



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

JLAF25: Background Papers

Some items on the agenda are addressed verbally at the meeting, thus papers for every item on the agenda do not appear here. **Further reading of interest to members can be added to the meeting page of the JLAF website at www.jlaf.org.uk** – contact the secretary if you need assistance with this.

Agenda item B2: News from the Public Rights of Way (PROW) teams

- i. Update on PROW work including: decision making, team structures and finance

This will be a verbal update from Council Officers covering the work of each council.

- ii. PROW Liaison Groups

There follows a copy of the Agenda for the most recent meeting of each of the Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups, together with the date of the next meeting. These meetings are not statutory as the JLAF is, and meetings are not held in public. If you would like further information, contact the JLAF secretary in the first instance.

South Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG) 14th September 2011 Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Notes of last meeting 6th June 2011 and matters arising
3. JLAF Report (OutdoorsWest website)
4. Further PROW team changes
5. Rail/ PROW Crossings
6. Priority Forms and issue progress
7. CAMS resolved discussion
8. LG Priorities from User Groups perspective
9. Any Other Business

The next meeting – 8th December 2011

Bristol City Council Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG) 2nd June 2011 Agenda

1. Apologies and Introductions
2. 'Discover Brislington Brook', a 3-year Community Partnership project funded by Heritage Lottery – Rowan Matthiessen, Project Co-ordinator
3. Minutes from PROWLG meeting of 2ⁿ June 2011
4. Matters raised by members:
 - a. Equestrian access to multi-user routes / cycle trails (BM/AF) (Re. Letter from Minister for Natural Environment & Fisheries to Anne Main MP - <http://horseytalk.net/Newsletter/Current.html>)
 - b. Chair of PROW Liaison Group's letter to Councillors Kent and Rogers (PG)
 - c. Ramblers Association 'Mystery Walker' Survey Results (PG) (www.ramblers.org.uk/ - N.B. Bristol ranked at 43 out of 126)
 - d. Chairing arrangements (PG) (Should PROWLG members elect a standing chair on an annual basis or revert to the system of appointing a chairperson three months' ahead - Discuss)
5. Update on Dundry Farm and the 'missing link'
6. Dedications and proposals for footpath diversions – Severn Way Link route and Monarch's Way
7. Gating Orders – (a) Adoption / publishing of Policy and (b) annual review of gated paths
8. Use of volunteer labour on Public Rights of Way
9. Next meeting – 8th December 2011
10. AOB

Bath & North East Somerset Public Rights of Way Liaison Group (PROWLG) 21st June 2011

This group has been established independently of the Council to discuss local public rights of way matters following the end of Council support for a Council led-group. This first meeting discussed the proposed arrangements for the group. The next meeting is on the 6th December 2011.

- iii. Gating Orders

This will be a verbal update from Council Officers.

C ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION

Agenda item C1:

JLAF Consultation Response: Independent Panel on Forestry



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Chris Hogg, Secretary to the JLAF
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**Ray Newbigin, Chairman, David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman**

Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings,Business\JLAF24 upto JLAF25\2011-07-31 Independent Panel on Forestry\2011-07-31 JLAF Response - Independent Panel on Forestry.doc

By email to: forestrypanel@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Secretariat to the Independent Panel on Forestry
c/o Defra
Area 5E
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Thursday, 28th July 2011

Dear Rt Reverend Bishop James Jones,

Call for views by the Independent Panel on Forestry

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Joint Local Access Forum for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire (JLAF) is a statutory body set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to advise Local Authorities, the Government and others on public access to the outdoors. Our 22 volunteer members are drawn from landowners, users of open air facilities and others with an interest in access to the outdoors.

The JLAF responded to the consultation by Defra "Consultation: Future of the public forest estate" earlier this year, and to the Forestry Commission's previous consultation: "The Long-term Role of the Public Forest Estate in England" in 2009.

Well managed forestry brings environmental, economic and social benefits, but this JLAF response concentrates on those matters defined by its statutory remit, relating to access to the outdoors. Other matters though, such as the management of nature conservation and attractive landscapes can be important influences on visits to forests. For instance, appropriate tree planting schemes can enhance access. It is this multi-disciplinary green infrastructure approach to all forests that the JLAF wishes to encourage. Many of these points apply to the Public Forest Estate, but access provision and associated benefits can be accrued from woodland in public, charitable and private ownership.

1. In summary:

- There are clear economic, health, social and environmental benefits gained by providing public access to woodlands and forests on the public forest estate.
- Current use and potential access of woodlands and forests on the public forest estate should be secured through legal means, as public rights of way or access land. This should include access used by walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers.

- Potential improvements to access should consider a wider network of access. Informal access should be provided, free at the point of use to walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and should always consider the needs of disabled people.
- Enhanced access facilities, such as that introduced by the 1SW off road cycling project should be expanded to more localities and for other users including equestrians.
- Informal and high quality managed access in woodlands and forests should be particularly targeted to locations easily accessible to where people live, and publicity targeted at all potential users. Forests can be used to further wider government policy objectives. A visit to a city by the Independent Panel on Forestry could be used to investigate these issues.

The potential for multi-use of all forestry land.

2. Forests provide huge potential for outdoors access. A multi-use approach to the management of all forests, rather than a wholesale zoning of forests for forestry operations, access or nature conservation is important, as is the management of both large and small forests and woodlands. Classifying all forests as either commercial or heritage forests prevents an effective multidisciplinary approach. In many cases physical infrastructure already in place to support forestry operations, such as paths and tracks is ready made for public use.

Securing and extending access.

3. The Forestry Commission dedicated pedestrian access to its freehold forestry estate under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Public rights of way on the Public Forest Estate also carry statutory protection, most clearly where recorded on Definitive Maps.
4. In addition to this protected access, there is further existing access to the public forest estate that does not have such protection. Mechanisms to secure access to the freehold and non-freehold estate should be used, including further dedication under CROW and the dedication and creation of public rights of way.
5. There have been excellent new mountain biking facilities provided on the public forest estate, including at Leigh Woods near Bristol. The success of such facilities demonstrates demand near to where people live, and the potential to install further facilities on existing and new forestry land. This must be well managed, without reducing the provision of access for other users.
6. The forest estate provides huge potential as a horse riding resource. There is also potential for providing facilities to encourage access by carriage drivers to forest tracks. There is no dedicated equestrian interest on the Independent Panel. At present most horse riding, where allowed, is run under a permit scheme, where riders have to pay a substantial sum to ride. This is an anomaly as other access, such as for walkers and cyclists, is provided at no charge.
7. Horse riding and informal cycling can be extended on the forestry estate and protected through further dedications for higher rights (eg for horse riders, cyclists, or carriage drivers) under Section 16 of the CROW Act, or by using Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980 for new bridleways and restricted byways.
8. The potential of forestry land to provide managed facilities for motorised vehicle users should also be considered.
9. Provision of access in forests should always consider and maximise access for disabled people and under-represented groups.
10. When assessing and improving access to forests, the wider network of access, including public rights of way, permissive and informal access, open country and registered common land, access within stewardship schemes, the national cycle network, parks and other open spaces should be considered. Thus, the benefits of access to forests can be maximised. This should include working with Highway Authorities and Rights of Way Improvement Plans as well as local stakeholders including Local Access Forums and land managers, public, private and charitable.

11. A long term sustainable funding mechanism to maintain and enhance access to forests must be established. This should consider not only access to Forestry Commission land, but access to other woodlands and forests.

The benefits of access to woodlands and forests.

12. Access to the outdoors, to the natural environment and to quality landscapes bring benefits to health, including physical and mental health, to local economies and to the environment. This can be maximised in forests where a multi-disciplinary approach to forestry is practised.
13. There are clear economic benefits gained from access to the outdoors: "in 2010/11 alone, nearly 2.5 billion visits were made to England's countryside and open spaces, during the course of which visitors generated over £17 billion in expenditure. Over half those surveyed responded that they visit the natural environment at least once a week."
 - Wayman, E. (June 2011) *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: The national survey on people and the natural environment, Annual Report from the 2010-11 survey*. Natural England & Forestry Commission.
14. There are clear positive health impacts of exposure to the natural environment: "Nature and green space can be seen as a great outpatient department whose therapeutic value is yet to be fully realised."
 - Bird, W (2004) *Natural Fit and Natural Thinking, the evidence to date*. RSPB.

"Outdoor activities, particularly walking, offer a cheap and accessible route to better health for all, and address many of today's pressing public health issues. The continued use of green space for physical activity is strongly linked to the quality of the landscape – in terms of beauty, diversity, and contact with nature"
 - Bird, W (2006) *Investigating the links between the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Mental Health*, RSPB and Natural England
15. Woodland and forestry provide important venues for families with young children and teenagers to experience and enjoy the outdoors.
"Natural spaces have a clear and important role to play in providing teenagers with the opportunities needed for their healthy physical, psychological and social development"
 - Hanna, J *et al* (May 2010) *Wild Adventure Space: its role in teenagers' lives*, Natural England
16. There is clear evidence in terms of the cost to poor health to the economy: "The estimated direct cost of physical inactivity to the NHS across the UK is £1.06 billion... There are clear and significant health inequalities in relation to physical inactivity according to income, gender, age, ethnicity and disability."
 - Burns, H; Davies, S; Jewell, T; and McBride, M, (July 2011) *Start active, stay active: a report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*, Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection.
17. Applying a multi-use approach to forests near to where people live can deliver other policy objectives: "Improving the availability of good quality open and green spaces across the social gradient... Much of what we recommend for reducing health inequalities – active travel (for example walking or cycling), public transport, energy-efficient houses, availability of green space, healthy eating, reduced carbon-based pollution – will also benefit the sustainability agenda."
 - Marmot, M *et al*, (February 2010) *The Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England. At: www.ucl.ac.uk/marmotreview

18. Investments in cycling and mountain biking facilities have been shown to attract significant numbers of people to exercise in the outdoors, often to those groups of people (such as young people) who typically do not access the countryside for physical activity. This provision can be extended with enhanced access management of the public forest estate. The programme of 1SW to provide regional and local hubs for off-road cycling should be expanded to include more local provision. In addition to more informal provision of access to woodlands and forests, this model could be adopted to provide high quality facilities for other users such as walkers and equestrians.
 - Katherine King (December 2010) *Lifestyle, identity and young people's experiences of mountain biking*, Forestry Commission Research Note. Forestry Commission.
 - <http://www.1sw.org.uk/experience/about-1sw/>
19. Forests can provide and should be promoted as a venue for programmes of organised events including walking for health.
 - Davies, A. (January 2009) *Essential Evidence on a page - No. 6: Walking to health*, at: *Essential Evidence for Walking and Cycling* at: <http://betterbybike.org.uk/essential-evidence-for-walking-and-cycling>

Woodlands and forests near people

20. The JLAF responded to "The Long-term Role of the Public Forest Estate in England" Consultation in 2009, stating that there were opportunities to target forestry planting and acquisitions to areas near where people live, including near towns and cities such as Bristol and Bath. There is a need to recognise the importance of small areas of woodland and landscape forestry schemes that also provide access and other benefits. This would maximise the sustainable access to the forests by the public and also give more exposure to the Public Forest Estate.
21. In this area, the Forest of Avon was established in 1992 under the Community Forest programme and managed planting, woodland economy, land management, community and public access projects. The Forest of Avon's had lengthy experience of working effectively with landowners and the local authorities. The funding environment over the past 5 years has changed and the Forest of Avon scaled back the scope of its work as it became the Forest of Avon Trust.
22. The visits announced by the Independent Panel on Forestry all appear to be to established and large forests, mostly to less populous areas, so we would highlight the importance of including a visit to a city to investigate the importance and potential of woodlands, forestry and trees close to large populations. It would allow the panel to investigate the advantages that near-urban forests bring, and also some of the management considerations necessary for such land.
23. The Forestry Commission should work with other access providers and the Ordnance Survey to provide a single hub for information on access to the outdoors, to maximise use of its physical resource.

Yours sincerely,

[submitted by email from secretary@jlaf.org.uk]

Ray Newbiggin, Chairman of the JLAF.
cc. David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman

Agenda item C2: Draft JLAF Letter to Councils: Investment in Public Rights of Way and Outdoors Access



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Chris Hogg, Secretary to the JLAF
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Ray Newbigin, Chairman, David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman

Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings,Business\JLAF24 upto JLAF25\2011-10-05 JLAF letter to Councils - Resources\2011-10-05 DRAFT JLAF letter to Councils - Resources.doc

By email to:

Exec/ Cabinet Members: B&NES, BCC, SGlos

Directors: B&NES, BCC, SGlos

Cc: MPs

Date

Dear

Investment in Public Rights of Way and Outdoors Access

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

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At the most recent full meeting of the JLAF I was asked to write to the three Councils in this area – Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council – stating the importance of Public Rights of Way and to warn of the impact that cuts may have.

Over the past couple of years, the resources dedicated to public rights of way in this area, in terms of both budgets and staffing has already been cut. The funding for other related areas of work, such as the support of health walks and environmental projects that publicise the use of public rights of way has also been reduced.

Whilst savings are being made across central and local government in all areas, there is clear evidence that spending on public rights of way and associated areas of work leads to an increase in physical activity and an improvement in the health of the public, as well as increase local expenditure and support local economies. Studies have demonstrated a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 19:1 for walking and cycling projects.

Public rights of way and Outdoors Access has traditionally been an area of work where volunteers have made significant contributions – in this area by the JLAF, as well as organisations such as the Ramblers Association, the British Horse Society, the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens as well as many volunteers who lead health walks every week. These volunteers and the work they carry out depends on a high quality network of routes that the highway authorities have the responsibility to provide.

In recent years it has been noticeable that steady investment by the Councils in the maintenance and improvement of the public rights of way network has led to a more reliable experience for users. This investment has made the resource more accessible to more people. If such investment does not continue, such progress may be lost and the potential of the network will not be realised.

At the moment, there is also an increasing recognition of the value of physical activity, and preventative measures to reduce the burden on NHS resources. Changes in the provision of health services call for local authorities to work more closely with NHS colleagues to maximise the value of existing resources. The public rights of way network provides an excellent demonstration of the local authority's contribution to such partnerships.

Attached to this letter is a review of a strong body of evidence citing studies that show the importance of investment in Outdoors Access.

If you wish to meet or talk to discuss this further, then please do not hesitate to contact us. Alternatively, the next meeting of the JLAF is at 2pm on the 4th November in Keynsham Town Hall and you are most welcome to attend.

Yours sincerely,

[submitted by email from secretary@jlaf.org.uk]

Ray Newbigin, Chairman of the JLAF.

cc. David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman

Evidence for Outdoors Access.

24. Access to the outdoors, to the natural environment and to quality landscapes bring benefits to health, including physical and mental health, to local economies and to the environment.
25. Investment in walking and cycling measures are high value, and brings clear benefits: "The typical [Benefit] cost ratios [BCR] are many times greater than the threshold of 2:1 which is considered by the Department for Transport as 'high' value for money... Almost all of the studies identified report economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions which are highly significant. The median result for all data identified is 13:1 and for UK data alone the median figure is higher, at 19:1" visit the natural environment at least once a week."
 - Davis, A (2010) *Value for Money: An Economic Assessment of Investment in Walking and Cycling*. Department for Health.
26. There are clear economic benefits gained from access to the outdoors: "in 2010/11 alone, nearly 2.5 billion visits were made to England's countryside and open spaces, during the course of which visitors generated over £17 billion in expenditure. Over half those surveyed responded that they visit the natural environment at least once a week."
 - Wayman, E. (June 2011) *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: The national survey on people and the natural environment, Annual Report from the 2010-11 survey*. Natural England & Forestry Commission.

27. There are clear positive health impacts of exposure to the natural environment: "Nature and green space can be seen as a great outpatient department whose therapeutic value is yet to be fully realised."
- Bird, W (2004) *Natural Fit and Natural Thinking, the evidence to date*. RSPB.
- "Outdoor activities, particularly walking, offer a cheap and accessible route to better health for all, and address many of today's pressing public health issues. The continued use of green space for physical activity is strongly linked to the quality of the landscape – in terms of beauty, diversity, and contact with nature"
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28. The natural environment and access to it provides important venues for families with young children and teenagers to experience and enjoy the outdoors.
- "Natural spaces have a clear and important role to play in providing teenagers with the opportunities needed for their healthy physical, psychological and social development"
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- Burns, H; Davies, S; Jewell, T; and McBride, M, (July 2011) *Start active, stay active: a report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*, Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection.
30. Access to land near to where people live can deliver other policy objectives: "Improving the availability of good quality open and green spaces across the social gradient... Much of what we recommend for reducing health inequalities – active travel (for example walking or cycling), public transport, energy-efficient houses, availability of green space, healthy eating, reduced carbon-based pollution – will also benefit the sustainability agenda."
- Marmot, M *et al*, (February 2010) *The Marmot Review: Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England. At: www.ucl.ac.uk/marmotreview
31. Investments in cycling and mountain biking facilities have been shown to attract significant numbers of people to exercise in the outdoors, often to those groups of people (such as young people) who typically do not access the countryside for physical activity. Models for providing access to Green Infrastructure, such as the excellent mountain biking facilities provided at Ashton Court and Leigh Woods near Bristol could be adopted to provide high quality facilities for other users such as walkers and equestrians.
- Katherine King (December 2010) *Lifestyle, identity and young people's experiences of mountain biking*, Forestry Commission Research Note. Forestry Commission.
 - <http://www.1sw.org.uk/experience/about-1sw/>
32. Public paths are venues that programmes of organised events including walking for health depend upon. These programmes are proven to tackle health inequality.
- Davies, A. (January 2009) *Essential Evidence on a page - No. 6: Walking to health*, at: <http://betterbybike.org.uk/essential-evidence-for-walking-and-cycling>

Agenda item C3: JLAF Letter to Defra: A Monarch's Way National Trail



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Chris Hogg, Secretary to the JLAF
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**Ray Newbigin, Chairman, David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman**

Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings,Business\JLAF24 upto JLAF25\2011-10-12 JLAF letter to NE, National Trails\2011-10-12 JLAF letter to NE, National Trails.doc

By email to:

Caroline Spelman MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Richard Benyon MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries

Sheila Talbot, Lead Adviser, National Trails, Natural England

Dear Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP

A Monarch's Way National Trail

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

At the most recent full meeting of the Joint Local Access Forum (the JLAF), attended by members with user, land management and other interests, resolved to support approval of the Monarch's Way long distance path as a National Trail.

The Monarch's Way, a 615 mile walking route across the midlands and the south of England, closely follows the escape route taken by Charles II after his defeat at The Battle of Worcester, and links many historic sites. The route runs for 43 miles in the JLAF's area, linking the cities of Bristol and Bath with the countryside beyond, benefiting users and wider society by improving health as well as spend in local economies.

The Monarch's Way, created by the late Trevor Antill, was developed and promoted entirely by volunteers to oversee maintenance and improvement. This spontaneous model of volunteers developing a project, and working closely with highway authorities has parallels to the National Trails model, where routes are adopted by the Secretary of State, then maintained and promoted with both volunteers and national trail officers.

The Monarch's Way Management Team now proposes that the future profile and quality of the route is best served by formal adoption by the Secretary of State as a National Trail. The Joint Local Access Forum supports their proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Sent by email

Ray Newbigin, Chairman of the JLAF.

cc. David Waterstone CBE, Vice Chairman
Robert Killen, Deputy Chairman

Agenda item G: The next meeting JLAF26

(in Bath & North East Somerset on the 2nd March 2012)

In the Council Chamber, Keynsham Town Hall.

Subsequent Meeting Dates

The following are dates for full meetings of the JLAF, following a pattern of once every 4 months, on the first Friday of the month.

Event/Meeting	Date	Location
JLAF27 Main Meeting	FR 06JUL12	Keynsham Town Hall
JLAF28 Main Meeting	FR 09NOV12	Keynsham Town Hall
JLAF29 Main Meeting	FR 01MAR13	