

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire Local Access Forum**  
held on Friday, 23rd March, 2012 at Executive Meeting Room 2 - Town Hall,  
Macclesfield SK10 1EA

**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  
Keith Pennyfather  
John White  
Kath Wurcbacher

**Officers and Others** Genni Butler, Cheshire East Council  
Rachel Graves, Cheshire East Council  
Hazel Barber, Cheshire West and Chester Council  
John Thorp, Warrington Borough Council  
Mr Colin Miller, Peak and Northern Footpath Society  
Mr Peter Williams, CTC Chester and North Wales

**Action**

**1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ian Hesketh and Adele Mayer from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Mike Taylor, Cheshire East Council.

**2 IN MEMORIAM OF JOHN TAYLOR**

Members paid tribute to John Taylor, who had been a founding member of the Cheshire Local Access Forum, and stood in a minute's silence in his memory.

**3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2011 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

38 Cheshire Local Access Forum Website  
The final paragraph be amended to read

“Following discussion, Members agreed Option 2 as the way forward so that the website showed the latest agenda and minutes, and those from the previous 12 months”

#### **4 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Nominations to the post of Vice Chairman were requested. Neil Collie was nominated and it was agreed that he would be appointed Vice Chairman.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Neil Collie be appointed Vice-Chairman.

#### **5 UPDATE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

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

##### Finance

Neil Collie reported that the Annual Funding Spreadsheet would be updated for the June meeting.

##### Under Represented Groups

The Group had not met since the last meeting.

##### Health

The Group had nothing to report at present.

In relation to the Best Practice Leaflet for Town and Parish Councils,

Andy Gildon reported that the leaflet had been forwarded to the Cheshire Association of Local Councils for distribution and to the Local Area Partnerships. He was not sure if the Leaflet had actually been received by the town and parish councils as no feedback had been received.

The Chairman noted that the topics for the Working Groups had been decided over two years ago and asked if there were any other activities which the Forum could look into.

Suggestions put forward included the changes to the planning system by the Local Government Bill and Paths for Communities Fund and that the Cheshire Association of Local Councils be invited to attend the Forum to discuss the former of these issues.

## **6 COUNTRY LAND AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION "THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD: THE CLA'S COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO ACCESS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE"**

The County Land and Business Association (CLA) had published a report entitled 'The Right Way Forward: The CLA's Common Sense Approach to Access in the Countryside'. The report made a series of recommendations to enhance the public rights of way system, improve efficiency and obtain better value for money.

It was suggested that these recommendations should be read in conjunction with the Stepping Forward report from the Stakeholder Group on Unrecorded Rights of Way. The Stakeholder Group had made 32 recommendations and it was expected that consultation on these recommendations would be held later in the year.

It was agreed that a link to the Stepping Forward report would be sent to members and suggested that a representative from the CLA be invited to a future meeting.

**KL**

## **7 THE DELAMERE PROJECT - CONSULTATION ON MASTERPLAN**

The Forestry Commission was carrying out pre planning application consultation on proposals to improve and develop visitor facilities in Delamere Forest.

A draft forest-wide Masterplan had been produced and the consultation process would lead to two planning applications being submitted – one for the creation of a new Visitors' Centre at Linmere and one by Forest Holidays for a development of forest cabins in the Kingswood area.

The Forum was concerned that the Forestry Commission had not consulted them directly on the proposals as the land affected by the proposed developments was classified as Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Discussions on the proposals included consideration of the advantages and disadvantage of the location of the forest cabins, access to the forest by public transport, vehicle access to the cabins, the affect of the proposals on the forest paths, light pollution, disruption to wildlife and creation of employment in the area.

## **8 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
- Long Distance Horse Ride
- Population of [www.discovercheshire.co.uk](http://www.discovercheshire.co.uk) website

#### Cheshire West

- Neston to Deeside Cycleway
- Accessibility – Interactive Mapping

It was reported that the Cheshire West and Chester Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026 had now been adopted and copies of the document would be available shortly.

## **9 FEEDBACK FROM NORTH-WEST REGIONAL LAF CHAIRS' MEETING**

The Chairman reported on the issues discussed at the latest meeting of the North West Regional LAF Chairs. The main topics were:

- Disabled access
- Temporary fencing on Access Land
- British Waterways Trust status
- Role of Natural England
- Creation of LAFs for urban areas
- Emergency services in remote areas
- Paths for Communities funding
- Demonstration of 'Huddle' Forum

Keith Pennyfather asked if there had been any further information on the review of the maps of Open Country and Registered Common Land, as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The statutory review had been deferred for two years in 2010 and it was understood that this decision would be reviewed in August or September 2012.

## **10 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

Neil Collie gave a short presentation on the A556 consultation. The Highways Agency was consulting on junction layout and the detrunking of the existing road and details were available on the Highways Agency website. He had drafted a response on behalf of the Forum, which had been circulated to members, in which Option 3 was supported as the best location for a junction to link the new

A556 with the detrunked A556 and local roads, and supported options A or B for the location of the overbridge for the local road. The detrunking plans for the A556 were to reduce the four lanes to two lanes and replace the surface of the disused lanes with a grass verge and soft earth mounds. It was suggested that the detrunking would provide the opportunity to create an all user path on the fourth lane and that the response be amended to include this suggestion.

Helen Connolly reported that the horse box parking signage had been erected for the Whitegate Way but had noted that two bays had no signage at all, indicating incorrectly that horse box parking was allowed only on the bay with signage.

Dale Langham reported that he had been in contact with Cheshire East Council in relation to overgrown footways and cycleways as he was concerned that the contractor appointed to clear the growth was not doing the job properly.

Hazel Barber highlighted that the Department of Transport was consulting on simplifying the process for Traffic Orders. Details of the consultation could be found on their website and the closing date for responses was 23 April 2012.

Genni Butler reported that the Neil Collie, on behalf of the Forum, would be attending a meeting the Non-Motorised Forum in relation to SEMMMS.

## **11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Cheshire Local Access Forum would take place on Friday 22 June 2012.