

Cheshire Local Access Forum



Agenda

Date: Friday 23rd March 2012
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Executive Meeting Room 2
Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1DX

Location Map for Macclesfield Town Hall on Page 1

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies (10.00 - 10.05)**
2. **In Memoriam of John Taylor (10.05 - 10.15)**
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising (10.15 - 10.20)** (Pages 3 - 10)

To confirm the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Cheshire Local Access Forum held on 16 December 2011

4. **Election of Vice-Chairman (10.20 - 10.30)**
5. **Update Reports from Working Groups (10.30 - 11.00)**
 - Funding
 - Under-represented Groups
 - Health
6. **Country Land and Business Association Publication "The Right Way Forward: The CLA's Common Sense Approach to Access in the Countryside" (11.00 - 11.30)**

John White

7. **The Delamere Project - Consultation on Masterplan (11.30 - 11.45)**

John White

For requests for further information

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

8. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan Updates (11.45 - 12.00)** (Pages 11 - 16)

Hazel Barber and Genni Butler

9. **Feedback from North-West Regional LAF Chairs' Meeting (12.00 - 12.15)**

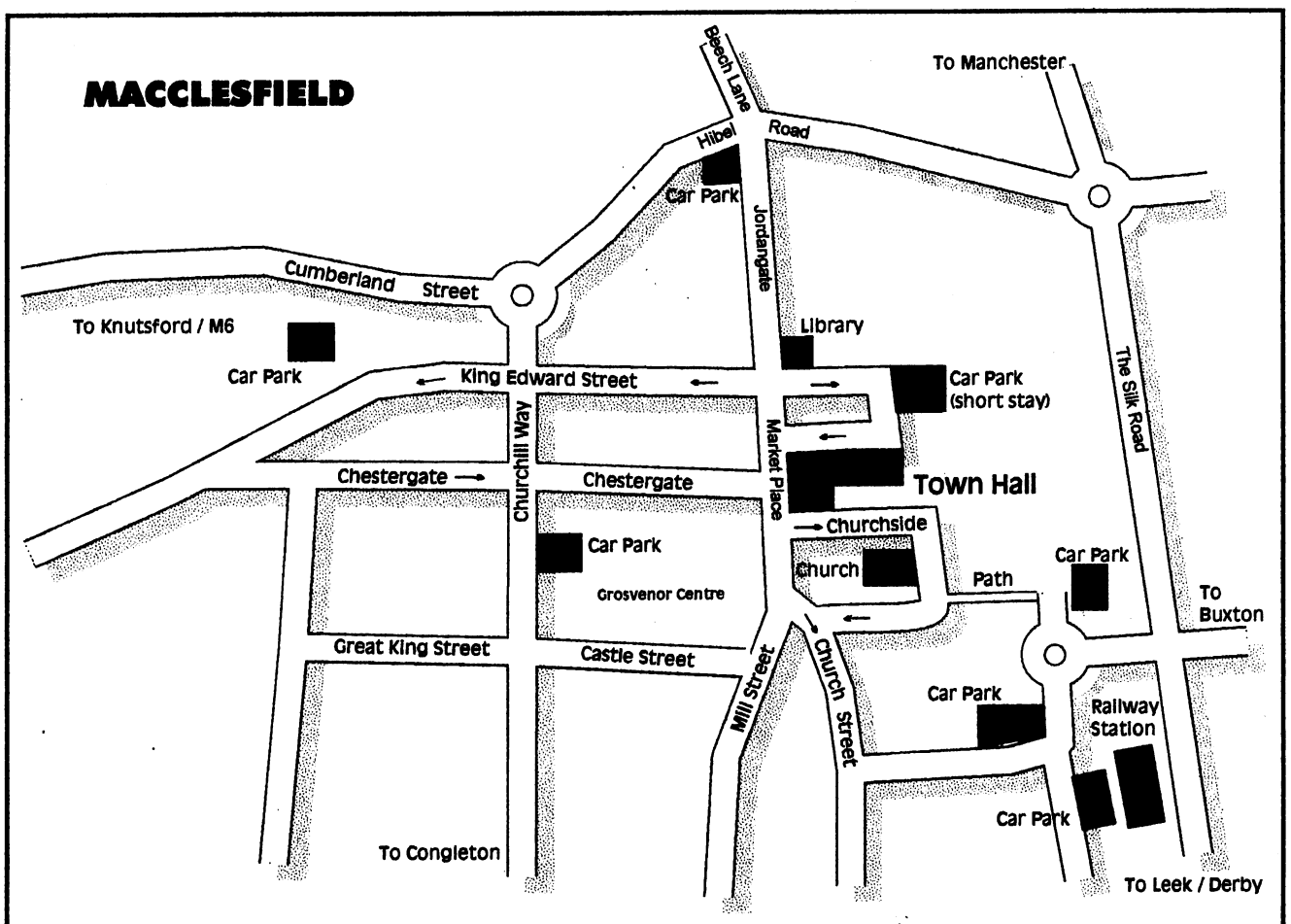
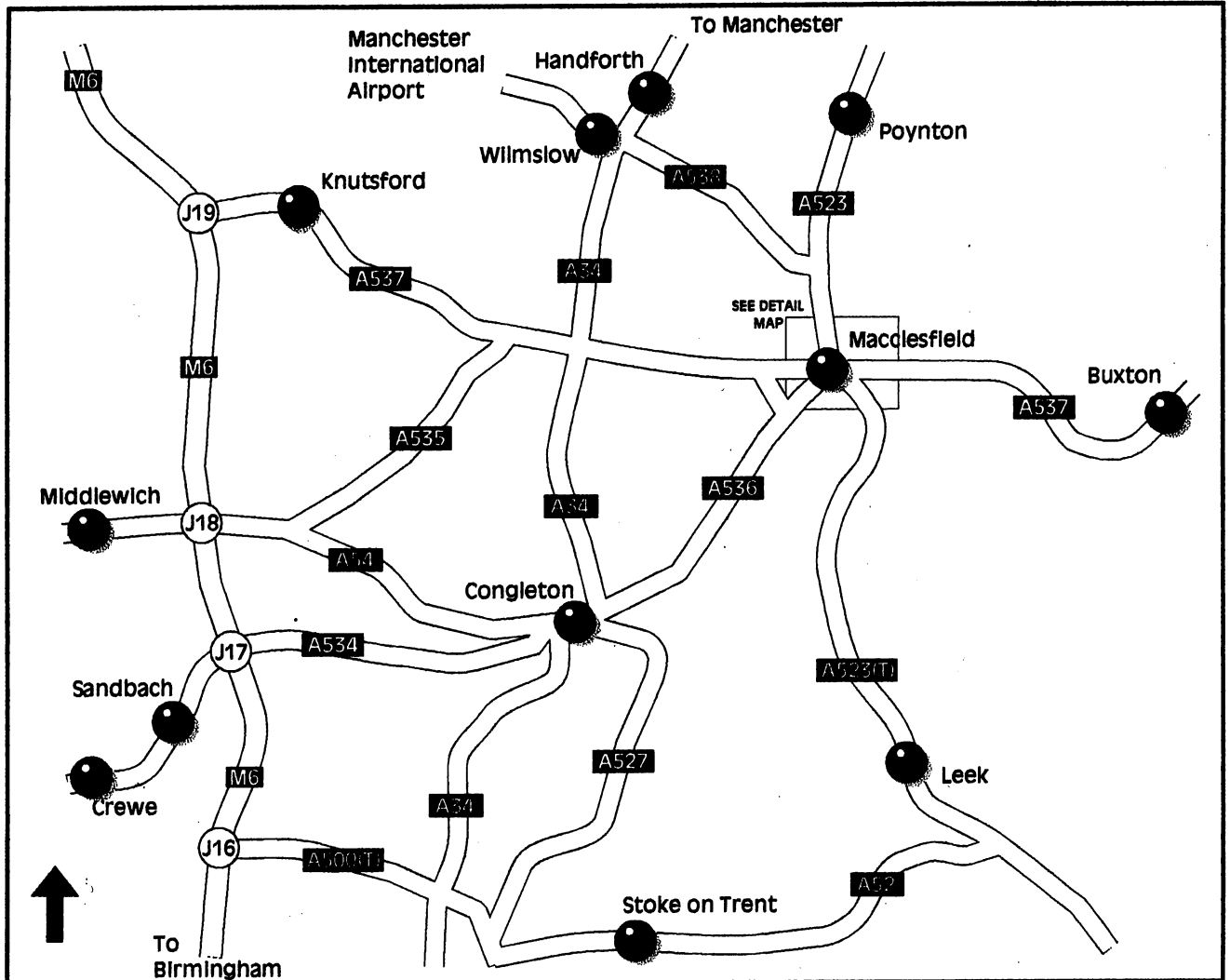
John White

10. **Reports from Members (12.15 - 12.30)**

All

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is at 10.00 am on Friday 22 June 2012



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Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Local Access Forum**
held on Friday, 16th December, 2011 at Committee Room 1 - Wyvern House,
The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH

PRESENT

Forum Members

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

Officers and Others

Mike Taylor, Cheshire East Council
Rachel Graves, Cheshire East Council
Denise Snelson, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Adele Mayer, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Susie Woodward-Moor, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Graham Dutton, Warrington Borough Council
Julie Sharman, British Waterways
Mr John Haines, Ramblers
Mr Peter Williams, CTC Chester and North Wales

Action

31 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Keith Pennyfather, Genni Butler, Ian Hesketh and Hazel Barber.

32 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations to the posts of Chairman and Vice-Chairman were requested. John White was nominated as Chairman and John Taylor as Vice Chairman. It was agreed that they would be appointed for a one year period.

RESOLVED:

That John White be appointed as the Chairman and John Taylor be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Cheshire Local Access Forum for the ensuing year.

33 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2011 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following spelling amendments:

Item 25 – Update Reports from Working Groups

Finance

The sentence be amended to read “The Group had **nothing** to report at present”.

Under Represented Groups

On the fifth line ‘geocoaching events’ be amended to read ‘**geocaching** events’

34 **BRITISH WATERWAYS: A NEW CHARITABLE TRUST**

Julie Sharman, Head of Regeneration (North), British Waterways, briefed the Forum on the creation of The Canal and River Trust, which would come into being in April 2012.

The Canal and River Trust would be taking over British Waterways’ waterways in England and Wales. The Waterways Trust in England and Wales would also be merging with the Canal and River Trust.

Transition Trustees had been appointed to oversee the formation of the new Trust. The governance structures for the new Trust would include a Council whose role would be to appoint and hold accountable the Board of Trustees, monitor the Charity so that it meets its charitable purposes and appoint auditors and other company law shareholder powers. The Trustees would be the principal governing body and be responsible for the appointment of the management to run the Charity; determining policy and strategy, and approve business plans. Waterways Partnerships would be created to oversee the work of local waterways units. The Partnerships would be made up of local people who would hold local management to account and oversee the work of the Trust at local level. The Chairman of each Partnership would sit on the Trust’s Council.

It was highlighted that the North Wales and Borders Partnership was looking for members at present. Under the leadership of the Chair - Jim Forrester, the Partnership would be working closely with the Area’s Waterway Manager to develop an overarching vision for the waterways and develop strategies and plans to encourage more people to use and get involved with their local

waterway. More information was available on the British Waterways' website.

Members asked questions about the sale of residential property and impact on access to canals; access to towpaths for walkers, cyclist and equestrians; towpaths becoming public rights of way and ownership of bridges and locks.

35 **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

The draft Annual Report for 2010-11 had been circulated with the agenda.

Members suggested a number of amendments including the updating of the Forum's membership, changing the photograph on the front cover, amending the description on the A556 road scheme and including health and wellbeing in the priorities.

Any further amendments were to be sent to Denise Snelson or Genni Butler as soon as possible so that the Annual Report could be finalised and printed.

**ALL/
GB/DS**

36 **CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER INTERACTIVE MAPPING PRESENTATION**

Denise Snelson gave a presentation on the changes being made to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Interactive Mapping system. She explained and demonstrated the information which would be available on the system. This included the information collected and photographs of path furniture taken during the CAMS survey. It was hoped that the service would be come live in February 2012.

To encourage use of the interactive mapping system a number of presentations were planned to Parish Councils. Members commented that they found the interactive mapping system very useful but that it was difficult to find on the Council's website and asked if a link could be included from the Home page.

37 **UPDATES REPORT FROM WORKING GROUPS**

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

Finance

Neil Collie reported that the Group hoped to update, with the help of Denise Snelson and Genni Butler, the Annual Funding Spreadsheet for the next Forum meeting.

**NC/
GB/DS**

Under Represented Groups

The Working Group had produced a discussion paper on their findings for the Forum to consider.

The Group had looked at ways to encourage under represented groups to access the countryside more readily and had concluded that no single initiative would have a breakthrough effect on getting people into the countryside. This was more likely to be achieved by a number of smaller initiatives such as:

- 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

The Group was proposing that a test event be held to see if the initiatives mentioned above could actually increase the number of people access the countryside.

Health

Helen Connolly reported on the key findings of British Horse Society (BHS) research on Health Benefits of Horse Riding.

The BHS had 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 UK.

The research found that horse riding and associated activities expended sufficient energy to be classed as moderate intensity exercise. A survey of 1,248 horse riders had been carried out and the response indicated that the vast majority of horse riders were female (90%) and a third of these were above 45 years of age. Horse riding was especially well placed to play a valuable role in initiatives to encourage increased physical activity amongst women of all ages. It was also found that horse riding stimulated positive psychological feelings and that riders gained well being from interacting with horses. Being outdoors and in contact with nature was also an important motivation for the majority of horse riders.

Support was needed for better access to the countryside for equestrian users, with the provisions of safe routes to bridleways and better horsebox parking and the benefits of horse riding needed to be promoted more.

38 CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM WEBSITE

The Cheshire Local Access Forum webpage was hosted on the Cheshire West and Chester Council's website. Adele Mayer

reported that the Council was updating their website and that guidance issued for this would have an effect on the content of the Forum's webpage.

The guidance stated that websites should no longer host archival material and that any documents on the website must be less than a year old. At present the Forum webpage held archival material in the form of old agendas and minutes.

Three options for alternative arrangements for the website were outlined. These being:

- **Option 1:** That the Forum ran and maintained its own website, which could 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:** That the current website contain the latest documents, with these being available for a maximum of one year
- **Option 3:** That Cheshire East host the Forum for the time being and delay a decision.

Following discussion, Members agreed Option 2 as the way forward so that the website showed the latest agenda and minutes.

39 **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES**

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

Progress on the following projects was reported:

Cheshire East

- Crewe to Nantwich Greenway
- Gritstone Trail – crossing on A54
- Long distance horse ride
- Stapeley Footpath No.1
- Pickmere Footpath No.13

Cheshire West and Chester

- Cuddington new footpath to link with Footpath No. 21
- Flintshire to Neston Cycleway
- North West Coastal Trail
- Delamere Loop
- Weaver Valley projects

Denise Snelson reported that Cheshire West and Chester Council

had completed an Open Space Audit and Assessment of Need Household survey, along with consultation with Town/Parish Councils, recreational organisations and the public, on their Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2016. The results from these had been used to produce a 'Statement of Action' and 'Improvement Implementation Plan' for the next five years and it was hoped that the final version of the Improvement Plan would be available in January 2012.

40 FEEDBACK FROM NORTH-WEST REGIONAL LAF CHAIRS' MEETING

John Taylor and Andrew Needham had attended the meeting of the North West Regional LAF Chairs' on 6 October 2011. The main topics discussed were:

- Natural England's agreement to fund regional LAF
- Development of urban area LAFs in Manchester
- Changes to British Waterways
- What was happening to the 10 year review of CROW access maps
- Changes to the National Peak Park Boundaries
- Cattle Free Routes
- Huddle Forum

The Huddle forum had been created by Natural England and was a user friendly network site for Local Access Forums, which enabled discussion with other Forums, information sharing, advice, guidance and access to library of specialised information.

John White had been invited to join and there was the opportunity for two additional members to join the online community. Members were asked to let John know if they were interested in joining by the next Forum meeting.

41 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Mike Taylor reported on the restructuring of services taking place at Cheshire East Council. The Greenspaces Service had moved from Health and Wellbeing, with the Public Rights of Way Team and Countryside Ranger Service becoming part of Highways and Transportation and Parks/Openspaces moving to Streetscene. The staffing structure was not known as present and he did not have any indication if there would be changes.

Kath Wurcbacher reported that Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, had urged all local authorities to allow horse riders to use cycle trails, routes and any other ways where it was in their powers to do so and encouraged that permission or dedication happened where it was not in their power.

Neil Collie reported that a new group – Peak District Green Lanes Alliance, had been established to campaign against the use of green lanes by motor vehicles and the damage caused by them.

He also reported that East Cheshire Ramblers had carried out a footpath inspection in their area and that the number of paths graded C and D had increased. The results would be shared with the Cheshire East Public Rights of Way Team.

John White reported that Defra had asked Natural England to develop and run a new grant scheme called 'Paths for Communities', which would be launched in April 2012. It would be a competitive scheme, supporting proposals which offered best value for money. Local communities would be able to bid into a central fund to create new public rights of way or upgrade existing ones for horse and bike use, to enable the path network to become easier to use, better publicised and better integrated with local transport, services and popular destinations.

He also reported that the Independent Panel on Forestry had published a progress report on 8 December 2011. The Panel had received 42,000 responses to their call for views and was working towards making recommendations which would increase the benefits to the public from access to forests in England. The recommendations would be made to the Government in spring 2012. The progress report could be viewed on the Defra website.

42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Cheshire Local Access Forum would take place on Friday 23 March 2012.

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MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 23 MARCH 2012

REPORT OF : COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
Contact : Genni Butler & Hazel Barber
Officer 01270 686059 or 01606 288539

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 March 2012
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. Initial BW response received: suggesting permissive path – responses chased August, September & November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Smith in BW taking forward after meeting with town council in January
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 ROW Committee approval of new route obtained December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowner requires alternative route • Planning permission, common land consent re-applications required
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. Landowners approached, but unwilling to offer permissive route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways tasked to install signage • Other 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. Funding bid successful October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project delivery underway: signage, gate improvements, landowners informed
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 Project completed November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity to encourage use undertaken February 2012
discovercheshire.co.uk	ongoing	ICT, Tourism colleagues	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 Willaston Old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing

			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 • Ollerton bridleway surface improvements press coverage • Haslington walk feature in Cheshire East News prepared but publication cancelled due to spending freeze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stapeley Footpath No. 1 cycling to school publicity

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

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update March 2012
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
Neston- Deeside 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 We now have £250k funding from SUSTRANS. Work to be completed 2012/13. Highways/Greenspace will implement the scheme Flintshire CC are in the process of the physical work on their side of the border. Negotiation are still ongoing with local landowners
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 March 2012
Bishop Bennet Way	2012	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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital programme bid 2012/13
Delamere Loop	2012	CW&C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation Order in progress to secure stretch at the end of Whitegate Way to join Cuddington BR16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress 2012 with PINS currently
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	On going	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
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 soon

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"> • Work continuing on Discover the Sandstone trail microsite
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, • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greenspce team will be representing CW&C with a large site at the Cheshire Show 2012