



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

JLAF 19

Draft Minutes of meeting of Friday 6th November 2009

Date: Friday, 6th November 2009

Time: 2:00pm

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

Present: JLAF Members:

Chris Bloor, Cllr Malcolm Bridge (South Gloucestershire Council), Bill Dawson, Ann Fay, Roger Fowler, Peter Gould, Bernadette Macey, Ray Newbigin (JLAF Chairman), Ron Phelps (JLAF Deputy Chairman), David Waterstone, Robin Winfield (JLAF Vice Chairman) Margaret Wilson.

Also in attendance:

James Blockley (Cotswold Way National Trail), Rennie Dickins (South Gloucestershire Council), Amanda Grundy (Natural England), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Kelvin Packer (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Andy Whitehead (Bristol City Council).

Action

	INTRODUCTIONS	
A1	Welcome to new members and introductions The Chairman welcomed all present, including Kelvin Packer (Service Manager - Highways and Parking) who is currently managing the Public Rights of Way Team at Bath & North East Somerset Council.	
A2	Apologies JLAF Members: Jill Britten, Cllr Chris Cray (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Robert Killen, John Gunnery, Anna Ferguson, Colette Linehan, Andy Short, Adam Stratton. Members Not Present: Janine Averis, Cllr Tim Kent (Bristol City Council)	
A3	Declarations of interest No declarations were made.	
A4	Minutes of the last meeting on 3rd July 2009. The minutes were <i>agreed</i> as an accurate record of the meeting.	
A5	Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda Item E. A new officer, Simon Smith at the Cotswold AONB, is now working on the 'My Countryside' project. A matter 'Public Rights of Way and Development at Oldland Common' will be dealt with under AOB.	

B	MAIN BUSINESS	
B1	<p>Natural England and Access in the West of England Amanda Grundy, Officer, Natural England</p> <p>Amanda, from the West of England team of Natural England, gave a presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of Natural England, its strategy, priorities and targets - its role in outdoors access - the schemes it runs to fund the improvement of routes and access land - health walk schemes and other means to encourage of people to get out and use the countryside and other green areas - its role in advising on the countryside and specifically on green infrastructure and new developments in the West of England area. - Grant schemes and potential in the JLAF area. <p>The full presentation will be made available on the JLAF website.</p> <p>A general discussion on access in the area followed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the availability of routes for motorised users, and the use of cars to access the countryside, or, to travel to the countryside - opportunities for access for more people, including publicising routes for health walks to use, possible links to the base for the 2012 British Paralympic team at the University of Bath - there are many successful schemes in the area, including the Community Forest Path and work by member Chris Bloor on continuing this - the Bristol to Bath Railway Path is excellent for disabled people, but the key is to market paths, and in this Natural England is keen to work with the councils. - The importance of getting children and their parents into the countryside inside and outside school. - The importance of improved access in new developments to make outdoor exercise an attractive experience. <p>The Chairman thanked Amanda for her time, and for her ongoing contributions to the JLAF.</p>	Secretary
B2	<p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Implementation</p> <p>The JLAF were updated on progress with the ROWIP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CAMS (a public rights of way mapping database) is now installed and running in all three councils, as well as in North Somerset Council. - A full infrastructure survey of all 2000km of public rights of way is completed in the three councils, bar a small part of urban South Gloucestershire. This, for the first time gives a record of all items of furniture, path surfaces, together with photographs and accurate mapping. This will provide a massive resource for route management. - The councils will now use the data from the survey to plan and prioritise the large list of issues identified in the survey. This may vary by council area, but the councils will have a joint path standards scheme. - A joint Path Order Policy has now been adopted by all three councils. <p>A template for Local Walks and Rides</p> <p>The three councils are working on a joint website, as the first tool in holding information on Access to the Outdoors, and marketing this as a means of increasing the use of Public Paths. The need for non-internet information is recognised. The website will include comprehensive information for new users, existing users, as well as landowners and other stakeholders. It will hold a variety of routes, and the JLAF are asked to advise on how this should these routes should be included.</p>	

	<p>The Councils asked the JLAF to set up a working group, to advise on a template, to which walk, ride or other routes can be added, held on the website, and printed by users. There are already existing designs for such route details, and the working group should review these designs, and provide advice on a template that will be easy to use by new users, and be adaptable to different types of route.</p> <p>The working group will be supported by the Secretary, and members Robin Winfield, David Waterstone, Ann Fay, Roger Fowler, Bernadette Macey, and Chris Bloor volunteered. James Blockley will also be involved as an Observer. Members will be contacted by the Secretary, but were asked to collect good examples for review.</p>	<p>Secretary and working group members</p>
<p>B3</p>	<p>Gating Orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed Gating Order, Kipling Road <p>JLAF members had been emailed with details of this proposal, and information put on the JLAF website. Their comments had been collated by Ron Phelps, the Deputy Chairman, and his response letter was considered by the members.</p> <p><u>The response was agreed as the advice of the JLAF.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on current or proposed Gating Orders <p>A table of Gating Orders that the JLAF have been consulted on, or have otherwise been made is shown on the JLAF website. The JLAF's advice had been previously been submitted for PROW FP163 in Fishponds, Bristol, and the Council are still considering whether to make the Order.</p> <p>Bristol City Council have adopted a Gating Order Policy, South Gloucestershire Council are re-assessing their Gating Order Policy and Bath & North East Somerset Council will consult the JLAF on their draft Gating Order Policy in the New Year.</p> <p>JLAF members were asked to report any proposals of which they become aware.</p>	<p>Bath & North East Somerset Council</p> <p>JLAF members</p>
<p>B4</p>	<p>JLAF Project Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Chew Valley Lake <p>The Vice Chairman, Robin Winfield, reported on this matter that he been closely monitoring.</p> <p>Following previous delays to the two stretches of new path at the northern end of the lake, Habitat Surveys have now been completed on the vulnerable sections of these proposed route sections, and no significant impacts have been identified.</p> <p>Sustrans are now preparing renewed planning applications; Bath & North East Somerset Council engineers are preparing detailed design work; but the money reserved for this scheme by Bath & North East Somerset Council is at risk, because construction is not now likely until the spring and autumn of 2010, and there are further limitations on the construction due to nature conservation constraints. The JLAF were informed that there can be no guarantee that money reserved in 09/10 will be available in 10/11.</p> <p>There was disappointment at this news from members, who advised that the funds should be reserved in the programme for next year, and to do this there must be clear progress on the preparation work and planning process.</p> <p>It was emphasised by one member, and the consensus of the group, that any routes around Chew Valley Lake must consider the impact on Nature Conservation, as the legislation covering the European and National conservation designations dictates, on a precautionary principle.</p>	<p>Bath & North East Somerset Council with Sustrans</p>

	<p>ii. Monarch's Way</p> <p>It was noted that this item would be more appropriately titled: 'River Avon paths at Brislington and Sea Mills'. There is progress in Brislington, where the three landowners of the path have been identified, and negotiations with these are continuing, with some prospects of success. Agreement on a path Creation Agreement here is much more preferable than a Creation Order. At Sea Mills, negotiations are continuing on the status of the route with relevant landowners there, and on the necessary specifications for a fence adjacent to the railway line. The JLAF said this progress was encouraging, and urged continued efforts on these issues.</p> <p>iii. Chipping Sodbury links</p> <p>The paths linking Chipping Sodbury Common required continuing efforts to research use by horseriders and would relate to negotiations with landowners.</p> <p>iv. Lansdown Access Land and Public Footpath Creation</p> <p>Ray Newbigin, JLAF Chairman reported on this matter. Bath & North East Somerset Council has made a Creation Order to create a new public footpath linking this Access Land site to Lansdown Lane. The Order did not attract any objections, and should be confirmed on the 22nd January 2010. There are works planned to complete the physical structures necessary to open up the path to users, including the help of David Waterstone, JLAF Member on dry stone walling.</p> <p>The JLAF approved of this work, and understand that a Diversion Order will follow, aimed at correcting a long-standing obstruction on another public footpath. Particular thanks were noted for Graeme Stark and other officers for their work on this site.</p>	<p>Bristol City Council</p> <p>South Glos Council with BHS</p> <p>B&NES Council</p>
B5	<p>Marine Bill, Coastal Access</p> <p>Ron Phelps, JLAF deputy Chairman reported on the progress on the Marine and Coastal Access Bill which is anticipated will receive Royal Assent soon. There are two consultations on this major change in Access legislation, which will grant a right of access to the coast. The first, current consultation, concerns the technical implementation of changes to other legislation that are necessary to increase access and the JLAF have little to input to this, though it is on the JLAF website in case members want to review it. Soon, Natural England will consult on the Coastal Access Scheme, and this is very important, as it will lay out the methods and definitions to apply the legislation on the ground.</p> <p>The JLAF will form a working group, chaired by Ron Phelps to consider this. JLAF members Robert Killen, Bill Dawson and Chris Bloor also volunteered for this group, and Rennie Dickins will sit as an interested observer on the group. Working Group members will be contacted when the consultation is launched.</p>	<p>Working Group Members</p>
C	<p><u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION</u></p>	
C1	<p>Forestry Commission Consultation Response</p> <p>JLAF members had been emailed with details of this consultation, and information put on the JLAF website. Their comments had been collated by Chris Hogg, the Secretary, and his response letter was considered by the members. Members stated the response closely reflected their views.</p> <p><u>The response shown in the background papers was ratified as the response from the JLAF.</u></p>	

C2	<p>JLAF Annual Report</p> <p><u>The report distributed to members with the background papers was agreed as the annual report of the JLAF.</u></p> <p>Members were advised to distribute copies of the Annual Report to their contacts and to the various relevant organisations they are involved in. Copies are available from the Secretary.</p>	Members
D	<u>ITEMS TO REPORT/ FOR INFORMATION</u>	
D1	<p>Discovering Lost Ways – action taken by JLAF Officers</p> <p>A Stakeholders Working Group on Public Rights of Way had been established by Defra after the Discovering Lost Ways Project ceased, to look at public rights of way legislation, and in particular look at the legal process relating to the definitive map, and existing but not legally recorded public rights of way.</p> <p>A working document was distributed to Chairs of Local Access Forums for their comments, and at short notice the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the JLAF compiled a response, which was submitted with other LAF responses to Defra. The response is shown on the JLAF website. There was some concern with this process, as the JLAF is usually consulted as a body but in this case there were severe time constraints.</p> <p>The Stakeholders Working Group, and the Chairman’s response, are shown under the documents for this meeting on the JLAF website. This was agreed unanimously.</p>	
D2	<p>Local Transport Plan (LTP) and ROWIP integration</p> <p>There is new government guidance on Local Transport Plans – the next are due to be published by spring 2011 and this is on the JLAF website. There is also advice on integrating LTPs and ROWIPs. The Secretary is involved in work for this integration and will keep the JLAF updated. The Chairman plans to speak to a meeting of the West of England Partnership, who write the Local Transport Plan, at an appropriate point.</p>	Secretary Chairman
D3	<p>Access Land Restriction at Barn Field, Upper Swainswick</p> <p>JLAF members were emailed with details of the renewal of this restriction, and information was put on the JLAF website. Their comments had been summarised by the Secretary, to continue the restriction as the JLAF previously advised, and if the use of the land change, the restriction be reassessed.</p> <p><u>The response was agreed as the advice of the JLAF.</u></p>	
D4	<p>SW LAFs Conference, 20th October in Taunton</p> <p>Ray Newbigin, Robin Winfield, Ron Phelps, Peter Gould and Robert Killen attended this event. They reported that the event was very informative, with useful briefings, in particular by Terry Robinson, Head of People and Access Policy at Natural England, and Adrian Roper, Regional Director of Sustrans.</p>	
D5	<p>National and Regional LAF business</p> <p>A quote from Hansard was highlighted, showing an exchange in parliament that emphasised the cross party support of the role of (Joint) Local Access Forums. This is shown on the JLAF website.</p>	

<p>D6</p>	<p>News from the PROW teams</p> <p>Bristol City Council. Andy Whitehead gave an overview of recent PROW work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the full infrastructure and condition survey, the reported issues are being assessed, with any problems on Bristol City Council owned land identified for resolution. - New signing has been installed in areas of the city showing more information, such as destination and distance. - A major planning application for a Bristol City FC's new stadium has required attention concerning existing Public Rights of Way. - There are various claims for public rights of way being processed, including at Purdown. - Bristol Cycling is progressing. There has been some negative press, but following planning and design, infrastructure schemes will be starting construction and be more visible. <p>South Gloucestershire Council. Rennie Dickins gave an overview of recent PROW work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similarly there are many issues from the full survey in South Gloucestershire, though some of the urban areas are still being surveyed. - The team is to be relocated to new offices in Yate, with a change in working methods, including no use of staff's own cars, and hot desking. - South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council are working together to resolve a cross-border issue at Filton Golf Course. - Designs of signs being consulted for cycling city are being reviewed, after members highlighted an issue where equestrian use was not shown on paths where cycling is to be promoted. - The current Path Ranger is leaving, and a replacement has not been appointed. <p>The JLAF expressed its thanks for the hard work and many improvements carried out by the Path Warden Colin Grove.</p> <p>Bath & North East Somerset Council. Kelvin Packer gave an overview of recent PROW work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The second of this year's vegetation cuts on 25km of paths and spraying of 1900m of paths has been completed. - 5 bridges have been installed on Public Rights of Way this summer, aided by the fine weather in the early autumn. - CAMS, the survey and Lansdown Access Land have been highlighted earlier in the meeting - A Gating Order policy is being developed. <p>A query on the response to a letter about BA2/5 in Batheaston, where the River Avon is eroding a public footpath that is closed for safety reasons was highlighted. In response, engineers are soon to report on options and costings for this path. The letter will be attended to.</p>	
<p>D7</p>	<p>Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups</p> <p>The members reviewed the agendas in the background papers.</p>	
<p>E</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Public Rights of Way and Development at Oldland Common</p> <p>Plans for a major housing development in Oldland Common have been submitted to South Gloucestershire Council. Such development is similar to many that are proposed as part of urban extensions in the JLAF area. Members were alerted to the perceived lack of consideration of public rights of way.</p> <p>The JLAF will write to South Gloucestershire Council concerning this, and other</p>	

	developments of this kind, urging improvements to routes in and around such developments, along with other Green Infrastructure. The letter will include a copy of the JLAF's Position Statement on Green Infrastructure and Development.	Secretary
F	<p>The next meeting JLAF20 at 2pm on the 5th March 2010 at Fry Club, Somerdale, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 2AU</p> <p>Possible Agenda Items Presentation by the Bristol Cycling City team Cotswold Way National Trail Local Transport Plan</p> <p>Subsequent Meeting Dates See background papers or JLAF website.</p>	
	Close	