



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

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Ray Newbigin, Chairman, Robin Winfield, Vice Chairman
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Reference: S:\Prow\JLAF\JLAF Meetings,Business\JLAF18 upto JLAF19\2009-08-10 Sth. Gloc. leaflets RN to Peter Jackson, Aug 09.doc

Peter Jackson
Director of Planning
South Gloucestershire Council

Ray Newbigin
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10 August 2009

Dear Mr Jackson

Walks Leaflets in South Gloucestershire

Members of the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire are reporting that South Gloucestershire Council are considering ending the practice of printing walks leaflets and booklets on the grounds that these can be downloaded from the Council website.

The JLAF has a statutory remit to advise its Councils on matters relating to access to the countryside and the wider outdoors. This proposal is giving the JLAF grave cause for concern.

The Council has an exemplary record in producing fascinating walks covering the wide range of our natural and historical heritage. The walks have been promoted by signposting and the provision of illustrated leaflets which are widely available in libraries and other public centres. They are uniformly excellent in grabbing the attention and encouraging walking and an interest in South Gloucestershire generally. Additionally the Council has a successful *Walking for Health* programme aimed at newcomers to the benefits of walking. It is apparent to the JLAF that walking for recreation, health and “discovering” South Gloucestershire will be seriously undermined if leaflets and booklets are not readily available.

It is suggested that the public will be able to download and print the walks for themselves. While this may be a laudable long term aim it in no way meets current needs. **Many people, and particularly those who have most to gain by walking, do not have ready access to the internet** – not even in libraries. The suggestion also overlooks the fact that the many leaflets in current use have not been designed with the web in mind and print-outs are unsatisfactory and expensive.

 Printed on Recycled Paper

The JLAF is a statutory body established by the three councils shown below, to provide advice as to the improvement of public access to land in the area of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area. Its views do not necessarily represent those of the three councils.

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**




**South Gloucestershire
Council**

Furthermore home printing is environmentally unfriendly as it is clearly more energy and resource intensive than the commercial operation.

For safety, enjoyment and the protection of the countryside visitors need a clear map and description of where they are going and what they can hope to see and understand a little better. The JLAF urges the Council to abandon any plans to end the printing of walks information. It seems self-evident that Departments should be given all the facilities they need to work effectively. However, if adequate storage is now beyond the Council's resources perhaps consideration should be given to renting space elsewhere, or contracting out storage and distribution, or getting another Department which may have the space to provide the facility.

The Council's record of promoting walking in South Gloucestershire is something of which it can be proud. I would appreciate your assurance that the provision of leaflets and booklets to residents is not at risk.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newbigin

Ray Newbigin, Chairman, Joint Local Access Forum

cc. Robin Winfield, Vice Chairman
Ron Phelps, Deputy Chairman

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire.

South Gloucestershire Council is required, in accordance with Section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this Forum in carrying out its functions.