

Plymouth Local Access Forum

Monday 18 March 2013

PRESENT:

Mr Fairchild, in the Chair.

Mr Stewart, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Mr Goddard, Mrs Rodgers and Mrs Stewart.

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.40 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the forum 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.

42. **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	South West Coast Path Update (minute 47 refers)	Is the Plymouth local representative for the South West Coast Path	Personal

43. **MINUTES**

Members reviewed the minutes and commented that Minute 34 (c) should read ‘on 21 April 2013 the South West Coast Path (SWCP) Association would be hosting a walk of the Plymouth section of the South West Coast Path as part of a walk of the entire SWCP which was taking place between 3 April and 7 May 2013, in celebration of the SWCP Association’s 40th anniversary’.

Agreed that subject to minute 34 (c) being amended as above the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2012 are confirmed as a correct record.

44. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair’s Urgent Business.

45. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS**

The Forum noted the tracking resolutions document and agreed that unless items had been satisfactorily completed then the item should remain as white, and so

remain as an outstanding resolution. Therefore the following items will be returned to white on the tracking resolutions document:

17.12.12 Minute 34;

17.12.12 Minute 37 (1);

17.12.12 Minute 37 (2).

46. **STEPPING STONES TO NATURE PROJECT UPDATE**

The forum received a summary report on recent Stepping Stones to Nature (SS2N) projects and the SS2N Annual Report 2011 – 2012.

In response to questions raised it was reported by Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, that –

- (a) selection of SS2N sites had been decided from a number of factors with deprivation being one;
- (b) although most SS2N sites were in the north of the city, value had been added to other woodland sites located in the south, although they had not been formally acknowledged as SS2N sites;
- (c) aluminium signs had been ordered to replace the theft of two signs at Forder Valley.

47. **SOUTH WEST COAST PATH UPDATE**

Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, informed the Forum that –

- (a) the section of the SWCP between Jennycliff and Bovisand was closed in December 2012 following geotechnical investigation which had showed evidence of potential instability;
- (b) the section of the SWCP had been regularly monitored over the winter months without signs of worsening; the path will be reopened at the end of March 2013;
- (c) development had begun on installing steps at the Royal William Yard with work anticipated to be completed by 30 May 2013. A footpath would be installed in late April 2013 connecting the Royal William Yard with Devil's Point;
- (d) the SWCP Association's 40th anniversary walk of the SWCP was due to begin on 3 April 2013, with the Plymouth section of the path being walked on Sunday 21 April 2013, departing from Jennycliff at 10:15am.

It was commented by Dave Pawley, Forum Member that –

- (e) the closing date for registration for the SWCP Association's 40th anniversary walk had been extended and everyone was encouraged to register for the walk either online at <http://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/40th-anniversary/> or by telephoning the SCWP Association office on 01752 896237.

48. **PLYM VALLEY CYCLE TRAIL UPDATE**

Agreed that this item is deferred until the Forum's next meeting.

49. **CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE) UPDATE**

Bob Harvey, LAF member, gave a verbal update on the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and informed members that –

- (a) the CPRE were in favour of renewable energies on a small scale and were campaigning against large renewable energy constructions, such as solar farms and wind farms;
- (b) it was believed that the economic benefits from large renewable energy constructions would not be delivered in the UK and would instead improve the economies of other nation states where energy companies operating these sites were based, such as EDF Energy in France;
- (c) the operation of large renewable energy farms was also doubted and it was believed that the amount of energy produced would be inadequate and that energy companies spending money on construction would need to recoup this money from customers, therefore adding to the already significant problem of fuel poverty;
- (d) the CPRE were campaigning to ensure that tidal energy schemes would be delivered as a major renewable energy solution as water was thought to be a constant source of energy, whereas sun and wind (for solar and wind farms) were more infrequent;
- (e) countryside in urban areas was high on the CPRE agenda and it was hoped that a CPRE representative would soon work with Plymouth on this issue;
- (f) tree diseases were now a genuine issue across the entire UK with ash dieback becoming a serious threat to the future of ash trees in both urban and rural environments.

Agreed that the impact of ash dieback in Plymouth is added to work programme as an item to be discussed at a future meeting.

50. **CONFERENCE UPDATES**

Ray Fairchild, Chair, updated Forum members about the recent National LAF Conference held in Sheffield on 27 February 2013. Members were informed that –

- (a) the conference was very informative and very well attended, with 71 out of 82 LAFs represented;
- (b) the following items were discussed during the conference –
 - Monitoring of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey;
 - LAF involvement in Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs);
 - Hampshire Heritage PATHH – Providing access to Hampshire’s Heritage;
 - National Planning Policy Framework;
 - Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) update;
 - LAF Annual reports.

John Skinner and Bob Harvey, LAF Members, updated the Forum on the LAF Regional Conference held in Bovey Tracey on 5 March 2013. Members were informed that -

- (c) the conference was interesting with its main theme focussing on the behaviour of dogs in the countryside;
- (d) the main speaker at the conference was Stephen Jenkinson who was excellent and very motivating;
- (e) Plymouth LAF could host a future event with Stephen Jenkinson as the main speaker and invite other local LAFs to attend.

Agreed that –

- (1) Ross Johnston, LAF Secretary, would email the Chair’s notes from the National LAF Conference to all Forum Members;
- (2) Ross Johnston, LAF Secretary, would email a link on the Hampshire Heritage PATHH to all Forum Members;
- (3) Bob Harvey would investigate the idea of inviting Stephen Jenkinson to provide a session on dogs to the Plymouth LAF and other local LAFs.

51. **WORKING GROUPS**

a) **UNRECORDED FOOTPATHS WORKING GROUP**

Robin Pearce, Public Rights of Way Officer, informed the Forum that –

- (a) there had been no meetings of the ‘unrecorded footpaths working group’ since the last Forum meeting;
- (b) the Forum could assist in the development of PROW by identifying areas with unrecorded footpaths and presenting them as detailed local packages of footpaths to be adopted as PROW, similar to the Whitleigh: Safer and Sustainable Travel Project.

Agreed that Patricia Hitchens is appointed as the Forum’s representative for the Whitleigh: Safer and Sustainable Travel Project and will provide progress updates at future LAF meetings.

52. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The forum noted the work programme for 2012 – 2013.

53. **CORRESPONDENCE**

The forum noted its correspondence.

54. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed the dates for the next municipal year as follows:

- Monday 17 June 2013 at 10:30am;
- Monday 2 September 2013 at 10:30am;
- Monday 16 December 2013 at 10:30am;
- Monday 17 March 2014 at 10:30am.

55. **ISSUES ARISING FROM FORUM MEMBERS**

Members of the Forum commented that Plymouth LAF should attempt to make contact with the Royal Forestry Society to establish whether a project could assist with Plymouth’s urban forest lands, similar to that of a project in Torbay which aims to preserve and improve forest and woodland areas.