



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

JLAF 11

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 03NOV06

Date: Friday, 3rd November 2006

Time: 2:00pm

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

Present: Bill Dawson, Ann Fay, Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Cllr Chris Jackson (Bristol City Council), Bob Hall, Robert Killen, Alun Morgan, Ray Newbigin (JLAF Chairman), Ron Phelps (Deputy to JLAF Chairman and Vice Chairman), Ken Scott, Andy Short, Janet Wallis, Margaret Wilson, Robin Winfield (JLAF Vice Chairman) (JLAF Members)

Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Cheryl Hannan (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Colin Hudson (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Francis Mann (Bristol City Council), Hilary Winter (Regional Coordinator, SW Region LAFs)

Action

1	Introductions	
2	<p>Apologies Kay Bath, Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), David Colbourne, Mark McGuinness, Adam Stratton, Cllr Peter Tyzack (South Gloucestershire Council) (JLAF members)</p> <p>Bill Blyth, Mark Connelly (Cotswold AONB Board), Sir Elgar Jenkins (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Chris Weedon (Forest of Avon).</p>	
3	<p>Election for Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JLAF Ray Newbigin had requested that his position as a user representative be reconsidered as an 'other' interest, believing that this was more appropriate to his involvement in the JLAF. This had been accepted by the JLAF Steering Group, and Ray Newbigin is now a representative of 'other' interests.</p> <p>The following statement was made by Ray Newbigin: "I would like to pay tribute to the work that Alun has done for the JLAF over the last three years since its inception and probably his achievements can be divided into his: Knowledge of the Law; Hard work, and Leadership. You may remember that, following a career in the RAF, Alun studied for a University degree then became a Public Rights of Way Inspector when he had to administer the Law for many years. At one stage he was the only Welsh-speaking Inspector so was asked to solve all those intractable problems where the participants could, or would, only speak Welsh. He has many tales to tell of the footpath passions he had to calm. When the JLAF started he offered to write three of our publications – "Some background to the Law on Public Rights of Way", "The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, An Introduction" and "JLAF Glossary of terms and abbreviations". I am personally indebted to Alun for the legal guidance he has given me over the last three years. As you can see, Alun is not afraid of hard work and he and I calculated, as best we could, how many days we had spent on work for the JLAF. Alun spent 42 days in the first year and another 42 days in the second year. And let me tell you, I have 13</p>	

	<p>inches of JLAF paper and I am sure that Alun owns many more inches of JLAF paper than me!</p> <p>Lastly, may I thank Alun for his leadership on the formation of the JLAF. You have always encouraged all sides to contribute to the discussions and you have been an inclusive Chairman. You got us off to a good start and it is now our job to continue the good work."</p> <p>Alun Morgan resigned as Chair of the JLAF, Ray Newbigin resigned as Vice Chair of the JLAF.</p> <p>Ray Newbigin was elected Chairman of the JLAF until the election during the first full JLAF meeting after 30/06/2008. Robin Winfield was elected Vice Chairman of the JLAF until the election during the first full JLAF meeting after 30/06/2008.</p>	
4	<p>Deputy to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JLAF</p> <p>The appointment of a Deputy to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JLAF, was agreed. This post is outside of the scope of the regulations and therefore is an informal post, with the purpose of assisting the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JLAF. Ron Phelps was appointed to this post until the first full meeting after 30/06/2008.</p>	
5	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest raised under this item.</p>	
6	<p>Minutes of the last meeting on 7th July 2006</p> <p>A correction to Item 3, Apologies: Alistair Murdoch (NFU) is not a Councillor as shown. Subject to this amendment, the minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	Secretary
7	<p>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</p> <p>Page 2: Item 8, Access Land: The Chair wrote to the Executive Member responsible for Access Land in B&NES about the Access Land at Lansdown. No response had been received. Another letter will be written to Sir Elgar. It was highlighted that the Executive Member had not attended any JLAF meetings. It will be possible to publish Access Land maps on the Council websites, including showing the sites where access has been improved, though these maps are not yet on the council websites. Page 4: Item 13, Updates: The workload of the JLAF, as shown through the attendance at meetings was highlighted. Page 5: Item 16, The next meeting: The National Countryside Access Forum (NCAF) is under review, as its previous reporting body, the Countryside Agency, is now being replaced by Natural England. Members will be updated on any developments.</p>	Chairman Councils Secretary
8	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)</p> <p>a. ROWIP Update</p> <p>Timetable</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Summary of work being undertaken on the ROWIP Assessment</p> <p>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:</p>	

- A 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. See item 8c of this meeting.
- There will be 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.
- The councils 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.

b. Review of ROWIP Public Consultation Questionnaires.

A presentation was given on the results from the Questionnaires sent out during the summer of 2006. Three sets of identical questionnaires were sent out, one in each council area. The results from the three questionnaires have been merged, and the draft combined results were presented as draft results. The questionnaires were designed to measure use of public paths, discover barriers to use and investigate measures that might influence use, to meet the ROWIP vision to increase use. Copies of the draft results were distributed to members.

From the questionnaire results, officers had identified the following as significant issues that influence use of paths:

- The cleanliness of paths (particularly from dog mess),
- the maintenance of paths,
- the safety (personal and traffic safety) of paths,
- clarity of signing (the use of symbols to show the legitimate users of paths),
- effective promotion of paths and the use of the internet, and
- the provision of short clear circular promoted walks, graded for users (e.g. for disabled users).

JLAF members found the results interesting, but would need time to consider them in more depth. Particular points were made:

- i. the results were interesting, and put to use, it could be a valuable piece of work
- ii. whilst the results from the question about sign recognition was interesting, the signs would be more meaningful if viewed on paths rather than on paper
- iii. the reliability of the results was questioned, particularly on the sampling methods and regarding self-selection by respondents. Each

	<p>council's questionnaire had been undertaken according to national standards, though a clarification on the methodology would be sought by the secretary.</p> <p>The full merged questionnaire results, once finalised, will be added to the JLAF website.</p> <p>c. Review of Local Assessment Area working group meetings</p> <p>The notes from these four JLAF working group meetings were discussed. The meetings considered the current access and potential for improvements in Timsbury, Brislington, Sodbury and Oldbury-on-Severn. It was stated that the meetings themselves, and submissions made by JLAF members before each meeting were very comprehensive, and produced a great deal of information.</p> <p>Points were raised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The roads in Timsbury are dangerous for walkers, horse riders and cyclists ii. Access in Brislington would be improved if more routes on Bristol City Council owned land were dedicated iii. Common Land (for example in Sodbury) is being used more by 4x4's motorcyclists and scooters, creating a danger to members of the public iv. Paths and golf courses don't mix, so are best routed elsewhere – this is not always possible though, and the paths preceded the golf courses v. There is a better north-south link than indicated in the notes of the Sodbury meeting vi. A correction: the tidal bank at Sodbury was not designed with horses and cyclists in mind, whilst canal towpaths did consider horse use. vii. It was often necessary to gain the goodwill of landowners to have improvements agreed. viii. Improvements to parking and joining up footpaths are needed in Oldbury-on-Severn <p>These areas will be considered further at local meetings to be held in January.</p>	Secretary
9	<p>Enforcement of Public Rights of Way</p> <p>Following a request for an update on formal enforcement actions, Bath & North East Somerset Council have issued two formal PROW enforcement notices, and one case is going through a debt recovery process following a non-payment for clearance works; South Gloucestershire Council has issued one formal notice.</p>	
10	<p>Updates (for information)</p> <p>a. Access Land No matters raised</p> <p>b. Statutory Guidance to Local Access Forums (draft) Hilary Winter will take the JLAF's comments, as in the background papers, to a meeting with Geoff Audcent of Defra.</p> <p>c. Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups It was suggested that, to promote links, 'JLAF' should be a standing item on the liaison group agendas.</p>	Hilary Winter

11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>It was requested, that with the large amount of papers that Councillors have to consider, the papers for each could be prepared and distributed 14 days prior to meetings if possible.</p> <p>Meeting dates and venues will be arranged at least one year ahead. Members are happy with the current venue, and the current arrangement for afternoon meetings on a Friday.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
12	<p>The next meeting JLAF12 on the 3rd March 2007 at The Carter Room, Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items</p> <p><i>Agenda items for the next or subsequent meetings:</i></p> <p>Update on the Forest of Avon bid for the dedication research project Cross compliance Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act To use the Annual Report as publicity for the JLAF Review of Access Land</p> <p>Subsequent Meeting Dates</p> <p>The dates for the next year of main meetings are on the Background Papers for the meeting.</p>	
13	Close	