



# Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

## JLAF Notes of the RoWIP Funding Event – Natural England South West Region 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007

Officers of the JLAF (along with Council Rights of Way staff) attended an event on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007 organised by the South West Region of Natural England dealing with the issues about funding Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) that should by now have been approved by Councils in England. It appears that most but not all Councils have met the deadline – ours amongst them. The *Access Company* has the task of reviewing the quality of RoWIPs. Further information can be found on [www.theaccesscompany.com](http://www.theaccesscompany.com)

Funding RoWIPs and other access to the countryside initiatives is not a straightforward task in the modern world. It raises the question as to what extent the JLAF should get involved. It is currently thought that the JLAF's role is to support Local Authorities and other non-profit making organisations in getting funding for appropriate projects. So the comments below, gleaned from the Natural England presentation are to help in the understanding of some of the funding issues.

### 1) Accessing funding – general approach required by fundraisers

- 1) Attention must be paid to the emotional issues, look for partnerships, help partners, develop formal and informal networking – in short funding is an interpersonal activity.
- 2) Take a strategic view, focus on the project and likely funders. Use imagination and clarity seeing things from the funders' point of view.
- 3) Shape your appeal to match and to some extent your project but do not chase funds which do not support your core aims.
- 4) Decide how to communicate – what media are appropriate.
- 5) Accessing funding is complex and time consuming. Networking may take years to pay off but once successful an ongoing funding stream may be established.
- 6) You will not get funding for statutory duties. But if the project is a mix of the statutory and voluntary presentation becomes important.
- 7) Bids from whatever source need the support of the public and local communities. The LAFs with their wide-ranging membership can provide this very effectively and individual members have their own organisations behind them.
- 8) There has been conflicting advice about writing RoWIPs. The original emphasis on access generally was replaced by focusing on rights of way and travel. This has weakened the RoWIP as a funding mechanism in its own right so projects may have to include wider aims.

### 2) Experience of other council areas

- 1) The Devon Public Service Agreement approach focused on information, number of walkers, participants in Walking for Health Schemes etc., thus demonstrating that there is a demand.
- 2) Somerset have a "funding officer" with specialist skills
- 3) Another Council has someone with funding skills but he tends to do things his own way and expertise is not shared.
- 4) The problem with going to others is the possibility of losing control of your project and losing touch with potential donors.
- 5) Cornwall has had success with major schemes – mineral railway trails, quarrying, sandpits. A dynamic approach can attract large-scale funding.
- 6) Modern mapping technology is being used to map the "wish list" of projects so that they can be accessed when appropriate.

### 3) Sources of funding

A distinction may be drawn between Grants and non-Grants

- 1) For Grants the Directory of Social Change [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk) lists all the possible sources of funding from local trusts and charities of varying sizes.
- 2) Non-Grant sources include approaching individuals or small companies not only for cash but time, expertise, equipment.
- 3) Earned Income can be generated by advertising etc.
- 4) Sponsorship – by large companies comes from the marketing budget so remember that they will expect some sort of return – exposure, goodwill.
- 5) *Access to Nature* a consortium of over a dozen organisations under the auspices of *Natural England* has been formed to bid for funding rather than compete amongst themselves. More will be known about this in the new year. [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)
- 6) The *Environmental Stewardship Scheme* administered by *Defra* – the Higher Level is relevant and could be used to improve countryside access for walkers concentrating on links for circular walks, links to “island sites” of CRoW access land, and links to promoted routes and trails.

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