

# South Downs

## Local Access Forum

**17 July 2018, 10.30 am**  
**East Meon Village Hall, Workhouse Lane, East Meon**

### **Members Present:**

Annie Brown AB, Bob Damper BD, Russell Cleaver RC, Neville Harrison NH, Simon James SJ, Roger Mullenger RM, John Vannuffel JV, Robert Whitcombe RW

**Apologies:** Val Bateman VB, Sue Dunkley SD, Andy Hannaford AH, Richard Johnson RJ, Doug Jones DJ, Edward Seymour ES, Nick Taylor NT, Susan Thompson ST

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

Andy Gattiker AG (National Trail & ROW Lead), Nigel James NJ (Countryside & Policy Manager) Andrew Lee AL (Director, Countryside & Policy Management)

Apologies: Trevor Beattie TB (CEO), Allison Thorpe AT (Access & Recreation Strategy Lead)

**Minute Taker:** Rebecca Osborne RLO, (Support Services Officer)

**Observers:** Ben Bessant (SDNPA), Paul Bould (Sussex Ramblers), Chris Lickley (SDNPA) Robert Self (South Downs Society), Aileen Wood AW (HCAF)

Apologies: Patricia Butcher PB (WSLAF), Graham Butler GB (SCAF), Michael Clarke MC

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

BD welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were given (see above). It was noted that the meeting was not quorate.

### **2. Items for AOB**

There were no items of AOB.

### **3. Minutes (15 May 2018) and matters arising**

The minutes of the 15 May 2018 AGM meeting were proposed (RM), seconded (NH) and accepted as a true record. Please also see Item 7 below.

#### Actions from the previous meeting: update

- **Action 1** (all to give suggestions for new SDLAF members to AG) - none have been received. Two members are due to retire. In particular, new members to represent easy/disabled access in the countryside are sought.  
**ACTION 1: NJ, AG & AT** to review SDLAF membership and also to contact those who have not attended in the last 12 months.
- **Action 2** (AT to circulate an up to date list of all members for next meeting) – linked to above. This is on-going and AG will circulate.
- **Action 3** (AG to write to HLAFF to express SDLAF support for the draft letter to MOD) – done.
- **Action 4** (NJ/AT/AG to draft response to HCC on Draft Byway operational procedure and circulate to members before sending) – ongoing – see item 5 on current agenda.
- **Action 5** (AT to distribute a pdf copy of the SDLAF 2017 annual review to SDNP parish contacts): AG was unsure if this had been done.  
**ACTION 2: AG** to check if 2017 annual review has been sent to SDNP parish contacts.

- **Action 6** (AG to form a small working group to undertake M3 site visit and report back to SDLAF) – this has not progressed any further. RC, BD and RM volunteered for the working group.
- **ACTION 3:** AG to email the SDLAF membership and seek further volunteers to join the M3 site visit working group.
- **ACTION 4:** AG to talk to Andy Beattie to obtain an update on the M3 and circulate to the members.
- **Action 7** (JV to provide further information to members about Public Space Protection) – this links to item 5 on the agenda.
- **Action 8** (NJ, AT & AG to suggest to HCC other methods to stabilise surfaces, and routine maintenance to remove surface water) – this links to Item 5 on the current agenda.

#### Outstanding matters from previous meeting's Actions update

- **Action 2** (All members to suggest locations for gates and log seats to Friends of the South Downs) - All SDLAF members please continue to send these to AG via [access@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:access@southdowns.gov.uk).
- **Action 4** (NJ to investigate feasibility of using engineers from Centurion Way to work on Meon Valley Trail, and RM to draft letter to HCC with suggested actions to resolve flooding issues) - There is still no response from HCC. AT had visited the site shortly after a downpour and there was flooding. NJ is waiting for support from HCC, as any work carried out will be expensive.
- **Action 5** (AT to circulate dates for M3 consultation meetings at Winchester) - The consultation has ended, and when there is a firm update, AG will circulate this to SDLAF members (see AOB)
- **Action 6** (SO to scan report on Exceat bridge and circulate to SDLAF members) - This has not been done. Action to be carried forward.
- **ACTION 5:** AG to circulate report on Exceat Bridge to SDLAF members.

#### **4. Matters arising from the LAF Update report**

- RC asked for clarification on Section 2.2 regarding the legal position on the current route at Junction 9 of the M3. BD explained that the legal status is unknown. It is promoted as a cycle route, but no cycle track order has ever been made. All existing records have been lost. The Inspector has ruled that it cannot be a bridleway, as part of the route is a footway under the 1835 Highways Act. The new Junction 9 will obliterate existing routes, but it is important that current routes are established. SDLAF could stress the importance of improved access for cyclists.
- Section 4.3.2 – work on Charleston Steps - AB queried materials. AG explained that there are constraints by Historic England. Materials will be chalk with flints rolled into the top, with type 1 on the steps to prevent mud.
- Section 7 – Rights of Way Orders received since the last LAF – AG explained that SDNPA have objected to the application to deregister Common Land on part of Quellwood Common, Lurgashall. The applicant has to provide evidence of error in the original registration and could not do so. Deregistering would remove the right to open access.

#### **5. HCC Draft Byway operational procedure: Introduction to Site Visit**

AG reported that he had met with HCC on working to manage Byways in the National Park. The SDNPA wants to support the Highways Authority on the practicalities of managing public perception and behaviour change on Byways. HCC felt it would be useful for SDLAF to trial the form and tease out any improvements. They agreed to delay signing off the form to give SDLAF the opportunity to comment. The site visit part of this meeting will trial the form on Byway Langrish 17.

Issues discussed included:

- Recording the length and width of the route at its widest point on the form is not helpful for users of the route. It was explained that for Highways, the width at the widest point has significant impact on the cost of maintaining the route.
- The current form has the potential to score all Byways in the SDNP as a priority, which doesn't help prioritisation of those Byways within the National Park.
- There was a question about which department at HCC is responsible for repair and maintenance of Byways.

## 6. Site Visit

Byway Langrish 17 was visited by all those present. Two sections of the Byway were examined, and one form for each section was completed. Comments made during the exercise have been recorded in the Appendix to these minutes.

## 7. Conclusions from site visit

**ACTION 6: AG** - notes from the site visit/form completion exercise to be collated and circulated to all members, by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July. Following this, comments to be formalised and circulated to other Local Access Forums for their comments, before sending to HCC as soon as possible.

JV asked that it is made clear that these comments are supplementary to any previous comments and advice submitted.

Conclusions:

- There was support in principle for the procedure, but not for the detail.
- The overall score recorded was 44, which on the form states "Voluntary Restraint or Temporary Closure required". Those present did not feel that either of these options would work in this case.
- It was felt that the Operational Procedure document assumes that damage is caused by the user, and does not take into account other factors.
- There is nowhere to make recommendations for action on the form. It is not clear whether the boxes on the form are for officer comments.
- It was requested that HCC were asked for their feedback on the SDLAF comments.
- There was concern that the minutes from the previous SDLAF meeting in May stated that "SDLAF recommend that the system is trialled and reviewed". For clarity, the meeting had agreed that the form was trialled and reviewed before the system is implemented.

## 8. Any Other Business

AL gave a quick update on a meeting between Highways England and SDNPA that had taken place the previous day regarding M3 Junction 9.

Reports from other LAFs:

BD apologised for this item being left off the agenda, and it will be included in all future meetings.

AB reported from the Brighton and Hove LAF that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is due to be signed off. This will feed in to the Whole Estate Plan for Brighton Downland.

AW gave an update on the work of Hampshire LAF, who have been working on a draft Enforcement Policy, revising letters to Parish Councils, working on the Health and Harmony document, and also looking at HCC's Draft Byways Operational Procedure.

## 9. Close

The meeting closed at 12.40.

## **Next SDLAF Meeting for 2018:**

Tuesday 23 October 2018

### **ACTION LIST – SDLAF 17 JULY 2018**

**ACTION 1: NJ, AG & AT** to review SDLAF membership and also to contact those who have not attended in the last 12 months.

**ACTION 2: AG** to check if 2017 SDLAF annual review has been sent to SDNP parish contacts.

**ACTION 3: AG** to email the SDLAF membership and seek further volunteers to join the M3 site visit working group.

**ACTION 4: AG** to talk to Andy Beattie to obtain an update on the M3 and circulate to the members.

**ACTION 5: AG** to circulate report on Exceat Bridge to SDLAF members.

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## SDLAF meeting 17 July 2018

### East Meon Village Hall

#### Appendix

#### Site Visit to Byway Langrish 17 – key comments from scoring exercise

##### General

- The form doesn't allow for assessment of different sections of the Byway, which would be appropriate if some sections were in good order and some were not. The Byway visited in this case would need to be assessed in three sections, using three separate forms.
- It would be helpful if the guidance notes could include photographs to show examples of condition, to help completion and consistency.
- It is not possible to make an assessment using only a score/number.
- The BOAT network is only a small fraction of the routes in the National Park.
- Most TROs are made outside the National Park.
- The form needs to mention improvement work as an outcome as well as closure. It does not prioritise for repair.
- There is an implication that damage has been caused by users, and does not account for water or other damage.
- For consistency, all Byways should be assessed at the same time of year.
- Please could the form factor in the will of different groups to help repair/restore condition of a route.

##### Comments section

- The form does not make explicit whether the whole width of the Byway should be examined for condition, ie from enclosure to enclosure. How do you assess the extent of the highway?

##### Impacts section

- The form is confusing in terms of how to record each user, eg a separate score for each, or an average.
- The form is surface focussed and doesn't take account of overhanging trees.
- Cyclists: can be subdivided into different types: the condition of a route may be acceptable for one kind of cyclist but may not be usable by another.

##### Links section

- Subjective. The section needs to be reworded as it is unclear what is being scored. Clarify the wording re BOATS (as presumably it refers also to other types of route).
- No scoring for condition of signage.
- Positive scoring only.
- Not all of the Byway may need closure whilst repairs are carried out.
- (2<sup>nd</sup> section visited) If this section were to be closed, walkers would still have another route round, but other types of users would not.

##### Risk Assessment section

- If there is no risk, there is no option to score zero.
- Landowner impacts are irrelevant.
- A score of five is required if the route is in the National Park. Therefore the section cannot be used to prioritise work on different routes within the National Park.