

South Downs

Local Access Forum

31 January 2019, 10.30 am
Linklater Pavilion, Lewes

Members Present:

Andy Hannaford AH, Annie Brown AB, Bob Damper BD, Edward Seymour ES, Nick Taylor NT, Richard Johnson RJ, Sue Dunkley SD, Susan Thompson ST

Apologies: Doug Jones DJ, Glynn Jones, GJ, Neville Harrison, Roger Mullenger RM, Russell Cleaver RC, Simon James SJ, Val Bateman VB

Not Present: John Vannuffel JV, Robert Whitcombe RW

SDNPA Officers In attendance:

Allison Thorpe AT (Access & Recreation Strategy Lead), Andy Gattiker AG (National Trail & ROW Lead), Nigel James NJ (Countryside & Policy Manager), Alister Linton-Crook (Cycling Project Officer), Sara Osman (Support Services Officer - Minutes)

Apologies: Andrew Lee AL (Director, Countryside & Policy Management);

Observers: Diane Smith (East Sussex Ramblers), Michael Clarke (ESLAF), Vic lent (Friends of the South Downs), Wendy Brewer (Egrets Way Project)

1. Welcome & Apologies

BD welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were given, as listed above. The meeting was not quorate so it was agreed that any decisions that needed to be made would be deferred to the next meeting.

2. Items for AOB

Sue Dunkley, SDLAF Member, and Vic lent, from the South Downs Society, asked to discuss items under AOB.

3. Minutes (21 November 2018) and matters arising

It was noted that the minutes of the 21 November 2018 AGM stated the incorrect date and venue. The rest of the minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record.

ACTION 1: SO to change date and venue on the minutes for the meeting held on 21 November 2018.

Matters arising:

Richard Johnson updated members on the WSCC Bus User Survey, which was discussed at the last meeting under item 4 (SDLAF Update Report). Since submitting the SDLAF response, WSCC have announced their planned changes as a result of the consultation. These include greatly reduced services for many villages, which connect them with larger towns such as Chichester and Horsham. RJ proposed that SDLAF send another robust letter opposing these proposals, and agreed to draft a letter to be circulated to Members.

ACTION 2: RJ to draft letter opposing WSCC bus timetable changes. **SO** to circulate to SDLAF Members.

Actions from the previous meeting:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Update/ Closed</u>
ACTION 1: SO/AG to send the web link for the SDLAF 2017 annual review to all 176 Parish Councils.	SO/ AG	Sent 08/01/19 20 out of 181 Parish Councils have asked to be kept informed of SDLAF meetings
ACTION 2: SO/AG to send a copy to the SDNPA response to HCC's transport survey to SDLAF Members	SO/ AG	Sent 17/12/18
ACTION 3: ALL to email comments on questions 11, 12, 14 & 17 if the Glover Review to RM by Friday 30 November. RM to collate and circulate a draft response before submitting before the deadline of 18 December. SO to send a copy of final response to other LAFs	RM/ SO	Submitted by 18 December 2018
ACTION 4: AG to draft response to Natural England's report on the England Coast Path.	AG	Done. Verbal discussion with NE. No objections submitted. NE happy more written responses necessary.
ACTION 5: SO/AG to send dates for next 4 meetings for 2019.	SO/ AG	Sent 17/12/18

Outstanding matters from previous meeting's Actions:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Update</u>
NG/ BD/ AG to look at SDLAF Membership	NG/ BD/ AG	Ongoing
AG to send letters to Landowners who have permissive paths on their land	AG	Ongoing These are on hold until AG has details for <u>all</u> landowners, so they can be sent at the same time.

4. Matters arising from the LAF Update report

Bob Damper informed Members of the passing of Graham Butler, who used to attend SDLAF representing Surrey LAF, and recognised the dedication and support he had given.

The Update report covered an update on the National Trails who met with Julian Glover to discuss the management and funding of National Trails as part of the Glover Review of protected landscapes. They have also started work on a shared vision document and business plan for DEFRA.

Concerns were raised that changes to HLS agreements could result in permissive paths being taken out in any future arrangements. The SDNPA would ensure this is taken into consideration in future tests and trials they are proposing to take forward with Defra.

5. Updates from neighbouring LAFs

- **ESLAF:** Michael Clarke reported on behalf of East Sussex LAF. The lead councillor for Transport and the Environment attended their last meeting. Items discussed, within the SDNP, included:
 - The Network Rail crossing at Tide Mills is delayed for an ecological survey. A ramped access is preferred by ESLAF members but they had asked whether a tunnel had been discussed for this site. SDLAF responded that it had been discussed but was prohibitively expensive.
 - The Highways England A27 crossing was discussed. Access improvements have been made at Beddingham and Polegate but no further improvement plans have been confirmed. Their next meeting is 27 March,
- **BHLAF:** Annie Brown reported on behalf of Brighton and Hove LAF. They discussed:
 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) which has now been formally adopted.
 - HLS stewardships coming to an end and the potential impact on paths.

- Availability of busses which could accommodate bicycles were thought to be a good idea to be explored further.
- Ash dieback clearance in Stanmer Park was taking a long time and messy work creating conflict for different users of the park.

6. Any Other Business.

- Sue Dunkley invited SDLAF Members and the SDNPA to a community network project holding a workshop on wellbeing and green spaces at the Southeast Youth Hostel on March 19th. Members of the SDLAF agreed to attend the meeting and AT said the SDNPA would support it and provide promotional material.
- Vic lent raised three points:
 - *Could the SDLAF or SDNPA improve publicity, signposting and mapping for open access land so the public were more aware of where it is and what it means.* The SDLAF agreed to put open access signage and publicity on the agenda for the next meeting.
ACTION 3: AG to put open access signage and publicity on the agenda for the next meeting.
 - *Would permissive paths disappear when the Countryside Stewardship funding comes to an end? Specifically in relation to Rise Farm footpath from Lewes to Iford village.* BD explained that the SDLAF undertook a review of all permissive paths in the Park, which included this footpath. AG will be writing to all landowners who have a permissive path on their land and it is hoped that this path will not be lost. The SDNPA have spoken to this specific landowner as they have a Whole Estate Plan (WEP) which indicates Rise Farm path, so the SDNPA are hopeful that this path will not be lost. There was some discussion about the lack of public consultation for the plan. AT responded that WEPs are a voluntary undertaking with no legal obligations. There should be public consultation relevant to each estate, however the degree of public consultation will vary from estate to estate depending on size
 - *Were the SDLAF aware of local issues on footpaths at Lewes Racecourse?* Yes but as Enforcement action is being taken the SDLAF could not respond to questions about this particular site.

7. Creating new NMU routes – Progress on the Egret’s Way

Alister Linton-Crook, Cycle Project officer for the SDNPA, joined the meeting and gave an outline of the progress on the Egrets Way path, prior to a site visit. The project has been driven by the community with the aspiration of providing a safe off road path, linking bridleways, for cyclist and other users from Lewes to Newhaven. The previous option was using the C7 cycle route, which uses a main thoroughfare and not felt a safe route for cyclists. The 1st section of the Egrets Way, from Kingston to Lewes, opened in 2013. In 2014, phase 2 delivered a section from the South Downs Way at Southeast to Rodmell. Phase 3 delivered 2.5km path in the mid-section from Southeast to Piddinghoe.

This SDLAF went on a site visit to look at the proposed route for phase 4, as set out in the planning consent. There are currently three landowners involved – the Railway Land Trust, Network Rail and one private landowner. The landowner wants the route to be different to that proposed on the planning application. The new proposed route would involve running across grazing land and could include working with an extra 4 landowners. LEADER funding has been secured for the plans as set out in the planning application but this funding has time constraints, which means and decision taken on a new route needs to be decided quickly.

ACTION LIST – SDLAF 31 January 2019

Action	Who	Update/ Closed
ACTION 1: SO to change date and venue on the minutes for the meeting held on 21 November 2018.	SO	Done (1/2/19)
ACTION 2: RJ to draft letter opposing WSCC bus timetable changes. SO to circulate to SDLAF Members.	RJ/ SO	Done (1/2/19)
ACTION 3: AG to put open access signage and publicity on the agenda for the next meeting.	AG	To do