

Wigan Local Access Forum



Information pack and application form for members:

- Explanatory notes
- Person specification
- Application form

Explanatory notes

Introduction

The Wigan Local Access Forum was established in the Summer of 2004 and members were appointed in accordance with Regulations published by the Government in August 2002. The appointing authority Wigan Council is now inviting applications from people who would be interested in contributing to the Forum.

Background

Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on local Highway Authorities and National Parks to establish an advisory body to be known as a Local Access Forum. The notes below give information about the role, responsibilities, membership and organisation of the Local Access Forum, based on the "The Local Access Forums (England Regulations) 2002" and the Circular on "Local Access Forums" issued by DEFRA on 26th July 2002.

Statutory role and responsibilities of the Forum

The Local Access Forum is a statutory adviser to Wigan Council on the improvement of public access to land within their area for open-air recreation, rights of way and the enjoyment of these areas. The Forum is also a statutory consultee on any byelaws to be made in respect of land to which the public have a new statutory right of access, on the appointment of any wardens for access land and on Rights of Way Improvement Plans for the area. The Forum must be consulted on any proposals to restrict or exclude access to access land. The advisory role of the Forum is wide ranging and the Forum may be asked to consider and comment on a variety of strategies prepared by Wigan Council.

Membership

The membership will:

- Be balanced to avoid dominance by any single group or coalition of interests; and
- Include a cross-section of local interests in the countryside

The membership will include:

- A chair and vice chair; and
- An optimum number of 12 – 16 and a maximum of 20 members.

Members in total must bring a broad range of overall experience, which should include:

- Recreational use, for example cycling, disabled interests, riding, off road vehicles, outdoor pursuits and walking;
- Land management, for example tenants, landowners and occupiers, plus others with an interest in the land; and
- Nature conservation, heritage, tourism, health, business and transport.

Attendance

Members are expected to be able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings. Where a member misses two consecutive meetings the Forum shall review his/her position (this will be carried out even if a substitute attends in their absence)

If the Forum agrees that a member be replaced, the replacement should ideally be from the same interest group and the appointment shall be subject to the usual selection procedure.

Period of membership and terms of appointment

Forum members may be appointed for between one to three years and are eligible for reappointment when their term has ended. The Regulations do allow for a member to resign at any time by giving written notice to Wigan Council. The Council may also terminate the appointment of a Forum Member if he or she has failed to attend any of the Forum's meetings for a year or has contravened the Regulations relating to disclosure of personal interest.

Disclosure of personal Interests

The Regulations require any member of a Local Access Forum who has a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, in a matter to be discussed by the Forum, to disclose the nature of that interest to the meeting. A personal interest may be anything which affects a member's well being, financial position or business, or that of a relative or friend. The interest does not prevent the member from contributing to the discussion, so long as the interest is disclosed.

Expenses

Local Access Forum members may claim travel and subsistence costs directly incurred in respect of their duties as a member of the Forum. Members may also claim expenses for childcare or dependants as necessary in respect of their duties as members.

Administration

Wigan Council will provide a secretary for the Forum, which will undertake the following:

- Organise and advertise meetings and the proceedings of the meetings
- Prepare and circulate the agenda and papers in consultation with the Chairperson and the Forum Members in advance of meetings
- Prepare an outline programme in consultation with the Chairperson and the Forum Members
- Produce the minutes of the meetings in consultation with the Chairperson
- Prepare in conjunction with the Chairperson and Forum Members an annual report
- Liaise with DEFRA, the Countryside Agency and with neighbouring Forums.

Meetings

The regulations require the Forum to meet at least twice a year. In practice the Forum may meet more regularly as deemed appropriate.

Training

Forum Members can be given training and it is encouraged that Members identify any training that would assist in undertaking their duties.

Applications and appointments

Anyone wishing to join the Forum must complete an application form and demonstrate that their interests and experience would contribute and be beneficial to the aims of the Forum. A person specification and application form is available for potential candidates. It is anticipated that a selection panel will appoint Members for the Forum based on the information contained within the application forms.

Person specification for membership to Wigan's Local Access Forum

Requirements	Examples
Specific interests	<p>Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they:</p> <p>Use rights of way, footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic, restricted byways. Use open access land or are An owner/occupier whose land is affected by rights of way and/or open access. Aware of land management issues Aware of other interests</p>
Skills	<p>It is desirable that Applicants possess:</p> <p>Good communications skills An ability to work constructively in partnership An ability to listen to competing interests and work for the benefit of the Forum as a whole</p>
Knowledge	<p>It is desirable for Applicants to have:</p> <p>Knowledge of rights of way and countryside issues, preferably within Wigan.</p> <p>Knowledge of key issues relevant to the countryside and the interaction between land use and management issues, such as recreation, land management, conservation and other interests.</p>
Experience	<p>All Applicants should have experience in:</p> <p>Dealing with and discussing strategic issues Working in partnership Working to achieve the best result for a group in line with the agreed aims, despite personal interests</p> <p>The Chairperson should have experience in:</p> <p>Chairing formal meetings Demonstrate a positive contribution to countryside access.</p>
Personal competencies	<p>All applicants should possess:</p> <p>Confidence, diplomacy and an ability for team working A willingness to commit the necessary time to the Forum.</p>

Application for membership to Wigan's Local Access Forum

Part one – Personal details

Full Name:		
Address:		
Postcode:		
Telephone number:		
Email address:		
Preferred method of communication:		
Are you currently employed by Wigan Council*	Yes	No
Are you related to any Member or Senior Officer of Wigan Council?		
If yes please give details:		

*Please identify your interest group:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor• Landowner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• user of rights of way• other
If other, please give details:	

Are you seeking election to the Forum for*:		
1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Do you wish to be considered for the position of Chairperson*:	Yes	No
Where did you see this vacancy advertised?		

*Please tick

Part two – Skills and experience

Interest:

Skills:

Knowledge:

Part two – Skills and experience (continued)

Experience:

Personal competencies:

Achievements:

Signature:

Date: