

South Downs

Local Access Forum

17 October 2013, 10.30 am, at Norfolk Arms Hotel, Arundel

Present:

Members: Glynn Jones GJ (Chair), Sue Dunkley SD (Vice-chair), Andy Hannaford AH, Neville Harrison NH, Val Bateman VB, Russell Cleaver RC, John Vannuffel JV, Jo Carr JC, Bob Damper BD, Simon James SJ, David Ashcroft DA, Isabel Swift IS, Roger Mullenger RM, Susan Thompson ST, David Brookshaw DB

Apologies: Richard Johnson RJ, David Taylor DT

In attendance: South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Officers: Tim Squire TS, Rights of Way and Access Officer, Trevor Beattie TB, CEO, Phil Belden PB, Director of Operations, Andy Beattie AB, Parkwide Manager, Allison Thorpe AT, Access & Recreation Strategy Lead, Andy Gattiker AG, South Downs Way Officer

Minute Taker: Nicola Winning NW, Strategy & Partnership Administrator SDNPA

Observers: Kevin Haugh KH, Natural England, Robert Cheesman RCh, ESLAF, Sue Montila SM, Trails Trust and HCAF, Tricia Butcher TBu, WSLAF, Michael Clarke MC, ESLAF, Abby Hone AH, B&HCC

A. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome

GJ welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Isabel Swift a new member to the SDLAF

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Factual accuracy:

AH sent apologies to the last meeting but was entered in Present and Apologies

Matters arising:

DB advised of a planning application made by West Hove Golf Club for a large bund to provide noise barrier. B&HLAF have said it could provide a valuable opportunity to link two bridleways. TB confirmed that a previous application for this was rejected and that the representations made regarding access will be taken into account when looking at any subsequent applications. NH commented that it is entirely appropriate for the LAF to be a consultee in these matters and make a representation. A discussion followed considering how developments significant to access can be brought to the attention of the SDLAF. See also 4c below

Action 1: TS to discuss with officers ways of bringing relevant applications to attention of SDLAF

SM wished to have support of SDLAF for equestrian access on the Centurion Way. The Trails Trust has negotiated equestrian access to link bridleways to Centurion Way but now need to secure this on the way itself. GJ proposed SDLAF could assist if SM identified who needed to be approached. AT said a feasibility study was beginning and that equestrians will be included in the consultation.

Action 2: SM to provide map and Trails Trust proposal to TS

Actions from previous minutes:

Action 15 and 16: Ray Drabble will present Local Plan topics at the January meeting

3. National Nature Reserve Dedication Programme

Sarah Haigh from NE was unable to attend due to travel disruption to give planned presentation. TS presented map of Beacon Hill and explained that a report which took into account the SDLAF comments was currently being considered by NE board following which the site can be dedicated as Access Land under the CRoW Act including proposals for higher rights. GJ suggested, and the LAF agreed, that it would be good to meet with site managers to discuss LAF advice on access management on Beacon Hill.

ACTION 3: TS to arrange site visit to Beacon Hill following SDLAF meeting at local venue, April 2014.

4. South Downs National Park Authority Update

a) AT said the Management Plan public consultation closed 16 Sept. On 15 October the SD Partnership and NPA looked at responses. Over 250 people responded to the survey, 123 from organisations. A final -draft will be taken to NPA in November. The Delivery Framework requires more information for the section to be understood. Some of this will be of interest to the LAF e.g.; Miles without Stiles project; identifying where higher rights are achievable; Byways misuse and conflict. SDLAF is a 'Partner' as are the Local Authorities. GJ sent in some comments on outcome 5 for an indicator that measures positive change. TB said there were too many indicators and they need to be active and descriptive. He urged any comments to come in quickly.

b) AT confirmed that SDNPA is one of four successful National Parks in being awarded £3.8mill to spend on cycling. This is a lot to spend by March 2015 but NPA has good relationships with existing LSTF local highway authority partners who are also delivery partners for this work.

c) TS asked the LAF to note the Local Plan newsletter which will be a means of keeping everyone informed of the progress of the Local Plan. TB confirmed that this is the beginning of a long process that will take 3 to 4 years with lots of opportunities for the LAF to input. RM commented that LAF can't look at every planning application. DB said the South Downs Society will raise relevant applications with the LAF. NH added that Planning Committee is sympathetic to RoW issues and can include conditions where appropriate. See also action 1 above.

5. Defra and Natural England – Kevin Haugh (NE)

a) The National Conference was at risk because there is no funding. Local authorities agreed to pay travel expenses. NE agreed to provide conference venues. One is being sought in the north of the country and one has already been found in Bristol. NE will no longer pay for accommodation as it is assumed people can get there and back in a day.

b) Paths for Communities – All funding was allocated at the September grants panel. Over £2m was allocated to 43 projects creating over 77 kms of new PRoW. KH explained that the scheme had been welcomed but problematic for applicants because; upfront payments difficult for small community groups; match funding rules and; strict completion dates. TB indicated that in future good schemes should not fail because of cash flow problems and the NPA can assist by providing funding up front until community groups can draw down grant payments. KH also said that time negotiating with landowners has delayed schemes. GJ commented that it is good to have schemes worked up and ready for funding that becomes available.

c) LAF Newsletter – TS asked the LAF to note the newsletter and the section 94 letter from Defra. KH confirmed that this letter can be circulated to whoever SDLAF thinks appropriate to

raise awareness of LAFs e.g. District and Parish Councils. SDLAF agreed it was a good template that could be adapted to stress NP messages. PB suggested that the letters should go to Local Enterprise Partnerships and maybe invite someone to attend the SDLAF. He also suggested an article on Pathwatch for next newsletter. JV and JC to attend next Pathwatch meeting. TB and Margaret Paren met with Hampshire's Police and Crime Commissioner regarding rural crime, including Countrywatch (their equivalent to Sussex Police's Farmwatch and Pathwatch) in order to coordinate with Pathwatch in Sussex.

Action 4: TS/GJ/PB to revise section 94 letter and agree circulation list

Action 5: TS to co-ordinate with JC and JV on LAF newsletter article on Pathwatch

6. LAF Feedback

WSLAF – GJ commended TBU's efforts to secure safe crossing at Bramber. TB reported on a LAF visit to Forestry Commission and progress with the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

WSLAF need to recruit new members

Action 6: All to let TBU know of any potential candidates for membership of WSLAF

HCAF – SM reported on; engagement in Traffic Management Consultation; raising LAF profile by sending information to councillors; review of enforcement policy; and Local Plan development. HCAF will be reviewing Countryside Access Plans. Robin Edwards, Country Land and Business Association SE Regional Director is attending the next meeting. DA confirmed he is SDLAF representative on enforcement policy review sub-group.

ESLAF – MC reported ESLAF not quorate at last meeting and more members were required. They are awaiting outcome of two public enquiries on RoW in East Sussex. Items also discussed by ESLAF are two diversions on this SDLAF agenda.

B&HLAF – DB reported that they are also struggling with numbers, although good meetings and work going on. Falmer to Woodingdean path almost complete. Lewes Road corridor completed ahead of schedule with links into countryside now to be worked on. Digitising of the Definitive Map is progressing well. DB was pleased to report that Anthony Young has agreed to be permanent chair.

RoW training in Hants. BD and SJ both attended and found it very informative.

Action 7: TS to report back to HCC on well received RoW training

HCC traffic management consultation - NH has looked at this and is disappointed that there is no mention of the NP the work that SDNPA have done. AB had responded and reminded HCC that it must have a regard for the NP purposes, duty and Vision, and also highlighted the Highways Protocol which is an agreement between the four Local Highway Authorities, the Highways Agency and the SDNPA about how they will work together on highways within the SDNP.

Action 8: TS/GJ to prepare SDLAF response to HCC traffic management consultation

LSTF Conference – SDLAF noted BD written report

PATHH report – RM report to follow by email

Action 9: TS to circulate RM's PATHH report

7. Abby Hone – Principle Transport Planner, B&HCC

AH gave an update on a proposal for improved walking and cycling along Ditchling Road including open grazing. A report was taken to the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee, 08 October, which resolved that officers should continue work to bring forward

cycling and walking scheme but to investigate further the legal requirements for introduction of open grazing. TS had circulated DT and JV comments prior to the meeting.

AH said that the psychological effect including narrowing of the carriageway would be to change behaviour and reduce speeds. RC pointed to New Forest as example. AH agreed signage would be needed plus the overall effect would be that it is not urban and would give the look of a gateway into the NP. GJ informed the LAF of a note from Anthony Young, B&HLAF, which said members all supported cycle scheme and most the open grazing. JV supported open grazing and thinks that the proposals are an improvement for motorists also. RM raised issues of walkers' fear of cattle and irresponsible dog walkers. AH said the farmer is happy to graze his sheep if speed limit is reduced so may not be cattle. DA has genuine concerns about collisions with animals and added that normally drivers can claim against animal owner? GJ recognises the serious concerns. It is terrible when animals are killed but it is also not good to hide them away. GJ asked members if they supported the scheme – **all in favour of the scheme with two abstentions**

8. Diversions of RoW.

Telscombe 12a, Southern Water Treatment Works: TS presented map and photos to illustrate situation and background to the diversion order. RCh presented an alternative route. Comments and discussion ensued including; benefit of cliff top path to be available again after many years; cost and practicality of a bridge; security of industrial site; landscape consequence of railings; problems of shared use of cycleway; continuation of coastal path. SDLAF agreed that a response to be sent urging ESCC to take action to resolve this long standing issue. The letter should indicate that SDLAF do not object to the order but would prefer to see a route as close to original line as possible. While recognising the many difficulties of a route through the site these should be explored with Southern Water. Also requesting investigation into what measures could be taken to mitigate safety and conflict on shared cycleway/footway.

Action 10: GJ/TS to write letter with agreed response to ESCC diversion proposal

Newhaven 24, Railway Crossing: GJ to write letter to Office of Rail Regulation to urge Network Rail to be more creative with the interpretation of the guidance in order to allow for gates instead of stiles. TS has arranged site meeting with NR and ESCC on 23 October.

Action 11: GJ to write to ORR

Action 12: TS to invite interested members to meeting 23 October

9. Key Topics for discussion

South Harting incident: GJ explained a recent incident where a resident leading horses along a right of way found herself in a dangerous situation where the horses were alarmed by a large number of runners participating in a race who refused to slow down or give way.

Events Organiser's Guidance: AG introduced draft guidance which he is consulting on with SDLAF and then landowners and events organisers. NPA wants to build closer relationships with the events organisers and to introduce a "payback" scheme where a small sum of money for each participant can be spent on improvements. AG received questions and suggestions. GJ asked for all individual comments on the guidance to be sent to AG.

Action 13: TS to circulate guidance on cycling law sent by JV

Action 14: ALL members to feedback comments on events guidance to AG

Action 15: AG will come back to LAF with further draft

PB thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the meeting which the SDNPA find very valuable.

GJ said the support from SDNPA officers was much appreciated.

Next Meeting Date: 21 January 2014, Norfolk Arms Hotel, Arundel