

# PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011



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## I. Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the 2010 - 2011 annual report of the Plymouth Local Access Forum. Over the past 12 months we have held 6 meetings in the Plymouth City Council meeting rooms and have discussed and debated numerous topics concerning public rights of way, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), planning and local transport plans and nature conservation within the boundaries of Plymouth.

We have been involved in consultations on the England Access Forum, Saltram Countryside Park, Review of Statutory Duties on local government.

Our members have attended a Regional LAF Conference at Bovey Tracey in October 2010. At the conference, workshops included Forestry Commission – 'promoting recreational opportunities', Department of Health – 'the health agenda' and Natural England – 'how LAFs can contribute to green infrastructure policy and involving young people in countryside recreation'.

We have been involved in supporting planning applications for the Royal William Yard (RWY) for the boardwalk and access to Devil's Point.

We attended a public inquiry in January 2011, Ham Drive to Carnock Road, to view the process and learn what happens.

I have attended two regional chairman's meetings at Taunton and met Mr C Gammon, Regional Director for Natural England and Mr P Owens, Regional Business Manager for Natural England. The main themes at the meetings was 'the way ahead for LAF;s and Natural England'.

Recently the LAF has formed a working group to review and advise on a project called 'Access Whitleigh'.

I would like to thank the Rights of Way Officer for his continuing support and advice and finally my members who have given up their free time to work on various LAF topics.

Ray Fairchild  
May 2011

## **2. A Local Access Forum**

A Local Access Forum is an independent advisory body set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. All highway and national parks authorities are required to have such a forum in place and their role is to provide strategic advice to prescribed bodies on how they can improve access to land for outdoor recreational use.

DEFRA has prescribed the following bodies to whom the forum may give advice to:

The local Authority (Plymouth City Council)  
Natural England  
The Forestry Commission  
English Heritage  
Sport England  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Conservation Boards  
District Borough, Parish and Town Councils within its area

These bodies are known as section 94 bodies as they are prescribed by section 94 (4) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The purpose of providing advice to these bodies is to influence their decision making processes.

When a section 94 body receives advice from a Local Access Forum it is obliged, by statute, to consider that advice. This does not necessarily mean that the receiving body must follow the advice given but that they properly consider it. If that advice is not followed it is usual that justification for this be given.

### **2.1 The Role of Plymouth's Local Access Forum**

The Plymouth Local Access Forum was established in 2006. The role of Plymouth's Local Access Forum is to advise the Council on issues that involve people enjoying and using the outdoors. The members of the Forum will be people who can demonstrate knowledge or experience in this area. They might be people who like to walk or cycle around Plymouth or they might own land that people like to walk on. They might even be people whose job it is to help others enjoy themselves outside.

Although there may be different views on some subjects, the Forum will discuss these matters so that they can tell the Council what they think. The Forum's membership is varied so that their views are representative of all those who live in Plymouth. The views of the Forum will be very important to the Council when decisions are made. The below list acts as a guide to the issues the Forum might talk about. However, this is only a guide and the Forum can talk about anything they think is relevant, such as:

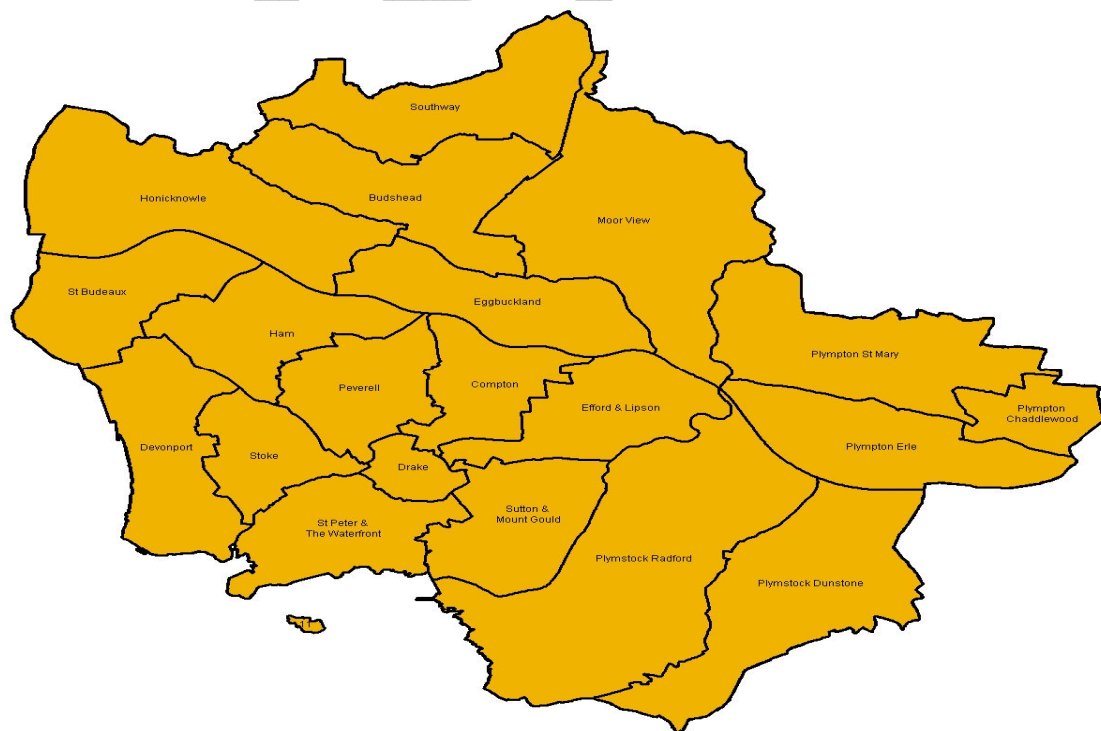
- helping the Council with, and giving opinion on Plymouth's rights of way improvement plan
- telling the Council and its partners what they think of recreation and access strategies

- advising the Council how local people might view access issues so they can be included in the national guidelines the Council has to stick to
- commenting on wider plans and strategies for landscape, recreation, transport, health, tourism and information
- telling the Council if the strategies and policies currently in place suit different types of users and whether they reflect the needs of local people and businesses
- telling the Council what they think of the way resources are used in providing ways for people to enjoy the outdoors
- telling the Council how to manage areas people use without harming agriculture and conservation areas or risking public safety
- discussing the way the Council handles public rights of way

In addition the forum may wish to:

- make representations to the Planning Inspectorate on any appeal
- look for ways to encourage landowners to make more areas available for the public to use
- promote the work of the forum and countryside issues to other people
- find new ways of getting money so we can make improvements
- comment on new large-scale developments so that peoples' use and enjoyment can be made better

The Local Access Forum is independent from the Council and it decides what issues they want to discuss and what they would like to advise the Council or other bodies about. The map below shows the area covered by the Plymouth Local Access Forum.



## 3. Forum Membership

### 3.1 Members and Representation

The Plymouth Local Access Forum has been constituted as far as practicable so that it is balanced between three main interests, which are:

- Users of access land or public rights of way
- Owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by rights of way
- Other interests considered relevant to Plymouth

The Membership of the Plymouth Local Access Forum is:

Name	Membership	Group
Ray Fairchild	Chair	Access User
Ian Stewart	Vice-Chair	Other Interest
Ken Foster	Member	Councillor
Thomas Browne	Member	Councillor
George Wheeler	Member	Councillor
John Emery	Member	Access User
Patricia Hitchins	Member	Access User
Keith Raymond Loze	Member	Access User
Barbara Mickley	Member	Access User
David Pawley	Member	Access User
John Skinner	Member	Access User
Rupert Goddard	Member	Other Interest
Beth Roberts	Member	Land Owner
Stephanie Rodgers	Member	Land Owner
Nick Attrill	Member	Other Interest

### 3.2 Observers and Advisers to the Forum

All meetings are public and anyone can attend if they wish but the Forum can specifically invite observers and advisers to attend and participate in meetings. The following representatives are those that have attended meetings in 2010/2011:

<b>Robin Pearce</b>	Public Rights of Way Officer, Plymouth City Council
<b>Colin Jones</b>	Natural England
<b>Dan Forster</b>	Senior Transport Planner, Plymouth City Council
<b>Dave Readman</b>	Tamar Valley AONB Partnership
<b>Rosemary Dale</b>	Major Schemes Officer, Plymouth City Council

### 3.3 Secretariat

Plymouth City Council as the appointing authority provides the Plymouth Local Access Forum with a secretariat:

**Mr Ross Johnston**

Secretary to the Plymouth Local Access Forum  
Democratic Support Unit  
Corporate Support Department  
Plymouth City Council  
Plymouth PL1 2AA  
Tel: 01752 307990  
E-mail: [laf@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:laf@plymouth.gov.uk)

### 3.4 Advertising for Members

In March an article appeared in the local media advertising for members to the LAF.

Membership to the Forum will be representative of one or more fields of interest as defined below rather than any particular organisation of which they might also be a member:

- users of rights of way, or the new access right
- owners and occupiers of access land, or land over which local rights of way subsist
- in addition to this we will encourage fair representation of other interests considered to be relevant to Plymouth, these include tourism, outdoor education, sport and recreational provision, disability awareness, local business interest, the military, health promotion and wildlife and cultural heritage

Within these interests we have aimed to encourage a better representation of younger people, woman, people with disabilities and those on low incomes.

## **4. What has happened over the past year (2010 – 2011)**

### **4.1. Chairman**

Ray Fairchild was Chairman of the Plymouth Local Access Forum and Ian Stewart Vice-Chairman from March 2010 to March 2011.

At the Forum's meeting of 8 February 2010 it was resolved that Ray Fairchild be appointed Chair and Ian Stewart be appointed Vice Chair for the forthcoming year with the new term of office beginning on 29 March 2010.

### **4.2 Formal Meetings**

Over the past year May 2010 – April 2011 there have been six formal meetings at the following dates:

- 14 June 2010
- 9 August 2010
- 27 September 2010
- 22 November 2010
- 24 January 2011
- 28 March 2011

Information about the agenda's and minutes from the Forum's meetings in 2010 – 2011 can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/32e8ey4>.

### **4.3 Presentations and Reports**

The Forum has received the following presentations over the past year:

- Local Transport Plan 3
- Radford Woods – ROCKets Grant Award
- Tamar Valley Discovery Trail
- Access Whitleigh Project
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund

The Forum has received the following reports and papers over the past year:

- Promoted walks in Plymouth
- Local Access Forum involvement in coastal access implementation
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- South West Coast Path
- Local Access Forum Development Questionnaire
- Notice of Statutory Land Transfer – Ridgeway School
- Notice of Statutory Land Transfer – Coombe Dean School



## 4.4 Consultation

The Forum responded to the following consultation requests over the past year:

- Local Transport Plan 3
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- English Access Forum
- Saltram Countryside Park
- Public Path Diversion Order application on Hooe Lane, Plymstock
- Central Park Draft Masterplan
- Plymouth Local Access Forum Development
- Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- Review of Statutory Duties

## 4.5 Policy Development

Over the past year the Plymouth Local Access Forum had formally made comments and or submitted correspondence with the aim that it would be considered in the development of the following policies and plans:

- Local Transport Plan 3
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan

## 4.6 Planning Application responses

The Forum has become increasingly responsive to Planning Applications submitted to Plymouth City Council. Since January 2011 a weekly update has been sent to members informing them of the Planning Applications that have been submitted and the LAF has formally responded to the Planning Department on the following applications:

- Royal William Yard (Urban Splash) – Reference. 10/02104/FUL
- Royal William Yard (Urban Splash) – Reference. 10/02094/FUL

## 4.7 Working Groups

The Plymouth Local Access Forum has created two working groups:

- Potential Rights of Way Working Group
- Planning Working Group

Over the past year the working groups have discussed the following issues:

- Ramblers' 1988 Maps
- Access Whitleigh Project

## **4.8 Training and Events**

The following training subjects, events and dates were made available for attendance by Plymouth Local Access Forum Members:

### **Regional LAF Annual Conference**

20 October 2010

## **4.9 Promotion and Media Coverage**

A number of articles have appeared in the local media with regards to work undertaken by the LAF. These articles demonstrate the effectiveness of the LAF in monitoring and reviewing public rights of way. The articles refer to the Forum's continued monitoring of the South West Coast Path and can be viewed by clicking on the attached links:

<http://www.thisplymouth.co.uk/news/Coastal-path-near-Plymouth-won-t-reopened-survey/article-2924441-detail/article.html>

<http://www.thisplymouth.co.uk/news/coast-path-closed-indefinitely-landslip/article-3139237-detail/article.html>

The LAF agenda has incorporated new aspects including a tracking resolutions document and a work programme. These new items were included following a consultation undertaken by Forum members with the aim of ensuring a more effective and efficient Forum. These new items were seen to offer improvements to the Forum and as such were distributed to regional LAF's for their information.

### **4.10 Public Rights of Way**

On 1 May 2010 Plymouth City Council had 53 separate footpaths (83 links) designated as Public Rights of Way (PROW).

On 30 April 2011 Plymouth City Council had 53 separate footpaths (83 links) designated as PROW.

In total for the period 1 May 2010 – 30 April 2011 Plymouth City Council created 0 footpaths.

## **5. Future Aspirations**

Given the fact that it is often difficult to anticipate topics that may arise on the access agenda either locally or nationally and regarding Public Rights of Way it is believed that the following topics offer a quality insight into what the Plymouth Local Access Forum aim to cover over the coming year in 2011 - 12.

### **National Issues**

Coastal Access  
English Access Forum

### **Regional Issues**

Access Projects  
Sustainable neighbourhoods  
Northern Corridor Development  
The Rights of Way Improvement Plan  
Definitive Map  
Local issues around Open Spaces  
Ramblers' 1988' maps  
South West Coast Path  
Access to Nature project

New membership to the Forum was hoped to be achieved for 2011 – 2012 and as such new training initiatives will be offered to all members. Furthermore, it was hoped that the use of the Forum working groups would be utilised to a greater effect enabling the Forum to respond and offer advice to wider reaching issues.

## 6. Financial Statement

The financial statements relates to the finance period of 1 April 2010 to 1 March 2011.

### Members' expenses

Travel Allowance	-	£120.79
Childcare	-	£0.00
Total	-	£120.79

### Meetings

Advertising	-	£0.00
Catering	-	£142.50
Total	-	£142.50

Total Expenditure for 2010/11 - £263.29

### 6.1 Members Expenses

Member	Travel (£)	Subsistence (£)	Childcare (£)
Ray Fairchild	£120.79	0	0
Ian Stewart	0	0	0
Ken Foster	0	0	0
Thomas Browne	0	0	0
George Wheeler	0	0	0
John Emery	0	0	0
Patricia Hitchens	0	0	0
Keith Raymond Loze	0	0	0
Barbara Mickley	0	0	0
David Pawley	0	0	0
John Skinner	0	0	0
Rupert Goddard	0	0	0
Beth Roberts	0	0	0
Stephanie Rodgers	0	0	0
Nick Atrill	0	0	0
LAF Secretary	0	0	0

**Members' (Who's Who)**

<p><b>Mr Attrill</b></p>
<p>Mr Attrill is a Plymothian who has worked for the Ordnance Survey for 38 years and is currently working in and around Plymouth. This allows him to visit many parts of the city and beyond. He walks a great deal for his work and leisure; latterly he is usually accompanied by his dog. He has worked in the archaeological side of the OS which has stimulated his interest in history and archaeology of which there is much in Plymouth. He reads extensively with interest in history, science fiction, and fantasy and he also enjoys films and music.</p>
<p><b>Mr Emery</b></p>
<p>John Emery is interested in Planning, transport, heritage and rights of way issues. Member of the Ramblers Association and Open Spaces Society. Writes a monthly article for the local parish magazine on community affairs.</p>
<p><b>Mr Fairchild</b></p>
<p>Mr Fairchild is a retired technical officer of the M.O.D. His interests include walking, the environment and gardening. As well as being Chair of the PLAF he is also a governor at Eggbuckland Community College.</p>
<p><b>Mr Goddard</b></p>
<p>Mr Goddard worked for Groundwork South West, a local environmental regeneration charity. He coordinated volunteering projects including Conservation volunteering and Horticultural Healing. Recent projects have included the upgrading of footpaths through Woodland Wood Local Nature Reserve. He has been working for Groundwork for 12 years, before which he worked as a countryside ranger. Throughout his career he has worked within the field of countryside management and predominately with volunteers. Outside of work he enjoys walking local footpaths, including the South West Coast Path. He is a keen explorer of local caves and mines and aswell as sitting on the LAF he is a member of Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.</p>
<p><b>Mrs Hitchens</b></p>
<p>Mrs Hitchens is a long time resident of the Crownhill/Derriford Area. She has an interest in maintaining and defining open spaces and ancient footpaths in this fast changing area.</p>
<p><b>Mr Pawley</b></p>
<p>A Plymothian, as a teenager attended Sutton High and R. Dockyard TC and was a member of Mayflower Sailing Club. Graduated and employed as an RAF Education</p>

Officer for 21 years followed by 14 as a senior lecturer in Management Science and Computing at CFE. Has now retired. A long time member of the Ramblers with a keen interest in seeing footpaths properly recorded in the City. An enthusiastic boat owner actively working to provide affordable moorings for locals. A member of the Plymouth LAF since its formation in 2006.

#### **Mrs Roberts**

Mrs Roberts is currently a full time Mum of two young children, who has a passion for the Environment and community work. Her previous roles were as a Project Manager for Groundwork Trust and Community Development Worker in the Public Sector. She was responsible for the development of local and National projects that aimed to encourage walking at all levels. I am a trained Walk Leader and have worked as a Volunteer for both the National Trust and Millfields Trust. She is a keen and active person, who enjoys walking and bee keeping on her family's farm in the North of Plymouth.

#### **Mrs Rodgers**

Mrs Rodgers works for the National Trust in the Plym Valley as a Community Engagement Officer. A big part of her role requires her to work closely with the local community to enable them to feel a part of their local property, and also to make sure that access is available and appropriate at all times for visitors to National Trust property. Her knowledge of rights of way, land management and environmental issues helps her to support the aims and objectives of the LAF here in Plymouth. As a trained walk leader and trainer she spends a lot of time promoting walking as a worthwhile past time on National Trust land, also walking in her spare time too, mostly on Dartmoor.

#### **Mr Skinner**

John Skinner has been a member of the Plymouth Local Access Forum since it was first set up in 2006. He is also a member of the Devon Countryside Access Forum. John is an experienced mountain and moorland walker, rambler and occasional cyclist. He is currently Access Officer for the Devon Area of the Ramblers' Association. For the Ramblers' Association he had extensive involvement with the preparatory work and mapping of access land for the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) in Devon in 2005. He now monitors closure of land under the CRoW Act and matters affecting public rights of way. Largely through self-education he has a good knowledge of the law relating to public rights of way. He firmly believes that the City of Plymouth should have a comprehensive and complete Definitive map of public rights of way within the City boundaries.

In due course he expects to provide input to the emerging proposals for the introduction of a coastal footpath and coastal corridor.

He is Chairman of the Dartmoor Rambling Club and a member of the Ramblers' Association, Dartmoor Preservation Association, the Open Spaces Society, the National Trust and the Youth Hostels Association. He has been retired for several years but spent his career with HM Land Registry.

**Mr Stewart**

Mr Stewart as a doctor with an interest in sports injuries (which includes exercise) he found himself doing many sports, including long distance walking and hence his involvement with the LAF.

He would like to see as many open spaces as possible within the city and all linked by foot/cycle paths. There are already many footpaths available which need to be mapped and made available and accessible to the public, and some of these specifically for the disabled.

As a LAF we should support and promote all healthy lifestyles and increase the public profile of the LAF.

**Cllr Foster**

An elected member of Plymouth City Council serving the Southway Ward. At the meeting of the City Council on 21 May 2010 was appointed to sit as a member on the Plymouth Local Access Forum.

**Cllr Browne**

An elected member of Plymouth City Council serving the Southway Ward. At the meeting of the City Council on 21 May 2010 was appointed to sit as a member on the Plymouth Local Access Forum.

**Cllr Wheeler**

George Wheeler has been a member of the LAF since it was first set up in 2006. He is an elected member of Plymouth City Council, representing St Budeaux ward. He is an experienced transport administrator, having served spells as chair of the transport committee before the executive/scrutiny system and as cabinet member for transport since. He is an advocate of the use of sustainable transport means, of which walking is an essential element. He is a keen Rambler, though usually outside of the city.

**APPENDIX B**

## Summary of Members' Attendance at Forum Meetings

<b>Name</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Attendance (maximum 6)</b>
Ray Fairchild	Chair	6
Ian Stewart	Vice-Chair	5
Ken Foster	Councillor	5
Thomas Browne	Councillor	6
George Wheeler	Councillor	5
John Emery	Member	6
Patricia Hitchens	Member	5
Keith Raymond Loze*	Member	2
Barbara Mickley *	Member	5
David Pawley	Member	6
John Skinner	Member	4
Rupert Goddard	Member	3
Beth Roberts	Member	3
Stephanie Rodgers	Member	4
N Attrill	Member	6

\* Resigned mid-term