is understood that a toll ride using the tidal bank is being considered by some landowners – this is not likely to be a profitable venture, therefore would be with the good will of the landowners. Alternative access, for example through environmental stewardship was mentioned.
- Improvement to the bank would aid access for disabled users, and could provide an excellent destination for wheelchair users in particular – this has been suggested by the parish. This would in the first instance need a new wheelchair accessible kissing gate and ramp. Further improvement to the surface could also be undertaken. A view was raised that hard-topped routes are disadvantageous to horses and not preferred by many walkers.
- There might be potential in creating horse and cycle access to short sections of the tidal bank (possibly as a trial) to link some of the dead-end bridleways and to provide circular routes. There are currently two circular routes in the 'Circular Rides in South Gloucestershire' pack. On a recent Sunday visit to Oldbury-on-Severn about 12 riders were passed on bridleways.
- There are some gaps in the bridleway network. Some are accessible through permission or other access arrangements, though they might not be formalised. Some of these might have user evidence that could initiate a claim of bridleway rights.
- There have been some capital improvement schemes made by South Gloucestershire Council to bridleways across the council area, including some surface improvements on paths in Oldbury on Severn
- There have been problems with motorcycle users in the past.

The Chair invited Bob Hall to give a brief summary of his findings for Oldbury-on-Severn. Please refer also to the report that follows. The following points arose in discussion involving all present:

- Living in Thornbury Bob has used the paths in Oldbury-on-Severn for a number of years, often with the local running club
- There are some very dense areas of paths. Generally, paths are in reasonable condition but some old installations of stiles need replacing, similarly, waymarking needs to be renewed in some areas. Some vegetation growth might mean there is low use of some paths. There are a few notable examples of paths needing repair.
- Runners like routes where they can make good progress, while others might like to linger.
- Main use is likely to be along the riverside and along rhynes, which attract birds therefore bird watchers. Perhaps links could be made where there are physical, but not public routes, paths and tracks
- The main attractions of the area is the tidal edge and rhynes. The impact of lost car parking adjacent to the Windborne public house, now closed, was raised.

Other points raised at the meeting included:

- The possibility of a link from Oldbury-on-Severn to and from Thornbury (raised within the parish). This would be particularly useful for pedestrians and cyclists, especially for children at the local youth club. This was thought to be desirable, but expensive. Such a route might run along road verges – this would be of additional benefit for horse riders as well as children on bikes, if appropriately surfaced. Horse riders already use the verges.

- Another route for such a link was suggested – some of the route is existing bridleway, some is on roads, and another section is on a footpath that currently has a good surface. The suggested route links path numbers OOS87, the road near Wheelbarrow Cottage, OTH25, OTH30 and OTH35.
- Much of the bridleways are on the low lying land in the village, there might be potential in improving OTH32, as it is a bridleway that has – with some clearance – the potential for excellent views. Clearance might also aid the drying of the surface of the bridleway.
- The role of landowners was discussed – and the perception that landowners do not like access was challenged. Whilst many landowners might otherwise support improved access, they have other pressures related to farming and food production that are difficult to reconcile. Sometimes these are exasperated by unsympathetic or unknowledgeable users. For instance, galloping horses can cause cows to run, which can cause animal health problems, particularly in milking cows. There was access for horses along the estuary in the past, and limited local use, but current horse riders and owners are greater in number and not necessarily the same in the nature of use. Some landowners attitudes are therefore not 'won't do', but by necessity 'can't do'.
- The effect of the loss of informal parking, and the reliance on this informal car parking, was emphasised. This is particularly important for disabled people.
- The possibility of creating new signed (promoted) routes to increase use on lesser used routes, encouraging users to explore further was raised as an alternative to the low levels of use on some routes being inevitable.
- There was a general discussion about route rationalisation (using diversion, extinguishment and creation of routes in an area). There was an emphasis that there is not a principled or general consensus on route rationalisation though it might be possible in theory to achieve a consensus on very specific and considered examples.
- Transport to and from Oldbury-on-Severn was raised – including car ownership and access to the village by public transport.

Oldbury-on-Severn

JLAF Member's Report: Ann Fay

The bridleway network in Oldbury parish is extensive and heavily used. The general area is low lying and wet which causes the bridleways to become extremely muddy at times. There has been extensive work recently by South Gloucestershire Council to improve the surface of several of the bridleways and cut back the overgrowth on others.

While checking up on some bridleways I have not seen for some time I asked opinions of riders I met. The efforts made by South Glos recently are appreciated. Some comments were "the stones used for surfacing are too large, they bruise some horses feet", "we prefer muddy bridleways as they are better for cantering", "the manhole covers in one bridleway frighten the horses" (explained later on) , and overwhelmingly, "links along the Severn Bank would be fantastic". A number of people would be willing to fill in evidence forms from riding the bank in the past. No other links were suggested.

Two local landowners are attempting to set up a tollride in the area, including the Severn bank.

The bridleways.

OOS10 across fields from OOS27 with a number of gates, not always easy. It ends in a footpath OOS9, which the present landowner allows to be used.

OOS13 a field bw from Jobs Green Farm to the river bank where it ends with a stile.

OOS16 short track from OOS19 to Jobs Green farm

OOS19 wide track around Oldbury Power Station, gravelled with some muddy patches. There has relatively recently been a pipeline installed down the middle of the track with metal cover plates at intervals along the track. One rider cannot use the track because of these. Other riders said their horses are spooked by them but still use the track.

OOS25 Harestreet Lane. Wide,hard track.

OOS27 field bw from Hill Lane to OOS10. Several gates. Blue bw waymark on gate at road, no signpost.

OOS30 from Hill Lane to Rockhampton Rhine (Duckhole). Hard track, grassy track and fields. No obvious route or waymarks at end. Correct route (track) was cleared last year but is now overgrown and very wet. Gates much improved since my last inspection.

OOS44 bw in 3 parts. The Toot end has been cutback and is clear. Surface reasonable at present but gets wet. The next part is a good track, surfaced. The last part has been cut back and is clear. Surface as first part.

UCR Ham Lane, hard track from OOS44 to Oldbury/Foss Lane.

OOS52 from Featherbed Lane. The start is across the lawn of Albion House and is completely overgrown with a metre thick thicket. After that it is a track and field bw, ending before the river.

OOS56 rough grass track, very rutted from near Oldbury Church to Westmarsh Lane, where it becomes a hard track. A cul de sac.

OOS81 from Oldbury Church. Hard track to junction with OOS87 then muddy track. Some work done recently by new landowner.

OOS85 Metalled road, hard track and field. Ends before river.

OOS87 hard track from OOS81 to Cowhill Lane

OOS95 Stock Lane, field bw from Cowhill Lane to Stock Hill. Very muddy but work being done by new landowner.

OTH32 Bond Lane, a track from Stock Lane to Mumbleys Lane. Recently improved by South Glos.

Horses

Oldbury 206

Rockhampton 34

Hill 31

Thornbury 124

Aust 37

Olveston 219

The Severn Bank link is the main aim of most riders in Oldbury.

Oldbury-on-Severn

JLAF Member's Report: Bob Hall

Unlike the areas earlier in the ROWIP surveys, this is an area I have walked around, and more often run around, with Thornbury RC, for many years. However, we have usually confined ourselves to our favourite trade routes, so I've supplemented things with a few sample excursions of some less-well-used paths..

As last time, it's convenient to divide the paths into 4 areas.

a) The northern plain, down by the river, much of it flood-land in former times. This area, now largely populated with horses (some of which bite!) and chicken farms, is a bit of an acquired taste in the autumn mist (World's End Farm a little further north, is aptly named)

b) The land around Oldbury village and Oldbury Naite, (south of the Power Station road) – here this is a high density of paths, not all of which I've sampled recently

c) The land East towards Thornbury – a few fairly well-used paths suffice for us runners in this area

d) The higher ground in the south, Fowlers hill, Tittershill and the land around Kington (some of this is area transferred out of Thornbury area to Oldbury several years ago, but apparently still keeping the OTH identifiers).

A major issue for this area is whether horse riding can be more easily facilitated, especially along the river bank, (which is presently a footpath only

a) Northern Plain

Many people in this area incorporate the river bank (Severn Way) in some part of their excursion.

The area ends most logically to the North at Hill sluice (on the river bank), which is in fact in Hill CP. The county boundary lies further north again. A number of bridal paths make their way to the river bank in this area – (at least one, at World's End Farm has been 'rationalised away' in the past 10 years). Foremost of these tracks is 'Stuckmoor Lane' which lives up to its name in winter months; gets churned by cattle and horse traffic but has steep drainage ditches which reduce the scope for walkers and runners to avoid the mud.

Coming properly into the survey area with the footpath from the river bank that the White House, I note that appears to be no RoW now shown from the south. This is anomalous (the f/p used to be reachable from both directions) and seems to have arisen about 15 years ago when the river flood-bank was re-engineered from the E (landward) side of the White House to the W. The path SE from the Whitehouse, OOS/1, seems to have lost all its waymarks and any road side sign of recent years

In the block between Nupdown and Sheperdine only OOS/10/(+OOS/27) and OOS/26 get much use I think – both are bridal paths for most of their length.

I sampled a couple of blocks of little used paths. Apart from the N end of OOS/32 (N of the small pond) all appeared to have once been adequately way marked and stiled. But in some cases the stiles had not been cutout for several year and were now wholly within the hedge; in other cases the stiles had reached a dangerous condition (split or broken steps etc.). Similar problems were found (on OOS31 & OOS36) in the next block south, to the power station road.

While on this area, it is sad to see that the Windbound now discourages parking. There is thus almost no where with any capacity near the river.

b) The land E to Thornbury.

The principal trade routes in the next block E all go to the rheen system – principal of these are OOS/28 E from the road, OOS/30, a track, and OOS/68 68 which follows the rheen (usually we reach by a mild trespass (?) from OOS/67). There is probably scope for OOS/68 to be made into a bridal path, especially if the bp were to run below the top of the banking.. OOS/70, from the rheen SE to Duckhole is also useful and could be bp'd

c) Oldbury Village Paths

There are many paths and sidepaths in this area, useful mainly as teasers for the ardent rambler. I have not in the main revisited them, hoping that their proximity to the village has secured their adequate maintenance (this is certainly true of those we regularly use in this area). The path OOS/31 is notable for being an alternative route NS to Oldbury Naite. For the rambler the paths regain their logic when constrained by Oldbury Pill (OOS/14 to the N and OOS55 to the S) – there is no formal way over the sluice between these two, but this is honoured, by those on foot, in the breach. Perhaps the EA could now be persuaded to concede a way on both foot and horse.

d) The land from Cowhill to Fowlers Hill

There are several 'trade routes' around Cowhill, principally OOS/87 which provides a quick bridal way to Oldbury Church from Thornbury; then down to the river on OOS/85 (but lacks a good bridal-way approach, out of Thornbury). There is a similar useful way across the fields south (OOS/86 then OAU/87) to Littleton. From a quick sample of the paths on to St Arilda's Church and around Churnmead Farm to Pullins Green, these are generally adequately maintained (though need 'cutting out' this autumn soon)

The remaining footpaths and bridal ways are those over the high ground . Principal of these is OTH/32, a bridal path, the pleasant approach path OTH/33, and path OTH/34, part of the Jubilee Way. The bridal path is probably overgraded as a bridal route (the surface is very soft, and the descent to the road to the north is particularly messy, though both a horse and foot variant are offered..

Overall. The Oldbury area offers in the main very little contrast in elevation, so that the main attraction is access to the tidal waterfront, or (to a confirmed nature lover) one of the more major rheens. There is thus a good case for opening up these watersides to limited horse traffic. The area as a whole has a basic footpath network, which is adequately used, and an extensive network of minor footpaths around Oldbury Village which is believed to be well maintained. Away from Oldbury the tracks, though once apparently well-stiled and way-marked, are beginning to show the need for maintenance. The higher ground by the Church and also between Tittershill and Fowlers hill offers very pleasant view across the Vale and towards the Cotswolds. Some modest development of these routes might prove possible.

Car Parking down by the river is now very restricted at the Windbound. An arrangement for some public provision should be sought with the present owners. Similarly an arrangement with the Oldbury Training Centre would be useful.

Oldbury-on-Severn

JLAF Member's Report: Ray Newbiggin

Introduction.

1. I visited Oldbury on Tuesday the 26th of September 2006 to do a survey for the ROWIP. This report follows the reports made following my visits to Timsbury, Brislington and Sodbury. This survey is different from the other three because this one is primarily concerned with bridleways.
2. Before going, I did 1.5 hours desk research and used the two maps provided by CJH and:
 - noted that the survey area is about 8 square miles, the largest of the ROWIP study areas
 - planned drive routes and 15 spots where I could park and look around
 - noted that each drive route appeared to be of interest to the ROWIP bridleway debate.

The Survey on the drive routes

Both the desk research and the field visit pointed to the desirability of making the sea wall a bridleway which would mean it could probably also be used as a cycle route. It is already a footpath. A number of the existing bridleways go near to the sea wall and it would be sensible to make some circular bridleway routes.

However, this will need both capital investment and annual maintenance costs for the sea wall. I say this because the sea wall is a vital defence against the occasional high water surge.

When I walked on the sea wall near the northern end of the study area, the track was rutted with large puddles of water standing in some of the ruts. August and September this year have been very dry and I wonder what conditions would be like in a wet summer and a wet winter. If the surface of the sea wall is not made firm enough to stand constant horse riding then the sea walls will inevitably leak and farms will be flooded. The southern end of the sea wall has a much better surface.

Details of my drive routes are:

1. OOS/30, well marked and well used. Is at a dead end.
2. OOS/26, well marked. Link it to OOS/30?
3. OOS/27, well marked. Not used. Could it be linked to OOS/30?
4. OOS/26 & OOS/10. 26 is not marked in any way. 10 is marked with the normal sign and also with "Round Avon Ride" opposite the telephone box.
5. OOS/13, marked but not used. This could go to the sea wall.
6. OOS/16, not marked
7. OOS/16, not marked
8. OOS/52, not marked as a bridleway but marked as a footpath
9. OOS/52, not seen. Could this be linked to the sea wall?
10. OOS/84, marked
11. OOS/85, not marked
12. OOS/85, good track and the track goes almost to the sea wall
13. OOS/56, not seen
14. OOS/95 to OOS/81, marked but one side of the bridleway sign is broken
15. OOS/87, marked.

Overview of the area using keywords from the CROW Act 2000.

Rating on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 is high.

Needs of the public,

Walking	5
Cycling	5
Horse riding	3
Exercise	5
Recreation	5
Blind / Immobile	1
Safe	5
Attractive	5

Miscellaneous information

1. I saw no horse riders on bridleways or on roads but some youngsters were learning to ride at a riding school. There were many horses in the fields and a number of horse boxes were seen.
2. I saw some people taking recreation exercise with their dogs on the sea wall on a very sunny Tuesday whilst I was driving and walking around the area for 5 hours.
3. Looking at the map before hand, and looking at the footpath signs on the ground, there is a super-abundance of footpaths. Maintaining so many footpaths must be a headache for the Council.
4. There is a cycle route through the area and it is splendid cycling countryside. Unlike Timsbury, the roads were safe because there was little traffic and all the drivers I met were courteous and careful on the narrow roads.

Oldbury-on-Severn

JLAF Member's Report: Andy Short

View on behalf of leisure cyclists – Andy Short

- The area is blessed with the NCN route and the route that tours the boundaries of the old county of Avon.
- All the bridleways, roads, RUPPs, BOATS, whatever, that lead to the river bank appear as 'dead-ends' to any user other than pedestrians.
- I believe it is appropriate that at least some of them are linked along the river bank to provide a local (perhaps limited) through route for horses and cyclists.
- When I raised this at a JLAF meeting, I was advised that this had been (and would continue to be) resisted on the grounds of erosion and risk of flooding due to breach of the embankment.
- I disagree with this view most strongly. Canals have borne horse traffic for centuries with regular maintenance (indeed, working horses of considerably more bulk than ridden horses, and pulling barges/narrowboats). The bank footpath has very shallow ramparts, with no risk of subsidence. Addition of a suitable hard surface (grit of preference to horse riders, tarmac of preference to cyclists) would not reasonably be expected to compromise the integrity of the embankment, indeed, it should reinforce the crown. I suggest that the group identify two sections, each say half a mile long, linked to the local bridleway/road network, by routes reasonably useable by leisure cyclists and horse riders, and promote the surfacing of one with tarmac, one with compacted grit. This would be a minimalist 'pilot' proposal.
- The river is one of the most scenic attractions in the immediate area, but is not available to incorporate in to an exploratory route, only a there and back visit.
- I believe any resistance to such a proposal would be based on the desire of specific interest groups to exclude horse and cycle riders, veiled by the pretence of structural and economic risk.

- As I recall, about the only 'watering hole' along the riverside, the Windbound, was lost to the public when converted from a pub in to a residence. The area cannot be regarded as reasonably accessible without the demand to create refreshment opportunities, public convenience, etcetera.
- Most existing users of the river bank are pedestrians who would have driven there in a private motor vehicle. At least cyclists, and some horse riders, would be able to make a complete journey without dependence on fossil fuels. We should be welcome, not proscribed.

Oldbury-on-Severn

JLAF Member's Report: Robin Winfield

Although familiar with his Parish I have made two specific visits to check on the Public Rights of Way, the Signage and use of the Rights of Way.

Signage from the Public Highway appeared good for both Footpaths and Bridleways.

The map indicates that there are a number of Bridleways, which go to and from the Severn Estuary, but not along the protective Estuary Embankment.

These no doubt arise not only from Barges which used to operate along the Severn Estuary and River, but from Fishermen. With the traditional catching of Salmon in the Putchers, these were taken to and from the Estuary via horse and cart.

I have therefore paid particular attention as to whether the footpath should be amended to that of a Bridleway in the future.

The embankment is a sea defence which was because of its breach in 1980 was increased in height, and profile. The new profile being a smoother shape, so that in the event of overtopping the water would flow down the inner side, and not undercut the embankment as it did with the previous wall.

Since then there have already been several times when with a high tide the estuary waters have deposited rubbish, on top of the wall, and indeed have probably for a short time overtopped it. With Global Warming even a small rise in sea levels is going to see this embankment tested more and more.

The inland areas are below high tide level, and any breach could see thousands of acres covered with the loss of life of livestock, and possibly human life as well. The Environment Agency now stipulates a 1 in 200 assessment, as to the likelihood of flooding, and this has been quoted in the refusal of planning permission for development further along the Estuary.

To prevent erosion of the sea wall, use has always been limited to a public footpath along the top of the wall.

The embankment and the warth land on the estuary side are owned by individual landowners and farmers. Livestock is grazed on both sides of the estuary wall, and is kept apart by fences and gates.

Gates are normally "kissing gates" to allow walkers to follow the footpath line, whilst the larger field gates have locks which are the property of the Environment Agency.

The warth land on the estuary side of the wall has been classified as SSSI, and no change of farming practice is allowed, even the burning of tide rubbish is not allowed.

Situated in the Parish is the Nuclear Power Station, which now has regular patrols of Police, for security.

I have made enquiries of a local riding stable, and whilst they use the recognised bridleways, informal agreements with local farmers mean that they can connect between various bridleways. These local agreements recognise that they can only be used when weather and ground conditions are suitable. Any statutory bridleways would not do this, with the consequent damage to the ground along the embankment, and any footpath.

A recognised access point to the Estuary wall was at the "Windbound", which has now been limited by the property owners, so that only two vehicles can safely park at anyone time. This is unfortunate, as it did enable walkers to use this as access point, before walking along the embankment. This can still be done but vehicle numbers are now limited.

I did write to the Lower Severn Drainage Board to enquire about maintenance of the Embankment, this was referred to the Environment Agency, as it is their responsibility. I enclose herewith a copy of the reply to the Lower Severn Drainage Board.

I would add that since this letter DEFRA, have cut the total budget to the Environment Agency by £200 Mn, and part of that cut will be set against drainage and sea defences.

I would therefore draw the conclusion that it is most unlikely that any "upgrading" to allow riding or vehicles on the embankment would be either approved or paid for by the Dept. of Environment.

Extract of letter from the Environment Agency to the Lower Severn Drainage Board, 28th March 2006:

Joint Local Access Forum – Severn Estuary

Thank you for your letter dated 17th March 2006 regarding the formation of a new right of way along the flood defences at Oldbury. I appreciate you bringing this to our attention.

To date, we have not received any consent application or enquiry from the Joint Local Access Forum and I will be writing to them to ask them to consult us on their plans. They will need to demonstrate that the integrity of the defences will be unaffected by any new right of way. We would also have concerns if the proposals were to increase the costs of any future improvements. In summary, a number of questions would need to be answered adequately before we would grant consent or support any proposal. Our first step would be to encourage them to keep off the sea defences because of increased erosion.

Oldbury-on-Severn

English Nature / Countryside Council for Wales report:

Managing and Promoting Recreational Access in the Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, Ramsar Site and European Site - An Advice Note for Authorities and Public Bodies



MANAGING AND PROMOTING RECREATIONAL ACCESS IN THE SEVERN ESTUARY SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST, RAMSAR SITE AND EUROPEAN SITE

AN ADVICE NOTE FOR AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC BODIES

This note has been produced to provide general information on the legislative issues relevant to any authority or public body which has a duty, power, function or role in managing or promoting access to land or water in the Severn Estuary. This is not intended to be definitive legal advice and all authorities should seek appropriate legal advice where required.

In order to keep this advice note succinct and focussed and to facilitate the wider understanding of the relevant terms etc. necessary cross-referencing to underlying relevant legislation and supporting documents is provided through footnotes.

Background

The Severn Estuary is designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar Site (Wetland of International Importance) and Special Protection Area (SPA). It is also proposed for designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).¹

These designations have been put in place (or are proposed) to recognise and protect a wide range of habitat and species features. These include several interest features which are susceptible to impacts arising from increased levels of human activity including both physical impact on habitats and visual or noise disturbance impact. Of particular concern regarding promotion of increased recreational access is the potential for a corresponding increase in levels of trampling of sensitive habitats (eg saltmarsh vegetation) and disturbance of important populations of feeding, roosting or breeding birds.

The role of authorities and public bodies in proposing new or altered access arrangements

All authorities and public bodies, whether managing existing access arrangements or proposing to undertake or promote new access arrangements, will need to have regard to the legislative provisions which have been put in place by the UK Government to deliver the conservation of the special features of SSSIs and European sites.

Authorities may have different and overlapping roles relating to the designations in place; ie “competent” and “relevant” authorities² in respect of European sites and “Section 28G Authorities”³ in respect of SSSI. The responsibilities accompanying these titles may relate to works undertaken by the authority themselves or works they authorise or cause others to undertake.

All competent, relevant and section 28G authorities should have particular regard to the following legislative requirements:

European sites

- **Regulation 3(4) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994**, which gives a general duty to competent authorities in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats (and Birds) Directives so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions. Of particular relevance in this context is the requirement in Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive, to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration and disturbance of habitats and species for which European Sites have been designated.
- **Regulation 3(3) of the above Regulations**, which requires any competent authority having functions relevant to marine conservation to exercise those functions so as to secure compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. “Marine conservation” is not defined in the Regulations, but “marine area” means any land covered continuously or intermittently by tidal waters, or any part of the sea.
- **Regulation 48 of the above Regulations** regarding consultation and authorisation procedures for plans and projects ‘likely to have a significant effect’ on the interest features of any European Site. The scope of “plans and projects” is not defined in the legislation, but official guidance and emerging case law suggests a broad interpretation is required. Not all plans and projects are specifically covered by Regulation 48, but all should nevertheless be subject to a procedure equivalent to Regulation 48 in order to ensure compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.
- **Regulation 60 of the above Regulations** relating to permission granted by any GDO where the development is ‘likely to have a significant effect’ on the interest features of any European Site

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- **Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as substituted by section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)**, which gives a general duty to all public bodies and statutory undertakers to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper

exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the special features of an SSSI

- **Section 28H and 28I of the above Act** regarding consultation procedures over any operations (carried out in the exercise of the authority's own functions or in authorisation of others) which are likely to damage the special interest features

In relation to activities which do not clearly fall within defined consenting procedures, particular attention should be paid to Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as substituted) and to Regulations 3(3) and 3(4) of the Conservation Regulations 1994, as these are catch-all provision intended to ensure that all the activities and decisions of authorities are as far as possible conducive to the protection of these important designated sites.

It should be noted that all the above legislation relates to the consideration of impacts on the special interest features whether operations occur inside or outside the boundary of the designated sites. The above legislation also covers any functions – regulatory, advisory or otherwise - that an authority may have in relation to private landowners and occupiers.

The role of landowners/occupiers in proposing or permitting new or altered access arrangements

Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as substituted) and Regulation 19 of the Conservation Regulations 1994 require the owner or occupier of any land in an SSSI or European site to consult and receive written consent from the relevant nature conservation body before permitting any activity likely to damage or have a significant effect on the special features of the designated site.

It should be noted by all landowners/occupiers and authorities that “recreational or other activities likely to damage the features of interest” is included on the list of operations issued at the time of notification of the Severn Estuary SSSI in 1989.

It is English Nature and CCW's view that all proposals to provide or promote new or altered recreational activities within the boundary of the SSSI or European Site should be subject to consultation with English Nature/CCW in order that consideration of the likely impacts on the special features can be made, under both UK and European legislation.

It should be noted that section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Regulation 19 of the Conservation Regulations 1994 are a legal requirement placed on owners and occupiers and that there are substantial penalties both for failing to consult and for undertaking operations without the necessary consent. Authorities should therefore, in considering proposals for new or altered access provision, take care to ensure that any dealings with owners and occupiers include advice on this matter.

Notes:

¹ Designations

SSSI - UK designation for flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. Protection is implemented principally through Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as substituted by Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

European Site - European designation made under either the Habitats Directive (SACs) or Birds Directive (SPAs). Protection is implemented through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended. The designation may incorporate both terrestrial and marine areas – the latter parts known as European marine sites

Special Protection Area (SPA) – a European designation made under the 1979 Birds Directive – all SPAs are European sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - a European designation made under the 1992 Habitats Directive – all SACs are European sites (in England, this includes candidate sites submitted by the UK Government to the European Commission but not yet formally designated as SACs. Note that as of September 2005, the Severn Estuary possible SAC is not yet a European site)

Ramsar Site – an international designation classified under the Ramsar Convention 1971. It is the policy of the UK and Welsh Assembly Governments that Ramsar sites should be treated as if they were European sites

² **Competent and relevant authorities** are defined in Regulations 5 and 6 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. In essence, all public bodies and statutory undertakers are competent authorities (Regulation 6), while certain types of competent authority are also relevant authorities (Regulation 5).

In the Severn Estuary the majority of relevant authorities have formed the Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA) to co-ordinate their approaches and produce a management scheme for the Severn Estuary. The management scheme and associated action plan published in September 2004 seeks to identify and address issues affecting the conservation of the European marine site including the impacts of land and water based access and recreational uses of the Estuary.

³ **Section 28G Authorities** are defined by Section 28 G of Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales
September 2005

Agenda item 10: Updates (for information)

a. Access Land

Access Management Grant Scheme (AMGS).

Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils made an application to the AMGS in June 2006, for works that under the scheme would need to be completed by March 2007:

Bath & North East Somerset £6824.00 spend, 75% grant at £5118.00
South Gloucestershire £5000.00, 75% grant at £3750.00

However, on the 24th July, a moratorium was issued on Countryside Agency grants (not just on grants for Access Land). At this time, the Chair of the JLAF emailed the Countryside Agency:

From: Alun Morgan
Sent: 30 July 2006 16:01
To: Chris.Burke
Cc: Chris Hogg; Ray Newbigin
Subject: Moratorium Notice.

Dear Mr Burke,

I am writing as Chair of the Joint Local Forum for Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire.

I am most concerned to hear that there is to be a moratorium on issuing new grants for Access Land for the 06/07 financial year. The JLAF has been very involved in the applications by the councils in our area, not only in discussing the proposals but in visiting the areas under consideration. We strongly supported the applications for 05/06, and we have further supported the works for the 06/07 year. This has including advising the councils on the areas of Access Land to be given priority for new works, and advising on the signs and furniture to be included.

This moratorium will not only delay the implementation of our schemes, and hence reduce the likelihood of these areas being used by the public in 2007, but it will mean that the JLAF members who have been involved in all the planning (as volunteers) will feel that their efforts have been wasted. This will inevitably have an impact on the likelihood of our being able to get volunteers in the future.

I would be grateful if you would let me know if this is a temporary hold on the grants requested, and the background to the decision.

Alun Morgan

This reply was received:

From: Chris.Burke
Sent: 01 August 2006 17:22
To: Alun Morgan
Cc: Chris Hogg; Ray Newbigin
Subject: Re: Moratorium Notice.

Dear Mr. Morgan,

Many thanks for your e-mail below.

Although I am on leave at the moment I have picked up your e-mail.

There is currently a budget review in progress and I apologise for the disruption at the present time . However as soon as I have any further information I will inform your access authority representatives.

I am back in the office on 7 August and will provide any further information at that time if I have it.

best wishes

Chris Burke
Access Management Grant Casework Officer
DIRECT LINE : 0117 910 2961
Countryside Agency
5th Floor
1 Redcliff Street
Bristol BS1 6NP

The access authorities have been kept up to date, but the grant scheme is still under moratorium and, given time constraints and the seasonal nature of some of the works, it is now unlikely that any works can be carried out on access land in this area.

Access Land at Lansdown.

The Chair has sent the following letter:



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Chris Hogg, Secretary to the JLAF
Floor 2 South, Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, BRISTOL. BS31 1LA.

Telephone: 01225 394161
Facsimile: 01225 394205
Email: secretary@jlaf.org.uk
<http://www.jlaf.org.uk>

Alun Morgan, Chair of the JLAF. Ray Newbiggin, Vice Chair of the JLAF.

Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings\JLAF11 FR031106\JLAF11 Papers\JLAF11 Background Papers.doc

Cllr Sir Elgar Jenkins
Executive Member for Transport and Highways
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Guildhall
High Street
BATH BA1 5AW

Alun Morgan

Thursday 26th October 2006.

Dear Sir Elgar Jenkins,

Access Land at Lansdown

I am writing to you as chairman of the Joint Local Access Forum for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire (the "JLAF").

The JLAF has been established through a partnership between your authority with Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council to provide advice on matters associated with public access to land; the authorities have a statutory obligation to consider that advice. The JLAF has 21 members, one Councillor from each authority involved and 18 other members with a variety of interests, including those of land managers and of users.

This letter is being sent on behalf of the JLAF following a consensus to do so at the meeting of Friday the 7th July 2006.

We have, over the past three years, considered the implementation of Access Land in the area. This has involved site visits of land included on the Conclusive Map of Open Country issued by the Countryside Agency, then advising the Councils on priorities for opening access to sites, on improvement works and on the design and installation of new signs.

One of the sites that we identified as high priority is the Access Land around Chelscombe Farm, between Lansdown and Weston. The land has excellent views, is close to a large population and has the potential to provide an excellent link for walkers along the Cotswold escarpment. There are public footpaths on the land, though one path has been inaccessible for many years: the council has, in the past, considered enforcement action regarding this path. The land has not been improved for access and promoted by the council as Access Land, as agreement has not been achieved between the council and the landowner. We understand that council officers have written to and also visited the landowner on site. The JLAF has written to the landowner to invite discussion though there has been no response. There are legal powers available to the council to achieve a means of access agreement.

We would be grateful if you would consider this case and make a decision on the council's approach to the improvement and promotion of this area of access land.

If you have any questions or queries regarding this matter then please do contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Alun Morgan, Chair of the JLAF.

Agenda item 10: Updates (for information)

b. Statutory Guidance on Local Access Forums (draft)

The Chair and Vice Chair had an opportunity to view a draft copy of the new Statutory Guidance, which is now due to be issued with new Regulations for commencement on the 1st January 2006. The following emails contain some comments made on those drafts, and the response from Defra.

From: Chris Hogg
Sent: 02 October 2006 18:15
To: Audcent, Geoff
Cc: Alun Morgan; Ray Newbigin
Subject: FW: Secretary of State's Guidance on the work of Local Access Forums

Dear Geoff Audcent,

I have been asked to forward some comments made by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Local Access Forum for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire. I need to stress that these comments are personal observations and do not represent a consensus view of the JLAF. The Chair and Vice-Chair are very grateful for the chance to make additional comments at this stage.

1: Firstly

This new guidance is a very comprehensive document, which could be very helpful to us and to new members of the JLAF. It is noted that new regulations are also due which are referred to at page 42. These, when finalised, may address some of the points below.

2: Joint LAFs

Our JLAF is joint between 3 of 4 adjacent unitary authorities. It is possible that North Somerset would join with the JLAF arrangement, particularly considering other joint work in the "West of England" area such as on the LTP. As the guidance stands it appears that the view included in our earlier consultation response may still apply:

"View C. Under the current regulations it does not appear possible to appoint more than three members who are also members (Councillors) of a participating Appointing Authority. In order to address a difficulty where there might be more than three authorities involved in a Joint Local Access Forum, we suggest that the regulations could be amended to state that there should a maximum of three councillors in a Local Access Forum, and in the case of Joint Local Access Forums one additional Councillor member for a fourth and each subsequent appointing authority".

3: Workload

At paragraph 1.2 the draft guidance states: "Disproportionate (being, sic) demands being made upon their time." This point is repeated in the rest of the document. The amount of work involved in running a successful (J)LAF is substantial and following this guidance will create additional burdens. This has been raised at regional LAF and national NCAF events. This is of particular concern where success requires the substantial involvement of volunteers. A summary of the work contributed to the running of the JLAF by the Chair and Vice Chair is attached, as this might be of interest – it might be useful to research such involvement in other LAFs.

4: Independent reporting

We are aware that the potential implications of Section 3.2.7 (page 10) are being raised elsewhere in the region. We would be concerned if the JLAF was required, when giving advice to non-section 94(4) bodies, to give that advice via the appointing authority. This would compromise the currently independent nature of the JLAF advice.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment, and we look forward to working with the final version of this guidance.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Hogg.

From: Audcent, Geoff

Sent: 09 October 2006 17:36

To: Chris Hogg

Subject: RE: Secretary of State's Guidance on the work of Local Access Forums

Chris

Thanks for this.

With regard to council representation on joint LAFs, I understand the point you make, but this councillor membership of forums drew mixed responses during the public consultation and in the light of this is was decided not to make changes to this aspect of the Regulations. However, there is nothing to prevent a council sending a representative to a meeting even if that person is technically not a member of the forum, and I would normally expect the Chairman to allow that person to contribute to the debate.

With regard to independent reporting, I can advise that in response to concerns raised by yourself and several others we are reconsidering whether there might be any scope to reword section 3.2.7 of the Guidance to better address the concerns.

Geoff

Agenda item 10: Updates (for information)

c. 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 12th October 2006

Agenda

1. Introduction and Apologies
2. Minutes of last meeting 6th July 2006 and matters arising
3. Suitability of the three lists: Priorities, CAMS resolved and DMMO's
4. Content of the three lists
5. JLAF/ROWIP update
6. Review of PDA training and PAI issue explained
7. 5% Sample survey (November) and request for volunteers
8. Ranger appointment and interim workshop arrangements
9. RUPPs and Restricted Byways
10. Any Other Business

The next meeting – 11th January 2007

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

Wednesday 11th October, 2006

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Notes from last meeting held on 19 April 2006 and matters arising
4. Management arrangements for the PROW Team
5. What the council is doing in order to make sure that Public Rights of Way are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and possible ways in which the council can use the Disability Equality Forum in order to ensure that Disabled people are included. (Cathie Baker - B&NES Disability Equality Forum)
6. How to solve the problem of ineffective catches/handles on gates on byways and bridleways.
7. Use of Volunteers to clear / improve Public Rights of Way
8. Major Works on PROW 2006-07
9. Rights of Way Improvement Plan update
10. Current PROW Legal Orders update
11. City of Bath Definitive Map update
13. Any other business

The next meeting – 21st February 2007

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

Thursday 7th September, 2006

Agenda

1. Minutes of PROWLG meeting on Thursday 1st June 2006
Matters arising.
2. Gating Orders – Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (update)
3. Matters raised by members
Lost Ways Project
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
6. Any Other Business

Provisional Date of the next meeting – 7th December 2006

Agenda item 12: The next meeting JLAF11

(in Bath & North East Somerset on the 2nd March 2007)

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
03 NOV 2006	<i>Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham</i>	<i>13 OCT 2006</i>	<i>16 OCT 2006</i>	<i>27 OCT 2006</i>
02 MAR 2007	<i>Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham</i>	<i>09 FEB 2007</i>	<i>12 FEB 2007</i>	<i>23 FEB 2007</i>
06 JUL 2007	<i>Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham</i>	<i>08 JUN 2007</i>	<i>11 JUN 2007</i>	<i>29 JUN 2007</i>