



JLAF 13

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 02NOV07

Date: Friday, 2nd November 2007

Time: 2:00pm

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

Present: David Colbourne, Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Bill Dawson, Ann Fay, Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Bob Hall, Robert Killen, Alun Morgan, Ray Newbigin (JLAF Chairman), Ron Phelps (Deputy to JLAF Chairman and Vice Chairman), Robin Winfield (JLAF Vice Chairman) (JLAF Members)

Stuart Ballard (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Chris Burke (Natural England), Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary) Anita Walker (South Gloucestershire Council)

Action

		Action
1	Introductions The Chairman opened the meeting and introduced Chris Burke from Natural England who has an involvement in Access Land, Local Access Forums and Rights of Way Improvement Plans for an area that includes the JLAF area. The busy agenda reflects the increasing work that LAFs are asked to do.	
2	Apologies Cllr Kevin Quartley (Bristol City Council), Andy Short, Adam Stratton, Janet Wallis, Margaret Wilson (JLAF Members) Cllr Charles Gerrish (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Cheryl Hannan (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Colin Hudson (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Francis Mann (Bristol City Council), Christine Pouncett (Bristol City Council), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Andrew Whitehead (Bristol City Council)	
3	Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest raised under this item.	
4	Minutes of the last meeting on 6th July 2007 The minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting.	
5	Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda No matters were raised under this item	
6	ROWIP Implementation Funding Chris Burke, Natural England "I am the Open Access Officer for part of the SW region of Natural England. The SW Region of Natural England corresponds to the government regional office boundaries i.e. Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Avon Unitary Authorities (also called West of England area), Gloucestershire, Wiltshire.	

I manage grant aid to access authorities for the management of open access land including infrastructure such as gates and signage. I also determine applications to restrict access to open access land and assess impact of open access on sites of nature conservation concern. The area that I cover within the region specifically for Open Access matters is Dorset, Gloucestershire and the Avon Unitary Authorities.

I have also just become the local representative for Natural England on advising on implementation of the two ROWIPs for the West of England area. The West of England Partnership covers the Council areas of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, the former Avon area.

Please note that I am not the contact for LAF/ROWIP matters in the other counties of the south west. Colin Jones remains the contact for these authorities at least for the moment and has the overview on all LAF/ROWIP work in the South West.

Chris Burke (Open Access Officer), 0117 959 8423(Chris.Burke@naturalengland.org.uk)

For Agri-environment land management schemes within former Avon, main contact is: Jonathan East (team leader), 0117 959 8515 (Jonathan.East@naturalengland.org.uk)

Specifically for agri-environment access the contact is:
Chris Westcott on 0117 959 8415 (Chris.Westcott@naturalengland.org.uk)

For health walking the contact is:
Rob Leek on 0117 959 8511 (Rob.Leek@naturalengland.org.uk)

The Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk is a useful point of reference on the breadth of work of Natural England and the relevant teams.

The funding advice is contained within background papers and there is an additional PowerPoint presentation with more detail. This will be made available on the JLAF website. I have not personally been involved in the development of the funding advice circulated with the agenda [background papers] for the meeting but will answer any questions that I can and collate any that I cannot answer myself and pursue answers from other Natural England staff."

Question 1: Have there been any changes to the amount of Access Land since its launch? **Response:** No, Access Land is the same as on the Conclusive Map, with some dedications of new Access Land. Some land though has been the subject of partial restrictions to access for safety or land management reasons. The maps are due to be reviewed at the decadal review.

Question 2: what is the situation with Natural England (NE) support for LAFs? **Response:** Regional Coordinator Hilary Winter has been employed again until March 2008 to support LAFs, and consultants (The Access Company) have been appointed nationally to do LAF training and networking.

Question 3: what funding is available for ROWIPs? **Response:** There are very little funds to run specific ROWIP grants. It will be necessary to broaden the source of funds for ROWIP work, including health or regeneration funds. Natural England could help councils identify ROWIP funding. Other examples include Suffolk who have done some work on getting funds. It is important to consider how funding is 'packaged' so that projects can tap funds from different sources.

Question 4: would NE get involved in EU funding? **Response:** NE could help by endorsing the applications made by others.

Comment: gaining funding can need long term commitment, as from experience it took 9 months and lots of time and energy to get a £3000 lottery grant.

Secretary

	<p>Comment: We should be more adept at getting funding from development through s106 contributions, where improvements are undertaken to allow developments to go ahead. NE could help by showing there is guidance from 'on high' as well as the demonstrated local demand. With regional growth points and related development this source of funding will become more critical.</p> <p>Comment: If a regional coordinator role for LAFs is important now, it should be supported for 5 years rather than the current appointment for 6 months at a time.</p>	
7	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Quick Wins</p> <p>There are three 'Quick Wins' shown in the ROWIP where the JLAF have been identified as "key partners and stakeholders/funders" in the Statement of Action. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop joint diversion policy including specification standards for diverted paths • Complete a full review of signage in the area and produce signage guidelines • Provide information, guidance and support to landowners <p>The Councils suggested the following approach: The Councils draft a joint diversion policy for the JLAF to review through a working group. That the signage review and the landowner guidance might be something that the JLAF might want to consider soon as subjects to make open suggestions, either through email discussion or in-person working groups.</p> <p>The JLAF would like the Councils to come to the JLAF with more worked up proposals, with draft policies or papers for the JLAF to consider and comment on, either through consultation or through devices such as working groups.</p>	Councils
8	<p>JLAF Reporting of advice to Councils</p> <p>The JLAF currently report their advice mainly through the minutes of meetings, responses to consultations and letters to individuals in the Councils and other organisations such as Natural England or Defra. In addition, the JLAF Chairman and others attend meetings and events to both raise the profile and engage with organisations relevant to the interests of the JLAF. This agenda item provided an opportunity to review this approach, particularly considering the Guidance issued earlier in the year which highlights that feedback to the JLAF's advice should be given.</p> <p>JLAF Members noted that all Councillor members of the JLAF and Council officers do not always attend JLAF meetings. The attendance of the Cabinet Member from Bath & North East Somerset Council at the last meeting was welcomed. The attendance of Cabinet or Executive Members of each Council or their substitutes, Council Officers and Councillor Members of the JLAF or their substitutes should be the norm. The Secretary should ensure that the papers are made available and invites sent for meetings to all of the above.</p> <p>Communications from the JLAF should include a request for feedback from the recipient.</p> <p>Cllr Chris Cray requested that the JLAF minutes be considered by members of the relevant committees in each Council.</p> <p>JLAF Members suggested that otherwise the current approach was appropriate, with a selection of methods for publicising the advice of the JLAF being utilised.</p>	Secretary Secretary Councils
9	<p>Communications, Email, JLAF Website, JLAF leaflet.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the JLAF Members have proved that they can respond to consultations effectively – 59% of Members contributed to the ROWIP consultation. All members present confirmed that they have access to email. The Chairman hoped such effective response could continue and asked Members to check their email and the JLAF website regularly. More information will be added to the JLAF website between meetings to make it more relevant to members. The secretary will also report to members on the 'traffic' to the website.</p>	Secretary

	<p>The Secretary stated that Bath & North East Somerset Council had introduced some new software, with which a discussion board could be set up on the JLAF website for Members to use. Whilst there was some concern that this could not be an effective use of resources, Members said that the Secretary should investigate this further, particularly considering any financial cost and whether it would be sufficiently user-friendly.</p> <p>The Deputy Chairman and Secretary will consider a JLAF leaflet, to be used to promote the JLAF. In principle such a leaflet should be designed so it is long lasting, and can be used for a variety of audiences. Such audiences should be considered carefully and could include Parish Councils, District Councillors, Council Officers and funding bodies. A draft will be produced for members to consider, but this is not a current priority of the JLAF.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Deputy Chair/ Secretary</p>
10	<u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION & INFORMATION</u>	
10a	<p>Consultations: JLAF meeting to ratify responses to "Right to Apply", "Coastal Access" and "Discovering Lost Ways"</p> <p>The response to the 'Right to Apply' consultation had been submitted to Defra before the consultation deadline, with a note that the response will be considered for ratification at this meeting. The response was ratified, agreed as the consensus response of the JLAF. Robin Winfield who chaired the subgroup on this subject, and Ann Fay, Peter Gould and John Gunnery were thanked for the work they put into this consultation response.</p> <p>The response to the 'Coastal Access' consultation had been submitted to Defra before the consultation deadline, with a note that the response will be considered for ratification at this meeting. The response was ratified, agreed as the consensus response of the JLAF. Ron Phelps who chaired the subgroup on this subject, and Bill Dawson, Robert Killen and Bob Hall were thanked for the work they put into this consultation response.</p> <p>The response to the "Discovering Lost Ways" consultation issued at short notice by Natural England had been compiled from JLAF Member responses by the Chairman of the JLAF. The JLAF had been granted an extension to this consultation so that it could be ratified at this meeting. The response was ratified, agreed as the consensus response of the JLAF. The Secretary will submit this response urgently.</p> <p>There was a query whether such responses were considered by the recipients of these consultations. In response, it was stated that they should be, and that reports summarising the responses to consultations were often published by organisations such as Defra and Natural England.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
10b	<p>Access Land: Update by Councils</p> <p>The report in the background papers listing the works completed by the Councils on Access Land was considered by the JLAF. The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding from Natural England towards these works was gratefully received • There are no grid references on the report so it is not possible to locate all of the works • Some of the works have been damaged since installation – for instance some of the aluminium signs had been taken • The report shows completed works but does not show what works have not been undertaken. <p>The JLAF requested a further report for the next meeting showing what improvements are needed to make Access Land accessible, for instance showing the percentage of Access Land now accessible to the public and the publicity of Access Land.</p> <p>It was reported that a team in Natural England are looking at (the Countryside and</p>	<p>Councils</p>

	Rights of Way Act 2000) Section 15 land (land with access rights granted by enactments other than the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This will look at the possibility of improvements to this land and the publicity of it.	
10c	<p>Access Land: Letter from JLAF regarding Access Land at Lansdown</p> <p>The JLAF had written a letter to Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Customer Services at Bath & North East Somerset Council requesting that the access to this plot of Access Land should be improved. The site has been identified as a priority site by the JLAF. A holding reply was received from Will Steel, Public Rights of Way Team Leader at Bath & North East Somerset Council.</p> <p>At the meeting, the Council officers explained that the Council have been trying to achieve agreement for carrying out works on the land to improve access. This would also link with a proposed dedication of Access Land by the council on its own adjacent property, to provide a through route along the Cotswold escarpment. The Council is also applying to Natural England under the Access Management Grant scheme to enable the physical works here to take place. The JLAF will be kept up to date with progress.</p>	Bath & North East Somerset Council
10d	<p>JLAF Project Progress</p> <p>- Chew Valley Lake</p> <p>A letter from Cllr Charles Gerrish of Bath & North East Somerset Council was distributed as a background paper for the meeting (also on JLAF website). Robin Winfield, the Vice Chairman is leading on this for the JLAF.</p> <p>Robin thanked the Forum for accepting his recommendation that they requested B&NES to investigate the construction and promotion of a "trail" around the lake. Robin outlined the correspondence that had been sent to Cllr Gerrish and Matthew Smith of B&NES.</p> <p>Since then he had continued discussions with Alison Sherwin (B&NES) and the Chairman of the Disabled Ramblers Association. He was continually monitoring progress including the use of Sustrans expertise in land negotiation.</p> <p>He concluded by thanking Margaret Wilson for bringing it to the attention of the Forum.</p> <p>- Monarch's Way</p> <p>The JLAF wish to see this route recorded properly in Bristol on the Definitive Map, and have selected it to represent some of the actions the JLAF proposed in their contribution to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This has been raised at the Bristol Public Rights of Way Liaison Group. Bristol City Council acknowledge that the legal protection of this route will be desirable, but without knowledge of the ownership of the land and the lengthy desk-top research necessary it is not currently a high priority over other statutory duties, though any assistance from the JLAF would be welcome.</p> <p>A JLAF member will separately be writing a paper to the Executive of Bristol City Council, care of Cllr Mark Bradshaw, and the JLAF will await the outcome of this paper. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the JLAF will raise this in meetings with Bristol City Council.</p> <p>- Mead Riding off-road link at Chipping Sodbury</p> <p>This scheme is being progressed by South Gloucestershire Council using £100,000 of funds from the Aggregates Levy, and the scheme has to be complete by March 2008 to be able to use this fund. This is the scheme that the JLAF wished to see completed and is pleased to see such progress by Council Officers. However, equestrian access is not currently being granted as part of the scheme as the landowners will not agree to equestrian access, for reasons of safety, potential damage to sports pitches and a wish not to have fences erected along the entire route. Equestrian Access was included in negotiations for the route.</p>	Chairman / Deputy

	<p>In Bath & North East Somerset, a review of access by equestrians to 'multiuse' routes is being concluded but there had been petitions compiled against equestrian access.</p> <p>The JLAF members present resolved that it supported the use of these routes by all users, following reasonable consideration of issues such as safety and requested that this be considered by the Councils. The Chairman will write to the Executive Members of the three councils outlining this advice.</p>	Chairman
10e	<p>JLAF Annual Report 2006-2007</p> <p>The Members considered the report and highlighted some errors with Membership details. These errors will be corrected and the JLAF is happy for the councils to submit this to Natural England as the Annual Report of the JLAF.</p>	Secretary
10f	<p>Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups: Agendas</p> <p>No queries were raised under this item.</p>	
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chairman reminded JLAF members to claim for all of their expenses relating to the JLAF.</p> <p>LAF Member Handbook.</p> <p>This was a late consultation from Natural England that was sent to JLAF members by email. There was a query that this had been sent to all members of the JLAF [this was checked after the meeting and members concerned had received the email]. The responses from members had been compiled by the Chairman of the JLAF. The response was ratified and agreed as the consensus response of the JLAF. The Chairman will submit this response to Natural England.</p>	Members Chairman
12	<p>The next meeting JLAF14 on the 7th March 2008 at Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items Subsequent Meeting Dates</p>	
13	<p>Close</p>	