

Minutes of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum meeting, 13 December 2016

Present

Members

Graham Flatt (Chair) - GJ
Rachel Bryan (Vice-Chair) - RB
Sue Coles - SC
Melanie Fortescue - MF
Cllr Edward Heron - EH
Gail Johnson - GJ
Paul Knipe - PK
Alan Marlow - AM
Lindsay Marshall - LM
Alan Taylor - AT
Aileen Wood - AW

Officers attending all or part of meeting

Jo Heath (HCC) - JH
Petronella Natrass (Forum Officer)- PN
Jonathan Woods (HCC) - JW
James Emmett (HCC) - JE
Owen Devine

Observers

Helena Barker (Mid and West Berks LAF)
Gill Plumbley - GP
Mark Sumner (DIO) - MS

1 Apologies and news

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Mark Ludlow, Lyell Fairlie, Nigel Wolstenholme, Robin Edwards, Cllr Alicia Denny and Isaac Walker.
- 1.2 Valerie Rawlings has stepped down from the Forum in November and there is therefore a vacancy for a disability representative.
- 1.3 Gill Plumbley was welcomed as the new horse-riding representative-in-waiting (pending confirmation from Portsmouth City Council as joint Appointing Authority).
- 1.4 Sue Coles expressed concern that the vacancy for an off-road cycling representative remained unfilled. This and the vacancy for a disability representative will be advertised in the New Year.
- 1.5 Mark Sumner was attending the meeting to advise on any MoD matters in Mark Ludlow's absence.
- 1.6 Jonathan Woods, suggested proactively targeting communities in Portsmouth and Southampton to fill vacancies.

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The draft minutes were approved as a true record.
- 2.2 **Matters arising:**

- **Yateley Common at Blackbushe Airport** – GJ had provided details of a local equestrian contact which had been passed on to JW. Hart District Council has recently agreed that the Countryside Service should liaise with the landowners about the dedication of an alternative bridleway to the north.
- **Watercross Way** – AT and AM had drafted a letter to County Estates, which was circulated with the meeting papers. The Forum approved the draft, with one

amendment to para 2, describing the Watercress Way as a ‘...continuous walking, cycling *and horse riding* route...’

The Forum suggested that this matter indicated a degree of disassociation between the objectives of HCC Estates and those of the Countryside Service, but it was agreed that they should await the reply before discussing this further.

ACTION: PN to amend the letter and send it to County Estates.

- **Forestry in England inquiry** – no comments received.
- **Forestry Commission** - the invitation to Bruce Rothnie had been deferred to March 2017 owing to the number of items already on the agenda for December.

ACTION: PN to contact Bruce Rothnie about attending the March meeting.

- **Access on MoD Land** – ML had been asked to add the Review of Byelaws at Long Valley, Aldershot to the agenda for the next MoD Liaison Group meeting on 18 January. That meeting has now been postponed, as ML is currently on leave of absence until the end of January.

The consultation process is yet to start and the programme has not yet been set. MoD is still getting basic information and developing its communications strategy. Alan Taylor commented that MoD must consult users about what the access requirements might be. Sue Coles sought confirmation that MoD will be consulting before drafting the byelaws and not simply publishing draft byelaws for consultation.

ACTION: Mark Sumner to set a date for the next meeting and ensure the Byelaw review is included for discussion.

- **Auditing the List of Streets** – covered under item 9b).
- **Whitehill and Bordon equestrian survey** – the letter drafted by GJ had been sent to EHDC after being approved by the Forum. A copy was circulated to all members.
- **HCC Access Team update** –The team structure chart had been circulated to all Forum members.

3 Forum Officer's report

3.1 ***Future meeting dates*** – discussion deferred to item 14 AGM.

3.2 HCC UPDATE

- ***New Cycling access to QECP*** – SC commented that there had been a motor sports event on adjacent land when she first used this route and that this was not ideal, particularly for a family route. This was not a site managed by HCC and there was no information in regard to approvals for this event.

JE hopes to be able to update the Forum at the next meeting on the legal status of the route, which is yet to be determined.

- ***Southampton ROWIP*** – it was noted that Portsmouth City Council's RoWIP is also due for review in 2017. JW advised that the HCAF should proactively maintain its profile with both Portsmouth and Southampton Councils as resources become tighter.

GF highlighted the common interest in the England Coast Path and the desirability of having Portsmouth and Southampton Cities represented on the Coastal Access sub-group. At present there is no Member representative from Southampton on the Forum.

ACTION: PN to contact Southampton CC about Member representative for HCAF and send Cllr Alicia Denny dates of Coastal Access sub-group meeting.

- **Rural Crime Conferences** – the Feb 15th date for Newport, IoW had been incorrect on the flier and should be amended to 18th. EH advised that the conference on 11th Feb will now be held at Minstead rather than at the Gill Nethercott Centre.

ACTION: PN to circulate amended date/venue to all members.

- **Post office consultation**

DECISION: that the Forum will not respond to this consultation

- **Big Pathwatch** – AM advised that much of the data gathered relates to paths that are not rights of way.

4 Project/sub-group updates

a) Providing Access to Hampshire's Heritage (PATHH)

4.1 The old PATHH website has been updated by the Maritime Trust. Amanda Hull is still working on the new website which has incurred a minor cost of around £40, bringing the balance in the PATHH account down to about £300.

b) Access on MOD land

4.2 The MoD liaison group meeting has been postponed as ML is on leave until the end of January. The group hope to meet on 15 Feb, subject to confirmation from Mark Sumner, who is the DIO point of contact in ML's absence.

ACTION: ALL to forward to MS any emails sent to ML in the last month.

ACTION: PN to circulate Mark Sumner's email address to the Forum.

4.3 MS advised that some funding is available for interpretation on MoD sites and possibly for other projects, as appropriate. If any funds are needed on or near MoD land, contact him for further details.

4.4 DIO (the Defence Infrastructure Organisation) is currently carrying out a nationwide review of its Training Estate Public Safety strategy, looking at public access, rights of way and sites throughout England and Wales.

4.5 GJ had been in contact with ML about double roundabouts south of Bordon, looking for route for riders to get round Bordon itself, and asked to discuss this separately with MS.

c) Multi-user routes

4.6 GJ raised concern about a comment by Transport Team during discussions relating the Botley bypass that 'horses and cyclists don't mix'. This is being taken up by Cycling UK and BHS but there is a concern that this is an established view within parts of the County Council. GJ wishes the Forum to discuss this further in March, in particular how to support a change of views. There was further discussion of this

specific project which JW suggested should feed into the Planning Workshop in the afternoon.

d) Coastal Access

- 4.7 There is continuing concern about the depiction of spreading room on OS maps and the lack of distinction between this and private/excepted land. This issue is the subject of a national discussion, not specific to Hants. It was noted that map colouring seems to be changing over time.
- 4.8 Four open evenings had been held in the last 10 days, with varying levels of attendance. Concerns have been raised over the decision to include the Warsash to Hamble ferry, there being no provision for the frequent occasions when the ferry is unavailable.

ACTION: PN to circulate minutes of last meeting of the Coastal Access sub-group.

5 Reports from other LAFs

- 5.1 AM had attended the New Forest Access Forum meeting on 5 December and Aileen Wood had gone to the Surrey LAF's meeting on 10 October.

a) New Forest Access Forum – 5 December (Alan Marlow)

- 5.2 As per report.

b) South Downs LAF – 20 July

- 5.3 The South Downs LAF has initiated and is carrying out a comprehensive review of permissive access across the National Park area.

c) Surrey LAF – 10 October (Aileen Wood)

- 5.4 As per report.

d) Mid and West Berks LAF

- 5.5 Helena Barker (Mid and West Berks LAF) attended the HCAF as an observer and highlighted the following areas of focus for her forum:

- Wokingham is developing area and the LAF is concerned about effects on RoW network, also about noise/air pollution from the M4 'Smart Motorway' project.
- Following up on work local Wildlife trust has done on access to Commons e.g. easy access trail on one of the commons.
- Reading – due to review their ROWIP at January meeting.
- A local BHS representative (Janice Bridger) has been working on safety in the area and persuaded Wokingham BC to look at using a flexi-pave system for shared routes. The LAF has had a site visit to look at this product, which is guaranteed for 7 years (compared with one year for asphalt). SC expressed concern about how this surface performed in wet conditions. JW drew the Forum's attention to an example in Winchester in front of Westgate School around school. AT had found the surface too springy for comfort when walking any distance.

6 Countryside Service Update (Jo Heath)

- 6.1 Copy of presentation attached with minutes, together with a separate copy of Jo's 'infographic'. Forum members are welcome to use this and share it with others.

ACTION: PN to circulate infographic and presentation slides to Forum.

- 6.2 EH commented that whilst this is a period of great change, there are opportunities as well as challenges. Final figures for coming financial year will be announced by central government before Christmas. At present HCC is reasonably optimistic that T19 achievable.
- 6.3 AM asked whether the maintenance of unclassified roads (UCRs) would be coming over to CS. JH advised that there is no plan for this to happen.
- 6.4 SC commented that Highways appear in some cases to be looking to Countryside to develop cycling routes for them because they can do so at lower cost, and that this leads to unsatisfactory solutions for utility cycling. She asked how JH sees the relationship between Highways and Countryside developing so that all users can get best outcome.
- 6.5 JH responded that Countryside are working productively with Highways. JW commented that much of the funding that Highways are trying to spend is linked with developer contributions. Projects are often limited by the wording of s106 agreements, and the amount awarded compared with the amount needed to deliver the project. Countryside are working with Highways to look more closely at what can be delivered with funding available. However, the message that different users have different needs is something HCAF has ability to influence.
- 6.6 SC observed that if the aim is to encourage cycling as a mode of transport and funds are being spent on schemes that do not meet utility needs, they are not delivering value for money. EH pointed out that the issue with developer funding is that there may be enough money to put a new access route in but not optimise the surface. Then have to look at having '2 bites of cherry', i.e. seek to enhance the surface later. SC's concern is that it does not subsequently get enhanced.
- 6.7 GJ highlighted the importance for equestrians of early involvement in planning, before the consultation stage, and suggested that in terms of collaborative working, the Forum could do more to help, e.g. by running drop-in consultation sessions such as GJ ran recently at Bordon.
- 6.8 She also suggested that the Countryside Service should consider parking for horseboxes as an income-generator.
- 6.9 AT thanked JH for attending and asked what HCAF could do to support the Countryside Service. In terms of access and rights of way, JH advised that the Service would bring T2 plans back to the Forum and ask for ideas and advice.
- 6.10 JH thanked the Forum for all that they do – having been closely involved in the past she knows how much input is involved.

7 Access Team review and priorities for the coming year (Jonathan Woods)

- 7.1 The Access Team budget is around £1million per annum. T19 is looking at efficiencies and income streams that can reduce the HCC cash limit, whilst maintaining similar budget spend.
- 7.2 Savings area being identified including new (leased) vehicles which cost less to maintain/run, county-wide purchasing/bulk buying, cutting down on paper and printing (e.g. for HCAF and SGS), however before changes are made it needs to be clear what the impact will be.

- 7.3 Business modelling – looking for efficiencies, e.g. temporary closures – process is relatively quick but phone enquiries can take a lot of time. Scope for using simpler language, FAQs, QR codes.
- 7.4 Increased charges – these are being brought into line with those of neighbouring authorities.
- 7.5 Countryside Access Plan implementation – after a year in post JW is impressed at what has been achieved and JW will bring a progress review to the Forum next March.
- 7.6 AM asked whether volunteers had been consulted on the new Volunteer Handbook mentioned in JW's update. RB said that TCV have been consulted.

8 Byway management update (*Jonathan Woods*)

- 8.1 After feedback at and following the previous meeting, HCC has modified its approach. An option informal consultation has been completed and received 27 responses: 12 in favour of the proposals, 11 against and 4 neutral. It has been proposed that Kent carriage gaps could be used rather than gates to allow continued use by carriage drivers, but this is subject to further consultation. In most instances the aim is to restrict access to motorised vehicles with 3+ wheels although Worldham/Selborne will be closed to all motorised users. Orders will not be made until the New Year.
- 8.2 JW has also started consulting users about more dynamic approach to byway management for routes that are at risk but not critically bad, aiming to reduce damage during wetter seasons via seasonal or emergency closures. These closures might be linked to severe weather warnings, possibly working with user groups on how to categorise/trigger those actions. The Forum will be kept informed as this approach is developed.
- 8.3 GF asked what programme is in place for talking to user groups. JW advised that consultation would be mostly by telephone, but if GJ wishes to get a group together, he will programme a meeting in his diary.
- 8.4 MS asked how management measures would be policed. JW – this will be difficult because of not being able to use gates. The police responded to consultation that they will not be enforcing. It will therefore be necessary to rely on local monitoring.

9 Member Discussion/project development

a) Equestrian Needs – the Way Forward (*Gail Johnson*)

- 9.1 GJ and PN had met and agreed to work a paper up for HCAF in March. The focus of this work is safety; new off-road routes should provide for equestrians as well as walkers and cyclists.

ACTION: GJ and PN to prepare paper for March meeting

b) List of Streets (*Alan Marlow/Sue Coles*)

- 9.2 AM and SC had prepared a brief outlining work done previously by HCAF on this topic, which had been circulated to the Forum. This paper proposed that a sub-group of HCAF (plus representatives from SDLAF and NFAF if they wish to join us)

should finalise the brief, set objectives for the sub-group and then propose and prioritise an action plan.

DECISION: that the List of Streets sub-group should reconvene.

9.3 MF and GJ asked to join the subgroup and it was agreed that the subgroup should identify a clear remit, referencing the letter from the BHS.

ACTION: PN to draft letter to NFAF and SDLAF to invite membership of a joint subgroup.

ACTION: SC/AM to provide PN with a paragraph outlining objectives

10 HCC Enforcement Policy

10.1 A copy of the draft Policy had been circulated with the meeting papers.

ACTION: ALL - any comments should be emailed to jonathan.woods@hants.gov.uk

11 England Coast path

11.1 As per presentation (attached with minutes)

11.2 OS Maps – as it stands, seaward area of path is spreading room except where restricted, however OS is unable to show this other than as a magenta coloured wash. There is a caveat re natural areas but this is not enough and a review has started that could affect mapping nationally. One possibility is text within the wash referring to on-ground signage or website. OS are currently receptive to ideas and it is hoped to find some way to notify people appropriately of excepted areas.

11.3 There was some discussion as to whether text on maps would be adequate. LM suggested NE should concentrate simply on establishing a path, however spreading room (and roll-back) is intrinsic to the whole initiative. AT felt that the key issue is why OS is having difficulty with the mapping. The first point of contact for most users of the path will be the map and they will assume they have access to all of the magenta-wash areas. This is therefore building-in contention. At present there is an opportunity to avoid this. Conversations with OS are continuing.

11.4 Hamble Ferry also remains an issue – e.g. closed that day because of fog. John Truswell knows subgroup's views on this.

11.5 It was agreed that Forum would make a formal representation to NE about its concerns.

ACTION: PN to find out which NE officer to write to.

ACTION: AM to draft a letter about the magenta wash, AW to provide a paragraph about the Hamble ferry. PN to circulate full draft to Forum for approval.

12 Planning Policy and Development Control (Owen Devine)

12.1 As per presentation (attached with minutes).

12.2 OD recommends that HCAF gets on distribution database for local Planning Authority consultations. The earlier one can get involved, the better. Access is often included in Outline applications, or else in Reserved Matters.

12.3 **Workshop:** Members formed smaller groups to discuss:

- Possible **negative effects** of development on the Rights of Way network
- Acceptable **mitigation**
- **Opportunities** that development offers for improving the Rights of Way network

12.4 Members wrote their points on post-its and placed them under the relevant heading. Output from this session was reviewed during the AGM and summarised at the end of the meeting.

13 Countywide Rights of Way Survey

13.1 Item deferred owing to time constraints.

ACTION: AM/JW to send round a written note regarding this initiative.

14 AGM

a) Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

14.1 At this point in the meeting Graham Flatt stood down as Chair. Rachel Bryan stood as the sole candidate for the post and was elected unanimously by all members present.

14.2 Alan Taylor was likewise the only candidate for the post of Vice-Chair and was elected unanimously by all members present.

14.3 Rachel's first act as Chair was to record thanks to Graham for his chairmanship, on behalf of the Forum.

b) Meeting and training programme for 2017

14.4 The following dates were agreed for meetings in 2017:

28 March
20 June
12 September
12 December

14.5 AW noted that attendance had been low at recent meetings and JW asked if this might be due to the length of meetings.

DECISION: to keep with full days, but schedule important business in the morning and cover other topics/workshop activities in the afternoon

ACTION: PN to email Forum when preparing Agenda to ask if any member wants a specific item covered in the morning.

ACTION: Chair and Vice-chair to draft a Work Programme for 2017 at their first Agenda-setting meeting

ACTION: Members to notify Forum Officer of those key points in the 2016 Work Programme that should be carried forward to 2017

15 Feedback from Planning workshop

15.1 **Key negative effects** – traffic, road safety, crossing points, flow of traffic. Integration of RoW into existing network – none, lack of connectivity, fragmentation.

Experience of RoW – e.g. pollution. Increased maintenance as a result of greater use.

- 15.2 **Mitigation** – new paths/new crossings. Multiple applications for one growth area – having a strategic overview/vision. Consultation with user groups at early stage in shaping the application. It is not just recreation, also sustainable/utility use. Management/diversion of RoW during course of development e.g. Minerals and Waste developments – movement and restoration. Transition during site working.
- 15.3 **Opportunities** – new network, multi-user paths rather than single-use. Projects for CIL – smaller amounts going back to same pot, green spaces/corridors. Crime and prevention of crime. Issue of future-proofing: long-term vision e.g. put a bridge across a main road for pedestrians, if network wants to evolve, pedestrian bridge limits.

ACTION: PN to circulate transcript of output to all members, asking them to contribute any additional points (including any from those who were unable to attend the meeting)

15.4 The Planning sub-group currently comprises GJ, GF, AM, AT, RB and NW.

ACTION: PN to check whether any further members would like to join this group.

The meeting closed at 15:20

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 28 March 2017. Venue to be confirmed