

Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 17 March 2014

PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr Attrill, Mr Curno, Mr Emery, Councillor Ken Foster, Councillor Fox, Mr Harvey, Ms Hitchens, Mr Pawley, Mr Skinner and Councillor Wheeler.

Also in attendance: Robin Pearce (Public Rights of Way Officer), Rosemary Starr (Smarter Choices Manager), Hilary Winter (Regional Co-ordinator, SW Region LAFs), Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.40 am and finished at 12.45 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.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Mr Pawley	South West Coast Path	Is the Plymouth local representative for the South West Coast Path	Personal
Councillor Foster	Planning applications	Is a member of the Planning Committee	Personal
Councillor Wheeler	Planning applications	Is a member of the Planning Committee	Personal

44. MINUTES

Members reviewed the minutes and commented that Minute 37 (c) should read 'Mark Owen, South West Coast Path National Trail Officer, had sourced the funding required via Natural England to build the steps at the Royal William Yard'.

Agreed that subject to minute 37 (c) being amended as above the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2013 are confirmed as a correct record.

45. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed Hilary Winter (Regional Co-ordinator, SW Region LAFs) and Rosemary Starr (Smarter Choices Manager) to the meeting.

46. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The Forum noted its tracking resolutions and commented that –

- (a) there was an ongoing difficulty trying to contact Kat Deeney, Green Infrastructure Team Leader;
- (b) an update on the letter that was sent to Natural England was to be given to members;
- (c) the long-standing issue of public slipways and landing stages needed to be re-addressed.

47. **CATTEWATER RAIL SPUR SITE VISIT**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, updated the Forum on the site visit to the Cattewater rail spur on 21 January 2014.

The Forum commented that –

- (a) the site would be a good location for a cycle path/footpath as part of the South West Coast Path;
- (b) another site visit would be planned, and further updates provided at future meetings;
- (c) Network Rail should be contacted to discuss the possibility of converting the site to a cycle path/footpath.
- (d) Dave Pawley agreed to lead on this project.

Rosemary Starr advised the Forum that it was possible that one of her colleagues was already dealing with this issue.

48. **FEEDBACK FROM NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, gave feedback from his attendance at the Annual LAF Conference at Defra, Bristol on 4 February.

The Forum were advised that the following issues were discussed –

- Draft Deregulation Bill;
- Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs);
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs);
- Strategic Economic Plan (SEPs);
- Big Lottery Fund;
- Paths in Crisis;
- The Land Managers Perspective;
- Raising Profile of LAFs;

- Closure of Level Crossings, Diversion and Extinguishment.

Agreed that the LAF Secretary would reproduce the Chair's notes from the meeting and send to him prior to sending to members.

49. **HUDDLE HOT TOPICS**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, advised Forum members that the 'Huddle Hot Topics' were compiled by Hilary Winter for dissemination to LAFs. Following members' questions -

- (a) Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, clarified the item 'Integrating the Highway Records – The Local Street Gazette';
- (b) Hilary Winter advised members that the hotel mentioned in the item 'Not-for-Profit Organisation linked to a LAF' was thought to be in either Thurlestone or Hope Cove;
- (c) Ray Fairchild, Chair, advised members that if the Plymouth LAF wished to raise funds in a similar way they would need a specific project to fund.

50. **DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER UPDATE (TO FOLLOW)**

Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, gave an update on matters relating to the processing of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs). The Forum was advised that –

- (a) the modification order process was a long one;
- (b) the process involved several stages of consultation, the production of topography reports, research of documentary evidence held in record offices and other forms of research and liaison with landowners and their legal representatives;
- (c) each application must also be decided by a Council committee and from there could lead to a public inquiry;
- (d) each application took between 18 months and two years to take from receipt to confirmation and two applications at a time were progressed in strict date order of receipt;
- (e) the backlog of applications was between six and eight years for current applications already in the queue with a 10 year wait for any new application;
- (f) the backlog was partly due to the complexities of the process but was also due to the council's reliance on external legal support associated with public inquiries;
- (g) in order to address the backlog of applications, several issues had been addressed;

- (h) the first part of the modification order process for every outstanding application had been outsourced and it was anticipated that this work would be completed by summer 2014;
- (i) eight applications were currently being processed;
- (j) when all eight applications reached committee report stage, the Council would continue as they do now, and process two applications concurrently to completion;
- (k) the new way of processing applications enabled the existing backlog of applications to be reduced significantly faster, and new claims to be processed considerably quicker;

Following members' questions, the Forum was advised that –

- (l) the backlog work had been outsourced to Rowtac;
- (m) if another backlog arose in the future the situation would be reviewed at that time;
- (n) applications were now available to view online;
- (o) another application had recently been received, and further application packs had been sent out.
- (p) the application process was daunting, and it was not possible to offer assistance with completion of the paperwork in order to maintain impartiality.

Following a lengthy discussion, Councillor Wheeler pointed out that any criticism of the process needed to be directed at the system, and not the Public Rights of Way Officer, and expressed his disappointment at comments made by fellow Forum members. Furthermore, he passed his congratulations on to the Public Rights of Way Officer and his colleagues for their work in dealing with the backlog. Dave Curno also expressed his appreciation at the way in which the backlog was dealt with.

The Chair thanked the Public Rights of Way Officer for his report.

51. **DEFINITIVE MAP UPDATE (TO FOLLOW)**

Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, gave an update on the Definitive Map. The Forum was advised that –

- (a) the Definitive Map was republished in March 2014;
- (b) the Definitive Map was now available online, along with Permissive Path Agreements and Creation Agreements;
- (c) the Definitive Map was now available to view in the First Stop reception and

local libraries;

- (d) there were now approximately 37km of recorded public rights of way in Plymouth, including one bridleway, increased from 14km in 2010;

Following members' questions, the Forum was advised that –

- (e) the 'Officers' referred to in paragraph 2.1 of the Definitive Map Update document were Robin Pearce and Rosemary Starr.

52. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Forum reviewed its work programme. It was agreed that -

- (a) the Unrecorded Footpaths Working Groups item needed to be on the work programme early in the new municipal year;
- (b) the LAF Secretary would canvas members as to their suitability for an Unrecorded Footpaths Working Groups meeting.

Hilary Winter advised that she had some information regarding the Sherford development cycling proposals and would forward it to LAF members.

Ian Stewart advised that he wished to re-commence attending the Saltram Countryside Park Stakeholder Forum.

Agreed that the LAF secretary would contact Kat Deeney (copied to Chris Caldwell) regarding this issue.

53. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Forum noted its correspondence.

Councillor Wheeler asked for an update from Robin Pearce and Rosie Starr regarding the footpath at Coombe Dean School.

Robin Pearce advised that there was a liability issue regarding the footpath, which could be resolved if Corporate Property covered the costs of accommodation works required for adoption by AMEY.

54. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed following confirmation of the programme of Council meetings at the Full Council meeting on 31 March 2014.

55. **ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS**

John Emery, LAF member, requested that his correspondence with Councillor Coker and Paul Barnard is discussed at a future meeting, and advised that he would write to Councillor Coker again. Following a discussion, it was noted that –

- (a) the Chair was of the opinion that this matter had reached its conclusion;
- (b) the Vice Chair stressed it was important to ensure that it was made clear that the letter had been sent from Mr Emery as a member of the public, and not as a member of the LAF;
- (c) Patricia Hitchens pointed out that the letter inappropriately suggested that all members of the LAF agreed with the points contained within it;
- (d) the Vice Chair advised that Mr Emery needed to clarify that the letter was not representing the views of the LAF;
- (e) Mr Emery apologised to members if they thought his letter suggested that it had been sent by the LAF;

Dave Pawley, LAF member, advised that the steps on the South West Coast Path at Jennycliff, which were an ongoing problem, were now in the process of being repaired, and thanked the Public Rights of Way Officer for his work. Dave Curno pointed out that the steps were being repaired with recycled plastic, which was flammable although it was noted that so is wood.

Hilary Winter advised that a presentation on the Local Transport Plan would be useful.

Hilary Winter advised that an event to celebrate the success of the South West Coast Path's 'Unlocking our Coastal Heritage' project was being held in Exeter on 26 March, which she was due to attend.

Bob Harvey, LAF member, spoke regarding the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). He advised the Forum that -

- (f) he had been dealing with Robin Toogood, manager of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit;
- (g) LAFs and the AONBs could be better engaged with;
- (h) the CPRE were concentrating on land use strategy this year, which involved a large campaign and public meetings;
- (i) there was significant development occurring in the county, and people might feel discouraged from coming here – which could affect local employment and the local community;
- (j) the South Hams and Plymouth CPRE AGM would be held on 2 May, and attendance at this meeting would be worthwhile for LAF members.

The Chair pointed out that the Tamar Valley was also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Chair advised the Forum that a consultation was taking place on a proposal to put motorsport events on public roads. The consultation needed to be completed by April, and LAF members agreed that the Chair can reply to this consultation. Councillor Wheeler asked for clarification on the type of event this covered.