

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2011
WIGAN TOWN HALL**



1. INTRODUCTION.

Edgar Ernstbrunner (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present:

Edgar Ernstbrunner	Ramblers Association - Manchester area
Trevor Boardman	Cycle Liaison Group
Peter Burns	Peak & Northern Footpath Society
Brenda Gaskell	Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group
John Gurhy	Disability Forums
John Pimblett	Wigan and District Ramblers Association
Judith Burton	British Horse Society
Kath Tudor	Standish Bridleways Group
Pauline Thomas	Standish Bridleways Group

Officers:

Elizabeth Parry	Public Rights of Way Officer
David Scrivens	Rights of Way Officer

2. APOLOGIES.

Jackie Roberts	Crankwood Bridleways Group
Barry King	Long Distance Walkers Association
Ruth Killen	Landowner

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 4.1 - Crankwood Road – EP explained that the Barrister’s advice has been received – The conclusion was that the public have a right of way on foot only on Crankwood Road. EE asked who would complete the Definitive Map Modification Order for the route? EP advised that the

Council would likely complete this process although this is not a priority and there is a backlog of Claims to be addressed. They are all processed in date order.

4.2 Item 4.2 - Guidance for all users. EP advised that there is nothing to report albeit Kathryn Barker the Access Officer is part of the Rights of Way team so we hope to make any final alterations to the document shortly.

4.3 Item 4.4 - Milestone Statement - EP stated there is nothing further has been said relative to this document.

4.4 Item 7.1 – Equestrian Access – JB advised that she has e-mailed Mark Westerly from the British Horse Society explaining all the good work Wigan Council has done on bridleways. JB has received a reply from him saying thank you for doing such an excellent job.

5 **BRIDLEWAY AT TRAVELLER SITE**

5.1 JG stated that Hindley Footpath No: 7 as it joins Hindley footpath No: 6 is in a terrible state. It's so muddy that his scooter had got stuck. JG also advised that Travellers are using vehicles on the footpath as access and churning up the footpath. EP will find out if the Travellers have a right of access on the land.

EP

EP also advised that the key for the gate that leads to the Woodcock Drive Estate will be replaced with a new one.

EP also stated that she has made further enquiries regarding management of the site and learnt that Wigan & Leigh Housing, Platt Bridge Office are responsible. EP has spoken to Tracey Smith the Area Housing Officer and as such has briefly explained the issues but will be writing /emailing her to seek her assistance in determining what rights the Travellers have in terms of:

Designated vehicle access
Use of fields

EP advised it will probably be necessary to contact other Officers; Planning and Legal / Terriers to confirm agreements etc. However one resolve may be that where the main problem is the surface of the bridleway, consideration may be given to further improvements with a sealed surface to prevent continual damage, in addition some provision may be required to 'control access' thus accommodating the Travellers.

6 **WIGAN ROW STAFF & FUNDING**

6.1 EP stated as mentioned at the last meeting David has now been moved to the Open Spaces Team under Simon Calderbank, with Dave

Broome.

Confirmation has been received that the ROW maintenance budget will be the same as last year, no reduction at £140,000. As such the annual maintenance programme is underway and a few schemes are being looked at. EP mentioned that we are trying to work with Simon / Open Spaces to do some schemes on land too which Planning are the managers. EP thanked DS for his help in keeping costs to a minimum. This free's up monies for other issues on Rights of Way.

EE asked whether if it was a good idea to use volunteers to survey the Wigan Paths to get the Public Path Orders done for the former County Borough area. EP will need to check the stance on insurance for public liability. EE advised that this has been successfully done by other authorities.

EP

7. **ROWIP IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS**

7.1 EP gave an update on the ROWIP

- Wigan 91 – Work completed.
- Martland Park - Work complete on the ground.

Reports and plans are with legal to complete Wigan path upgrades to definitive footpaths and bridleways

- Towpath Scheme – Bamfurlong to Plank Lane

EP gave an update from Mike Orrell who is coordinating the project

- Phase 1 complete.
- Phase 2 (southerly towpath from Dover Lock to Plank Lane) started and progressing well.
- Phase 3, is to be the return section on the northerly towpath, between Crankwood Road and Smith's Bridge. Confirmation is being sought from British Waterways to agree a route on this side of the canal to provide a link up to Crankwood Road. There has been some delay in progressing this further so the Local Transport Plan team will send the latest details through. Issues over the future of BWB may be hindering progress. Once agreement is confirmed; then the Council will do a Public Path Creation Order to create a link between public bridleway Abram No.30 and the towpath across Crankwood Road.

There are also investigations taking place regarding the feasibility of bringing forward improvements to the southern towpath between Plank Lane and Atherleigh Way. This will provide a continuous high quality route between Wigan and Leigh town centre's.

- Holy Family – Tyldesley – No change

Permissive agreement has been drafted by Peel Holdings, which is currently with Legal Division to check.

The Section owned by Wigan Council has been declared surplus to requirements of Environmental Services (now Places Directorate)

- Red Rock Line – Red Rock Lane Haigh to Chorley Road Adlington.

Report to declare land surplus to requirements has been drafted and submitted for approval. There are two main issues that need to be resolved:

Maxwell Bridge – needs construction work and pointing,
A retaining wall to the north of the line needs pointing.

Thus far Open Spaces have contributed £25,000 to the repair of the bridge and EP has suggested that Rights Of Way put £10,000 to cover pointing for the bridge and retaining wall, plus some drainage works.

- St Mary's Lowton Line – No further news.

This was held up because the Council were not given permission from the neighbouring landowners to survey the ponds. However EP has been in contact with the Greater Manchester Ecological Unit and they have advised that we may be able to proceed on the basis that we accept Great Crested Newts are in the area and that Reasonable Avoidance Measures are adopted. Some suggestions have been given on this and further advice may be necessary. However in view of this we may be able to push ahead with the legal aspect.

7.2 EP handed out a document 'The Regeneration of North Leigh'. EP emphasised that it is not the Council who has taken the lead in this matter or responsible for the consultation. Indeed the consultation document was only handed to EP minutes prior to the meeting. It was pointed out that the closing date for comments is Friday 10 June 2011, however EP did point out that there would be further consultation during the planning application process.

BG was not happy that it hadn't been widely publicised enough before the exhibition dates. A lot of people could not get to see it because of the restricted times at certain venues. BG advised that it should have been publicised at least 3 weeks before hand and consulted at the Environment

& Transport Networkers Alliance (ETNA).

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 Astley Bridge - EP advised that work will be carried out on this bridge, unfortunately the Engineer overseeing the works is on leave so unable to say when works will commence, however horse riders and cyclists are a priority. BG emphasised that Steve Bell the Engineer had agreed to meet her on site Mid June to discuss the problems and possible solutions; EP will email SB to remind him of the site meeting.

EP

8.2 Health Walk Leaflets - EP advised it is no longer financially prudent to reproduce these leaflets in the same format; as such they have been redesigned so that they can be more easily accessed and printed off from Wigan Council ROW website.

8.3 Lightshaw Meadows Guided Walk – EP confirmed that there will be a walk at Lightshaw Meadows on the 29th June between 6 – 9pm.

8.4 Standish No: 20 – PT asked if this Bridlepath could be cut back as it is difficult to use.

DS

8.5 JB wanted to thank EP on behalf of the British Horse Society for all the hard work and dedication for creating more Bridleways in the borough. JB then awarded EP a certificate from the BHS 'Route Creation Award'. EP thanked JB & British Horse Society for the very kind gesture.

9. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7 September 2011 at Wigan Town Hall. Sandwiches and refreshments will be provided from 5.30pm with official business starting at 6.00pm.