

Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 27 September 2010

PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr I Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr N Attrill, Councillor Browne, Mr J Emery, Councillor Foster, Mr R Goddard, Ms P Hitchens, Mr K Loze, Mrs B Mickley, Mr D Pawley, Miss B Roberts, Mrs S Rodgers, Mr J Skinner and Councillor Wheeler

Apologies for absence:

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.30 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made by Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Mr Pawley	Chair's Urgent Business (minute 23 refers)	Sea Farer	Personal
Councillor G Wheeler	Any Other Business (minute 31 refers)	Member of Planning Committee	Personal

22. MINUTES

With regard to the minutes of 9 August 2010 members commented that –

- (a) Mr Emery's declaration of interest should have referred to minutes 15 and 16;
- (b) regarding minute 15, the list of applications waiting in the queuing system had not been provided and that the LAF secretary should ensure that members were emailed a copy of the waiting list prior to the next meeting;
- (c) regarding minute 16, Councillor Wheeler's declaration of interest caveat should have read that he took no part in the discussion in the item;
- (d) regarding minute 16, Councillor Browne had also declared an interest as a member of the planning committee and took no part in the discussion in that item;
- (e) regarding minute 15 a, the process for reporting obstacles on public rights of way was not clear and that the LAF Secretary would distribute to all members the correct process of how to report an obstacle on a public right of way and contact details for relevant Plymouth City Council departments.

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2010 are confirmed as a correct record subject to the above amendments in (a), (b) and (d).

23. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

LAF Regional Conference

Ray Fairchild, Chair of the LAF informed members that the LAF Regional Conference was scheduled to take place on 20 October 2010 at Bovey Tracey and if members were interested in attending they needed to inform the LAF Secretary.

Letter from Giles Chichester MEP

Ray Fairchild, Chair of the LAF informed members that a letter to the press had been received from Giles Chichester MEP for the South West and Gibraltar explaining that areas of the South West Country Coastline had been designated as potential areas of consultation in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Plymouth Sound had been identified as a potential area of conservation.

Councillor Wheeler believed that the LAF was not the correct forum to be presenting a letter of political background, particularly as the letter had no impact on rights of way, the Countryside and Rights Of Way Act 2000 or access issues and it was just formal confirmation of the designation. Plymouth Sound had been designated as a candidate special area of conservation for some 15 years.

(Mr Pawley declared a personal interest in the above item)

24. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009/10**

Members received a copy of the draft Plymouth Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2009/10. It was commented that –

- (a) the format of the report should be in A5 and once published made available in public venues such as libraries;
- (b) statistics on what footpaths had become public rights of way throughout the year may add value to the report.

Agreed that the draft Plymouth Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2009/10 be approved subject to the inclusion of public rights of way statistics and adopting an A5 format.

25. **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The forum considered the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and commented that –

- (a) the map on page 41 showing potential rights of way should not be included in the plan as it may lead to difficulties with land-owners not being informed that there were potential rights of way on their land;
- (b) the document appeared to be long and repetitive, although it was agreed that it was comprehensive and for the good of the public to include so much information.

After a vote had been taken by the Forum it was agreed that the map on page 41 of the ROWIP be removed and the ROWIP be published as amended.

26. **RADFORD WOODS - ROCKETS GRANT AWARD**

Rupert Goddard, LAF Member informed the Forum that Radford Woods had been awarded a Rock Environmental Treatment Scheme (RockETS) grant. Members were informed that –

- (a) the RockETS grant enabled money to be put back into local communities through environmental projects following a levy on aggregate and crushed rock that was quarried from the local area;
- (b) due to the quarrying at the Moorcroft Quarry, Plymstock an application was made from Groundwork South West for the RockETS grant to be used on environmental projects at Radford Woods;
- (c) the Radford Woods project included circular walkways, new benches, improved signage and a selection of promotional events such as guided walks and family activities;
- (d) the works needed to be completed by March 2011 to satisfy the grant criteria and to achieve this Groundwork South West were looking at working with the local community and recruiting 15 volunteer workers.

Following questions from members it was reported that –

- (e) the grant award was worth approximately £19k;
- (f) promoting Radford Woods was viewed as an important role in implementing the project and it was hoped that the project would be publicised and promoted through schools, libraries, public notice boards and local neighbourhood meetings;
- (g) there were a number of footpaths within Radford Woods that could potentially become public rights of way and subsequently be added to the definitive map.

Members commented that –

- (h) Groundwork South West should be congratulated on the excellent grant award;
- (i) there needed to be some caution regarding public rights of way in woodland areas and nature reserves as they had been promised previously but had still not been included on the definitive map.

Agreed that a request be made to the Public Rights of Way Officer to provide a report at the next meeting of the Forum giving an update on the status of public rights of way that were going to be created on council owned land.

27. **ENGLISH ACCESS FORUM - SUSTRANS MEETING**

Members noted the minutes from the English Access Forum – Sustrans Meeting held on 20 August 2010.

28. **WORKING GROUPS**

a) **POTENTIAL RIGHTS OF WAY WORKING GROUP**

There was no report from the Potential Rights of Way working group.

It was commented by members that –

- (a) all members who had not completed the ramblers' map task should send their findings to the PROW Officer before the next meeting of the forum;
- (b) in addition to the ramblers' maps members needed to identify potential

critical and controversial footpaths within their area that could become public rights of way;

- (c) as a working group in the future they would look at the footpaths identified in the ROWIP as potential public rights of way and decide which of these footpaths may require urgent action.

Agreed that at the next meeting of the panel an agenda item be included that aims to identify a practical way forward on how to make the most out of the two working groups.

b) **PLANNING WORKING GROUP**

There was no report from the Planning working group.

29. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Forum commented on the correspondence as follows –

- (a) all letters that are sent out in the name of the LAF providing advice to Section 94 bodies needed to include a caveat stating that the LAF was an advice forum in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- (b) the Definitive Map Modification Order (FOOTPATH NO 1, DRAKE) was now being dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate;
- (c) the path referred to in the Definitive Map Modification Order (FOOTPATH NO 1, DRAKE) had been fenced off and given that it was a public right of way it should be open to the public.

Agreed that a request be made to the PROW Officer asking for information to be provided to all members on what action would be taken in order to clear the footpath referred to in the Definitive Map Modification Order.

30. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed that the next meeting of the forum is held at 10:30am on 22 November 2010 at the Council House.

31. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The following issues were raised by forum members as any other business –

- (a) Richmond Walk path behind Ocean Court was closed off as a result of building work and after a discussion regarding this issue it was advised that members of the public should attempt to claim the footpath as a PROW;
- (b) Yacht Haven footpath, Oreston;
 - the fence had now been removed from the site allowing members of the public to walk around the boundary edge of yacht haven;
 - there were more improvements needed to the path and surrounding area;
- (c) Ridgeway Schools Public Path Extinguishment Order;

- (d) Stepping Stones to Nature Annual Report;
- (e) Elburton Village Hall footpath had been closed off to the public which was a concern to local residents.

Colin Jones of Natural England was also in attendance and informed members that –

- (f) Natural England were facing some difficult times ahead with some major changes likely to happen in the allocation of resources;
- (g) reductions in funding was likely to lead to Natural England losing many staff positions which could potentially lead to less regional events occurring.

Agreed that –

- (1) the LAF Secretary would disseminate to all Forum Members an updated contact list of LAF Members for 2010/11;
- (2) the LAF Secretary would disseminate to all Forum Members via an email a copy of the SW LAF Newsletter;
- (3) a request be made to the PROW Officer asking for information to be provided to all members on what was happening regarding Ridgeway Schools Public Path Extinguishment Order.