



# Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

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

## Approved Minutes of meeting, Friday 3 July 2015

Date: Friday, 3 July 2015  
 Time: 2:00pm  
 Venue: Community Room, Keynsham Library, Market Walk, Keynsham, BS31 1FS

Present: JLAF Members: Chris Bloor – Acting-Chair of the JLAF (CBI), Andrew Gough (AG), Rennie Dickins (RD), Keith Weller (KW), Ann Fay (AF), Kate Chubb (KC), Peter Bird (PB), Peter Gould (PG), John Gunnery (JG), Bernadette Macey (BM), Ken Mill (KM), Robert Davies (RD), Mark O’Sullivan (MO).

Also in attendance: Nicola Chidley (South Gloucestershire Council (NC), Mary Knight (Bristol City Council), Graeme Stark - Bath & North East Somerset Council and Interim Secretary to the JLAF (GS).

		Action
<b>A</b>	<b>INTRODUCTIONS</b>	
<b>A1</b>	<b>Introductions</b> CBI introduced and welcomed KC and RD, who are both new JLAF members. All JLAF members and Council Officers introduced themselves for the benefit of the new members. GS stated that Cllr Liz Richardson had been appointed as B&NES Council’s Councillor representative.	
<b>A2</b>	<b>Apologies</b> JLAF Members: Chris Barrable, Cllr Liz Richardson, Chris Simpson, Robert Killen and Colette Linehan  Others: Duncan Venison (Bristol City Council)	
<b>A3</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b> None.	
<b>A4</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting on 6 March 2015.</b> The minutes were <u>agreed</u> as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the inclusion of the following wording under Item E:  <i>“MO stated that he felt that the presentation on urban routes focused on routes in new urban areas freshly developed from greenfield, whereas the original request for a presentation had focused primarily on the preservation and development of routes in established urban areas. MO requested a further presentation on the subject of the original request, which was agreed to.”</i>	
<b>A5</b>	<b>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</b> KW asked NC, MK and GS whether the Authorities endorsed the Cotswold AONB’s position statement regarding investment, volunteers and hierarchy. NC stated that SGC supported the position regarding investment and volunteers but stated that SGC did not have a strict hierarchy of routes, like in the position statement. Instead, routes are prioritised on a looser arrangement, such as promoted routes, Safer Routes to School, routes to work and shops and bridleways, with cul-de-sacs being given lowest priority. Formal prioritisation was investigated during the drafting of the ROWIP and	

	<p>was found not to work because all Bristol's PROWs would be the highest priority and most of B&amp;NES and South Glos' PROWs would be the lowest priority. GS confirmed that B&amp;NES Council used the same informal prioritisation as SGC. AG pointed out that usage alone shouldn't drive priority as some routes currently can't be used even though they would be important routes. KW undertook to draft a response to the Cotswold AONB regarding the Councils' position.</p> <p>MO stated that the topic of urban routes was raised last summer but didn't come before the JLAF until the March meeting and then wasn't satisfactorily addressed. The JLAF needs to discuss existing urban routes and not just new urban areas and MO queries why the subject wasn't being addressed at this meeting. CBI queried what areas of urban routes MO would like to discuss; MO stated it was about building new routes into the existing build environment to allow people to get to school, work and shops. This includes traditional paths between buildings that have been blocked off and identifying them in the Local Plan. It was suggested that someone from Planning development would give a presentation; however, the previous speaker was from a similar team. MK stated that 'Greenways' are already identified in BCC's Local Plan and NC stated that SGC have routes in their Core Strategy. RD queried whether the discussion was about unrecorded rights in light of the 2026 cut-off date. CBI was unsure who to get in to give a presentation on this subject.</p>	KW
<b>B</b>	<b>MAIN BUSINESS</b>	
<b>B1</b>	<p><b>Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>CBI stated that the JLAF's Terms of Reference didn't tie in with DEFRA's guidance, including with respect to the definition in Regulation 22. The Terms of Reference don't include urban routes and non-recreational activities or providing advice to Section 94(4) bodies. A change would allow the JLAF to deal with these bodies. Bodies have to take notice, but not necessarily follow, the JLAF's advice. PB pointed out that the Terms of Reference do not refer to statute and this leaves the JLAF slightly directionless and chasing its own tail. CBI reiterated that the JLAF's function is to give advice on public access. KW, PB and CB will form a sub-group to put forward proposed changes to the JLAF.</p>	KW, PB and CB
<b>B2</b>	<p><b>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>CBI stated that he's currently the Vice-Chair and would be prepared to put himself forward as Chair. Cbi was proposed as Chair by KW and seconded by MO. No one else was proposed or put themselves forward. It was put to a vote and CBI was unanimously elected as Chair for a period of one year.</p> <p>MO stated that he would be prepared to put himself forward as Vice-Chair. MO was proposed as Vice-Chair by CG and seconded by Cbi. No one else was proposed or put themselves forward. It was put to a vote and MO was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair for a period of one year.</p>	
<b>B3</b>	<p><b>Priorities and Annual Report</b></p> <p>CBI explained that although the JLAF annual report has previously been written by the three Authorities, it appears that this task should be completed by the JLAF itself. CBI asked GS for any suggests as the Secretary has previously completed the report. GS stated that the format of the report has changed each year and that some figures have already been inserted but for 'LAF achievements' the JLAF could put down the Neospora press release and the consultation responses provided to Section 94(4) bodies. KW stated that the JLAF have also helped with the volunteer</p>	

	<p>groups and this could be included too. It was suggested that North Somerset not joining the JLAF represents a challenge to the JLAF's ability to deliver improvements to public access; however, it was suggested by CBI that the continued cuts to local government funding for PROWs and public access is the principle challenge. CBI asked for the contact details of the appropriate executive members for the three authorities so that the JLAF could put the case for improved funding. JG suggests that improving the JLAF's relationship with neighbouring LAFs and authorities should be a priority. KW suggested that replacing stiles near the urban boundaries should be a priority but RD stated that not all landowners want stiles replaced. AF suggests that more shared routes should be accessible to horseriders, in line with government advice. It was identified that adequate funding for local authorities was required to deliver the JLAF's priorities over the coming year.</p>	<b>GS</b>
<b>B4</b>	<p><b>News from the Public Rights of Way (PROW) teams</b></p> <p><b>South Gloucestershire Council</b>  NC explained that SGC's PROW Team have been largely unaffected by the most recent restructure. Finances are OK but the capital budget has been cut by 10%. The team have been working with volunteers on their surveys and this has been very successful. The volunteers have allowed SGC to make improvements while funding has been reduced. The next liaison group meeting is on 15 July 2015.</p> <p><b>Bristol City Council</b>  MK explained that the capital budget is still to be confirmed for 2015/16. There is one vacancy in the team and this will be for a graduate trainee position. The coastal path route is being finalised in the autumn with improvements planned for the route next Autumn. The MetroBus scheme has thrown up a number of planning issues and efforts are afoot to minimise the number of stopping ups required.</p> <p><b>Bath and North East Somerset Council</b>  The capital budget has been cut by £25k and consequently only two projects will be carried out this year; Pipehouse Lane has just been completed and the route should now be open and available for all users after the surfacing and drainage works. Work will start shortly to rebuilt part of the River Avon riverbank in Freshford which carries a public footpath. Ariane Robinson has left the PROW Team and this will have an impact on the processing of legal orders. Following a public inquiry an Inspector has recommended not to register land in High Littleton as Town or Village Green and the formal decision will be taken at the end of the month. MO queried whether the JLAF should be looking into Open Green Space designations.</p>	
<b>B5</b>	<p><b>Gating order</b>  The JLAF has not been notified of any Gating Order applications.</p>	
<b>C</b>	<b><u>ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION</u></b>	
<b>C1</b>	<b>None</b>	
<b>D</b>	<b><u>ITEMS TO REPORT/ FOR INFORMATION</u></b>	
<b>D1</b>	<p><b>West of England Nature Partnership (WENP) – update</b>  CBI attended a meeting a few months ago but very little was decided and it was mostly discussions, including about the Severn Estuary Nature Improvement scheme (similar to the Forgotten Landscapes project). There are a number of circular route planned in the project and it was suggested that someone could come to the next JLAF meeting to discuss what is</p>	

	proposed. KC stated that rural payments should fund permissive public access and not just nature conservation.	
<b>D2</b>	<p><b>England Coast Path</b></p> <p>NC explained that work has started on the Aust to Brean Down section of the path and that the start/finish point of the national route will be in the JLAF's area. BCC and NSC are working with Natural England carrying out surveys and identifying alternative routes. The whole route will be 2,700 km long and is scheduled to be completed by 2020. Currently on stage 2 (of 5) which involves developing the route and the Secretary of State will be advertising the proposed routes with a view to opening the Aust-Brean section by summer 2017. AG asked whether landowners have been consulted and JG said that the understood that they had contacted all known landowners.</p>	
<b>D3</b>	<p><b>OutdoorsWest</b></p> <p>CBI said that someone has recently said to him that OutdoorsWest was very good which came as a surprise as he felt with RoutesDatabase was the most valuable part and this wasn't on the website. NC suggests that the JLAF could check with website and suggest what updates and improvements they would like.</p>	
<b>E</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>GS explained that Chris Simpson had asked for the JLAF to consider whether farmers should be able to close paths for up to 3 weeks at a time to allow them to graze cattle but to avoid conflict with dogs and their owners. KC stated that safety should be paramount and that farmers shouldn't put cattle in fields if they know them to be dangerous. JG said that the current advise was to let dogs go if there's trouble. NC highlighted a permissive path scheme in Cornwall which has proven to be quite successful.</p> <p>GS stated that a member of the public has asked for the issue of large groups of runners using rights of way to be discussed. Given the time restraints of the meeting it was agreed that GS would circulate the email to JLAF members after the meeting.</p> <p>MO asked whether Open Green Space designation could be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	<b>GS</b>
<b>E</b>	<p><b>The next meeting of the JLAF will be at 2pm on 30 October 2015.</b></p> <p>This is a proposed new date owing to a lack of an available venue on the original date in November. No objection to the change of date was forthcoming and next meeting was therefore scheduled for 30 October 2015.</p>	
<b>F</b>	<b>Close</b>	