

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire East Local Access Forum**
held on Thursday, 12th December, 2013 at The Tatton Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

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| Forum Members | Bob Anderson (in the Chair) Rhoda Bailey Carole Bentley Chris Driver Pat Featherstone Andy Gildon John Handley Linda Rose Ivor Williams |
| Officer | Genni Butler, Countryside Access Development Officer Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer |
| Others | Keith Brightmore, NFU PC Andrew Griffiths Dominic Flynn, Jacobs |

Action

25 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies were received from Forum members Gillian Herdman and Dale Langham and also from Mike Taylor, Rights of Way Manager

26 FORUM PRIORITY: SAFETY ON RURAL LANES

The Forum had agreed that improving safety on rural roads would be one of its work priorities and at the last meeting had agreed to invite a representative from Cheshire Constabulary to attend.

PC Andrew Griffiths attended the meeting and gave a presentation entitled "I am in your Blind Spot", which highlighted specific dangers involving farm vehicles and motorcycles on rural roads. Copies of the DVD along with leaflets and blind spot mirrors for tractors were available to take away.

The Forum agreed that the information in the presentation should be extended to other users of rural lanes in Cheshire, including motorists, cyclists, horseriders and walkers and that the Forum should work with the Cheshire Constabulary Road Safety Officer and other agencies to help improve the safety of the users.

27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2013 be agreed as a correct record, subject to correction of the spelling mistakes.

28 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Carole Bentley reported on the press coverage in the Crewe area on the unveiling of the memorial for John Taylor, which had taken place after the last Forum meeting.

John Handley reported that Cheshire East Council was currently consulting on its Planning Core Strategy Pre- Submission and suggested that the Forum should submit a response. He welcomed the references to access for walkers and cyclists in the document but felt that there should be a specific reference in the Visitor Economy section to the network of public footpaths, bridleways, byways and country lanes as they played an important part in attracting tourists to Cheshire East.

As the deadline for responses was 16 December 2013, it was agreed that John would draft a response to the Consultation and send to Genni Butler for submission via the Chairman.

**JH/GB/
BA**

Ivor Williams reported that the Bollington Walking Festival had been successful, with over 500 walkers taking part. He also report that Bollington had been accredited as a 'Walkers are Welcome' town. This was a nationwide initiative to encourage towns and villages to be welcoming to walkers and Bollington was the first town in Cheshire to be awarded the accreditation.

Rhoda Bailey reported that Cheshire East Council had run two schemes aimed at supporting community led activities to improve access to essential services – the Transport Accessibility Grant and a Vehicle Allocation Scheme.

29 POYNTON RELIEF ROAD

Dominic Flynn from Jacobs attended the Forum to seek their views on the effect of the proposed Poynton Relief Road on public rights of way and countryside access for the environmental impact assessment.

At this stage in the process the route had not yet been agreed and there was no detailed design for the proposed relief road but it was envisaged to be a 3km in length 50 mph single carriageway linking the A523 with the Manchester Airport Relief Road.

The proposed road would affect a number of public rights of way and it was envisaged that they would cross the road by either bridge or underpass. In line with the SEMMMS road it was proposed that there

would be a separate cycle route along the road.

Public consultation on the route options was expected to be carried out in due course and the Forum would be able to respond in more detail on the proposals then.

Forum members were asked to send any comments to Genni Butler, **AII/GB** who would forward on to Jacobs.

30 GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE ACT 2013 - CHANGE OF LEGISLATION FOR PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Genni Butler reported on the changes to rights of way law and procedures under the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013.

Section 12 of the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to allow competent authorities to make stopping up and diversion orders if they were satisfied that a planning application had been made and if the application was granted it would be necessary to stop up or divert the path in order to enable the development to go ahead. Additionally any order so made could not be confirmed unless the Secretary of State or the Order Making Authority was satisfied that planning permission had been granted and it was necessary to stop up or divert the path in order to enable the development to go ahead. These changes would contribute to speeding up the planning process by making orders for stopping up and diverting public rights of way prior to planning consent being granted.

The 2013 Act also introduced changes to Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980. The new legislation no longer required a declaration to be sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths but applicants had to sign a Statement of Truth attesting to the veracity of the information submitted. The new legislation also stipulated that the data be available through online registers of landowner deposits and that the deposits need only be made every 20 years. There was also a new requirement to advertise the making of a deposit by posting a notice on site and also displaying it on the Council's website.

The 2013 Act implemented changes to the registration of applications for Commons and Village Greens, which included the principle that a Village Green application cannot now be made on a site subject to a planning application or identified in any local development plan. If an application is refused or withdrawn a Village Green application can once again be made.

The draft Deregulation Bill contained proposal to change the process for applications to modify the Definitive Map and also to divert public rights of way. Further details would be brought to the Forum at a future meeting.

31 REVIEW OF THE YEAR'S PRIORITIES AND PROPOSALS FOR THE COMING YEAR

The Forum reviewed their previously agreed work priorities and agreed to continue with these for the coming year.

Safety on Rural Roads – Linda Rose, John Handley and possibly Dale Langham to lead on this work area. Contact would be made with the Cheshire Constabulary Road Safety Officer to obtain accident statistics. Other suggestion for this work area included highway maintenance, conservation of verges, visibility at night and publicity.

Publicity – Carole Bentley to lead. Any articles on the Forum in the local newspapers would be circulated to all Forum Members.

Walks for All – Bob Anderson, Ivor Williams and Andy Gildon to lead. It was suggested that this work area be expanded to include improving disabled access and for under represented groups.

32 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Genni Butler reported on the progress of the current projects in the Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan. These included:

- Walks for All Leaflet – an accessible PDF version had been developed, which was suitable for use with screen readers.
- Dane Meadow, Holmes Chapel – funding had been received from Path 4 Communities for the project.
- The Carrs, Wilmslow – the Public Rights of Way Committee on 9 December 2013 had approved a deed of dedication to create a public bridleway.
- Cranage to Holmes Chapel off road link – a business case had been submitted to seek funding for the scheme.

A letter was circulated to Forum members detailing a request that had been made for two lengths of public footpath in Crewe to be converted to cycle track status in order that cyclists can legally use the routes. Under section 3 of the Cycle Track Act 1984, a highways authority had the power to upgrade the legal status of public footpaths into cycle tracks. It was proposed to use this power in relation to public footpaths Nos.3 (part) and 36 in Crewe.

Members were asked to forward any comments on the proposal to Genni Butler by 31 January 2014. A report would be taken to the Public Rights of Way Committee on 18 March 2014 seeking approval for a Cycle Tracks Order.

33 NEW MATTERS ARISING

There were no new matters arising.

34 PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS IN 2014

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 13 March 2014 in Crewe.

The dates for meetings in 2014 are as follows:

Thursday 12 June 2014 – Macclesfield

Thursday 11 September 2014 – Crewe

Thursday 4 December 2014 - Macclesfield