

Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 18 June 2012

PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr Stewart, Vice Chair.

Mr Attrill, Mr Curno, Mr Emery, Councillor K Foster, Mr Harvey, Ms Hitchens, Mr Pawley and Councillor George Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Mr Skinner, Mrs Stewart and Councillor Jon Taylor.

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.40 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.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Agreed that Ray Fairchild is appointed Chair and Ian Stewart is appointed as Vice-Chair for the Plymouth Local Access Forum for the forthcoming year.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made by a member in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Mr Pawley	Public Slipways (minute 8 refers)	Is the Plymouth local representative for the South West Coast Path	Personal
Mr Curno	Public Slipways (minute 8 refers)	Is a representative of the Royal Yachting Association	Personal

3. MINUTES

Members reviewed the minutes and commented that –

- (a) the brochure for the South West Coast Path would now be published by the end of June 2012;
- (b) Barton Road, a route for walkers on the South West Coast Path, was due to be closed to the public for approximately two months due to major development works. Walkers would be re-routed for the period of closure;

- (c) unfortunately, the funding streams for the steps at Royal William Yard had been unsuccessful, meaning that the steps would be put on hold until further funding had been secured.

Agreed that –

- (1) a South West Coast Path update would be included as a standing agenda item for all future meetings;
- (2) that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

4. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair announced, disappointedly, that Bethan Roberts had recently resigned from her role on the Local Access Forum.

Agreed that the LAF Secretary would write a letter to Bethan Roberts thanking her for her service and to wish her well in the future.

5. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The Forum noted its tracking resolutions and agreed that –

- (1) the first item regarding site visits would not be deleted and that the LAF Secretary in consultation with the Public Rights of Way Officer would seek to establish a future site visit to include visits to:
- the Venn Estate, Hartley;
 - a Stepping Stones to Nature site;
 - the steps at Royal William Yard;
- (2) the LAF Secretary would further request the results of the Barrier Busting consultation.

6. **ANNUAL REVISION OF THE LAF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Forum noted and agreed its Terms of Reference.

7. **PUBLIC SLIPWAYS AND LANDING STAGES**

Dave Curno and Dave Pawley, LAF members, provided the Forum with an update on public slipways and landing stages. The Forum were informed that –

- (a) the public slipways section of the website had still not been updated despite information and webpage layout being provided to the Parking Department last year;

- (b) the website could be improved by providing links to high quality websites with up-to-date information such as those maintained by the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum;
- (c) cleaning and maintenance of slipways had significantly improved since the issue was raised, however, due to the equipment used by the cleaning contractor there was now an issue of degradation on some of the slipways.

Agreed that –

- (1) Councillor Wheeler would liaise with Dave Curno and Dave Pawley so that he could raise the issue of out of date slipways information on the website at the Maritime Liaison Committee;
- (2) Dave Pawley, LAF member, would draft a letter to the Parking Department requesting that the information on the website be updated.

8. **PLANNING AUTHORITY UPDATE AND POSITION STATEMENT**

The Forum received a report from the Public Rights of Way Officer providing an update on the Planning Authority and a draft position statement on planning applications dealing with potential rights of way.

It was commented by members that –

- (a) the position statement would be a useful tool for the Forum and offered a solution to the frequent issue of development on informal footpaths;
- (b) the decision of the Planning Authority not to add a further GIS layer onto the constraints map was regretted;
- (c) the review of planning applications by the Public Rights of Way Officer was a significant improvement on the current system of determining whether there were any potential public rights of way contained in planning applications;
- (d) establishing footpaths as Public Rights of Way was the easiest way to allow Planning Officers to deal with the issue of footpaths. The forum should be proactively encouraging users of footpaths to apply to the Council for an order to make the footpath into a Public Right of Way.

Agreed that the draft position statement included in the report is adopted by the Local Access Forum for its use when responding or commenting on any future planning applications.

9. **IMPROVEMENTS TO THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

The Forum was informed that the Ramblers Association had provided a very detailed response to this consultation.

Members commented that –

- (a) they were concerned about the amount of consultation requests coming from central government and, in particular, the size of documents that were being produced;
- (b) to allow LAFs the ability to respond appropriately to consultations from central government that Natural England should attempt to produce summary documents for LAFs on such issues.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Forum would not provide a formal response to the consultation on the improvements to the policy and legal framework for Public Rights of Way;
- (2) Ray Fairchild, Chair, would request, at the next LAF Regional meeting, that Natural England provide summary reports for LAFs highlighting areas of importance in response to major consultation documents.

10. **WORKING GROUPS**

The Forum received a report on potential working groups from the Public Rights of Way Officer.

It was commented by members that –

- (a) a working group looking into the complex issue of unrecorded footpaths on council owned land was a good idea and could assist the forum in tackling this difficult issue;
- (b) requesting that footpaths in City Council owned parks be adopted as Public Rights of Way was potentially allowing quick wins in terms of adding footpaths on to the Definitive Map;
- (b) although identifying footpaths as Public Rights of Way in parks was positive step forward there were concerns that this could have implications for cyclists using these paths.

Agreed that –

- (1) Ian Stewart, Vice Chair, would draft a letter to Parks Services outlining the Forum's views on Public Rights of Way within City

Council owned parks;

- (2) the Greenspace Manager is invited to a future meeting to respond to the LAF letter, in (1) above, and to address the forum in the context of the LAF work programme;
- (3) all Forum members are invited to a working group to discuss and agree a position statement on unrecorded footpaths not on council owned land.

11. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members noted the work programme for 2012 – 2013 and agreed that the following items be added to the work programme:

- a progress update on the cycle path at Laira Bridge;
- an update on unrecorded Public Rights of Way;
- an update on the Access Whitleigh project;
- an update on the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

12. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Forum noted its correspondence.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed that the next meeting of the Forum is held at 10.30am on Monday 17 September 2012.

14. **ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS**

There were no issues raised by Forum members.