

NEW FOREST ACCESS FORUM

Meeting: *Monday 07 December 2015*

Agenda item 5: *Reports from other LAFs*

a) Hampshire Countryside Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2015 can be found on the website:

www.hants.gov.uk/hcaf

1. Coastal Access.

This was the main topic. The speakers and the content were as at New Forest LAF.

2. Hampshire Coastal Project.

There was an introduction to a new project run by The Conservation Volunteers. We were given some information about a Solent Way Project which seemed to have started only recently. It is concerned with coastal communities south of the M27 and is working with community groups.

New sub projects are being sought

The following was mentioned in brief :

- Community engagement.

- Connecting footpaths.

- Businesses. Cafes etc.

- Skills training.

- Publicity via a photograph competition and use of Twitter.

Future meeting dates: 15 December

b) Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum

The main topic of the meeting was Enforcement and related to Section 130 of the Highways Act "To assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of public rights of way."

The statutory responsibilities of the County Council were explained. Enforcement is used only rarely and prudently, negotiation is used first.

Education was seen as important in dealing with issues.

Members raised concerns and discussion ensued as to how to deal with some issues.

If a formal notice is served a copy is sent to the Rural Payments Agency. This could be a big stick used to influence landowners.

Specific viewpoints were given by 2 members of the Forum.

The NFU representative described the information given to members. Newsletters, magazines and weekly emails as well as advice on how to deal with problems.

The landowner representative was particularly concerned about dog walkers failing to worm their dogs, not having their dogs under control and the hanging of dog mess bags on branches .

c) South East LAF Chairs' and Officers' meetings on 29 September

i) Chairs' meeting

The following points were raised:

1. Need for National Conference and for training.

For these to take place funding is required.

A cheap or free venue is required where there are good transport links. Funding of possibly £100 per delegate might be needed.

2. The need and possibility of influencing national decision makers.
In this context there was concern re the loss of permissive paths following the demise of HLS payments. Some thought there should have been consultation with LAF's before this change.
3. South Lincolnshire and Rutland consultation. This has been circulated. Little discussion took place. It relates to the loss of permissive access by horseriders. There was some talk of the use of Rural Network Grants to facilitate permissive access.

ii) Officers' meeting

1. There was some discussion of training available for LAF members. IPROW charge of £100 per person per day, though reasonable in itself, will be a challenge to fund. Hampshire had provided training for HCAF and NFAF as part of a wider 2-day training programme from IPROW for officers.
Other authorities were very interested in the Hampshire County Council LAF member information pack. A copy (minus member information) was circulated following the meeting.
2. Online mapping: Hampshire is apparently the only Highway Authority with the List of Streets available online. Isle of Wight Council has been in touch with Google about getting RoW onto Google Maps.
3. Multi-user routes: South Downs NPA hopes to commission an undergraduate study evaluating user experience and suitable surface materials.
4. Coastal Access: Medway Council have had very positive experience so far.

d) Other

Dorset LAF: last meeting held on 27 November; next meeting TBC

IOW LAF future meeting dates: last meeting held on 3 December; next meeting on 3 March 2016