

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2012 to March 2013

Name of LAF: Plymouth Local Access Forum

Name of LAF Chair: Ray Fairchild

Name of LAF Secretary: Ross Johnston

Number of LAF members: 14

1 - Involvement and Representation

What interests does your current membership cover? Walking, cycling, landowners, sailing.

What skills, sectors, interest groups, experience are missing? None.

Describe any difficulties you had recruiting members from particular sectors: Landowners have been difficult to recruit to the PLAF. Forum operates with 2 landowners.

2 - Operation of LAF

What procedures (e.g. expense claims, new applications etc) do you follow that help you work effectively? Are these effective? Plymouth Local Access Forum terms of reference.

How do you ensure that your members are able to work as a team? Plymouth Local Access Forum terms of reference.

In what ways do you reach consensus? Plymouth Local Access Forum terms of reference.

How do you ensure proper conduct and/or resolve any conflicts? Plymouth Local Access Forum terms of reference.

Give up to 3 examples of where you have encountered operational difficulties (e.g. lack of resources); explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate such issues:

- 1 - Progress in developing the Definitive Map.
- 2 - Planning applications dealing with footpaths - meeting arranged with senior planning officers who have taken PLAF's concerns on board.
- 3 - There is no public rights of way improvement plan at present.

3 - Partnership and Progress

Do you work well with the access authority? If not, why not? Yes.

Do you work well with your planning authorities? If not, why not? Yes. Weekly planning lists copied to Secretary for onward circulation.

Have you established a clear role for the LAF in the local area? Yes, statutory consultees for ROW; open spaces land access.

Were you successful in meeting the achievements set out in your work programme (please provide supporting information)? PLAF played a major role in the developments of the SWCP brochure. Derriford Countryside Park - responded to consultation.

Have you achieved something else? Relationship built with other LAFs through shared members and regional meetings.

Main or notable achievements?

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4 - Profile and Direction

Has anything changed over the last year? No.

What changes / barriers can you see ahead? The Forum has a need to recruit more members to the usual operating membership of 16.

What are your priorities for the year ahead (list up to 3)?

- 1 - More involvement in the development of LNP.
- 2 - Regular monitoring of South West Coast Path (SWCP) section through Plymouth.
- 3 - Development of the Cooperative Way - updating of brochure.

What support or training do you need to deliver your priorities?

5 - Section 94 Bodies

Give up to 3 examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:

- 1 - Public slipways and landing stages. Gave advice to Council and Marine Liaison Committee about public access to slipways and landing stages.
- 2 - Parks and greenspaces - wrote letter offering suggestions and giving advice to the Council's Parks & Green Spaces Manager.
- 3 -

6 - Open Access Work

How many Restriction Cases have you been consulted on? None.

How many cases have you responded to? None.

Detail any informal involvement with Open Access Restriction cases: None.

7 - Number of consultations, meetings and initiatives your LAF has been involved with over the year (please add numbers into the boxes below)?

Public meetings	4	Working groups	2
Training days	1	Definitive map modification orders	1
Highway orders	0	Green Infrastructure strategies	1
Gating orders	0	Local transport plans and traffic management schemes	0
Cycle projects	1	Disabled access	0
Dog exclusion/on leads/fouling orders	0	Housing development schemes	1

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Planning applications	2	PROW network and projects	0
ROWIP planning and objectives	1	Local development frameworks and planning strategies	1
Local Nature Partnerships	0	Recording of paths and promoting use	0
Expiring permissive agreements under Higher Level Stewardship schemes - assessing the value and future of and liaison with landowners to improve access	0	Flood defence works - Environment Agency consultations and planning applications regarding	0
Slipways and landing stages - public access to	1	Improvement of access through the Paths for Communities (P4C) scheme	0
Disposal and development of land owned by the Council	0	Parish Council or local improvement grant schemes	0
Shoreline management plans	0	Rail freight interchange strategic development	0
Network rail and rail crossing closures	0	Access and nature conservation	0
Horse routes and equestrian provision	0	Multi user routes	0
National Parks	0	Coastal access	1
Motorised vehicle access	0	Access to MOD land	0
New town & village green registration government consultation	0	Natural England consultations	1
Defra consultations	0	Commons grazing proposals	0
Highways Agency consultations	0	Department for Transport consultations	0
Other (please specify):			

8 - Final comments from Appointing Authority:

The Plymouth Local Access Forum have been involved in a number of issues the past year and there has been some useful feedback and suggestions made. Specifically the views of particular forum members on how we can improve access to information relating to the changes to the Definitive Map has been both insightful and interesting for us. We will be

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making a series of changes to our working practices as a result of that. However outside of this it has been something of a challenging year and from our point of view a step backwards for the PLAF after the success it achieved in previous years. There have been a number of important strategic opportunities missed such as engagement with the Plymouth Plan (City Development Plan), the establishment of the LNP and the Paths for Communities funding stream with the LAF instead placing its focus on isolated operational issues such as minor repair works and single footpath issues.

Apathy has been a key problem. Training sessions that were requested by the forum were only attended by 2 members, engagement opportunities offered by the planning authority weren't taken up and there is a disproportionate focus on public rights of way. The Membership is strongly biased towards access users and we are keen to attract a more varied member base representing areas such as water sports, tourism and cycling. The Forum also appears to be alienating key partners and is struggling to build or maintain professional relationships or to establish itself a reputation as a strategic body by looking inwards rather than outwards. We see the current weaknesses of the forum as being symptomatic of our inability to afford it the time and detailed support it clearly requires. We have recently implemented measures to tackle this such as reducing the frequency of meetings to encourage a more strategic focus, establishing a Forward Work Programme to help the forum better plan its agendas, limiting opportunities for members to introduce 'any other business' which detracts from properly planned agenda items and providing a system to record outstanding resolutions to enable the forum to keep track of its activities. In the future we would wish to see more variety in the leadership of the forum with a lack of competition for the posts having resulted in the same chair for the past 7 years. A broader range of interests will help create opportunities for other interests to influence the future direction of the LAF.

9 - Final comments from LAF Chair: Acknowledge the Appointing Authority statement, will discuss it further as soon as possible with Rights of Way Officer when available.