



meeting	<b>FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE</b>		
date	<b>2 SEPTEMBER 2009</b>	agenda item number	<b>8</b>
<b>Corporate Director (Communities)</b>			

## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (LAF)

### Purpose of Report

To provide Rights of Way Committee Members a summary of the statutory functions and activities of Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum.

### Background

1. Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 required all local Highway Authorities to establish a Local Access Forum (LAF) for their entire area by 8 August 2003. Nottinghamshire County Council, as the appointing authority, took steps to recruit a representative mix of members as required by the statutory guidance, and the first formal meeting of the Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum took place on 24 July 2003.
2. The Forum is an independent statutory advisory body. The primary purpose of the Forum is to provide independent advice to Nottinghamshire County Council, other local authorities, Natural England, the Secretary of State and others on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation. The Forum is a statutory consultee on various matters including; issues relating to Open Country and Registered Common Land, Gating Orders and on Rights Of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP). The County Council must have regard to the advice of the Forum when carrying out its functions (section 94(5) CROW Act 2000).
3. Administrative support is provided by the Council through the provision of a Forum Secretary and Administrator, who are both employed in the Planning Services Group as Countryside Access Development Officer and Management Support Officer respectively.

## **Membership of the Forum**

4. The Forum consists of 19 members, recruited through a selection and shortlisting process, including two elected Members nominated by the Council as appointing authority.
5. All Forum members act in a voluntary capacity albeit the CROW Act regulations provide for members to be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses associated with the work of the forum, including necessary travel, subsistence and childcare costs.
6. All members are independent to the County Council (elected Members excepted) and represent an area of interest or expertise rather than an organisation. Currently, three members represent 'land managers and rural business' interests, five represent 'users of rights of way and countryside access' and nine represent 'other relevant interests' including disability, conservation and parish and community issues.
7. Currently the Forum Chair is Peter Hiley. Mr Hiley is interested in walking and trail motorcycle riding on old roads and byways. He also served as a magistrate for 16 years. The Vice-chair is Dennis Reeson, who is a keen long distance runner and retired property solicitor.

## **Elected member representation on the Forum**

8. LAF regulations and guidance allow the recruitment of local authority representation (unitary and county). The regulations impose a limit of two elected Members for forums with up to 16 members and three elected members with forums with 17 members or more. The guidance states that members 'can play a useful role by helping to improve the quality of the forum advice (e.g. by explaining the authority's policies and constraints), and raising the profile and status of the forum within the authority'.
9. Back in 2003 Councillor Jim Napier and Councillor John Hemsall were selected as the County Council's elected Member representatives on the Local Access Forum. Councillor Jim Napier resigned in 2007 and was replaced by Councillor John Allin.
10. It has been suggested by the Local Access Forum that three members from the newly formed Rights of Way Committee are ideally positioned to become the elected Member representatives on the Forum. There is obvious merit in a good working relationship between the County Council and the LAF. However, careful consideration is needed to avoid any possible conflict which may arise from the Forum's discussions and any decisions made by the Rights of Way Committee.

11. In order to avoid possible conflict legal advice is to keep membership of the two bodies separate; that is for members of the Rights of Way Committee not to sit on the LAF. Instead, alternative County Council Members could be appointed to the LAF, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Rights of Way Committee could attend the LAF on a periodic basis to observe.

### **Activities of the Forum**

12. The Forum meets quarterly at Farnsfield Village Centre to discuss a wide variety of access issues including responses to consultations, for example, from Defra, Natural England and the Highways Agency. Additionally, the Forum has set up a number of sub-groups to discuss various countryside access matters with particular focus on access for all, bridleway development and motor vehicles in the countryside. Since the first meeting the Forum has considered matters relating to:

- Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2)
- New major road schemes
- Planning and development
- Gating Orders
- Motor vehicles in the countryside
- Open Access Land
- Definitive Map Modification Orders and Public Path orders
- Nottinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- The relocation of Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre

### **Summary**

13. The LAF is a valuable partner body, advising the County Council on its work in relation to rights of way and countryside access matters. Members should note the LAF's statutory advisory capacity and that regard must be given to its independent advice when reaching decisions.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and users. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of the report.

## **Recommendations**

15. It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a) the report be noted.

TIM MALYNN  
Corporate Director (Communities)

## **Comments of the Service Director – Finance**

The contents of this report are duly noted – there are no financial implications. [DJK – 12/08/09]

## **Legal Services' Comments**

This report is for noting only. [HD - 13/08/09]

## **Background Papers Available for Inspection**

Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum Terms of Reference

Guidance on Local Access Forums in England, Defra.

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All

Author of the report / Case Officer  
Neil Lewis – Countryside Access Development Officer  
0115 9773169

## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2008 / 2009**

### ***Introduction***

This is the fifth report of the Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum, as required by the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 94).

The forum was established by Nottinghamshire County Council in July 2003. The primary purpose of the forum is to provide advice to Nottinghamshire County Council, other local authorities, Natural England, the Secretary of State and others on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation. The Forum is a statutory consultee on various matters including; issues relating to Open Country and Registered Common Land and on Rights Of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP). The 'statutory' bodies must have regard to the advice of the Forum when carrying out their functions.

### ***2007 / 2008 Summary from Nottinghamshire LAF's Chair and Vice-chair***

#### **Discovering Lost Ways Project**

Despite Nottinghamshire being a Pilot Area for the Discovering Lost Ways Project there seems to be little progress either locally or nationally. In a presentation by Amanda Earnshaw, of Natural England, the Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum heard of the difficulties associated with the Project which had resulted in the Research Contract being terminated and a new working group being established to find a way forward and consider if new legislation and / or guide lines were required.

Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum considers that insufficient use is being made of the local knowledge possessed by Nottinghamshire County Council Officers and the public. Nottinghamshire has over 3,800 Public Rights of Way with a total length of over 2,700 km. In 2007 17.78 kms were added to the network – approximately 0.67% of the network. NCC Officers consider that there may be a further 20% of undiscovered "Lost" routes. With the original closure date of 2026, for modifications to the Definitive Map, getting forever closer it seems unlikely the Project can be completed as originally intended.

Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum considers that the closure date of 2026 should be delayed and funding for additional Local Officers should be provided.

#### **Local Issues**

- Flooding in 2007 caused problems with keeping the network open although good progress was made in respect of ploughing and cropping issues.

- Funding received as a result of the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan resulted in new and replacement signage and way-marking on Rights of Way being provided.
- Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum members have taken part in the twice annual surveying (former BVPI 178) of a sample of the Rights of Way conducted by NCC.
- A sub-group has been set up to consider Access for All issues. One problem being how to allow access using electric wheel chairs when barriers to stop illegal motor cycle access have been erected. One solution is to provide gates with RADAR key access.
- There has been a further increase in the number of Nottinghamshire Police motor cycles to combat illegal mechanically propelled vehicle use particularly at an area known as 'the desert' near Mansfield.
- Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum has been consulted on Definitive Map Modification Orders, Public Path Orders, Gating Orders and the creation of a Village Green.
- A Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum recommendation that all Councils involved in Planning Applications should have a standard form which includes a specific section in respect of Rights of Way was adopted throughout Nottinghamshire.
- A new Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum leaflet has been produced and sent to Parish and District Councils, Libraries and NCC Contact Centres and handed out at County Shows.
- Advertising 'Countryside Access' on the back of buses had resulted in more enquiries than from any other form of advertising.
- Open Access work at Budby Heath, Car Colston and Rainworth Heath has been facilitated by funding from Natural England via the Access Management Grant Scheme.
- A joint project by Nottinghamshire County Council and Derbyshire County Council has created The Silverhill and Teversal Trails which have opened up 9km of new access.
- A web based interactive map of Nottinghamshire is being developed.
- A £3.5m bid has been made to Alliance SSP Regeneration for two multi user schemes. One from Harby, in north Nottinghamshire, to Shirebrook, in Derbyshire and another from Southwell via Mansfield to Teversal.
- Consultations on proposals for a New Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre at Edwinstowe are ongoing.

## **Other meetings and visits made by Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum:-**

- The Trent Valley Landscape Partnership Nottinghamshire. Members met with Hester Capur and made suggestions for a Heritage Lottery bid to improve access and knowledge of the Trent Valley.
- Access issues from point of view of a landowner and a farm manager. Members made a site visit to Hoveringham where several examples were shown e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest, non standard stiles and unofficial Rights of Ways.
- Higher Level Stewardship Workshop at Nottingham. Members were given details of how consultation and map production was carried out to improve resource protection, biodiversity and historic features and access.

## **Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum Membership**

Sadly John Goddard, who had been an active member of the Forum, resigned due to illness in September 2007 and died shortly after. The Forum members and Officers sent a card of condolence to his family.

County Councillor John Allin, Mary Mills and Neil Barnes joined the Forum.

At the January 2008 meeting it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair can be in post for 2 years, then the post has to go for re-election.

Letters were sent to the National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association and Brackenhurst College asking if anyone wished to join Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum.

Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum would like to thank Neil Lewis, Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum Secretary, and all the Nottinghamshire County Council Officers and staff for their help and support.

Peter Hiley  
LAF Chair

Carolyn James  
LAF Vice-chair

## ***Membership summary***

Membership of the Forum consists of 17 members who have been recruited through a selection and shortlisting process. Currently, three members represent 'land managers and owners' interests, six represent 'users of rights of way and countryside access' and six represent 'other relevant interests'. Included in the members are two elected Members nominated by Nottinghamshire County Council, representing Labour and the Conservative parties.

## ***Members' biography 2008***

### **Alex Staniforth – Walking**

Alex is an active member of the Ramblers' Association in the Nottinghamshire Area both at local and at county committee level. He has served as Area Secretary (for over eight years) and was instrumental in setting up new rambling groups in the county. He is a joint co-ordinator within the Area running Navigation and Leadership Courses to encourage potential walks leaders. Currently he holds the position of Area Countryside Officer dealing with many issues including all kinds of development which may adversely affect the countryside and the rights of way network. He recently completed a two-year course at Nottingham Trent University on Countryside Management and Conservation Skills, which is proving beneficial in his work. (*Other interests: conservation, countryside management, tourism*).

### **Carolyn James - Disabled Access**

In July 2001 Carolyn had a fall which resulted in a spinal cord injury and a fracture to her neck. Before the accident she was a keen mountain and country walker who enjoyed introducing the pleasures of the outdoors to the students she taught at a Nottinghamshire Secondary School. Now she is disabled she still tries to get out into the countryside despite the many obstacles that make it difficult. As medical science improves and people's life-span lengthens she knows that there will be increasing numbers of people like herself who will want to be able to get out and enjoy the 'great outdoors'. (*Other Interests: walking, youth and community access*).

### **Dennis Reeson – Trail running**

Dennis is a busy property solicitor and has a wide knowledge of the local countryside. He is a keen but modest trail runner and thoroughly enjoys running through the county's beautiful local country parks, public rights of way and forestry areas. He is also keen to encourage the use of countryside facilities for the promotion of increasing levels of fitness whether by walking cycling or running. Other interests include perusing new and old maps, meteorology and particularly the effect of climate change upon the local countryside and its inhabitants.

### **Francis Thomas – Rural Business**

Originally from Kent, Frank has lived in Nottinghamshire for 50 years, and after military service has worked as project engineer for Rolls Royce. Frank is a partner in a family-run rural livery and saddlery business at Bassingfield, south of Nottingham. The Chairman of Holme Pierrepont and Gamston Parish Council and Treasurer to West Bridgford Local Area Forum, Frank is also a member of the British Horse Society and the Council for the Protection of Rural England, and is on the regional consultative group for DEFRA. A keen walker, rider, cyclist, mountaineer and yachtsman for many years, Frank is keen to see better access to the countryside for all. (*Other Interests: Equestrian, Parish Councils, Walking*).

### **Geoff Stevenson – Walking**

Geoff is a retired soldier and civil servant and passionate about maintaining a strong countryside heritage, conservation and caring for the environment. He is realistic to the needs of all users and open minded about sympathetic development needed to meet the changing demands on the countryside. In particular, he is keen to see improved access for the less able bodied and those with children and pushchairs.



He has a wide experience in dealing with Government Departments, Local Authorities, Statutory Bodies, land owners, pressure groups and the public, all of whom have an important role to play in protecting and developing our countryside. He is a keen Rambler and fisherman and his recent retirement has renewed his interest in inland waterways. (*Other Interests: fishing*).

### **Hilary Limb – Horse riding**

Hilary has many years experience dealing with rights of way issues affecting horse riders. She also has experience of working with Local Authorities and other agencies through the planning system, commenting on planning applications and Local Plans and presenting evidence at public inquiries. She was the British Horse Society's County Access and Bridleways Officer for Nottinghamshire for 10 years and also ran a local bridleways association, working to improve access and road safety for horse riders. Hilary is interested in all countryside issues, especially in balancing the needs of conservation and access to the benefit and wellbeing of people and wildlife. (*Other interests: conservation, tourism, access for all*).

### **John Cooper**

John is a civil engineering consultant based in West Bridgford, Nottingham, working mostly on infrastructure projects including roads, rail, and light rail. He spends much of his spare time either running, cycling or walking, usually within the East Midlands and often within a few miles of home. He would like to see footpath facilities develop in the same way that cycle facilities have in recent years, with more joined up routes which are mapped to maximise public enjoyment. He is also interested in opening up ancient rights of way and ensuring that existing rights are not lost as a result of new development.

### **John Dunn – Conservation**

Conservation is one of John's primary interests, and he works for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. He is also actively involved in the practical work of the Countryside Restoration Trust, being Chairman of a committee which is managing woodlands and farmland in West Yorkshire. John is a member of Everton Parish Council, being Parish Path Warden, Tree Warden and manager of a closed churchyard nature reserve. He is also a member of the Woodland Trust, Friends of the Earth and the Notts Wildlife Trust. John has considerable experience of youth work through involvement in the Scouting movement, and is a keen walker. (*Other Interests: walking, parish councils*).

### **Mary Mills – Brackenhurst student**

Mary is a full time mature student studying Environmental Conservation and Countryside Management at Brackenhurst (Nottingham Trent University) and joined the LAF in January 2008 as a result of a recruitment drive at Brackenhurst. She has lived in Nottinghamshire most of her life and was introduced to its countryside by enthusiastic parents as soon as she could walk! Main areas of interests are Walking, Running, Nature Conservation, Health and Access for All.

### **Peter Dixon - Conservation**

### **Peter Dodsworth – Conservation**

Peter is from a farming family and has lived in South Nottinghamshire all his life. He still has strong connections with agriculture through three brothers-in-law who are farming in the county. Originally a physical chemist working on new agricultural and pharmaceutical chemicals, he became involved with the use of computers and information systems in research and before retiring was Research Information Services Manager. He is also an enthusiastic amateur photographer and, as such, has a keen interest in nature conservation and responsible access to the countryside. (*Other Interests: photography and walking*).

### **Peter Hiley – Trail bike rider**

A life-long resident of Nottinghamshire, Peter has been involved in the Trail Riders Fellowship, (TRF) a national organisation for those using legal motorcycles on legal vehicular rights of way, since 1979. In this capacity he was a delegate to the Nottinghamshire Rights of Way Liaison Group for 14 years. From 1986 to 2002 Peter served as a Magistrate. He also assists as a marshal at long distance and cross country horse events. (*Other Interests: walking and equestrian*).

### **Simon Wilson – Motor vehicle (4 x 4)**

### **Sir Edward Nall Bt – Land Owning**

Sir Edward's family have been landowners in Hoveringham for nearly 150 years. He has a variety of public rights of way across his land, which includes a small area of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). He is a trustee of Papplewick Pumping Station Trust, a member of the Country Land and Business Association committee and is the Secretary of the Notts branch of the Game Conservancy Trust. A retired soldier, he is now also the County Chairman of Macmillan Cancer Relief. (*Other Interests: conservation and shooting*).

### **Sue Guy – Farming and community**

### **Councillor John Hemsall**

Nottinghamshire County Councillor (Conservative, Tuxford). *Other interests: Parish Councillor, Police Authority Member.*

### **Councillor John Allin**

Nottinghamshire County Councillor (Labour, Warsop). *Other interests: Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council.*

### ***Brief summary of meetings***

The Forum has met six times since the previous annual report:

## **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 at County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham**

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007
3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
4. Nottinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan
5. Public Path Orders
6. Lost Ways project
7. Dualling of the A46
8. Teversal Trails / Nuthall Railway
9. Strawberry Hill site visit update
10. Any Other Business / members update
11. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Summary of draft ROWIP consultation comments, Lost Ways presentation by Amanda Earnshaw, Presentation by Pete Jarman (NCC Recreational Routes Officer).

## **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at Brackenhurst College, Southwell**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007
3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
4. Annual report
5. Lost Ways update
6. Countryside Access review (NCC Manager)
7. Public Path Orders (inc. overview session)
8. Any Other Business / members update
9. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Update on Lost Ways Project and a discussion on a number of questions posed by Natural England, Countryside Access team review presentation by Stephen Jones (Service Manager).

## **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 at the Turbine Centre, Shireoaks, Worksop**

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007
3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
4. Election of Chair and Vice-chair
5. Best Value Performance Indicator 178
6. Rights of Way Improvement Plan
7. Any Other Business / members update
8. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Election of new LAF Chair and Vice-chair (Peter Hiley and Carolyn James to remain in post for another year), Best Value Performance Indicator 178 Ease of Use Public Rights of way, ROWIP approval at the meeting of the County Council 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007.

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham**

Agenda

1. Special meeting – Lost Ways Workshop
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the meeting 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008
4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
5. New members
6. Best Value Performance Indicator 178
7. Gating Orders
8. PPOs and DMMOs
9. Any Other Business / members update
10. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Special Lost Ways Nottinghamshire Pilot meeting with Natural England (members of user groups and other regional LAFs were also invited), welcome to two new LAF members - Neil Barnes and Mary Mills (both students from Brackenhurst College), Gating Orders, Nottinghamshire Guided Walks programme.

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at Farnsfield Village Hall**

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008
3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
4. Accessibility and rights of way
5. Gating orders
6. Village Greens
7. Guided Walks programme
8. PPOs and DMMOs
9. Any Other Business / members update
10. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Accessibility and public rights of way, update on Gating Orders, LAF members Dennis Reeson and Mary Mills gave a presentation on Village Greens, Nottinghamshire Guided Walks programme.

## **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at Farnsfield Village**

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008
3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda
4. On-line mapping in Nottinghamshire
5. Access development
6. Gating Orders – standing item
7. PPOs and DMMOs – standing item
8. Any Other Business / members update
9. Future Dates and Venues

**Items discussed:** Online mapping presentation by Gill Court (Publicity and Promotions Officer), Alliance SSP Multi-user routes bid, Gating Orders.

### ***Information about the Forum***

The Chair is Peter Hiley and the Vice-chair is Carolyn James. Members of the Forum are unpaid, albeit they are able to claim travel and subsistence allowances and expenses.

Neil Lewis is the Forum secretary and the Countryside Access Development Officer for Nottinghamshire County Council. Tracy Barnes is the Forum's Administrator, who is also employed by the County Council as a Management Support Officer.

The minutes of all meetings are available from the Forum Administrator and on the website [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk) Contact the administrator on 0115 977 4293 or e-mail [nottslaf@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:nottslaf@nottsc.gov.uk)