



Cheshire Local Access Forum

Annual General Meeting Agenda

Date:	Friday 16th December 2011
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, CW7 1AH

Location Map on Page 1

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies (10.00 - 10.05)**
2. **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman (10.05 - 10.15)**

Rachel Graves
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising (10.15 - 10.20) (Pages 3 - 10)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Cheshire Local Access Forum held on 23 September 2011
4. **British Waterways: a New Charitable Trust (10.20 - 11.00)**

Julie Sharman, Head of Regeneration (North)
5. **Draft Annual Report (11.00 - 11.10) (Pages 11 - 12)**

All
6. **Cheshire West and Chester Interactive Mapping Presentation (11.10 - 11.30)**

Denise Snelson

For requests for further information

Contact: Rachel Graves
Tel: 01270 686473
E-Mail: rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk

7. **Updates Report from Working Groups (11.30 - 12.00)** (Pages 13 - 18)

- Funding
- Under-represented Group: Discussion Paper
- Health: Health Benefits of Riding

8. **Cheshire Local Access Forum Website (12.00 - 12.05)** (Pages 19 - 20)

Ian Hesketh/Hazel Barber

9. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan Updates (12.05 - 12.15)** (Pages 21 - 26)

Denise Snelson and Mike Taylor

10. **Feedback from North-West Regional LAF Chairs' Meeting (12.15 - 12.25)**

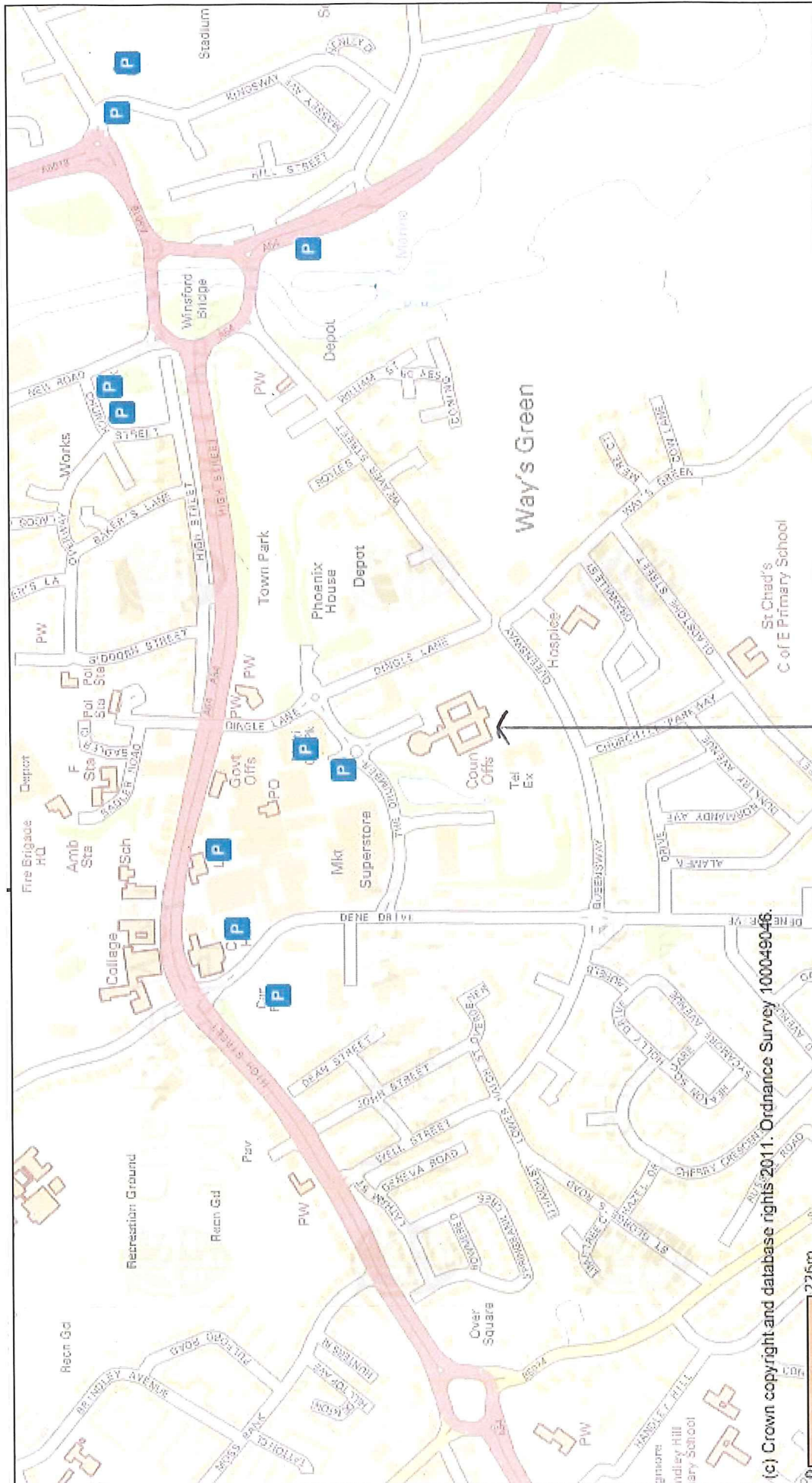
John White

11. **Reports from Members (12.25 - 12.45)**

All

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is at 10.00 am on Friday 23 March 2012



Cheshire West and Chester Council
 Wyvern House
 The Drummer
 Winsford
 CW7 1AH

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MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 16 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF : DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER
Contact : Rachel Graves
Officer Tel: 01270 686473
Email: rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

To confirm the minutes of the Cheshire Local Access Forum held on 23 September 2011.

RECOMMENDED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

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Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Local Access Forum**
held on Friday, 23rd September, 2011 at Nether Alderley Parish Hall,
St Mary's Church, Nether Alderley, Cheshire, SK10 4TW

PRESENT

Forum Members

John White (in the Chair)
Robert Anderson
Rhoda Bailey
Neil Collie
Helen Connolly
Andy Gildon
Dale Langham
Kay Loch
Andrew Needham
Keith Pennyfather
John Taylor
Kath Wurchbacher

Officers and others

Genni Bulter, Cheshire East Council
Rachel Graves, Cheshire East Council
Mike Taylor, Cheshire East Council
Denise Snelson, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Graham Dutton, Warrington Borough Council
Mr Alan Catherall
'Soot'

Action

Prior to the meeting, members walked to view the footbridge on
Nether Alderley Footpath No.33 over the Alderely Edge Bypass.

The proposal to include a footbridge on the Bypass had been
discussed by the Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forum in
December 2007 and the Forum had helped secure its construction.

23 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Keith Osborn and Ian Hesketh.

Cheshire West and Chester Council had appointed Councillor Kay
Loch to be their representative on the Forum.

24 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2011 be agreed
as a correct record.

25 UPDATE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Members of the Working Groups gave an update on their work since the last meeting:

Finance

The Group had nothing to report at present.

Under Represented Groups

The Group was in the process of putting together a position paper which would be brought to a future meeting. They had considered ways to encourage under represented group in accessing the countryside. Suggestions had included promotion of walks through leaflets, holding treasure hunts and geocoaching events, promoting walking festivals such as the Bollington Walking Festival and encouraging walking groups to hold events like the Ramblers initiative 'Get Walking Keep Walking'.

The Group had also consider issues which could put people off walking in the countryside and these included personal safety if walking on own, concerns about sheep, cows and bulls in fields, and not knowing where footpaths are going and the need for more information on signposts.

Health

The Health Group had not met since the last meeting but its members were aware of many countryside access events connected to health taking place such as "Change4Life", "Walk4Life Miles" and walks and events arranged by the Ranger Service and Health Teams in both Councils. It was suggested that feedback be requested from these events. **GB/DS**

A report on horse riding and its benefits to health was due to be published shortly. The Woodlands Trust had issued a report on the benefits of trees to physical and mental health.

26 EVALUATION OF THE NANTWICH RIVERSIDE LOOP PROJECT

Genni Butler reported on the findings of an evaluation of the Nantwich Riverside Loop project, which was completed in May 2011.

The Nantwich Riverside Loop was a three-mile circular walking route which had been designed to encourage people to walk a bit further than they normally walk. The route, signposted in both directions, ran along the River Weaver, then across fields to the Shropshire Union Canal where it followed the improved towpath up to the aqueduct over the Chester Road, before returning to the town via the historic Welsh Row

The Riverside Loop was a partnership project involving Cheshire East Council and British Waterways with support from voluntary organisations including Riverside Concern, Nantwich in Bloom, Nantwich Civic Society, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Nantwich Town Council, Acton, Edleston and Henhull Parish Council. The towpath improvement works were funded by a grant secured from Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN).

To guide walkers around the Loop a new leaflet had been published. The leaflet included a map, directions and information on the history of the riverside, canal and other features along the route. An evaluation card had been inserted in the first tranche of leaflets to gather evidence as to the value of the route and the usefulness of the leaflet.

Eighty responses had been received so far and of these responses:

- 95% said that the leaflet encouraged them to walk the route
- 90% said that having walked the route they are more likely to explore other walks in the area
- 94% said they preferred to find information on walks in a leaflet
- 29% stated the internet as a preferred source of information
- 94% said they feel healthier having been out for a walk
- 98% know that walking could improve their physical and mental health
- 68% of respondents reported that they were trying to exercise more or had been recommended by their doctor or health professional to exercise more

27 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES

Members were updated on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester. The report received outlined details of the current projects on the general infrastructure, access for equestrians and off road cyclists, accessibility and event and promotions.

Progress on the following projects was reported:

Cheshire East

- Bollington – bridge over canal at Clarence Mill to link towpath with Clarence Road
- Crewe to Nantwich Greenway
- Poynton Footpath No.30
- Seven Sisters Lane, Ollerton
- Long Distance Horse Rides
- Stapeley Footpath No. 1
- Pickmere Footpath No. 13
- discovercheshire.co.uk

- publications

Cheshire West and Chester

- Flintshire to Neston Cycleway
- Weaver Valley – upgrade of section of path into a multi-user path and cycleway
- Accessibility
- Publication and events

It had been announced by the Richard Benyon, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, that a new national trust for waterways would be set up to take over the functions of British Waterways and the Environment Agency's responsibility for navigable rivers and that access for walkers on England and Wales canal towpaths would be guaranteed under these proposals. It was suggested that British Waterways be invited to a future meeting to discuss these proposals and any possible closures of canals.

GB/DS

28 FEEDBACK FROM NORTH-WEST REGIONAL LAF CHAIRS' MEETING

The Chairman reported that the next meeting of the Regional LAF Chairs was on 6 October 2011 in Preston. He was unable to attend this meeting and asked if another member would like to attend with John Taylor. Andrew Needham agreed to attend in his place.

The Regional Chairs' meeting had previously discussed the Coastal Access project. Genni Butler reported that she had spoken to Danny Moores at Natural England, on the progress of this project. She reported that Danny had stated that he was working with 2 others in a team on the Allonby to Whitehaven stretch in West Cumbria, which was one of 5 lead stretches across the country: Somerset, Kent, Norfolk, Durham and West Cumbria. An advanced stretch was being developed at Weymouth to be completed prior to July 2012. Hearings on this stretch were being held presently to hear objections from landowners and other parties. The relatively low number of issues arising was pleasing to Natural England as this shows the consultation work done up front has paid off. Natural England was currently awaiting ministerial approval to develop the project beyond the initial 5 stretches. This approval was expected any time in the next month or so.

29 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

John White reminded members that the next meeting would be the Annual General Meeting, at which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would need to be elected.

He also highlighted a number of consultations being carried out to which members may like to respond:

- Cheshire West and Chester was consulting on two large planning applications in Northwich for housing on land near the River Weaver which could affect access to the river path.
- Cheshire East Council was undertaking a Place Shaping Consultation, which ends on 30 September. The consultation was the first stage of consultation in drawing up new plans for Towns and Villages in Cheshire East and was looking at how many new homes and jobs were need and where they should go; protecting and improving important open areas; providing new cycle routes and footpaths; improving town centres and community facilities; and how the environment of towns and villages could be improved.

Andy Gildon reported that a quarry local to where he lived was near the end of its working life and there had been a request to include permissive paths in the restoration plan of the site.

Kay Loch reported that the next meeting of the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rights of Way Committee was on 20 October 2011.

30 PROPOSED DATES OF MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The dates of future meetings of the Local Access Forum were noted as follows:

Friday 16 December 2011
Friday 23 March 2012
Friday 22 June 2012
Friday 21 September 2012
Friday 14 December 2012

All meetings to commence at 10.00 am

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Members and guests on a site visit to the footbridge over the Alderley Edge bypass.



Membership

Member	Area of interest
Robert Anderson	Accessibility
Rhoda Bailey	Councillor, Cheshire East Council
Neil Collie	Walking
Helen Connolly	Horse riding
Ken Edwards	Walking, local government
Andy Gildon	Community involvement
Dale Langham	Cycling and walking as sustainable transport
Andrew Needham	Councillor, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Keith Osborn	Land management
Keith Pennyfather	Walking and sustainable transport
Michael Scott	Land management
John Taylor, Vice Chair	Land management, accessibility
John White, Chairman	Walking
Kath Wurcbacher	Horse riding



Cheshire Local Access Forum, c/o Greenspaces, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Wyvern House, The Drumber, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 1AH
Tel: 01606 271931 Email: claf@cheshire.gov.uk Web: www.cheshirelaf.org

CHESHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
Annual Report 2010 - 2011





Chairman’s introduction

The Forum has met 4 times this year using different venues around the 2boroughs within Cheshire. Despite the large cutback in local government expenditure the Forum has been able to influence positively changes affecting access to the Cheshire countryside. The energy and enthusiasm of the Forum members and in particular the officers of Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester and Chester Councils have helped considerably. One of our priorities for next year will be to ensure that the respective Local Transport Plans provide resources for the recently published Rights of Way Improvement Plans

John White
Chairman.

Training

- Bob Anderson, John Taylor and John White attended the north west regional LAF training on localism and the Big Society in March 2011.

Priorities for 2010-2011

This year the Forum set up working groups in order to investigate more fully the issues surrounding:-

- Spreading best practice;
- Health;
- Under represented groups; and,
- Funding.

For example, the funding sub-group was set up to collect information on funding arrangements allocated to public rights of way within Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils. The annual funding, in both resource and financial terms, has been summarised in a table and presented to the Local Access Forum. The simple format will allow trends in the spending by the Councils to be monitored on an annual basis.

The sub-group has also produced a paper which summarises possiblesources of external funding for access projects so as to encourage local organisations to apply for such funding.

The under-represented groups sub-group has spent the first year in exploring the issue. Internet research showed a wide range of groups has been identified as under-represented. Although a factor common to many of them was lack of transport, we felt the scale of the problem, the cost involved, and current restrictions on expenditure made approaches to this difficult at present. We also concluded that it was realistic to recognise that many people do not wish to access the countryside; our focus therefore should be on those who might wish to do so, but lacked information, means, opportunity or stimulus.

We decided to try to identify a few possible projects, to test out how far new initiatives might increase countryside use by some of the underrepresented groups. We immediately encountered a major problem – lack of good base-line data on current use, against which to measure any changes. Despite this, we felt that our general approach offers the best way of making progress, and that we should continue with it.

In the coming year, we have decided that we should concentrate our efforts on a single countryside site, attempting to identify as wide a range of activities as possible which might be exploited at it. Although this implies a fairly broad approach, the main focus is likely to be on schools and schoolchildren. Though children are not necessarily defined as an under-represented group in themselves, we are interested in the possibility of using them as a means of reaching parents and increasing adult participation, both short and long term. Our aim is to use the information we gather to work with rangers and education professionals to develop a pattern for increasing the number of school visits to the countryside and to the footpaths network.

Priorities for 2011-2012

Continued progress through the working groups and ensuring the respective Local Transport Plans provide resources for the recently published Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

Items of interest

- The Forum received a presentation by Vernon Stockton, Delamere Forest Manager from the Forestry Commission on the proposed future changes to the management of the country’s forests.
- The Forum continued to monitor the delivery of Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) projects, the development of the new ROWIPs for Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, and annual reports for each. In particular, the Forum advised Cheshire East Council on the prioritisation methodology used to rank suggestions put forward during the consultation on the ROWIP.
- Members received a presentation on the Cheshire West and Chester Local Transport Plan from Jeanette Dodd and Sharon Blackshaw.
- The Forum received a presentation from member Ken Edwards on the proposed devolution of local services from the Borough Council to the Town Council, drawing on the experience of Bollington.
- Members contributed to the design and information provided within walks leaflets produced by Cheshire East Council
- Toni Proffitt attended the Forum’s meeting in March 2011, visiting from Denbighshire County Council
- The Forum was consulted on the proposal for a Dog Control Order across the whole of Cheshire West and Chester Borough.
- A presentation was received from David Pott on the new 86 mile pilgrimage route called the Two Saints Way which runs between the two cathedral cities of Chester and Lichfield, linking the shrines of St Werburgh and St Chad.
- The Forum was informed about the results of the Countryside Access Management (CAMS) survey which has populated the Geographical Information System (GIS) of Cheshire West and Chester Council with details of path furniture and surfaces.
- Members received an update from Danny Moores of Natural England on the progress of the coastal path project.
- The Forum made recommendations to the Highways Agency about the A556 Bucklow Improvement Project following a presentation by the Highways Agency and contractors Jacobs Engineering.

North West LAF Chairs’ Forum

Cattle free walking and 'walking for health' are emerging as concepts that Local Access Forums could be investigating more.

This was discussed at the regular meeting of the Chairs of each of the Local Access Forums across the North West of the country. Some experienced walkers thought that walking in areas where there is livestock is really a matter for individuals to do their own risk assessment. Others thought that some guidance would be helpful to encourage new walkers and to inform those who perceive a risk.

Chairs were also informed about the new internet based network ‘HUDDLE’ which will in due course be a source of information and discussion for all Forum members.

Alderley Edge Bypass site visit 23rd September 2011

The Forum’s meeting this quarter was held at the historic Nether Alderley Parish Hall in the grounds of St Mary’s Church. This gave the opportunity for members to take a short walk across the fields to the site of the new footbridge over the Alderley Edge bypass, pictured.



The Forum was instrumental in securing the footbridge to ensure that links in the public rights of way network were maintained following the construction of the bypass. The bridge is located on public footpath Nether Alderley No. 33. Further details were given in the Forum’s annual report of 2008-9.

During the site visit, members debated the costs and benefits of the installation of the bridge. Further discussion focused on the provision of access ramps to either side of the bridge even though the footpaths either side currently feature kissing gates and stiles. The site visit provided an ideal opportunity to consider these issues on the ground.

Under-represented Groups: Discussion Paper

Throughout the year, we have attempted to progress with the work on how to encourage under-represented groups to access the countryside more readily. What we have discovered agrees with much of what previous, detailed, studies have determined.

1. Any group (under-represented or not) would appear to be made up of:
 - Those who would wish to visit the countryside more but for some reason are unable to do so.
 - Those who might consider visiting if that activity fell within their cultural norm and was easy to do.
 - Those who might be interested if there was also an 'attraction' of some type, e.g. an event, demonstration, café, pub, show etc.
 - Those who are just not interested.

2. Of these groups, it is most practical to target as a practical proposition those who show some level of interest and to prioritise those who are interested but are unable to visit the countryside for some reason.

3. To encourage people who do not habitually walk in the countryside requires us to address a large list of questions and preconceptions in some way to 'get them off the sofa'. This has led us to discuss the necessity of providing car (and horse box) parking at convenient starting points, providing simple route descriptions either via paper or electronic means at the idea stage, allaying concerns about trespass, farm animals, ground conditions, weather, the possibility of getting lost etc. It has also caused us to consider the value of some means of helping people to gain confidence in their ability to manage and enjoy country walks. Walks4All have this aim and provide a series of graded and well-described routes. We recognized that it is also important to convey a sense of adventure when people are considering a visit. Perhaps the most simple means would be for experienced walkers to provide informal help to the less experienced. This requires some organization and publicity but would probably fit with the aims of, e.g., the Ramblers' Association.

4. Involving children would seem to be a good way to try to get more adults (their parents etc.) involved. The Scouting organizations already do this and there is a possibility to involve schools in visits to the country and walking as part of the curriculum. Apart from it being valuable in its own right, a visit to the countryside has much educational value: history, geography, social history, art etc. We acknowledge that simply going walking is probably not attractive enough for Generation Y and beyond, and that some sort of challenge and reward incentive will be needed to stimulate their desire to go out into the country (possibly things like orienteering, letter-boxing, themed walks could be considered). If we are to reach a younger group of potential walkers, then we should also consider using promotional channels that they use habitually, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Yammer etc. Groups of people organize events spontaneously using these methods and this may enhance the perceived attractiveness of the event.

5. For many in the cities and towns who have no access to a car and wish to visit the countryside, transport is becoming increasingly limiting. Discussions with providers of walkers' transport services show just how difficult is the economics of this and that, even with a large potential audience (e.g. Peak District NP) considerable funding is needed to set up and publicise the service before any accurate demand can be known. In the current situation, speculative attempts to start services probably could not be justified unless independent funding could be raised. However, we consider there could be more emphasis on access via public transport (e.g. Age Concern Cheshire has an admirable programme of walks for older

people, but all start from a car park – even though in some cases public transport is a viable alternative).

6. We found that some means of gaining access to the countryside were very useful as first steps for anyone new to hiking. For example, some of the larger estates (e.g. Lyme Park) provide reasonably adventurous walks within their boundaries and these are well serviced by signage and leaflets etc. They also provide other facilities and, therefore, alternatives should the weather be awful. The same applies to country parks (e.g. Marbury etc). Walks which begin in towns and loop through the country to return (e.g. Nantwich Riverside Loop) provide a similar easy introduction as do canal and riverside walks and linear parks. We began to form a view that any promotional effort would be best aimed at promoting these types of walks.

7. We also determined that to get a statistical baseline by which to measure utilisation is extremely difficult and is more time consuming than members of a CLAF working party could manage. This caused us to consider that any measures we might take should be viewed as 'proofs of concept' as we could take actions and assess the outcome at the time, rather than taking an action and monitoring over an extended period. An example of this would be, say, assessing the number of new walkers to turn up for events at the Bollington Walking Festival. If we were to do that, at least it would give some information on the utility of events of that type in reaching beyond the 'hard core' of walkers.

8. In summary, it is clear that no single initiative will have a breakthrough effect on getting people into the countryside; this is more likely to be achieved by many small steps and a degree of trial and error.

We have raised various proposals as to where we may take this activity next. These include, as noted above

- Improving information to encourage access
- Targeting work with children as a means of reaching adults
- Finding “challenge and reward” incentives to visit the countryside
- Utilising new media to reach younger people
- Emphasising the viability of existing public transport systems as a means of access.

We would like to discuss these with the CLAF to seek comments, further suggestions and also support to take some of these forward in 2012.

The health benefits of horse riding in the UK



Research undertaken by the University of Brighton and Plumpton College
on behalf of The British Horse Society

The health benefits of horse riding in the UK

Executive Summary

Key findings

The physical health benefits of horse riding and associated activities

- Horse riding and activities associated with horse riding, such as mucking out, expend sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise.
- Regular periods of trotting in a riding session may enhance the energy expended and associated health benefits.
- More than two thirds (68 percent) of questionnaire respondents participate in horse riding and associated activities for 30 minutes or more at least three times a week. Sport England estimate that such a level of sporting activity will help an individual achieve or exceed the government's recommended minimum level of physical activity.
- A range of evidence indicates the vast majority (90 percent plus) of horse riders are female and more than a third (37 percent) of the female riders who took part in the survey were above 45 years of age. Horse riding is especially well placed to play a valuable role in initiatives to encourage increased physical activity amongst women of all ages.
- Amongst the horse riders who took part in the survey, 39 percent had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks. This highlights the importance of riding to these people, who might otherwise be sedentary.
- Horse riders with a long-standing illness or disability who took part in the survey are able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or disability.

The psychological and social benefits of horse riding

- Horse riding stimulates mainly positive psychological feelings.
- Horse riders are strongly motivated to take part in riding by the sense of well-being they gain from interacting with horses. This important positive psychological interaction with an animal occurs in a very few sports.
- Being outdoors and in contact with nature is an important motivation for the vast majority of horse riders.

Study methods

The British Horse Society commissioned the University of Brighton in partnership with Plumpton College to research the physical health, psychological and well-being benefits of recreational horse riding in the United Kingdom.

Sport England UK have adopted a threshold value for the contribution of sport to meeting Government guidelines on the recommended intensity and frequency of exercise that is likely to achieve physical health benefits. The threshold value measures the degree to which an individual participates in sport of moderate intensity activity for at least 30 minutes or more, three times a week. The research, therefore, assessed whether horse riding can be classified as a moderate intensity exercise and examined the frequency with which individuals take part

The research also examined the psychological and social benefits of horse riding. Reliable existing evidence indicates that physical exercise produces well-being benefits linked to social interactions and changes in mood, anxiety, self esteem and other personal emotions.

Two scientific exercise testing trials were undertaken to analyse the physical exercise intensity of recreational horse riding using validated scientific measurements of energy expended and current definitions of what constitutes moderate intensity exercise in terms of energy expenditure measured in metabolic equivalents (METs).

The first trial involved 17 participants cycling in a laboratory to assess their aerobic fitness levels. Measurements were also taken of their descriptive anthropometric characteristics. In the second trial the same 17 participants rode a horse for 45 minutes at the Plumpton College equestrian centre following a protocol that replicated the pattern of a typical riding lesson.

A questionnaire survey was undertaken of 1,248 horse riders. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered by the questionnaire allowed an analysis of the respondents' self reported measures of exercise intensity and frequency, and their perceptions of the social and psychological benefits of horse riding.

Physical health benefits

The scientific trials indicated general horse riding energy expenditure was equivalent to 3.7 METs and trotting equated to approximately 5.0 METs. These levels are clearly within the moderate intensity exercise band recommended by the UK's ABC of Physical Activity for Health guidelines that considers moderate intensity to be typically characterized as between three-six METs.

The national compendium of physical activities categorises energy expenditures for different recreational physical activities and reports levels of four METs for general horse riding and 6.5 METs for trotting, which are similar to those obtained in the scientific trials. The compendium also reports that the energy expenditure for saddling and grooming was 3.5 METs which is in the moderate intensity band

More than two thirds (68 percent) of questionnaire respondents achieved the government guidelines for exercise intensity and frequency (30 minutes for three times a week or more at moderate intensity) from horse riding and associated activities alone. Of these respondents 69 percent achieved this level of intensity and frequency through horse riding and the other 21 percent did so through associated activities such as mucking out and grooming.

Women have been identified in government studies as a social group with relatively low levels of participation in physical activity. Some 93 percent of questionnaire respondents were women and 49 percent of female respondents were aged 45 or above. These are comparable figures to a major Sport England survey which found that 90 percent of those participating in equestrianism are women and 37 percent of the female participants in equestrianism are aged 45 or above. The gender and age profile of equestrianism is not matched by any other sport in the UK.

Thirty nine percent of questionnaire respondents indicated that horse riding was the only form of physical activity in which they had participated during the last four weeks. These respondents, if they did not ride, would be sedentary people unless they changed their exercise habits, thus stressing the importance of horse riding for these individuals.

Qualitative data obtained in the questionnaire suggests that for some respondents with long-standing illnesses or disability, horse riding had actually improved their physical or mental condition.

Psychological and social benefits

More than 80 percent of questionnaire respondents reported that horse riding made them feel 'quite a lot' or 'extremely' cheerful, relaxed, happy or active. Qualitative data suggests that horse riding can play a role in managing negative feelings relating to anxiety and depression. The experience of these psychological benefits amongst questionnaire respondents was not influenced by the frequency of participation in horse riding and most psychological benefits were experienced by riders who did not participate regularly.

Asked to rate different motivations for going horse riding 82 percent of questionnaire respondents rated the motivation of 'interaction with horses' as either 'very important' or 'extremely important'. No other motivation received such a high importance rating. Existing evidence suggests that companion animals can provide owners with certain psychological benefits. These findings suggest that the interaction with horses may be very positive psychologically for horse riders.

More than 80 percent of questionnaire respondents rated the motivations 'contact with nature' and 'scenery and views' 'important', 'very important' or 'extremely important'. Some personal development motivations identified as important by respondents included 'escape', 'develop skills', 'challenge myself', 'experience excitement', 'to be physically active' and 'to relax'. Participation in horse riding provides a range of psychological and social benefits, some of which are particular to the interaction with animals and nature and therefore would not be gained from other forms of sporting activity.

MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 16 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF : Ian Hesketh– Greenspace Manager
Contact : Hazel Barber
Officer

CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM WEBSITE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Local Access Forum web page will need to change in line with new Local Authority guidelines. This paper outlines how the website will have to change and gives some option for change to provoke a discussion on the matter.

2.0 THE BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are new guidelines for Local Authority Websites – they can no longer host archival material, any documents available on the website must be current, current is defined as less than a year old.
- 2.2 At present the Cheshire Local Access Forum (CLAF) is held on the Cheshire West and Chester Website.

3.0 CHANGES THAT ARE NEEDED

- 3.1 The website at present holds archival material for both Cheshire East and Cheshire West Councils. It also holds archival material in the form of old committee agendas and minutes.
- 3.2 It will no longer be possible to store this information once it is a year old. This could be an opportunity to change the way this data is presented to the public.

4.0 OPTIONS

- 4.1 An alternative to the present arrangement, the options below are not exhaustive but are included to provide a starter for the debate

Option 1: The CLAF runs and maintains its own website, which can then hold all the materials current and archival. A link from the website could then be maintained from the Cheshire West and Chester and East websites.

Option 2: Accept a reduced service from the current website with all current documents available for a maximum of one year

Option 3: Cheshire East host the CLAF for the time being and delay a decision.

- 4.2 Forum members' views are sought on the above options.

For further information:

Officer: Hazel Barber

Tel 01606 288539

Email: hazel.barber@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 16 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF : COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
Contact : Genni Butler & Denise Snelson
Officer : 01270 686059 or 01606 271931

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - CURRENT PROJECTS

Updates on current projects are provided for both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester overleaf.

RECOMMENDED:

That the report be noted.

APPENDIX - PROGRESS ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail and work completed 2011-12	Update December 2011
Bollington – bridge over canal at Clarence Mill to link towpath (FP52 Bollington) with Clarence Road	ongoing	Bollington Civic Society, British Waterways, Friends of Bollington Recreation Ground, adjacent landowner	Project lead = Richard Doran & Civic Society. PROW involvement = helping with any shortfall and dealing with the dedication of a PROW across new structure and down British Waterways' track to park & adjacent circular loop. Opportunities identified and approach made to BW.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial BW response received: suggesting permissive path – responses chased August, September & November 2011
LTP Area Programme Crewe and Nantwich – Crewe to Nantwich Greenway	Spring 2012	SUSTRANS, Highways, Weaver Valley Regional Park	Creation of new bridleway link between Crewe (Queen's Park) and Nantwich Riverside over land owned by the Beam Heath Trust. Part of the Sustrans 'Connect 2' project using the People's Millions Lottery Money. Landowner negotiations continuing Planning permission secured Commons Land permission in application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landowner requires alternative route Planning permission, common land consent re-applications required ROW Committee re-approval being sought December 2011
Seven Sisters Lane, Ollerton (ROWIP Ref. H20)	March 2015	North Cheshire Riders, Highways, Landowners	Safety issue for riders on busy lane, used to access bridleway network. Surface improvements sought on connecting bridleway No. 6 also.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highways Road Safety Officers engaged to investigate solutions
Gritstone Trail crossing of A54,	March 2015	Landowners	Seeking to improve crossing of A54 in Wincle. Road safety officer report received. Two landowners approached.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landowners approached, but unwilling to offer permissive route Highways solutions being investigated
Long distance horse ride (ROWIP ref. X15)	March 2012	North Cheshire Riders, Hoof Cheshire, local businesses	Development of long distance horse ride. Route would be first in Cheshire East and would be promoted for cyclists as well as horseriders. Route developed by North Cheshire Riders Application for funding submitted August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding bid successful October 2011 Project delivery initiated
Stapeley Footpath No. 1 (ROWIP Ref. T84)	March 2012	Local Transport Plan, Sustrans	Local Transport Plan Cycling project: Sustrans match funded surface improvements on urban path between school, shops and houses. Landowner agreement secured Quotes from contractors obtained Environmental mitigation agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project completed November 2011
Pickmere Footpath No. 13 (ROWIP Ref. T24)	March 2015	Parish Council, CWAC, Landowners	Surface improvements on a footpath connecting Pickmere village with Wincham school. Site meeting held Landowners' agreement sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project completed October 2011

discovercheshire.co.uk	ongoing	ICT, Tourism colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population of www.discovercheshire.co.uk and its sister websites Discover Cheshire's Peak District and Discover the Gritstone Trail with promoted walks, cycles and horse rides. • Knutsford Rail Walks leaflet routes added June 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willaston Old Oak Circular walk added October 2011 • Haslington walk added October 2011
Cheshire East News / other publications	ongoing	Communications teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knutsford Rail Trail leaflet nominated for Best Marketing Event award in the Community Rail Awards 2011 • Nantwich Riverside Loop featured in Cheshire East News • Walks for All route at Astbury Mere is the 6th most visited page out of all of those listed from around the country on the Walk4Life website • Walk4Life Day press release and Radio Stoke interview • Evaluation of Nantwich Riverside Loop press release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ollerton bridleway surface improvements press coverage • Haslington walk feature in Cheshire East News prepared but publication cancelled due to spending freeze

CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL UPDATE ON RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROJECTS

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update December 2011
Cuddington new footpath to link bowling green to FP21 Cuddington upgrade to surface and installation of new bridge	2011/12	Cuddington PC,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not within priority funding list for Highway for 2010/11. Capital bid potential for 2011/12 or possibility for external funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital bid for 2011/12 Pursue external funding
Flintshire to Neston Cycleway	Long term	SUSTRANS, CCC Regeneration, Flintshire CC, Engineering Service etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing cycling/walking link between Deeside and Neston. Approach to RSPB has been made by SUSTRANS. RSPB have agreed to permissive footpath, but not to cycling yet. Definitive Map Team dealing with Old Quay and Snab Lane claims – both to be DMMO'd as footpaths. Part of North West Coastal Trail (NWCT) – will be taken forward as part of this project. Authority has sent letter of support to Network Rail to compliment SUSTRANS application for this stretch. I meeting is taking place with landowners on site (RSPB, MoD & Network rail) on 2 December 2010 to progress route The meeting in December was very positive, all landowners confirmed they are happy to progress with a permissive cycle route. There needs to be thorough discussions regarding land management issues in the next few months. Flintshire CC applying for Welsh Assembly funding for their end of the route 2011/12. Cheshire West and Chester will look to secure funding for 2012/13 but will pursue earlier delivery if funding available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMMO priority document has been produced June 2010 Investigate link to Wirral Way 2010
North West Coastal Trail	Long term	NWDA, surrounding authorities, North West Coastal Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merseyside & Cheshire Coastal Access Group meet quarterly. NW Coastal trail proposed route through Frodsham Marsh & Flintshire to Neston cycleway Marine & Coastal Access Act gives Natural England a duty to implement a walking route around the coast by 2020. Working closely to secure both objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible source of funding to secure footbridge across Weaver navigation 2011/12

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update December 2011
Bishop Bennet Way	2011	Road Safety Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetreins Green stretch on the capital bid list, other improvements will be assessed. Road crossing surveyed for improvement possibilities Creation Order in progress to secure stretch at the end of Whitegate Way to join Cuddington BR16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital programme 2011/12
Delamere Loop	2011			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress 2011
Weaver Valley	On going	Weaver Valley Partnership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dutton horse crossing over £1 million project will be delivered over the next few months, a temporary pontoon crossing will be put in place while the work is undertaken. Weaver Way- Riversdale Bridge completed 2010. Additional footpath improvements along River Dane through Vickers parkway partially completed. Future improvements to tow path from Hartford Blue Bridge to Winsford are scheduled for early 2011 (£150K CW&C capital funding to be confirmed April 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On going project
'Walks for All' Cheshire West and Chester	2011	Volunteer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No steps no stile, walks for all booklet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Cheshire Show June 2010 Walks on Discover Cheshire April 2011
Accessibility	2011	ICT WEB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entire Network Survey information has now been received, reports are being run and issues/anomalies will be assessed for future work programmes and priorities. CAMS data base Fault reporting system will come on line with the new mapping pages Equalities Act training took place March 2011 to assess impact on RoW work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information delivery July 2010 Web package development programme December. Feature to be available Summer 2011
Discover Cheshire	2011	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New version is now on the web. Additional of walks for all routes and other Greenspace sites will be completed over the next few months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional info regarding parks will be added by the end of March 2011
Cheshire West and Chester publications & events	On going	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New sister web site for Northwich and Rural North will be a magazine type community based website with blogs and updates etc. Contact magazine, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire Show 2011- large show feature in the 'Countryside & Rural' section to promote

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking Together Magazine (public services magazine) Walks for All booklet promoted in both. • Cheshire walks feature article published in national Country Walking magazine • Walks for All information shared on Peak and Northern Footpaths Society website • ROWIP press releases 	<p>Greenspace Team including access & park improvements projects and allotments.</p>
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