

South Downs

Local Access Forum

1 April 2014, 10.30 a.m., at Soberton Village Hall, Soberton

Present:

Members: Glynn Jones GJ (Chair), Russell Cleaver RC, David Brookshaw DB, Roger Mullenger RM, Bob Damper BD, Simon James SJ, Richard Johnson RJ

Apologies: Sue Dunkley SD (Vice-chair), Andy Hannaford AH, Neville Harrison NH, Val Bateman VB, John Vannuffel JV, Isabel Swift IS, Susan Thompson ST, David Taylor DT, Jo Carr JC, David Ashcroft DA, Trevor Beattie TB - SDNPA CEO, Phil Belden PB - Director of Operations, Allison Thorpe AT - Access & Recreation Lead

In attendance: South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Officers: Tim Squire TS - Rights of Way and Access Officer, Andy Beattie AB – People and Places Manager, David Deane DD – Cycling Project Officer, Tim Richings TR - Planning Policy Manager

Minute Taker: Nicola Winning NW, PA to Operations Director and Strategy & Partnership Director, SDNPA

Observers: Rob Morris RMo -Natural England, Sarah Manchester SM – Hampshire County Council, Cath Hart CH - Hampshire County Council, Alison Perry AP - Hampshire County Council, Alan Marlow AM – HCAF, Sue Montila SMO, - HCAF, Nick Heasman - SDNPA Area Manager (Western Area), Peter Sollars - Ramblers

A. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome

GJ welcomed all to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting was not quorate therefore no decisions would be made. It was agreed that recommendations could be made to colleagues as necessary.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Factual accuracy:

The previous minutes were agreed.

Matters arising:

There were no matters arising

Actions from previous minutes:

Action 3: TS to invite Sebastian Anstruther and canoe representative/s to give presentations at the October 2014 SDLAF meeting, as Sebastian Anstruther is unable to make the July meeting
All other actions were completed.

3. South Downs National Park Authority Update:

GJ wished the South Downs National Park a HAPPY 4th BIRTHDAY!

a) Events Guidelines: These are due to be released next week

ACTION 1: TS will circulate the guidelines to LAF Members

- b) LAF attendance at Events: TS confirmed that a list was available showing the events that SDNPA would be supporting throughout the year. LAF Members would be more than welcome to volunteer to attend, helping and sharing their knowledge at these events. BD agreed that it was well worth doing.
 RM has volunteered to lead a monthly walk; he is still in the process of deciding the route and plans to build in a bus/train element within the route.
 It was noted that there is a 2 for 1 scheme being run in partnership with public transport. This scheme is for attractions throughout the park and ends on 30 April 2014. SDNPA have produced a very good advertising video which is viewable on the website.
 SDNPA has been successful in a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for improving heathlands – £40,000 to begin with for feasibility study – then £2.4 million for work on heathlands. RC asked if money is allocated for particular heathlands. TS believes it is for all heathlands to help make them bigger and better and more connected.
 The South Downs Society has agreed to carry out surveying to provide the ‘ease of use’ ROW indicator for the SDNPA to report to Defra.
 GJ confirmed that the first LIDAR survey flight has taken place.
ACTION 2: TS will circulate the Events list to LAF Members[post meeting note – sent 04.04.14]
ACTION 3: LAF Members who wish to attend an event need to contact Laura Warren at SDNPA to confirm which Event they would like to assist with

4. Defra and Natural England Business

- a) The National Conference 4 February 2014 feedback: GJ & RM attended, overall it was found to be slightly depressing, due to budget cuts and lack of support. That said some discussions were really useful. For example there was some good work on trying to educate dog walkers. RM saw a good presentation on designing leaflets for paths that were suitable for disabled access in the New Forest National Park. Another interest aspect was encouraging commercial premises to open their toilets to the general public. GJ saw a presentation from Network Rail about safety of rail crossings where replacing stiles with gates was discussed. It was agreed that the toilet facilities are important and maybe the SDNPA can help persuade businesses to help with this.
- b) NNR Dedication - Rob Morris, update from NE: RMo gave brief update on NNR dedication which was going to schedule. He also explained that following the “triennial review” NE was being reorganised into area based teams. Two areas would cover the South Downs: The Kent and Sussex Team and the Hants and Isle of Wight. RMo would still be in the National Access Team and the LAF contact will continue to be Kevin Haugh. DB asked when the CRoW Access Land Maps review would happen. RMo explained that it needs to be completed by 2019 and will need to start in 2015.
ACTION 4: RMo will forward the contact information to TS
- c) Regional Conference, 20 May 2014, London: GJ is unable to attend, there are four spaces available. BD expressed an interest in attending.
ACTION 5: TS will re-circulate the invite to LAF Members [post meeting note – sent 04.04.14]

5. Information from Members and other LAFs

- a) **Feedback from other LAFs**
West Sussex LAF – Glynn Jones GJ:

Two major items to note;

- 1) There is now a big push for membership and working on how to attract new members and encourage better attendance.
- 2) A big thanks to Tricia Butcher for her effort and determination in pursuing a route for a safe alternative road crossing for the Downs Link at Bramber. The proposed creation order and agreement are to be advertised. [post meeting note: there were no objections received]

and work is now underway to create the route on the ground]

Brighton & Hove LAF – David Brookshaw DB:

The last meeting was held on 26 February and DB feels that the meeting is suffering without a regular Chair. Some good officer reports were received; the Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor is now completed. Signage will now be installed to promote access into the wider countryside. A large area of land, north of Patcham is to be dedicated as Access Land. Definitive Maps are now on the web site. A working group will consider what funding could be possible through Local Transport Plan 4, RJ noted that at the Stammer Park bus gets stuck due to parked cars. GJ asked if it was worth SDLAF writing to B&HCC but RJ acknowledge that the Council were striving to find a solution with the resources it has.

Hampshire LAF – Cath Hart CH:

A sub-group is working on a policy for obstructions. They had a presentation from the MOD regarding access on the Estate. There is a demand on MOD for training, therefore more pressure on training Estate which will affect access. Cyclists are being turned off the Estate, groups of walkers have been stopped and turned back. They have now entered into dialog and are trying to build relations with the LAF. Bylaws could be challenged but this is not considered the best approach at this stage.

b) PATHH – Roger Mullenger RM

15 potential claims have been identified and the next stage is to have some friendly dialog with landowners.

6. Countryside Access Plan Review (CAP) Sarah Manchester SM, Hampshire County Council

SM explained where HCC were with the CAP review. Legislation requires a review after 10 years. HCC decided to complete a mini review after 5 years to look at:

- Main issues – are they the same?
- Objectives and actions – are they the most appropriate way to address the issues? Could they be altered to give a better 'fit' with life in 2014 and current expectations for the next 5 years.
- Implementation – learn from the last 5 years with regard to what has worked well and therefore should be continued. Also look at other ways to go about implementation.
- How should CAP influence HCC's work – for example from the last 5 years, GIS layer of 'desirables' established CAP working groups. What HCC wants from the CAP is something that will help on focusing efforts on achieving the improvements that people want, whilst still setting realistic expectations

HCC will also look at the 'take up' by others i.e. how have CAPs been referenced and used by other organisations, for example; NPAs, planning authorities, Parish Councils and communities, then look at how effective this has been. Could the plans be added to or changed to make them more supportive or helpful.

How could this work:

- Statutory framework
- Look to stakeholders, LAFs etc to input into the process

What is the timescale:

- Would hope to complete by the end of the year
- HCC will look at what the review throws up before deciding how to present, or put the review into effect, therefore it may not be necessary to revise and republish

A number of questions followed: RC wondered when this would be started? SM said it would be by March 2015. DB asked how SDLAF can influence ROWIP SM - LAF should be looking into ROW in all areas particularly cross boundary issues and lessons learnt. SDLAF is in a really good position to provide overview. DB asked if this could be a project for SDLAF? GJ said SDLAF could focus purely on the cross boundaries or look at the other LHA RoWIPs also. Confirm at next meeting what we will do to make this happen. CIL is a possible mechanism for

achieving improvements.

ACTION 7: TS to provide SM recommended specifications for furniture

Conference for Parishes in Hampshire – Sarah Manchester SM, Hampshire County Council

SM tabled the paper on the 'Paths to Partnership' Conference for Parish and Town Councils to be held 05 June 2014, explaining that the main theme will be working with town and parish councils as well as an opportunity to re-promote the Small Grants Scheme for local improvements. There will be workshops on working together, funding and commonly raised issues such as vehicles and shared use of paths. SM asked if the SDLAF would like a 'market place stall' or to be involved in other ways. Members would be welcome to discuss this with Sarah or Alan Marlow.

ACTION 8: CH will forward an invite via TS

7. Shipwrights Way – Cath Hart CH, Hampshire County Council

CH gave a presentation on the Shipwrights Way, a new long-distance route for walking, cycling and, where possible, horse-riding. The project has been a strong 4-way partnership between the SDNPA, HCC, East Hants District Council and the Forestry Commission. Approx £955,000 has been spent on improving paths and the connections between them, enabling local people to explore their countryside, supporting rural businesses and encouraging green tourism (the route passes 7 rail stations). 85% of the money has gone directly on practical path improvements, with the remainder employing an officer, paying for signage and funding a series of beautiful stone carvings along the route. The funding has mostly come from developer's contributions and central government funding. The following questions were asked: BD asked CH to elaborate on the initial public suspicions mentioned within the presentation – CH commented that the public did not want the countryside urbanised but that path surface improvements had been welcomed. RJ wondered if the website had recommendations of routes for people with disabilities and suitability of circular routes. CH said that each section has a leaflet which gives details on distance, gradient, gates, widths and facilities to enable people to determine if it is suitable for them; much of the route can be done as one-way sections with a return by train but it would be good in the future to also create circular routes.

8. Meon Valley Trail – David Dean DD, Cycling Project Officer, SDNPA

DD gave a presentation on the Meon Valley Trail. Questions followed: DD confirmed that there are regular updates on temporary closures during works via signage, websites and twitter. Has a 'green' car park at West Meon station been considered? RM asked if there will be any GPS on the routes. DD mentioned that there is a lot of scope for the Hampshire CC website to provide links to specialisms. It was agreed that if they already exist would be ideal to link to.

9. Local Plan Options – Tim Richings TR, Planning Policy Manager, SDNPA

TR gave a presentation on the Local Plan Options Consultation. Questions followed: RC was curious to know the difference between s106 & Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). TR explained that the process of CIL now clearly sets a rate of how much is payable. Also s106 was tied to development, whereas CIL can be used away from the development. TR confirmed that CIL is collected by SDNPA. BD asked if SDNPA are collecting authority are they also the spending authority. SDNPA will have control and strategic overview on how to allocate the money which can be spent by other authorities. DB asked if there will be a strong statement about countryside protection. TR explained that as a National Park the importance of landscape is emphasised throughout the document. RM asked how planning policy works at present. TR explained that the new South Downs Local Plan Local Plan will replace 4 joint core strategies and 8 inherited local plans.

Next Meeting Date:

22 July 2014, South Downs Centre, Memorial Hall, Midhurst