

# South Downs

## Local Access Forum

### AGM

**23 January 2018, 10.30am.**  
**Beeding & Bramber Village Hall, Bramber**

#### **Members Present:**

Andy Hannaford AH, Bob Damper BD, Doug Jones DJ, Edward Seymour ES, Glynn Jones GJ, Nick Taylor NT, Roger Mullenger RM (Chair), Russell Cleaver RC, Val Bateman VB.

**Apologies:** Annie Brown AB, John Vannuffel JV, Neville Harrison NH, Richard Johnson RJ, Robert Whitcombe RW, Simon James SJ, Sue Dunkley SD, Susan Thompson ST.

#### **SDNPA Officers In attendance:**

Allison Thorpe AT (Access & Recreation Strategy Lead), Andy Gattiker AG (National Trail & ROW Lead), Ben Bessant BB (SDW Ranger), Nigel James NJ (Countryside & Policy Manager), Trevor Beattie (CEO).

**Apologies:** Andrew Lee AL (Director of Countryside & Policy Management)

**Minute Taker:** Sara Osman SO, Support Services Co-ordinator, SDNPA

**Observers:** Bev Marks (East Sussex LAF & Sussex ramblers); Maire McQueeney (Brighton & Hove LAF); Michael Clarke (Chair, East Sussex LAF), Robert Self (South Downs Society)

## **A. Welcome and Minutes**

### **1. Welcome & Apologies**

RM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were accepted, as listed above. RM reminded members that the role of Vice Chair had still not been appointed. It was proposed that, if no formal vice chair were in place going forward, it may be possible to appoint a temporary Chair at the beginning of any meeting the Chair is not be able to attend. It was agreed that all Members for the SDLAF should investigate and consider this proposal, which should be discussed and agreed at the AGM in April.

#### **ACTION 1:**

- **RM & AG** to investigate the legality for non-appointment of a Vice Chair.
- **All Members** to consider the option of appointing a Member to act as Chair for any meeting the Chair cannot attend, in the event that no Vice Chair is appointed.
- **SO** to put this on the next agenda.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the 30 November 2017 meeting were accepted as accurate, with one amendment on page 4 (Item 9):

- *Annie Brown reported form BH LAF not ESLAF*

All actions were completed, or were on the agenda to be covered at this meeting, except for the following:

- *Action 4: Ongoing - AG will send letters out to landowners with permitted paths by the end of March*
- *Action 6: Ongoing - AG to put information and links on the SDNPA website about open access land*

### 3. Matters arising from the LAF Update report

Key points from this report included:

#### Item 2 - Chairs Update:

- The Chair will meet with a resident and a Chair of a Parish Council to discuss a complaint regarding the motorised use of by-ways in East Hampshire.
- The Chair attended a Hampshire Access Forum and a Surrey Access Forum which discussed a submission to the MoD to feed into their review of their by-laws. It should be noted that, whilst the majority of the affected land is outside the SDNP area, the MoD are already fencing areas currently open to the public outside of the SDNP.
- The South Downs Society, now re-branded now as “Friends of the South Downs”, have decided to allocate some of their capital funds to projects for replacing stiles with gates, log seats and SDW improvement, and with matched funding from the South Downs Trust. They are inviting SDLAF Members to propose sites. The SDLAF noted their thanks to the Friends of the South Downs for their work in this area.

**ACTION 2: All Members** to put forward suggestions of locations for gates and log seats to the Friends of the South Downs. **RM** to pass on thanks to the Friends of the South Downs for their work on funding gates, log seats and SDW improvement.

#### Item 3 - SDW:

- The SDW National Trail update for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter provided details on budgets (including income generation and expenditure), trail maintenance and improvements, user and stakeholder feedback, press & promotion, corridor improvements and added value projects, and outlined the priorities for the coming quarter.

#### Item 4 - SDNPA Update:

- WSCC published its Rights of Way Management Plan 2018 – 2028 in mid-November inviting comments by 31st January. SDLAF Members were given the link to the questionnaire and asked to submit its own response or endorse the response submitted by the SDNPA
- It was clarified that the 3-year partnership between the SDNPA and Gatwick Airport includes sponsorship of further ‘Miles without Stiles’ projects. This will enable more easy-access trails to be available so that people with limited mobility can enjoy the South Downs.

#### Item 6 – RoW Orders:

- One ‘Made Order Extinguishment & DMMO’ has been received for Warnford FPI3.

## Key Topics for Discussion

### 4. Site visit to Annington Hill

Members and public observers attended a site visit to Annington Hill to view and compare two routes, one a used line and one the legal line of public bridleway Bramber 3183. A recent application for a Definitive Map Modification order, that if made would create a new link to BW3183 has created the need to resolve the issue of the legal line. The legal line of the bridleway goes through the middle of field, however there is a used line which runs along the edge of the field, and which has been used since the 1970s.

AG asked the SDLAF to consider one route against the other, looking at whether the legal tests had been met, and whether it would be expedient for the Highway Authority to divert the route to the used line. All Members were given copies of West Sussex County Councils “*Public Path Diversion order notes for Applicants*” to ensure they understood the legal tests that needed to be met before making their recommendation. AG clarified that the legal meaning of public enjoyment was a subjective judgement.

RM asked all Members to comment, which led to a unanimous agreement in favour of a diversion from the current definitive line onto the current used line and that the legal tests had been met.

Key comments included:

- The used route is far easier to use, especially at times of year when the field is ploughed.
- Whilst some views will be lost, others will be gained, with no overall detriment to the enjoyment of the walk.
- The used route would be preferable to the public when there were stock in the field.

It was noted that adoption of the used route may create access issues and that it might be necessary to install a gate at one end of the path. There was also concern about the loss of a link from the path to a bridleway, which would need to be addressed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The SDLAF unanimously agreed that the existing used route at Annington Hill should become the ROW. They noted that the SDLAF was supportive of the principal of a new bridleway creating a link up to the SDW.

**ACTION 3: RM and AG** to draft a letter to the landowner of Annington Hill and WSCC (cc'ing SDNPA) with the SDLAF's recommendation for the order, and to invite the WSLAF to support the move also.

## Other Business

### 5. Development of a Proposal for a Footbridge for the SDW/ Meon Valley Trail

RM suggested that the SDLAF form a project team to develop the proposal for a wooden footbridge or bridleway bridge, including quotes and a preparatory scheme, to put to HCC in order to resolve the issues of flooding there the Meon Valley Trail crosses the SDW. This would bypass the road and the flooded section which becomes impassable in winter. The SDNPA recently had quotes for a similar project to put a bridge on a section of the Centurion Way, and it was agreed to contact the same construction company to discuss the Meon valley proposal. The SDLAF agreed that it was important to persist in asking HCC to meet their statutory requirements and develop a proposal for a footbridge, not the SDLAF.

**ACTION 4: NJ** to approach the engineering company, who worked on the Centurion Way, to investigate the feasibility of using the same designs on the Meon Valley. **RM** to draft a letter to HCC with suggested alternative actions to resolve the issues on the flooded section of the Meon Valley Trail and SDW intersection.

### 6. SDLAF Future Meetings and Annual Work Programme

There was a consensus amongst the SDLAF members that, going forward, meetings involving site visits would be welcomed where there were genuine reasons to visit the site. The proposed visits on the suggested work plan were agreed and it was encouraged for Members to submit ideas for future visits. It was also noted that the programme can change if more current issues arise.

It was agreed that the AGM meeting in April would comprise a whole day – half a day for the AGM, and a site visit in the afternoon together with the SDW National Trail group members. It was suggested that the group could visit the proposed M3 site changes. AT advised the public consultation would be closed by the time of the next meeting but she will circulate details of other meetings regarding the consultation and encourages LAF members to attend.

It was proposed that car sharing should be encouraged for travel to future site visits and meetings. SO agreed to obtain permission from members in order to share a list of contact details to enable this.

**ACTION 5:**

- **AT** to circulate dates for M3 consultation meetings in Winchester
- **SO** to send permission details to SDLAF members to obtain permission to share contact details to enable members to car share to future meetings.

## 7. AOB

### A. Reports from other LAFs:

- **Maire McQueeny reported from the Brighton & Hove LAF** and extended an offer to host any SDLAF meetings or site visits in BHCC area.
- **Michael Clarke reported from the East Sussex LAF with the following points:**
  - Members are in agreement with the proposed start and finish point of SDW.
  - Network Rail has accepted that their standard footbridge cannot be used as a crossing at Tide Mills. The ESLAF are concerned that any road crossing at Tide Mills may look out of place and proposed that a tunnel might be a better option.
  - The landowner of Lewes Racecourse has re-diverted a RoW, without permission, to a used route which is not on the map. ESLAF are following this up.
- **Bev Marks** brought a report on bridge plans at Exceat for SDLAF members attention

**ACTION 6:** **SO** to scan report on Exceat bridge and circulate to SDLAF members.

## Forthcoming SDLAF Meeting Dates: Tuesday 17 April 2018

### **ACTION LIST – SDLAF Tuesday 23 January 2018:**

#### **ACTION 1:**

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