



# Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

## JLAF 25

### Draft Minutes of meeting, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Date: Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2011  
 Time: 2:00pm  
 Venue: The Council Chamber, Keynsham Town Hall, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 1NL

Present: JLAF Members:  
 Chris Barrable, Chris Bloor, Jill Britten, Cllr Nicholas Coombes (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Bill Dawson, Cllr Howard Gawler (South Gloucestershire Council), Peter Gould, John Gunnery, Robert Killen (JLAF Deputy Chairman), Ray Newbigin (JLAF Chairman), Christopher Simpson, David Waterstone (JLAF Vice Chairman), Michael Youé

Also in attendance:  
 Nicola Chidley (South Gloucestershire Council), Chris Hogg (JLAF Secretary), Rob Leek (Natural England), Graeme Stark (Bath & North East Somerset Council), Duncan Venison (Bristol City Council)

Members of the public, including:  
 Malcolm Bridge, Rennie Dickins, Robin Winfield

#### Action

A	INTRODUCTIONS	
A1	<p><b>Welcome to new members and introductions</b></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all present. He passed on the apologies of Ed Plowden of Bristol City Council who is not able to attend to give his presentation on Bristol Cycling City because of illness.</p> <p>The Chairman Ray Newbigin and former Vice Chairman Robin Winfield both paid tribute to Rennie Dickins, attending for the first time as a member of the public since his retirement as the manager of the South Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way Team. The transcript of this will be made available on the JLAF website.</p>	Secretary
A2	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>JLAF Members:            Ann Fay, Colette Linehan, Bernadette Macey, Cllr Kevin Quartley (Bristol City Council), Andy Short, Sheena Stephenson, Rachael Whitlock</p> <p>Also:            Cllr Bryan Allinson (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Tim Kent (Bristol City Council), Ed Plowden (Bristol City Council), Cllr Nigel Roberts (Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council), Cllr Roger Symonds (Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council), Roger Fowler.</p>	
A3	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>No declarations were made.</p>	
A4	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.</b></p> <p>The minutes were <u>agreed</u> as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	

<b>A6</b>	<p><b>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</b></p> <p>Under item B7 ii. 'Access for the disadvantaged' the Chairman emphasised the importance of considering Outdoors Access for the 25% of the population without access to both a car and the internet.</p>	
<b>B</b>	<p><b>MAIN BUSINESS</b></p>	
<b>B1</b>	<p><b>Bristol Cycling City</b></p> <p>This item was postponed due to illness.</p>	
<b>B2</b>	<p><b>News from the Public Rights of Way (PROW) teams</b></p> <p>The Chairman explained how this is now a major item on the agenda, to give more consideration to the work being carried out by the Councils. Each Council will report on three items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Update on PROW work including: decision making, team structures and finance</li> <li>ii. Public Rights of Way Liaison Groups (PROWLG)</li> <li>iii. Gating Orders</li> </ul> <p><b>Bristol City Council</b></p> <p>Duncan Venison addressed this item. Duncan is now formally managing the Public Rights of Way team, along with Streetworks, Highway Licensing, and Highway Network Management. Budgets were cut between 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial years, but there have been no further in-year cuts.</p> <p>The council have been working with the Groundwork Trust and volunteers on a NVQ III course in Environment and Conservation to carry out work, including clearance work, on public rights of way. The funding for this scheme is limited and it is hoped that the Groundwork Trust will be able to continue with it.</p> <p>It is hoped that work will start soon on improving the start of the Severn Way link at Avonmouth, which should hopefully deter fly tipping. This may also coincide with the partial diversion of the Severn Way Link.</p> <p>The public rights of way team is currently obtaining quotes to have all vegetation removed and reopen a blocked footpath at Bankleaze School.</p> <p>The Monarchs Way at St Phillips Marsh has been cleared and is passable although the bank collapse area is uneven. The public rights of way team is looking at options here but are unlikely to be able to carry out any major works.</p> <p>New steps and an improved surface have been installed to improve path PROW 237 at Wickham Glen.</p> <p>At the last meeting of Bristol's PROWLG, Rowan Matthiessen gave a presentation. She is Project Co-ordinator of 'Discover Brislington Brook', a 3-year Community Partnership project funded by Heritage Lottery. At the next meeting, Henry Shaftoe will be giving a presentation titled 'Illegible Bristol' which was recommended to the JLAF. The notes of each meeting are now put on Bristol City Council's website at:  <a href="http://www.bristol.gov.uk/node/8157">http://www.bristol.gov.uk/node/8157</a></p> <p>Gating Orders are managed by the Safer Bristol Partnership and they consult the Public Rights of Way Team. Following a Gating Order, PROW 163 is gated and is awaiting a 12 month review. Two further applications have been made to the Council – a footpath between Cooperation Road and Greenbank Road; and an unclassified Road,</p>	

Brook Lane in Montpelier. A formally adopted Gating Order Policy will be put on the JLAF website.

**Secretary**

### **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

Graeme Stark addressed this item. Graeme is acting as Senior Public Rights of Way Officer and managing the Public Rights of Way Team for Bath & North East Somerset Council. There was a 12% cut in revenue funding between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial years, but capital funding has remained the same. The Chairman reported that there had been a 30% cut in staff in the Public Rights of Way team in recent years.

At the last Regulatory (Access) Committee in Bath & North East Somerset, approximately one hectare (2.5 acres) of land in Newbridge, Bath was recorded as a Town and Village Green.

The reinstatement of the collapsed river bank Batheaston River Path with £95k of works means that public footpath BA5/1 has been re-opened, following a closure of approximately five years. David Waterstone stated that he had received complimentary reports that the work, using willow binding, is attractive.

A Creation Order has added 1km of public bridleway south of Midsomer Norton to the Definitive Map.

The Bath & North East Somerset PROWLG has had one inaugural meeting chaired by Ray Newbigin with David Waterstone as Secretary, which was largely procedural. The next meeting is on the 6<sup>th</sup> December.

There is no gating order policy in Bath & North East Somerset – a function that is managed by the Community Safety Team. A new policy would need to be adopted before any gating order applications could be considered. No applications had been received.

Cllr Nicholas Coombes reported that a green transport fund was enabling new cycle routes, including at Batheaston and linking Bath to Bath Spa University Campus. The Chairman emphasised that equivalent attention needed to be paid to new walking routes.

### **South Gloucestershire Council**

Nicola Chidley addressed this item. Following Rennie Dickins' retirement, Nicola is the senior officer in the Public Rights of Way team. There are now three public rights of way officers, a single post (job shared) as technical officer and a path warden in the team. Public Rights of Way is now part of Street Care and a restructure of that department is to start soon. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 there was a £15k cut from a £90k capital budget with revenue funding remaining similar to the previous year.

A new route between the Bristol to Bath Railway Path at Mangotsfield and Yate will be delineated on the ground in 2011/12, with physical works to be completed later.

The team are working with Network Rail to address a potentially dangerous crossing of the high speed railway at Charfield, with a proposed Rail Crossing Diversion Order.

Ron Phelps, ex-JLAF member, is working with South Glos Council on a series of walks linking areas of Access Land, to be produced in leaflet form and on OutdoorsWest – and the PROW team are carrying out some remedial works on these routes.

Village Green and Definitive Map Modification Orders are to be considered at the next Public Rights of Way and Commons Registration Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> December.

	<p>The PROWLG is chaired by Peter Bird of the Thornbury Ramblers – the next meeting is on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011.</p> <p>The Council has received no new applications for gating orders.</p> <p>Cllr Howard Gawler explained the importance of the work that the Public Rights of Way team do and the resources needed to fulfil the function. He will continue to state this case. The Chairman emphasised the potential of promoting public rights of way in South Gloucestershire as a tourism asset.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Gawler</b></p>
<p><b>B3</b></p>	<p><b>JLAF Project Progress</b></p> <p>i. Chew Valley Lake</p> <p>Robin Winfield is kindly covering this long-standing item following his retirement from the JLAF. Cllr Roger Symonds wrote to the JLAF revealing a reserved £5k in 2011/12 and £50k in 2012/13 for this scheme. The next deadline is for Sustrans to submit a planning application by 17<sup>th</sup> December, with specific supporting specifications to be supplied by Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council. Robin was very wary of this deadline being met, given past experience and highlighted the importance of keeping the assigned funding. Cllr Coombes agreed to raise this with Cllr Roger Symonds.</p> <p>ii. River Avon riverside routes, both in Bristol and Batheaston</p> <p>These matters are reported under item B2.</p> <p>iii. Bridleway links at Frampton Cotterell</p> <p>This item was reported at the last meeting and there is no news to report, and a potential new path to avoid a road crossing at a blind bend requires negotiation with land owners. The secretary will update the next meeting on this route.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Coombes</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>B4</b></p>	<p><b>Plumbers' Trench, Hawkesbury Parish</b></p> <p>The Chairman Ray Newbigin addressed this item, which was initially reported to the JLAF by member Rachael Whitlock. Ray Newbigin, Rachael Whitlock, Cllr Howard Gawler and other interested parties had visited the site.</p> <p>Plumbers' Trench is a route that has been identified by local riders, and users of the local riding stable as a potential link to avoid the busy B4060 road. There is contention over the status of the route and whether riders have a right to use this route.</p> <p>The land over which the route passes is Registered Common Land and is subject to access on foot as Access Land under the Countryside &amp; Rights of Way Act. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as part of the Lower Woods nature reserve and is the subject of a higher level stewardship scheme.</p> <p>Establishing the use of this route as a bridleway requires the assessment of evidence of public rights of way. One specific issue relates to the compatibility of the use of equestrians by right and the meaning of 'exercising of horses' in the terms of the Common, which may or may not preclude the establishment of a public right of way.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that this is a typically complex public rights of way issue, and that as in many cases, dealing with legal and contentious issues can take many years. Users are expected to deal with this matter by making an application with documentary evidence, or evidence of use, which the Council can then consider.</p> <p>He thanked Rachael Whitlock for bringing it to the JLAF's attention.</p>	

<b>B5</b>	<p><b>OutdoorsWest, website, content and publicity</b></p> <p>The Secretary, Chris Hogg updated the meeting on the OutdoorsWest website. The website is now published and available to use by the public. Mapping, news and general information about public rights of way and access are all on the site.</p> <p>Following feedback from users, improvements are being made to the mapping system and the database of routes for users to download and follow. This will be carried out over the next couple of months and members were shown a preview. Partners, including the Ramblers Association, Bristol Museums and Chipping Sodbury Town Council have agreed to have their routes put on the site. Plans are being made to publicise OutdoorsWest in March, timed to coincide with the start of spring.</p> <p>Chris Bloor explained the involvement of volunteers, including JLAF members who are compiling routes for the site. He also explained the involvement of health walk leaders in Bristol, who are planning to use the site to publish and share the routes they use with their health walk groups. This will increase the number of surveyed and reliable routes available to the public.</p> <p>Chris Hogg thanked Chris Bloor and all the other volunteers who have been helping with this work.</p>	
<b>C</b>	<b><u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION</u></b>	
<b>C1</b>	<p><b>JLAF Consultation Response: Independent Panel on Forestry</b></p> <p>This response was ratified by the JLAF without amendment.</p>	
<b>C2</b>	<p><b>Draft JLAF Letter to Councils: Investment in Public Rights of Way and Outdoors Access</b></p> <p>This response was supported by members. The response will be reviewed and sent by the JLAF's Chairman after the meeting, ensuring that it included both the health and economic benefits of public rights of way. This approach was ratified by JLAF members.</p> <p>The secretary will identify appropriate contacts with a public health remit, with a view to the JLAF's Chairman meeting them to promote the importance of Outdoors Access.</p>	<p><b>Chairman</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<b>C3</b>	<p><b>JLAF Letter to Defra: A Monarch's Way National Trail</b></p> <p>This response was ratified by the JLAF without amendment.</p>	
<b>D</b>	<b><u>ITEMS TO REPORT/ FOR INFORMATION</u></b>	
<b>D1</b>	<p><b>Bristol's walking strategy. B&amp;NES and South Gloucestershire's walking strategies?</b></p> <p>Bristol City Council had consulted on a new Walking Strategy for the City, which the Chairman commended. He recommended that both Bath &amp; North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils could produce something similar, and implement them.</p> <p>It was explained that the Bristol walking strategy is separate to the supporting document on walking being prepared, which will be linked to the Joint Local Transport Plan, and will apply to all four councils in the area. Key to the implementation of this is the set up in the West of England, where a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been established, which is changing the previous role of the West of England Partnership. The secretary will obtain the latest information on these changes, with a view to the JLAF's Chairman meeting the appropriate person to promote walking.</p> <p>In Bath, a new city centre system for signing, information and street furniture is being implemented, similar to the system pioneered in Bristol.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>

<b>E</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>The meeting was informed of a proposed Cycle Track Order between Powlett Road and Bathwick Street in Bath.</p> <p>Cllr Nicholas Coombes introduced a trial that is being run in Bath this winter, where volunteers can hold a store of salt, along with tools for spreading the salt on pedestrian routes in the city.</p> <p>Rob Leek and David Waterstone reported that an application for funding had been submitted to Natural England from Avon Ramblers, to help set up a scheme for volunteer teams to work on public rights of way. This would complement the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens and cover works in the area outside of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p> <p>Rob Leek also reported that Macmillan Cancer Support have offered to provide up to £1.89m over 3 years to support Walking for Health services in recognition of the benefits walking can bring to people living with and beyond cancer. Walking for Health was discussed. In Bristol and South Gloucestershire there are large walking for health schemes. In Bath &amp; North East Somerset, Bernadette Macey (JLAF Member) is a health walk leader, and there are some walks led by the charity Age UK, but it is understood that the schemes are much smaller in scale than in Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It was stated that increasing the scale of Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council's Walking for Health Scheme is an opportunity. Cllr Nicholas Coombes will raise this with the Council.</p> <p>Members present agreed that their contact details could be passed to Rennie Dickins to use for his plans to continue some projects to promote use of public rights of way.</p> <p>Malcolm Bridge reported that he had been visiting a primary school to talk about local history, and that he had used the book 'Black Beauty', which was written by Anna Sewell as a prompt. He was now planning with teachers a trip using local public rights of way to explore the area, and suggested that this is something that the JLAF might want to get involved in. Chris Hogg explained that OutdoorsWest had a section for children, which at the moment refers people to the excellent resources for kids on the Woodland Trust website. The Secretary will discuss this with Malcolm Bridge.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Coombes</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<b>F</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman</b></p> <p>Ray Newbigin announced his resignation as the Chairman of the JLAF and his intention to resign as a member soon after the meeting. Robin Winfield paid tribute, describing the commitment that Ray had shown to the JLAF since becoming a member and Vice Chairman at its establishment in July 2003, then progressing to become Chairman in 2006. This included his hard work locally, regionally and nationally where he was respected by his peers and established the reputation of the JLAF. The transcript of this will be made available on the JLAF website.</p> <p>David Waterstone was proposed as a candidate and elected unopposed as Chairman of the JLAF. Robert Killen was proposed as a candidate and elected unopposed as Vice Chairman of the JLAF.</p>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p>
<b>G</b>	<p><b>The next full JLAF meeting JLAF26 at 2pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 at The Council Chamber, Keynsham Town Hall, Keynsham. BRISTOL. BS31 1NL</b></p> <p><b>Proposed Agenda Items</b> Ed Plowden will be invited to make a presentation on Bristol Cycling City. Subsequent full JLAF meetings are scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012.</p> <p><b>Close</b></p>	