



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

JLAF 17

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 06MAR09

Date: Friday, 6th March 2009

Time: 2:00pm

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

Present: JLAF Members:

David Colbourne, Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Bill Dawson, Ann Fay, Roger Fowler, Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Bob Hall, Robert Killen, Colette Linehan, Ray Newbigin (JLAF Chairman), Ron Phelps (JLAF Deputy Chairman), Cllr Kevin Quartley (Bristol City Council), Andy Short, Adam Stratton, Janet Wallis, Margaret Wilson, Robin Winfield (JLAF Vice Chairman)

Also in attendance:

Terry Bullock (Bristol City Council), Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Amanda Grundy (Natural England), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Will Steel (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

One member of the public was also in attendance.

Action

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A	INTRODUCTIONS The Chairman welcomed all present.	
A1	Apologies JLAF Members: Janine Averis, Cllr Malcolm Bridge (South Gloucestershire Council), Anna Ferguson Also: James Blockley (Cotswold Way National Trail), Nicola Chidley (South Gloucestershire Council)	
A2	Declarations of interest Cllr Chris Cray declared an interest under item 'C1: Lansdown Access Land' as Chair of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Regulatory (Access) Committee.	
A3	Minutes of the last meeting on 4th July 2008 Item 8 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan Implementation', paragraph 2 change 'horseriding' to 'equestrian use'. The minutes were then <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting.	

A4	<p>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</p> <p>Item 10 'JLAF Website Demonstration'. Members are to ensure that their summaries are submitted for the descriptions on the JLAF Member page. Secretary to chase.</p>	Secretary
B	MAIN BUSINESS	
B1	<p>Cotswold Way and National Trails and Routes review James Blockley, National Trails Officer, Cotswold Way was unable to attend.</p>	
B2	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Implementation</p> <p>i. Natural England ROWIP Evaluation</p> <p>The Secretary reported on the results of an evaluation, published by Natural England, of all Rights of Way Improvement Plans in England. The Joint ROWIP received a good write-up but it was suggested that more consideration be given to health and economic benefits.</p> <p>The Vice Chairman said that the information in the evaluation (linked from JLAF website) was very useful. The JLAF thanked the Secretary and others for the work they had done on the ROWIP in view of the favourable comments by Natural England.</p> <p>ii. Update</p> <p>The Secretary updated the JLAF on implementation of the ROWIP. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The three Councils now have the same mapping and database system (CAMS) installed for managing their public rights of way, reports and maintenance. This will allow closer integration. - Rights of Way Management Standards for maintenance are being developed with the full network survey. - The Councils have been revising a draft Joint Paths Order Policy following consultation with the JLAF at the July 2009 meeting and with others, and considering changes to legislation. The member of public present had asked for an update on this matter – there will be further consultation on the new draft of the Paths Order Policy. - A Definitive Map Policy is being developed by an officer working group - Following the item at the last agenda introducing the proposal of a signing strategy, and a 'sign gallery' on the JLAF website for members to comment on, officers will work on improvements to sign designs to be included in a signing strategy. - A joint website is being developed (see below) and other promotional work will follow from this, including in paper and other formats. <p>iii. Full Network Survey</p> <p>A full network survey is now being undertaken of all public rights of way in Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire. This includes recording data on all surfaces, furniture, signs and some condition information, along with photographs of every feature. All the results of this survey will be held in the CAMS databases and it will help the management of the network of public rights of way. The database will also allow interactive maps to be published on the joint website being developed. There were some comments and queries raised by JLAF members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Query: Will this survey cover only public rights of way on the definitive map? Response: It will not cover other routes, though such routes could be added to the system if surveyed at a later date. Such routes could include those added as a result of the Bath Definitive Map and Statement Project. - Query: How accessible to the public would the data be? Response: the full database is a management tool and will not be published on the internet. The joint council website will be directed at users and new users, so such detail 	

	<p>would be distracting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comment: There would be concerns adding photographs to a public database that include private property. Response: data could be made available for specific uses, for instance if land managers wanted the survey results for their land holdings and relevant statistics could be published. - Comment: the data from this survey could be extremely useful, but care will be needed to manage and prioritise the maintenance issues that it raises. <p>iv. Publicity and Communication</p> <p>The planned Joint Outdoors Access website, programmed for the financial year APR09-MAR10 will be introduced as a means to market the network of public rights of way and other access. This will include news about access, but also to hold background information for land managers, consultees, users, volunteers and those interested in the management, policy and planning of public rights of way.</p> <p>The secretary introduced a number of websites elsewhere in the country that contained relevant information and features. Links to these websites are on the JLAF website. JLAF Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the websites for features or content that would be particularly appropriate for an Outdoors Access Website in the JLAF area. Please send comments to the JLAF secretary. 2. Search on the internet for walks, rides and other relevant details <i>for this area</i>, and report back on what is found, and how easy it was to find it. <p>Comment: JLAF members raised the idea of using Council newsletters to distribute information to all residents, publicising news and possible walks/rides. Response: the councils have done some publicity similar to this, but will investigate further.</p> <p>v. Proposed ROWIP Small Grants Scheme</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset are proposing a small grants scheme, where parishes and other constituted bodies can receive grants to publicise routes on the network. There may be some capacity for small physical works such as benches, signing and display boards, but the councils envisage groups designing walks or routes. The councils can design leaflet templates to help with this and so that these routes can together form a series across the area. There are similar schemes in operation elsewhere, and there is a link on the JLAF website to the Hampshire scheme. In Hampshire, the LAF considers applications for the grants, and advises councils on which grants to award.</p> <p>The Deputy Chairman suggested that such routes could involve links to and through Access Land.</p> <p>The JLAF supported the principle of a small grants scheme and would take part in such a scheme. The Councils will work on such a scheme and brief the JLAF at a future meeting.</p>	<p>JLAF MEMBERS</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>B&NES Council</p>
<p>B3</p>	<p>Joining up the spaghetti</p> <p>The Chairman summarised particular routes that JLAF members had proposed, which might create useful links in the network of public rights of way. These routes might be new routes or include physical or legal upgrading of existing public rights of way. After an initial viewing by the JLAF, the JLAF officers would approach the Public Rights of Way Officers in each council for them to consider the practicality of creating such routes.</p> <p>Three examples of potential links in the PROW network were considered and the issues relating to such new routes were discussed. The following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some routes are recorded as public footpaths but would make effective links 	

	<p>as bridleways for equestrians and cyclists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed paths can be useful to provide direct links between villages, to avoid heavily-trafficked roads or to link existing paths that are close to each other but do not meet. - Sometimes parts of physical routes are recorded as footpath, parts are bridleways which raises questions about historic legal processes to record these routes - Some routes are used informally, though they are not recorded as public rights of way - Some proposals may, or may not be in the interests of the landowners - It may be worth investigating permissive or grant-aided access for some routes - There was concern that the JLAF might discuss proposals that affect private property before they had a chance to fully consider and respond to them. It was the role of the councils to follow up any suggestions and do such consultation or negotiation. - Early involvement of the relevant land managers (both tenants and landowners) is key, both to gauge the feasibility of such proposals and so that full circumstances are investigated before there is any public consideration. <p>The JLAF proposed that they request that Councils investigate such routes and report back to JLAF meetings with any workable proposals for these routes.</p>	<p>JLAF Chairmen / Councils</p>
<p>B4</p>	<p>Gating Orders</p> <p>i. Update on Gating Order Policies</p> <p>Bristol City Council's Gating Order Policy has been through a process of consultation including the JLAF, the Public Rights of Way Liaison Group and the Council's Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee. It is ready to be presented to the executive member for a decision on whether to be adopted. From the 17th February Bristol has a new Council cabinet, so the policy will be presented to the new Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset Council have a gating order policy being developed by the Community Safety Partnership. A draft should be ready for consultation in coming weeks and the JLAF will be consulted.</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Council has a gating order policy, but it is recognised that this did not meet requirements, for instance not including the JLAF as a statutory consultee. A revision will be drafted and the JLAF will be consulted.</p> <p>ii. Gating Order: Kipling Road, Filton, South Gloucestershire</p> <p>This order was made on the 22nd October 2008, but the JLAF were not consulted at this time. The JLAF subsequently received a consultation letter on the 12th January 2009 and in response the JLAF Chairman said that the JLAF would need adequate time to consider this order properly. Members stated that they needed more information than provided to be able to consider this order properly. For instance, the included map showed the extent of the path affected, but did not show it in the context of the PROW network. In this case, the path provides a potentially important link as part of a longer route to Filton Abbey Wood railway station, it may provide a link for people with limited mobility who want a walk 'round the block'. It was felt that clear principles should be followed in considering this order. South Gloucestershire Council needs to provide more information to the JLAF.</p> <p>iii. Informal Consultation: FP163, Fishponds, Bristol</p> <p>Bristol City Council are considering making an order on this route, therefore this is informal consultation. JLAF members stated that there needed to be careful consideration of the concerns of those residents who are promoting the order along with other immediate residents and members of the public from a wider area who do or might use the route. Measures to mitigate any criminal or antisocial behaviour should be tried before a route is subject to a gating order. JLAF members proposed</p>	<p>Bristol City Council</p> <p>B&NES Council</p> <p>S Glos Council</p> <p>S Glos Council</p>

	<p>considerations for such an order, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment of the effectiveness of measures such as installation or improvement of lighting, scrub clearance, bollards, locking bollards, and then the trailing of those measures where they may be effective - Measurement of current use and the impact on that use - Clear reporting of crime and antisocial behaviour facilitated by the route - A review of the order after a suitable period and action taken in respect of that review - Proximity of schools, parks, surgeries, shops and other facilities. - Limit gating of routes to the private alleyways before installing gates on a public right of way. <p>The JLAF advised that Bristol City Council carefully assess the case for a gating order, compiling a report summarising the evidence and issues that are relevant to the path and the order. This report should be made public and should be sufficient for JLAF members to be able to give informed advice on the Order when they are consulted.</p> <p>JLAF Role in Gating Orders. JLAF resolution.</p> <p>The JLAF wish to be consulted on the development of any Gating Order Policies.</p> <p>Following the last JLAF meeting, JLAF Chairmen had included a list of considerations for councils to assess proposals for gating orders against, available on the JLAF website [on 'news' page, dated 02FEB09] in correspondence with the three Councils. Considerations raised at the meeting can be added to that list. This list can then be proposed at the next meeting of the JLAF as a JLAF Position Statement.</p> <p>The JLAF advised that all three councils should include with any gating order consultation a report to the JLAF summarising the evidence and issues that are relevant to the path and the order. This should also be included as a requirement in the Councils' Gating Order Policies.</p> <p>The following resolution was agreed by JLAF members:</p> <p><u>The JLAF agrees to delegate authority to its Officers to advise our Councils on proposed Gating Orders should time constraints make it impossible to present them at a meeting. In such cases JLAF members will be sent details by email and invited to submit their own views to the Officers so that a balanced opinion may be given.</u></p> <p><u>All advice offered to Councils will be presented at the following JLAF meeting.</u></p>	<p>Councils</p> <p>JLAF Chairmen</p> <p>Councils</p> <p>JLAF Chairmen / Secretary</p>
<p>B5</p>	<p>JLAF Project Progress</p> <p>i. Chew Valley Lake</p> <p>The Vice Chairman of the JLAF reported on progress with this project. This included meetings of the JLAF Chairmen and Secretary with Jeremy Williams, Corporate Director at Bristol Water. A similar meeting was held with Adrian Roper, SW Director at Sustrans. The Vice Chairman has also kept in touch with Alison Sherwin, Area Traffic Engineer, Pedestrian & Cycling Issues, Bath & North East Somerset Council.</p> <p>The JLAF have been pressing for progress on the routes to the north of the lake. The planning application has been withdrawn by Sustrans whilst nature conservation surveys are carried out. Sustrans plan the construction of part of this route in 2009 and the second part possibly 2010. The JLAF have also requested that B&NES reserve £75000 in the budget for 09/10 for this project. The JLAF will keep monitoring progress on this as there is now an extremely tight timetable to achieve these dates. Sustrans staff are to investigate additional funding sources.</p> <p>The JLAF will continue to press for progress on the entire route and will engage with local interests, Bath & North East Somerset Council, landowners, Bristol Water, Sustrans, Natural England and others to achieve this.</p>	<p>JLAF Chairmen</p>

	<p>Margaret Wilson, a JLAF member who was with the Chew Valley Trails group when a feasibility study was carried out in 2000 was disappointed with the slow progress and the withdrawal of the planning application.</p> <p>A full note by the Vice Chairman will be posted on the JLAF website.</p> <p>ii. Monarch's Way</p> <p>Bristol City Council reported that they had written to the three landowners of this path with a view to dedicating the link. One landowner was not willing to dedicate the route as a public right of way and there had been no response from the other landowners. The route of the Monarch's Way and the signing of that route will need to be considered soon whether to sign this path or an alternative used route.</p> <p>There has been some progress on a route further along the River Avon riverside path towards the city centre.</p> <p>This item would also be addressed at the next Bristol City Council Public Rights of Way Liaison Group and be reported to the next JLAF meeting.</p> <p>iii. Equestrian Links, Sodbury Common</p> <p>South Gloucestershire Council could not update on this matter at the meeting. Ann Fay, a JLAF Member, reported that a South Gloucestershire Council officer was investigating the use of routes near the common, but there was limited user evidence. The JLAF will be updated at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Bristol City Council</p> <p>S Glos Council</p>
C	<u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION</u>	
C1	<p>Lansdown Access Land</p> <p>Cllr Chris Cray declared an interest under this item as Chair of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Regulatory (Access) Committee.</p> <p>The JLAF had received a consultation for a diversion of the public right of way at Chelscombe Farm, Charlcombe parish and the creation of a new public footpath at the site.</p> <p>JLAF members stated that the proposal would create an excellent route along the escarpment (route CD on the plan), There was some regret that a diversion to solve an obstruction was necessary, though it would be a pragmatic solution which would provide an overall public benefit. The status of the route on Bath & North East Somerset Council owned land was queried, with a preference for a public right of way rather than access land. The JLAF agreed with the proposals made by the B&NES PROW team and urged speedy action.</p> <p>The following resolution was agreed by JLAF members:</p> <p><u>The JLAF Officers reported that they have had detailed discussions with B&NES Officers and they have put forward ideas for solving the impasse with the landowner. The Chairman of the JLAF has written to the Cabinet Member who is content that the matter be explored in depth. The JLAF agreed with the actions taken by the JLAF Officers, asked them to continue to pursue the matter and report back to the next meeting.</u></p>	<p>B&NES Council and JLAF Chairmen</p>
C2	<p>Natural England Draft Access Policy</p> <p>The response shown in the background papers was agreed as the response from the JLAF.</p>	

C3	Natural England Review of Trails and Routes The response shown in the background papers was agreed as the response from the JLAF.	
D	<u>ITEMS TO REPORT and FOR INFORMATION</u>	
D1	JLAF Membership and Recruitment The secretary reported that half of the JLAF members' three year appointments came to an end before the next JLAF meeting in July. The secretary will write to those JLAF members affected inviting them to renew their applications. The JLAF will also advertise vacancies to potential new members. JLAF members are invited to indicate areas of expertise that the Councils could seek to recruit members from. JLAF members are also invited to inform potential members of vacancies.	Secretary
D2	Correspondence and activities of the JLAF The JLAF members were reminded to watch the news section of the JLAF website, particularly to see the correspondence and activities of the JLAF between meetings. There were no queries raised under this item.	
D3	National and Regional LAF Business - England Access Forum Paul Heal, Chairman of the Somerset LAF is now one of two members of the England Access Forum (EAF) from the South West of England, along with Bob Harvey, Co-Chairman of Devon LAF. The next EAF meeting is on the 11 th March and details will be published on the JLAF website.	Secretary
D4	Economics, Public Spending and Resources for ROWIPs Following a report in the national press quoting the Minister of Transport's difficulty in finding transport schemes that could be quickly implemented to provide economic stimulus, the Chairman of the JLAF wrote to the Minister, briefing him on ROWIPs and stating that they are ready to be implemented now. The Chairman of the EAF also wrote to the Minister. Replies from the relevant Minister were not very encouraging, but the exercise raised the profile of ROWIPs where initial correspondence indicated no clear knowledge of ROWIPs at that level. The Chairman thanked the Secretary for highlighting the article and its relevance to ROWIPs.	
D5	Marine and Coastal Access Bill The Secretary gave a short update on the progress of this Bill, including that it was being debated in the House of Lords. Natural England are also publishing increasingly detailed guidance on the subject. There is a lot of information on Defra's website (follow link from notes to this meeting on the JLAF website).	
D6	Bristol: Cycling City An update was given by JLAF member Colette Linehan on the Cycling City schemes and information was handed to JLAF members. This is shown on the JLAF website. A network of routes has been identified for the city, and measures to encourage cycling including subsidised bikes and personal mentoring for potential cyclists is included.	
D7	Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups The agendas of these meetings were included in the background papers.	
D8	JLAF Website Redesign	

	<p>The Secretary demonstrated the new features of the JLAF website that had addressed comments made at the last JLAF meeting. The website is now much more active, so members must check the site often.</p> <p>The website is very much orientated at JLAF members and other people interested in the JLAF's work and is therefore technical. A joint Outdoors Access Website would be much more directed at the casual visitor.</p> <p>The Chairman reported that other LAFs use the JLAF website to find information.</p>	
E	Any Other Business	
	<p>Bristol City Council Core Strategy Consultations</p> <p>This is on the JLAF website. JLAF members are invited to contact the Deputy Chairman with comments. The members agreed that the JLAF Chairmen can submit a response and report it to the next JLAF meeting.</p> <p>Cross-Boundary Route at Hartcliffe/ Dundry</p> <p>This route was raised as it shows a situation where a cross boundary legal anomaly causes problems to a physical route on the ground. This will be raised in detail at the next Bristol City Council PROW liaison group meeting. This will be considered for the JLAF Spaghetti project.</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset Council Multi Use Trial, Scrutiny Panel Meeting.</p> <p>The JLAF Chairman has been invited to attend the meeting on Tuesday 10th March in the Guildhall, Bath, following a call-in of the Executive Member's Decision to limit equestrian access on some route in Bath & North East Somerset.</p>	
F	<p>The next meeting 2:00pm on the 3rd July 2009 at Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items JLAF Gating Order Position Statement</p> <p>Subsequent Meeting Dates See background papers or JLAF website.</p>	
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