

**Minutes of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum meeting
Tuesday 7 July 2026**

Present

Gail Johnson (Chair)
Steve Taylor (Vice-Chair)
Aileen Wood
Anna Hammond (Teams)
Alan Marlow
Alan Taylor
Debbie Luff
Asher De'ath Snape
Sue Coles
Petronella Nattrass

Apologies:

Susie Corbett

Observers

Tim Lewis (Teams)
Brenda King (Teams)

Officers

Jonathan Woods - Strategic Manager
Abby Sullivan - Access Development Manager
Sarah Huggett - Southampton City Council (Teams)
Nicola Waight – Team Leader Transport Policy
David Jowsey – Transport Strategy Manager

Minutes taken by

Anna Olliffe – (HCAF secretariat)

1. Apologies / Welcome / Thanks to Lyndsey Marshall

Apologies: Cllr Mike Ford, Susie Corbett, Jacqui England

Lyndsey Marshall was thanked by the Chair for his years of service and expertise.
This was seconded by Alan Taylor.

Asher De'ath Snape was welcomed to HCAF and shared his background in forestry and land management.

2. Chair's annual report (please see attachment)

The Chair shared her annual report, which was approved by all members.

Action: Chair to add thanks to Lyndsey Marshall to the Chair's report.

3. AGM to include nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair

Gail Johnson stood as Chair and was seconded by Aileen Wood with no objections. Steve Taylor stood as Vice Chair and was seconded by Aileen Wood with no objections.

4. Minutes and matters arising (to include an update on drones)

Meeting minutes for the meeting held on 7 April 2026 were approved.

Aileen Wood was thanked for her role as minute taker on 7 April meeting.

Action: Name of minute taker to be recorded in all future HCAF minutes

5. Letter to Mayor and Unitary Authority Leaders from Local Access Forums/CAP Annual Delivery Plan

Gail Johnson shared the letter and asked for the committee's feedback.

Jonathan Woods suggested key terms were defined within the letter, including 'countryside access' 'rights of way' and 'country parks.' A further suggestion was made that the letter link directly to the three Local Access Forums Countryside Access Plans.

Action: Chair to agree the wording of the letter with Abby Sullivan.

A shadow authority is in process of being established with a senior officer, a bank account, and terms of reference. Is there a possibility for HCAF to feed into draft terms of reference to include rural issues?

Action: Jonathan Woods to find out who the members of the shadow authority are and (if practicable) timescales for HCAF involvement.

Once the wording is agreed the committee are happy for the letter to be sent. However, if a long period of time has elapsed, while the new authorities are established, the committee would like to see a draft before it is sent.

Action: Chair to recirculate the Letter to Mayor and Unitary Authority Leaders from Local Access Forums if the HCAF committee deem it necessary.

CAP annual delivery plan (please see attachment)

Abby Sullivan shared the CAP delivery plan and clarified the October-September timescales and how these interacted with the Capital Programme deadlines in August and September.

She shared the following short-term outcomes for the first year of the plan:

- Writing a least restrictive statement for the service, which HCAF will input to.
- The BOP (Byways Operational Procedure) which Jonathan Woods is presently developing.
- The inclusion of strategic routes across all internal policies and documents.
- The development of recording systems. Abby Sullivan is working with Amanda Hull from the Business Development Team, to create a dashboard and app so anyone from Countryside Services can log and report work which forms part of the CAP delivery plan. Abby will share the first version of the dashboard at the HCAF October meeting. It is hoped that this will be a useful tool for capturing institutional knowledge over a 10-year period.

Petronella Nattrass asked how completion of the new dashboard will be incentivised. Abby Sullivan and Jonathan Woods explained that the dashboard would be used as a reporting tool for senior management, who would expect timely reporting and that reporting in this way was now culturally embedded within Access and other Countryside teams.

Steve Taylor asked about whether these high-level outcomes would be further segmented into lower-level outcomes. Abby and Jonathan clarified that this would be implemented by individual managers.

Alan Marlow asked if there was a universal definition of strategically important routes. Jonathan Woods responded that these would be developed in conjunction with District councils, utilising their local expertise.

Debbie Luff asked for information held by the County Council on accessible routes. Jonathan Woods clarified that while HCC have accessibility guidance, they do not have an audit of accessible routes.

Anna Hammond raised that the ramblers are recording all furniture in their annual surveys, but this is not visible unless you report a problem. Could this be made visible to allow for better route mapping for users with different access needs?

Action: Jonathan Woods to investigate the possibility of displaying all furniture on the definitive map and to feed back to HCAF at the October meeting.

Action: The CAP annual delivery plan will be reviewed at the next HCAF meeting.

6. Officer report including Local Government Reorganisation Update (please see attachment)

Jonathan Woods described the 4 new councils that will exist after Local Government Reorganisation and the areas they will cover. These will be North Hampshire, Mid Hampshire, Southwest and Southeast. He then shared the percentages of Public Rights of Way Network by new Unitary Authority.

Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council both launched separate judicial reviews in June 2026 against the government's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) plans for the region.

New Authorities will take over from Hampshire County Council in April 2028. Teams are currently being established to administer and steer the transition. The current CEO of Hampshire County Council has been nominated as Senior Officer for the combined authorities.

Petronella Nattrass asked where National Park Authorities would sit within this new structure. Jonathan Woods recognised that while different national parks have different levels of influence on the local landscape, often dependent on whether they are the local planning authority or not, there was universal concern about loss of National Park influence.

Alan Marlow asked how the definitive map will be managed. Jonathan Woods stated that the choices and options will be dependent upon the new authorities. A decision will need to be made about whether the Integrated Definitive Mapping Team is centralised across the 4 new authorities or split and whether the Access teams

remain part of a Countryside / rural Service or join the Highways Team of the new authorities. There will still be a need for countywide networking and support structures to ensure that staff in the new authorities are not isolated and that there is a larger advisory group, when needed.

Gail Johnson asked what this will mean for Local Access Forums. Jonathan said that there is no clear idea at this stage. This will be for each new authority to dictate as they develop.

Action: Abby Sullivan to share map listing existing officers per areas with HCAF once one is created via GIS

Jonathan shared the Access Power Bi dashboard including how HCC manage and prioritise issues and about path grading scores. This layered data is allowing us to manage the network more efficiently.

Action: Anna Olliffe to facilitate Megan Cledwyn (Community Engagement Ranger from the Southeast) to get in touch with Gail Johnson about submitting volunteer numbers.

Action: Abby Sullivan to send Gail Johnson a link to support with submitting volunteer numbers.

Jonathan shared some of the ongoing Rights of Way issues in the area including Langstone and Warsash sea walls. The Nursling / Test Valley board walk, a backlog of definitive mapping queries and recruitment.

Anna Hammond asked if the Test Valley Board Walk will be accessible.

Action: Jonathan Woods to look at the frequency of passing places on the boardwalk and whether the kissing gate could be replaced with a radar gate and what will happen to the steps at either end.

7. Sub-forum and Working Groups

- a) MOD liaison – The MOD are not supporting an access function during Katherine's maternity leave.
- b) Accessibility – Steve Taylor shared that the Accessibility subgroup is in review stage. They are carrying out bottom-up assessment of accessible routes within Hampshire and engaging with parish councils. There is a strong need for the HCAF accessibility subgroup to understand what resources on accessibility Hampshire County Council already hold.

Action: Abby Sullivan to send the Accessibility Subgroup guidance from Access Scotland, the 'pushchair routes' lists created by each Community Engagement Ranger and to arrange a separate call with the Accessibility sub-group

Action: Jonathan Woods to send link to the Accessible Countryside for Everyone (ACE) web pages: <https://www.accessiblecountryside.org.uk/hampshire> and [Accessibility | Things to do in Hampshire | Hampshire County Council](#)

- c) Planning – The Standing Guidance for planning has recently been refreshed. Jonathan Woods is working with other teams to ensure that PROW are recognised appropriately within the document. This includes ensuring that standing guidance

applies to smaller developments with a public right of way running through them and that district councils are referenced. Gail Johnson asked how HCAF could engage with the Hampshire County Council Highways team.

Action: Jonathan Woods will send over Ben Clifton's details, to allow HCAF to write a letter to Highways about key planning criteria for public rights of way.

Action: Jonathan Woods will send HCAF a link to the revised standard guidance

Action: Alan Taylor to send over examples of small new developments impacting on public rights of way to Jonathan Woods

d) **Path Management – Jonathan and Vice-Chair presented the brief** (please see attachment)

Gail Johnson requested carriage driving be added to the brief.

Action: Steve Taylor to add reference to carriage drivers to the paper.

Debbie Luff requested that in some cases path closure be considered as a method of managing waterlogged paths.

Action: Sam Baker (Rights of Way Officer for Southeast Hampshire) will provide HCC steer and support. HCAF to research best practice with regards to path management and drainage. HCAF will utilise their networks to help them to understand best practice across their respective areas of expertise. HCC will ask their contractors to share what they are learning.

Action: HCAF members to utilise Sam Baker's membership of IPROW to ask questions - that would support the study.

It was agreed that sub-group membership can extend to external specialists beyond HCAF.

Action: Asher De'ath Snape will provide a land managers perspective to this piece of work.

8. Presentation from the HCC Active Travel Team (please see attachment)

Nicola Waight, the Transport Policy Team Manager introduced LTP4 Road User Utility Framework and Policy RT2, which is around developing strategically important routes to access the countryside, all of which are guided by the Movement and Place Framework.

David Jowsey the Area Transport Strategy Manager shared the work his team do in looking at problems across the network that a transport scheme could fix and designing these interventions. There will be 150 projects delivered across county this year.

Key projects include improvements to a North-South route connecting new developments to North Chineham including BOATS 701, 730 and 731, the Billy Trail on Hayling Island, the Itchen Corridor between South Winchester and Otterbourne.

Action: Gail Johnson to send through names and contact details of British Horse Society to David Jowsey, so they can be involved in consultations.

David Jowsey stated that while active travel is focussed on the needs of walkers and cyclists, there is recognition from Active Travel England that provision needs to be made for other users including horse riders and carriage drivers.

Action: Debbie Luff will contact Nicola Waight about the HCAF Accessibility subgroup feeding into the disability forum Nicola is setting up.

9. AOB:

- a) Spitfire Forest – HCAF submitted feedback to the consultation.
- b) Junctions 9 and 11 – layout of junction 11 may be changed, upgraded from a Pelican to a Pegasus crossing.
- c) Event Management

Action: Abby Sullivan will look into options for charging (or seeking contribution) for events held on public rights of way that significantly degrade path surfaces.

Meeting closed at 14.08

Date of next meeting: 10am, Tuesday 6 October, the Denning Room, Queen Elizabeth II Building, Winchester. The meeting will be supported by officers from Hampshire County Council.