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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Public Rights of Way Committee**
held on Monday, 13th June, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Wray (Chairman)
Councillor D Druce (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey, R Cartlidge, M Parsons and W S Davies

In Attendance

Councillor D Stockton, Executive Support Member for Environmental Services

Officers

Mark Wheelton, Leisure Services and Greenspaces Manager
Mike Taylor, Greenspaces Manager
Rachel Goddard, Solicitor
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Rhoda Bailey declared a personal interest in Item 8 – Application for the Diversion of Public Footpath No.4 in the parish of Peover Inferior, as she knew the owner of the land. In accordance with the code of conduct, she remained in the meeting during consideration of this item.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

One member of the public had registered to speak in relation to Item 6 – Application for the Diversion of Public Footpaths Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 11 in the parish of Mobberley.

5 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2011-2012

The Committee received a report which detailed the achievements of the Public Rights of Way service during 2010-11 and set out the proposed work programme for 2011-12.

The Greenspaces Manager reported on the work carried out during 2010-11 by the Maintenance and Enforcement Team and the Legal Orders Team.

It was reported that:

- 33 temporary and emergency closures of rights of way had been made
- 14 public path orders had been confirmed, 28 cases were in the progress, with a backlog of 14 applications
- 7 Orders had been contested and referred to the Planning Inspectorate
- 2 Definitive Map Modification Orders had been confirmed, 9 were in progress, with a backlog of 22
- 6 Definitive Map Anomaly investigations had been completed, with a backlog of over 260

The Rights of Way team had suffered from a reduction in the base budget. The base budget for contractors and materials had not increased over the past 7 years and was in decline. The increasing demand on the budget and the reactive way that maintenance must work resulted in funds being completed committed significantly before the end of the financial year and consequently work other than planned pre-allocated commitments had to be cut back. In addition, a moratorium on all non-essential spending was imposed over the Health and Wellbeing service in October 2010 until the end of the financial year. The consequences were that a back log of work was released at the commencement of the new financial year, compounding the problem of underfunding and speeding the time at which the budget becomes expired.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report for 2010-2011 be noted and the proposed Work Programme for the Public Rights of Way Team 2011-2012 be approved.

6 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NOS 1, 2, 3 AND 11 (PARTS), PARISH OF MOBBERLEY

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mr and Mrs A Edgar, Vale Wood Farm, Smith Lane, Mobberley (the applicant) requesting the Council to make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath nos. 1, 2, 3 and 11 in the parish of Mobberley.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

Mr John White, representing the Ramblers (Vale Royal and Knutsford Group), spoke in relation to Footpath No. 11 being unavailable on the ground and, as this had been the situation for a number of years, asked that the Council take action on this in the next 12 months.

The applicant owned the land over which the current paths and the proposed diversion ran. The sections of each Public Footpath to be diverted ran through the property of the landowner giving rise to concerns relating to security and safety, especially since Mobberley FP No.1 also ran through a barn.

The proposed new route would have a recorded width of 2m and would not be enclosed. Of benefit to the public, the new route would be significantly more enjoyable as it would pass through more open and scenic landscape and would be easier to navigate as it simplifies passage past the farmyard and buildings.

The Ramblers Association had made a request in relation to the current line of Mobberley FP No. 11, which was unavailable to the south of Vale Wood Farm since a bridge was missing that would allow passage over a stream. The legal line of the footpath was not clear and the Council was working to resolve this.

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and considered that the proposed routes were not substantially less convenient than the existing routes and diverting the footpaths would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of security and privacy of the property. It was therefore considered that the proposed routes would be a satisfactory alternative to the current routes and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert parts of Public Footpaths Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 11, Parish of Mobberley by creating new sections of each public footpath and extinguishing the current path sections, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/049 on the grounds that it was expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the paths.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order

be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.

- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

7 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 6 (PART), PARISH OF SANDBACH

The Committee considered a report detailing an application from Mr R Astles, Chairman of Sandbach Rugby Union Football Club, Bradwall Road, Sandbach (the applicant), requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath No. 6 in the parish of Sandbach.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make an Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

The land over which the current path and the proposed diversion ran belonged to the Sandbach Rugby Union Football Club. The section of Public Footpath No. 6 to be diverted traversed parts of two rugby pitches. To better manage use of the rugby pitches and the footpath, the applicant would like to divert the footpath to enable users to walk between the pitches rather than across them. The new route would have a recorded width of 2m and would not be enclosed. Of benefit to the public, the new route would be more convenient for users since it would pass between the pitches so separating path users from pitch users.

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and considered that the new route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route. Diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of improving land management in relation to use and maintenance of the rugby pitches. It was therefore considered that the proposed route would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No.6 Sandbach by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/048 on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.

- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

8 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 4 (PART), PARISH OF PEOVER INFERIOR

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mr B Wharfe, Whitehouse Farm, Plumley Moor Road, Knutsford (the applicant) requesting the Order to make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath No.4 in the parish of Peover Inferior.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

Mr SR Wharfe owned the land over which the current path and the proposed diversions ran. The section of path to be diverted ran across a pasture field on which a free range chicken farm was to be developed. For effective livestock management, the applicant was requesting that the path be diverted to separate livestock from path users. The new route would have a recorded width of 2m and would not be enclosed. Of benefit to the public, the new route would be as enjoyable as it would pass through similar scenic landscape.

Objections had been received from Mr JA Jackson and Mr and Mrs S Wade, who lived at The Smithy and Orchard Lea respectively at Smithy Green, Lower Peover, Knutsford. Their objections centred on the loss of scenic enjoyment if the footpath was diverted to follow the field edge rather than passing across the field and then through the enclosed section of hawthorn hedge and oak trees. However, the development of the chicken farm would alter the landscape and subsequent scenic enjoyment. A hedge would bisect the field so it would no longer be an expanse of open space. Furthermore, the current path alignment would force users to enter the chicken farm in order to follow the legal line. Diverting the path around the field edge would benefit users by separating them from the livestock whilst still providing scenic views.

The Committee considered that the new route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route and that diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of management of the land which was being developed for free range chicken farming. It

was therefore considered that the proposed route would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No. 4 Peover Inferior by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/047, on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

9 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 6 AND BRIDLEWAY NO. 1 (PARTS), PARISH OF CONGLETON

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mr P Chadwick, Moreton Meadows Farm, Waggs Road, Congleton (the applicant) requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath No. 6 and part of Public Bridleway No.1 in the parish of Congleton.

In accordance of Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appears to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path and bridleway.

The applicant owned the land over which the current path, bridleway and proposed diversion ran. The section of Public Footpath No.6 Congleton to be diverted ran through the property of the applicant giving rise to concerns relating to security and safety. The section of Public Bridleway No.1 Congleton to be diverted would realign it to the currently used line thus resolving an outstanding alignment issue. The new section of bridleway would be enclosed on both sides and have a recorded width of 3.5m along the new route and the new section of footpath would have a recorded width of 2m. Of benefit to the public, the alignment issue in relation to the bridleway would be resolved and the new footpath would be significantly more enjoyable as it would pass through more open landscape.

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and considered that proposed route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route. Diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of enhancing security and privacy of the property. Diverting the bridleway would resolve an outstanding alignment issue. It was therefore considered that the proposed routing would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1980, to divert parts of Public Footpath No.6 and Bridleway No.1 in the parish of Congleton by creating new sections of path and bridleway and extinguishing the current path and bridleway, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/051, on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path and bridleway.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

10 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 9 (PART), PARISH OF CHORLTON

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mr and Mrs A Parker, Oakleigh Cottage, Newcastle Road, Chorlton, Crewe (the applicant) requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath No.9 in the parish of Chorlton.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make an Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

The applicant owned the land over which the current path ran. The land over which the proposed diversion ran belonged to Mr and Mrs Sellars, Basford House, Newcastle Road, Chorlton, Crewe, who had given agreement to the diversion. The section of Public Footpath No.9 Chorlton to be diverted ran through the property of the applicant giving rise to concerns relating to security and safety and was also obstructed by buildings. Diverting the path would offer improved privacy and security

whilst realigning the path to a useable line. Of benefit to the public, the new route would be significantly more enjoyable as it would pass through more open landscape and be unobstructed.

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and considered that the proposed route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route. Diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the applicant in terms of enhancing the security and privacy of the property and realigning the path to be available for public use. It was therefore considered that the proposed route would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No.9 Chorlton by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/050, on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

11 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 6 (PART), PARISH OF SOUND

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mr WF Wright, Sound Lodge, Wrenbury Heath Road, Sound, Nantwich (the applicant) requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert part of Public Footpath No.6 in the parish of Sound.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

The Applicant owned the land over which the current path and the proposed diversion ran. The section of Public Footpath No.6 Sound to be diverted ran through the property of the applicant giving rise to concerns

relating to security and safety. Furthermore, the bungalow belonging to the applicant was on the current alignment of the path rendering it unavailable to users. The new route would have a recorded width of 2m and would be unenclosed. Of benefit to the public, the new route would be significantly more enjoyable as it would pass thorough more open and scenic landscape.

The Committee noted that no objections had been received and considered that the proposed route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route. Diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of enhancing the security and privacy of the property whilst realigning the path to make it available for users. It was therefore considered that the proposed route would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert part of Public Footpath No.6 Sound by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path, as illustrated on Plan No.HA/046 on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

12 HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 SECTION 119: APPLICATION FOR THE DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NOS. 4 AND 5 (PARTS), PARISH OF GREAT WARFORD

The Committee received a report which detailed an application from Mrs Byrom, Little Moss Farm, Chelford Road, Great Warford (the applicant), requesting that the Council make an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to divert parts of Public Footpath Nos. 4 and 5 in the parish of Great Warford.

In accordance with Section 119(1) of the Highways Act 1980 it was within the Council's discretion to make the Order if it appeared to the Council to be expedient to do so in the interests of the public or of the owner, lessee or occupier of the land crossed by the path.

The Applicant owned the land over which the current path and the proposed path ran. The section of Public Footpath No.5 in the parish of Great Warford to be diverted ran through the property of the Applicant giving rise to concerns relating to security and safety. The Applicant also had planning permission to convert some of the outbuildings into leisure facilities adding to the need for increased privacy and security at the property.

The Ramblers Association, Peak and Northern Footpath Society and Alderley Edge Footpath Society, having walked the proposed diversion route, had requested that the surface of the section across pasture land be treated to prevent water-logging and that the route was appropriately waymarked.

A letter of objection had been received from Great Warford Parish Council, in which they suggested a shorter diversion around the south side of the farm buildings. This alternative route had been discussed with the applicant, who felt that this route would still give rise to concerns relating to security and safety. The Greenspaces Manager stated that he would suggest to the Parish Council that he attends a future meeting to discuss the diversion and explain the process for the making of an Order under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

The Committee considered that the proposed route would not be substantially less convenient than the existing route. Diverting the footpath would be of considerable benefit to the landowner in terms of enhancing security and privacy of the property. It was therefore considered that the proposed route would be a satisfactory alternative to the current one and that the legal tests for the making and confirming of a diversion order were satisfied.

RESOLVED:

- 1 An Order be made under Section 119 of the Highway Act 1980, as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to divert parts of Public Footpath Nos. 4 and 5 in the parish of Great Warford by creating a new section of public footpath and extinguishing the current path, as illustrated on Plan No. HA/045, on the grounds that it is expedient in the interests of the owner of the land crossed by the path.
- 2 Public Notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Acts.
- 3 In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.25 pm

Councillor J Wray (Chairman)

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CHESHIRE

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Annual Report 2009 - 2010



Chairman's introduction

2010 was the first year of a Cheshire Local Access Forum without Warrington and with six new members. It was also the first operating year for the two new unitary authorities si has been quite a challenging time.

During the year we have attempted to increase the link with parish and town councils, monitored the management of access to the countryside by the new authorities and ensured we were consulted on the new Local Transport Plans and the consequent Right of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP). We have also continued to monitor the Cheshire ROWIP for 2006-11 and contributed to relevant northwest regional and national issues of access.

I would like to thank the forum members and officers for their support and enthusiasm during a period of great change. The local government spending review will ensure that 2011-2 will be equally challenging.

JOHN WHITE

Training

- New members to the Forum received induction training before the December 2009 AGM.
- Keith Osborn, Andrew Needham, John White and Michael Scott attended a training day for new members on 5th March 2010 arranged by the north west region LAF co-ordinator.
- John Taylor and Bob Anderson attended a training day on the Lancashire County Council Trumper Scheme in the Forest of Bowland on 25th March 2010.
- Andrew Needham accepted an invitation to visit Cumbria's LAF on 25th March 2010.

.Items of interest

- Members reviewed the new Cheshire East policy on structures on public rights of way which uses the principle of least restrictive option to make paths more accessible for all, including those with disabilities
- The Forum responded to the Cheshire West and Chester Council following a presentation on the development of the Local Transport Plan 3
- Continued to monitor the delivery of Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) projects, the development of the ROWIPs for Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils, and annual reports for each
- Members contributed to the development of Walks for All leaflets, giving information to users on accessible routes across the county
- The Forum made changes to the environmental impact surveying of public rights of way and users within the A556 Mere Highways Agency scheme following a presentation by contractors Jacobs Engineering
- Members assessed the differing roles and interest in public rights of way across the town and parish councils of Cheshire. A best practice guidance note was prepared
- The Forum learned about the number of long distance routes that span Cheshire
- The Forum heard about the Open Spaces Survey being conducted in Cheshire West and Chester Council
- The Forum heard about the relaunch of the Discover Cheshire website:
www.discovercheshire.co.uk



Members' articles

Some Thoughts from a New Boy

I was a bit surprised to be accepted as a member of the Forum: I spend quite a lot of time in the Cheshire countryside, birding and/or walking my dog, but this didn't seem much of a qualification. Inevitably, the first year has been a matter of learning rather than contributing: I still have problems identifying the abbreviations, acronyms and technical terms, though I think I am improving.

First impressions? The Forum members all, like myself, bring "on the ground" experience to bear – and a varied experience at that, including (for example) horse-riding, cycling, running and estate management, and drawn fairly widely from across the county. That's quite impressive and re-assuring – even if we are (inevitably?) a typical white middle-class gathering. Equally impressive is the excellent back-up from officers – not just in servicing meetings, but in availability at other times to provide information and deal with queries. All this makes for informed, and informative, discussion.

A pleasant surprise was the regional dimension, and the opportunity to learn about what is going on elsewhere. Having missed a couple of training events, I feel a bit guilty about referring to visits to Beacon Fell in Lancashire for a demonstration of the impressive Trumper vehicles for disabled people, and to Thurstaston Country Park to learn about coastal path issues and to sit in on part of a Merseyside LAF meeting: each was a really good day out! That said, I came away from each with

something to think about (the logistics of a Trumper hire scheme; the very different access problems in a major conurbation.). I do wonder, though, if we should have contact with LAFs in the West Midlands and North Wales – much closer than, say, Cumbria and maybe with similar experience to our own.

Another feature has been the scope for making connections between CLAF and other parts of my life. Plodding about doing bird surveys has at least given me some first-hand knowledge of footpath problems, and I've been able to introduce some access material, gleaned from contact with CLAF, into the county birding community. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the inclusion agenda has meshed in fairly well with my interests, once professional and now voluntary, in working with older and less able people: there's a lot more to this access business than just blocked footpaths.

So it is probably all coming together: it is more complex, and more varied, than I anticipated; it seems very worthwhile; I'm beginning to feel that maybe I can be a useful part of the Forum (and I'm glad that I eventually acquired broadband just before joining! I'm not sure I could have coped otherwise). As far as the future goes, I'm very worried about what impact public-sector cuts will have on access work generally (aren't we all?), but whatever happens I can see plenty of scope for pursuing issues which are important to our well-being – even if, as I suspect, the full scope of the Forum's activities is not very widely recognised by the public at large. After all, until I joined I didn't recognise it.....

Bob Anderson



New routes in the Peckforton Hills

I have now been a member of the Cheshire Local Access Forum for almost a year and during that time have seen a significant project spanning both the Cheshire East and Cheshire West areas come to fruition. With a particular interest in access for equestrians, the re-opening of the route over the Peckforton Hills is a real step forward in improving off-road riding possibilities. I have recently ridden this route with my own horse and found it took me a good 3 hours. There are pleasant surroundings and scenery from every aspect and the view of Beeston Castle from one part of the route is stunning. Where a horse can go, most other users also can and this route, either entirely or in fragments, because it is unencumbered by stiles and kissing gates, can be enjoyed by walkers (also those with the larger dog!), cyclists, those less able and parents with small children in pushchairs. The project is a true credit to the Hillforts and Habitats Landscape Partnership Team.

elen Connolly

Priorities for 2009 - 2010

- involvement in ROWIP2 and LTP3
- safety on rural roads
- urban rural access
- how does access better raise the health and wellbeing of the residents of the county

Priorities for 2010 - 2011

Development of working groups with the following themes:-

- Health
- Under represented groups
- Funding
- Spreading best practice

Walkers, riders, cyclists and canoeists across Cheshire will be able to discover the hidden places of this beautiful county, following the launch of new and improved versions of the popular Discovercheshire websites.

Developed by Cheshire West and Chester Council in partnership with Cheshire East Council and The Mersey Forest, the sites are aimed at local residents, as well as visitors planning their trip to the county. They use interactive Ordnance Survey mapping to provide multimedia information on all of the area's promoted routes, as well as country and urban parks. Users can even print out maps and directions to take with them into the countryside.

The websites also provide information on places of interest and events – as well as details of visitor attractions, pubs, restaurants and accommodation, within easy travelling distance of a chosen route or destination.

A new Discover site focussing on the Gritstone Trail launched in November 2010. This not only provides interactive mapping, directions and tourism information for the trail, but also details of the history of the route, as well as of the geology, flora and fauna that can be seen along the way. Similar websites are to be launched next year focussing on the Sandstone Trail and Weaver Way.

Among many other potential uses, the Discovercheshire websites have also been chosen as the primary means of promoting routes devised as part of the new Delamere

Project, which is supported by the Cheshire West and Chester Council, the Forestry Commission and Visit Chester and Cheshire.

The Discover sites can be found at: -

www.discovercheshire.co.uk (information for all of Cheshire)

www.discovercheshirepeakdistrict.co.uk (further information on Cheshire East and Cheshire's Peak District)

www.discoverthemerseyforest.co.uk (information on the Mersey Forest area).

www.discoverthegritstonetrail.co.uk (comprehensive details of this popular route)

DiscoverCheshire





Bollington Walking Festival

The Cheshire Local Access Forum is always looking to spread the word about new ways to entice people into the lovely countryside that graces our County. We also have a very well maintained network of well marked footpaths that can take walkers into every nook and cranny as well as the towpaths along the canals that make up the famous ‘Cheshire ring’.

Walking Festivals are becoming ever more popular. This year saw Bollington’s first. Bollington prides itself on being the only stone built town in the Cheshire Peak District .Bollington nestles in the Dean Valley just a few hundred metres from the Peak National Park. The town prides itself on its industrial history. The finest cotton ever spun was supposed to have been produced in this valley Town.

The Walking Festival, held in the last two weeks of October, was a great success. It came about through an encouraging example of a local community working together with local government to make things happen. Cheshire East Council provided the services of their Tourism Office and Town Centre Manager to host meetings and find the finance for an excellent colourful and informative leaflet and a website. Bollington provided its own tourism forum of energetic local groups, ranging from the Bridgend Centre, the Town Council, and the Civic Society to hotels, pubs and walking

groups. The thirty two walks which took place over the 16 days catered for many interests, from family walks to guided historical and heritage explorations, to the longer and more strenuous hill walks provided by East Cheshire Ramblers.

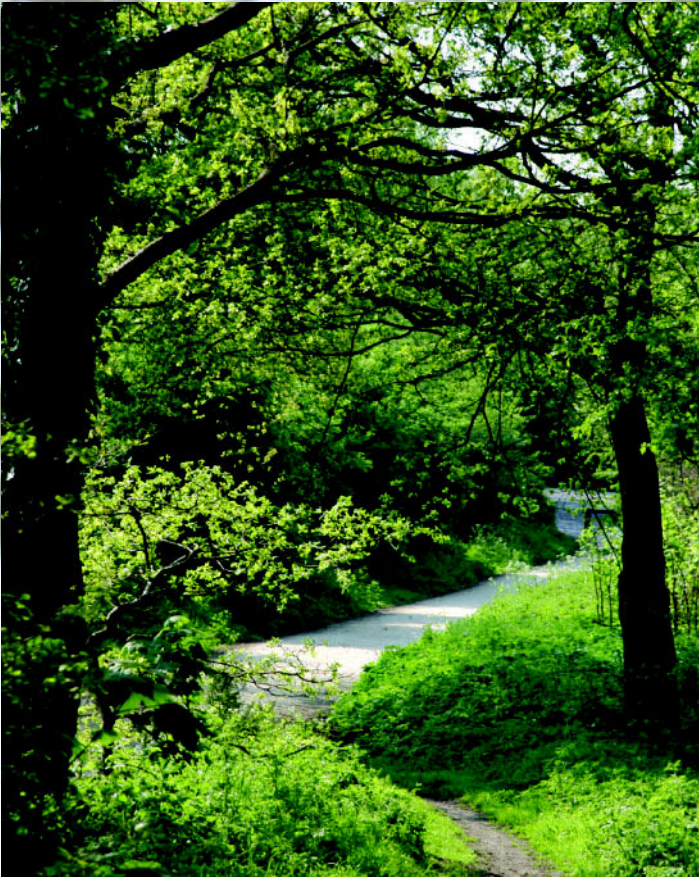
The walks were all given exotic titles, such as The Knights Walk or Rise to Shine, to attract more walkers! And it did seem to work. Even the 18 mile walk to Shuttlingsloe on a very wet day attracted 25 people. Nearly all our walks had numbers in the 20s or 30s and attracted a wide age range of experienced walkers who appreciated this opportunity to explore a less well known part of the Peak District.

The weather was mixed as you would expect around here. It rained very hard on Tuesdays. Other days were gloriously sunny and bright and walkers could enjoy the views over the countryside and the autumn colours at their best. The success of this Festival was possible because of the readiness of walk leaders to devise attractive walks months in advance and be ready to welcome newcomers in unknown numbers. Let’s hope that the success of this Festival will lead to others in the future.

The Cheshire Local Access Forum welcomes these community initiatives and is working to put together advice on how such events might attract groups of people who as yet find barriers to enjoying the Cheshire countryside.

Andy Gildon

My name is Andy Gildon, I’m a trail and fell runner, covering around 2000 miles per year (my dog probably goes even further). I joined the CLAF in 2009 and did so because I wanted to help people make better use of the wonderful and precious asset that is our PROW network. I use it daily and have a long experience of organising events to enable people to enjoy the countryside via use of our footpaths. I’ve come to understand that many people believe erroneously that they are not allowed to use rights of way, that the countryside is dangerous, that one can become easily lost etc. and that these misconceptions prevent them from enjoying the glorious freedom of small adventures in nature. My purpose in the CLAF is to work to break down these artificial barriers and allow those who do not use the network for lack of knowledge or cultural, economic and physical reasons to do so.



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 Wurbacher	Horse riding



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