



JLAF 14

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 06MAR08

Date: Friday, 6th March 2008

Time: 2:00pm

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

Present: Cllr Malcolm Bridge (South Gloucestershire Council), 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 Chairman), Cllr Kevin Quartley (Bristol City Council), Andy Short, Adam Stratton, Janet Wallis, Margaret Wilson, Robin Winfield (JLAF Vice Chairman) (JLAF Members)

Nicola Chidley (South Gloucestershire Council), Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Andrew Moss (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

Members of the public in attendance

Action

		Action
1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all present, and in particular thanked Councillor Malcolm Bridge (South Gloucestershire Council), Councillor Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and Councillor Kevin Quartley (Bristol City Council) for attending on behalf of their respective Councils.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Kay Bath (JLAF Member)</p> <p>Tina Bath (Mendip Hills AONB), Cllr Charles Gerrish (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Alistair Murdoch (National Farmers Union), Richard Saunders (Sustrans), Alison Sherwin (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Paula Spears (Avon Frome Partnership) Chris Orlik, Hilary Winter (South West England LAF Coordinator)</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest raised under this item.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of the last meeting on 6th July 2007</p> <p>The minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</p> <p>No matters were raised under this item</p>	
6	<p>JLAF Membership and Secretariat</p> <p>Change in Membership</p> <p>The meeting was informed that Kay Bath was resigning from the JLAF due to other commitments.</p>	

	<p>South Gloucestershire Council has recently nominated Cllr. Malcolm Bridge as a JLAF member. Cllr. Peter Tyzack is therefore no longer a JLAF member.</p> <p>Upcoming JLAF Membership Expiry and Recruitment The Secretary explained that the appointments of eight JLAF members would expire at the end of June 2008. There have been two resignations during the past two years. Therefore, there would be a recruitment during the spring for ten JLAF members. All JLAF members whose appointments expire can be returned as members: all applications will be considered together. The Secretary will write to JLAF members affected explaining the process – members will have to respond by email or letter to show their interest in being considered for another term of three years.</p> <p>There will be an election for the Chairman, Vice Chairman to the JLAF at the start of the next meeting, and also an election for a Deputy Chairman.</p> <p>Secretariat The Chairman stated that there had been an excellent start in the first years of the JLAF's life. However, 2007 did not run smoothly because Chris Hogg, JLAF Secretary was taken off JLAF work and put on to ROWIP work, because Will Steel, Public Rights of Way Team Leader in Bath & North East Somerset Council was seconded to Defra, Rennie Dickins, Team Leader, Public Rights of Way in South Gloucestershire Council was ill twice and Andrew Whitehead, Walking and Cycling Officer, Bristol City Council was not in post. One JLAF meeting had to be cancelled (with the Chairman's agreement) and JLAF members organised a training day. The Chairman estimates the work of JLAF members saved the Councils £20,000 by doing Chris's work. 2008 has started well BUT Chris is likely to be concerned with the ROWIP. The JLAF welcomes this but the JLAF work must not be neglected at a time when Regional and National LAF work is increasing. The JLAF needs an experienced backup for Chris and we look to the three Appointing Authorities to provide this. The JLAF suggests that a ring-fenced post is created for a LAF Secretary as in Devon. It was suggested that any points relating to resources would most effectively be made as part of the budgetary process within the Councils.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Implementation</p> <p>Chris Hogg summarised work on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was published by the three Councils in November 2007. The Councils are now planning implementation, identifying actions more specifically, including timescales and resource requirements, as well as specific quick wins. This is been led by groups consisting of Officers from each of the three Councils. These groups are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management Standards, led by Will Steel, B&NES; 2. Public Path Order Policy, led by Nicola Chidley, South Gloucestershire; 3. Definitive Map Work, led by Jenny King, B&NES; 4. Review of Signs, led by Rennie Dickins, South Gloucestershire; 5. Publicity and Communications, led by Chris Hogg, JLAF Secretary; and 6. Planning Liaison, led by Christine Pouncett, Bristol City Council. <p>The JLAF will be consulted on this work, particularly by groups 2, 4 and 5 above.</p> <p>Will Steel introduced the work of the Management Standards group, to plan a full infrastructure and condition survey of the entire network of public rights of way in the area. Also a classification system for paths to aid an inspection and management regime for the path network. This work will be trailed being 'rolled out' to the whole PROW network. This is a major piece of work, which the other actions of the ROWIP will be able to build on.</p> <p>Comments were made on the work of the Management Standards Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be essential to involve local groups – user groups, parishes, landowners and the JLAF • Such groups will be able to help with their local knowledge on the nature of paths 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful to consult in areas without parish councils. • Consultation should be done as early as possible in the process, though only when officers judge their system is ready, taking care not to build false expectations. • Volunteers are a potentially large resource in helping with the survey • It will be important to run local trials of the survey so that it is effective. <p>Nicola Chidley introduced group 2, Public Path Order Policy. This group is considering Action 1.4 of the ROWIP: "Develop joint diversion policy including specification standards for diverted paths" where the JLAF is a key consultee. The group's remit has expanded to prepare policies for all public path orders, not just diversion orders. The policy is expected to include standards for gates and gaps in diverted and created paths, safety standards. The ROWIP proposes that this is a 1-2 year project, but the group is hoping to complete much of the work this year. The JLAF will be consulted on a draft at its next meeting on the 4th July 2008.</p> <p>Rennie Dickins introduced group 4, Review of Signs. This group includes considering Action 2.1 of the ROWIP: "Complete a full review of signage in the area and produce signage guidelines" where the JLAF is a key consultee. This work will initially study improvements to the design of signs to resolve confusion by users when using some current signs. Additional information such as destination and distance will be added to some designs, to be used on selected routes. <u>JLAF Members</u> are asked to send in photographs or notes on signs that they see, either locally or even internationally, that show examples of good or bad practice. Send these to the Secretary, email is preferable (secretary@jlaf.org.uk). Sign designs will be trialled on paths, to measure their effectiveness when used by the public – this group will consult the JLAF at their meeting on the 7th November 2008.</p> <p>Chris Hogg introduced group 5, Publicity and Communications. This group includes considering Theme 3 of the ROWIP, including ROWIP Action 3.4: "Provide information, guidance and support to landowners" where the JLAF is a key consultee. The group is working primarily on compiling key information on an effective website and in other formats. This is a definable project that we hope can attract external funding. The group will particularly look at providing information to support landowners and providers of access as well as users, for current and potential audiences. One quick win of the group will be a guide to accessible routes in the area – a request strongly made at a ROWIP focus group of disabled users. <u>JLAF Members</u> are asked to send examples of useful websites, guide books and information, that show the type of information they would like to see on a local website. The group will report back to the JLAF on proposals at the November 2008 meeting.</p>	<p>Officer Group</p> <p>JLAF Members</p> <p>Officer Group</p> <p>JLAF Members</p> <p>Officer Group</p>
8	<p>Volunteers for JLAF related meetings or events</p> <p>As well as the work undertaken by the three Chairmen of the JLAF, other JLAF members are being invited to participate in the work of the JLAF, including attending external events (for example conferences and meetings) for the JLAF. Any interested members are asked to contact the Chairman or Secretary. JLAF members are also urged to check email and the JLAF website regularly to ensure that they keep up to date with JLAF- related information. The website is now being regularly updated between meetings.</p>	<p>JLAF Members</p>
9	<p><u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION & INFORMATION</u></p>	
9a	<p>Correspondence and activities of the JLAF</p> <p>The Chairman reviewed the work of the JLAF since the last meeting, as shown in the background papers. For example, the Vice Chairman and Deputy Chairman as well as other JLAF members went to a Cotswolds Access Conference, which was useful. Details are on the JLAF website.</p> <p>A member highlighted that Walking for Health projects in the three councils as this was seen as an important subject, where funding is limited, though there are large potential savings for the NHS. The Ramblers Association has attracted £5m Big Lottery</p>	

	funding nationally for a 'Get Walking, Keep Walking' project to concentrate on areas of deprivation.	
9b	<p>Regional and National LAF Business</p> <p>The Chairman reported on a Regional meeting that the Vice Chairman attended with him on the 18th January, then a following National meeting he attended on the 24th January in Sheffield. Both of these meetings largely concerned the formation of a National Access Forum, consisting of regional delegates from Local Access Forums (LAFs), together with representatives from Natural England. This National Access Forum will now go ahead, and a regional meeting on the 12th March will decide how regional delegates will be sent from the South West as well as compile subjects for that National Access Forum. The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national body is considered essential, as it gives Local Access Forums a direct route to senior policy makers and management of Natural England. This will enable effective lobbying for funding as well as sharing of experience and ideas. • The minutes of the national meeting again highlight the importance of the use of paths for 'fresh air and exercise' to bring health benefits. LAFs could help identify where potential and real projects locally could contribute to this, to provide evidence and case studies to national organisations. • Sponsored events are an effective means of getting people active – the key is then to keep people interested in continuing activities • Marketing and selling of activity is essential to achieve such health benefits 	
9c	<p>Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)</p> <p>These are important documents being developed by each Council that outline future development in the area. Whilst there has already been some work by the Councils on these, so the JLAF is a little late into the process, there are still many chances to be involved. Bristol City Council was consulting on their "LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options" paper. The JLAF's response is in the background papers in two parts, a direct response written by Ron Phelps and a JLAF Position Statement compiled by the Chris Hogg, JLAF Secretary. The Chairman is grateful to Devon Countryside Access Forum and their Secretary Hilary Winter for allowing the JLAF to use their position statement as the basis for a JLAF Position Statement on LDFs, and also grateful to Ron Phelps, JLAF Deputy Chairman for their work in responding to the Bristol Consultation. This is important, as the LDFs will have long term and significant impact.</p> <p>The JLAF ratified the responses as submitted, as the consensus advice of the JLAF.</p> <p>For future use, the JLAF position statement will be amended to include, under the section 'Rights of Way' an additional bullet point: "expect that new routes will be multi-user routes, suitable and open for the use for all non-motorised users. This amended position statement will be sent to Bath & North East Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.</p>	Secretary
9d	<p>Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Access Objective</p> <p>The JLAF considered a draft response to a consultation from an officer of Natural England in the South West Office, to national guidance on Access in Higher Level Stewardship, which the officer is preparing. By way of a response, the Chairman had annotated this guidance with comments after contacting land manager members of the JLAF for their advice. The Chairman was grateful to the members for this. After including the following amendments, the JLAF ratified the response for submission as the consensus advice of the JLAF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the comment about the JLAF being 'pleased...integration with existing ROWIP and PROW' • Under 'National priorities for access within HLS', point number 2, remove "access". • After point 3, replace "fighting" with "determined". • Under 'Targeting map for access' add bullet: "Local authority parks and gardens" • Omit "It is possible to envisage a situation where horses and riders are bussed 	Secretary

	<p>in, causing parking problems and poaching on bridleways.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change: “The qualifying criteria for HLS must be changed because at present it is principally based on environmental standards” to: “The qualifying criteria for HLS must be extended as at present it is principally based on environmental standards”. 	
9e	<p>Access Land: Update on Access Land at Lansdown</p> <p>Will Steel, PROW Team Leader at B&NES reported that Access Land at Lansdown created following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the opening of which would allow the development of a route similar to the Bath Skyline walk to the north of Bath.</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset Council has been proceeding with a process to open this piece of Access Land to the public, adding kissing gates to allow a route along the top of the land to be used. This could then lead on across a potential dedication of Access Land on council-owned land and on along the Cotswold escarpment.</p> <p>Officers have put in a lot of work in getting funding for work, and carrying out a legal process, including serving notice on the landowner. It has become clear that the landowner will not agree to access onto the land in order to carry out works, therefore legal advice said that a Court injunction would have to be obtained to gain entry. Following this advice, and following a 1½ hour meeting of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, the Divisional Director of Environmental Services, Public Rights of way Team leader and a Public Rights of Way officer from Bath & North East Somerset Council the decision was taken not to proceed further on this site at this time. The grant funding available for works on this site, for works to be completed before the end of March 2008 will be reallocated to other Access Land sites where possible.</p> <p>JLAF members expressed their disappointment that the work will not be carried out, and stated their continued desire for new means of access to be provided to this Access Land. The officers were thanked for the work they had undertaken so far. The Public Rights of Way Team Leader agreed to write a letter to the JLAF, explaining the reasons for not continuing with the process for improving this Access Land.</p>	Team Leader, PROW, B&NES
9f	<p>JLAF Project Progress</p> <p>i. Chew Valley Lake</p> <p>A letter was sent on behalf of Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Customer Services to the JLAF on 5th March 2008. This is in the additional background papers for the meeting. Sustrans are to submit a planning application for the route from the dam to Hollowbrook and funding will be dependent on this planning application being granted. The proposed route is believed to be within the land ownership of Bristol Water. The Bath & North East Somerset PROW team leader will identify the correct contact in Sustrans. The JLAF Chairman will write to Sustrans to encourage them to submit the planning application as soon as possible.</p> <p>ii. Monarch’s Way</p> <p>A meeting is scheduled for Monday the 10th March between Cllr Mark Bradshaw, Executive Member for Access and Environment at Bristol City Council, Glynn Duggan representing Bristol Civic Society, Peter Gould representing Bristol Ramblers Association and the Ron Phelps, the Deputy Chairman of the JLAF. This meeting is progress and an update will be provided at the next JLAF meeting in July.</p> <p>iii. Mead Riding off-road link at Chipping Sodbury</p> <p>The works are being carried out on this site to create a pedestrian and cycle path which will bypass a busy stretch of the Wickwar Road. The stone surfaced path will be substantially complete by the end of March, and final works will be complete by the end of April. A new signalised ‘toucan’ (pedestrian and cycle) crossing is being installed at Peg Hill, and a new 40mph speed limit is being considered for Wickwar Road south of Peg Hill. The new route is not open for the use of horses, according to the landowner’s intentions. The JLAF has previously stated that it would wish to see the route open to equestrians.</p>	Team Leader, PROW, B&NES Chairman
9g	<p>Discovering Lost Ways</p> <p>The JLAF considered a paper taken from the Board meeting of Natural England on 13th February 2008. Natural England is ending the Discovering Lost Ways project following</p>	

	<p>a review that found the exhaustive and costly research necessary was extremely resource intensive. Comments by JLAF members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Discovering Lost Ways project is dead in the water, a waste • The time the JLAF had contributed to a Discovering Lost Ways consultation in November 2007, and the time previously spent by the JLAF considering Discovering Lost Ways has been wasted. • This should be raised at the National Access Forum (NAF). • This failure demonstrates that consultation on a local level is important. 	NAF
9h	<p>Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups No queries were raised under this item.</p>	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Rural Payments Agency and Cross-Compliance As there was a short timescale for this item – a letter to be sent from South West LAF Chairmen – the JLAF Officers had supported it, though not with the full consensus of the JLAF. The meeting ratified the letter and made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners should receive notification of a problem from the highway authority with an opportunity for them to remedy any problems before the Rural Payments Agency becomes involved. • There should be a link between the enforcement processes of the highways authorities and the Rural Payments Agency – both actions should be co-ordinated. • There should be a clear breach of cross compliance terms before action is taken • This provides an effective deterrent to persistent negligence. <p>Regional Spatial Strategy and Travellers sites Members were informed of the requirements for the provision of new travellers' sites contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Developments such as these might have an impact on public rights of way and other access. The councils and JLAF members were advised to be aware of the impact of such proposals.</p> <p>Bristol to Bath Railway Path A Bus Rapid Transport System is proposed by the West of England Partnership to run along the line of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path in Bristol, from the centre of the city to Emerson's' Green. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JLAF should be aware of this and consider its position on it • The proposal is to fit two lanes for buses and maintain a cycle route • The conversion of the route for buses will fundamentally change the nature of the path, which is a green corridor for walking and cycling from some of the poorest urban areas in the city into the countryside – the development would effectively shut the door on access to the countryside for many people • The path was the first and is the most popular traffic free path on the national cycle network • The proposal would reduce the opportunity for fresh air and exercise, promoting buses for transport which are less active, over walking and cycling • Could the money be better spent on many more smaller schemes • If the JLAF should object to this proposal, then it should also be stated that the JLAF's position applies to this development only • More information is needed for the JLAF to give informed advice <p>It was agreed that the JLAF has concerns about this proposal and will write to the West of England Partnership for more information to be considered by the JLAF at the next meeting on the 4th July 2008.</p> <p>Footpath Furniture A member of the public, Mr John Ives, made a statement about the importance of reducing the number of stiles and other barriers on public rights of way. There are policies and guidance from the government to promote physically removing barriers, as the councils reflect in the ROWIP. Mr Ives was also concerned with the legal issue of</p>	Chairman

	<p>demonstrating authorisation for erecting new stiles or other restrictions on public rights of way, and asked to be consulted on any diversion policy.</p> <p>Cotswold Voluntary Wardens 40th Anniversary To celebrate this milestone a major project called 'walks on wheels' publicising walks suitable for wheelchairs, people with pushchairs and others are to be launched – on the Cotswold AONB website and in a booklet. There are three such walks in the JLAF area included in these publications.</p> <p>Bristol: Cycling Demonstration City Status Cycling England, the national cycling agency, is inviting bids for ten new Cycling Demonstration Towns and one Cycling Demonstration City who will share £47m of funds. These will join six current Cycling demonstration towns who have received a boost in finance for cycling projects. Bristol City Council is bidding to become a Cycling Demonstration City and JLAF members are invited to contact Andrew Whitehead with ideas and projects that would increase the levels of cycling in the city. Further information will be put on the JLAF website.</p> <p>The JLAF stated that it would be happy to support this bid, for instance by writing a letter to Cycling England if requested.</p> <p>Alun Morgan, first Chairman of JLAF Alun Morgan had expressed his intention not to renew his application to be a member of the JLAF in the spring. The Chairman thanked Alun for being an excellent first Chairman who lent his legal expertise with generosity and hard work: he left a cohesive and well-run JLAF. Alun complimented the JLAF as unusual for the manner in which members are always willing to listen and talk positively to each other about the matters being considered. A success of the past few years is the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. JLAF members thanked Alun and wished him a happy retirement.</p>	Chairman
11	<p>The next meeting JLAF14 on the 4th July 2008 at Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items Elections Rights of Way Improvement Plan Implementation Bristol to Bath Railway Path Transport Proposals Monarch's Way Update</p> <p>Subsequent Meeting Dates See background papers or JLAF website.</p>	
12	Close	