

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
WEDNESDAY 8th September 2010**

WIGAN TOWN HALL

1. INTRODUCTION

Jackie Roberts Chaired the meeting in the absence of Edgar Ernstbrunner (Chair). JR welcomed everyone to the meeting

Present:

Barry King	Long Distance Walkers Association
Jackie Roberts	Crankwood Bridleways Group
John Pimblett	Wigan and District Ramblers Assoc
John Gurhy	Disability Forums
Ruth Killen	Land Owner
Trevor Boardman	Cycle Liaison Group

Officers:

Elizabeth Parry	Rights of Way Officer
Katie Jackson	RoWIP Officer

2. APOLOGIES

Edgar Ernstbrunner	Ramblers Association – Manchester Area
Brenda Gaskell	Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group
Peter Burns	Peak & Northern Footpath Society
Judith Burton	British Horse Society

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 3.1 Page 9, item 7.4 should read 'JG stated that Mrs Hibbert **is claiming she** owns the track so using it may not be possible.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 4.1 – Definitive Map & Statements

EP advised that the Definitive Statements are now online and available to download in PDF format. Reports are available for each district.

4.2 Item 4.3 – Disabled Access Issues

EP informed that the guidance document is now available to view online via the Rights of Way notice board

4.3 Item 4.2 – Railway Street

EP advised that the case of Railway Street went to court and it is now open. It is unlikely that the route could be made into a definitive Right of Way as Network Rail has previously written that they didn't want to dedicate Railway Street as a Right of Way. Network Rail no longer owns the land but if a claim was put in for the route it would be called into question.

4.4 Item 4.4 – Gating Orders at Snowden Avenue

EP informed that the Gating Order is now on hold. The Alley Gates team were previously under Neil Fernley, but they are now under Steve Normington.

JG asked why the LAF was not consulted and if the Forum had any leverage to change this.

EP stated that the LAF is a statutory body and should be consulted by the legal department on such matters.

RK stated that herself and JR hadn't ever been consulted

BK informed that this gating order only came to the LAF's attention through EP. If there are any issues with Alley Gates then the LAF need to be able to meet up and discuss them.

4.5 **Item 6.2 – Astley Bridge**

EP informed that the safety audit has now concluded and the results show that the current system is not suitable for cyclists and horses.

5 **BARRIERS AT WINDERMERE ESTATE**

5.1 JG had previously asked for the Forums assistance regarding three inaccessible barriers installed on the Windermere Housing Estate by Wigan and Leigh Housing. Two of the barriers have now been modified to allow disabled access but the other remains inaccessible. For two years WALH have stated that the barrier is legal.

5.2 JG wrote to WALH to request the disability impact assessment used to install the barrier, under the Freedom of Information Act but one hadn't been produced. The Housing manager then met with JG and admitted that the barrier is illegal. JG believes that the LAF should have a voice regarding barriers as the LAF give advice to Section 94 bodies

5.3 JG would like the LAF to write to Wigan and Leigh Housing to get the barrier altered as WALH have admitted to it being illegal. JG wouldn't mind a legal barrier but the current barrier is inaccessible.

5.4 JG has been to the MP and newspaper and believes the LAF should be involved and Council departments should involve the LAF in barrier installation.

5.5 RK agreed with this comment

5.6 EP stated that this is the reason the Access document was created with the suggestion that it becomes a Council wide document. The draft document is now on the ROW website for comment until 30th November.

5.7 EP suggested that after the 30th November when the consultation ends the Access document will be presented to the LAF at the next meeting and proposes that the LAF can write in to the Chief Executive in support of the document.

5.8 JG will draft a letter to Edgar regarding the inaccessible barriers, to send to WALH on behalf of the LAF

6 **CRANKWOOD ROAD**

6.1 KJ gave an overview of the evidence received during the consultation so far. An anonymous caller gave information about a bus service operated by Lancashire United during the 1960s/1970s in Crankwood and has the belief that Crankwood Road was used as part of the bus route. This is backed up by another anonymous letter I received stating that a bus service used Crankwood Road daily during this time.

6.2 Other evidence includes the Chaddock/Gerard Tenancy Agreement 1744 and personal accounts of using Crankwood Road. A statement from Mr & Mrs Hibbert's solicitor stating that Mr & Mrs Hibbert have always understood that Crankwood Road was a private road benefiting those whose properties enjoyed a right of way over and along it and as far as they are aware it has never been a public highway.

6.3 Andrew Hibbert (Mr & Mrs Hibbert's son) has also emailed to say he has no intention to dedicate Crankwood Road as a public right of way, this is because from March to October the road is in constant use by large agricultural machinery so in the interest of public safety he needs the right to close the road when necessary.

7 **MAIN POINTS FROM REGIONAL CHAIRS LAF MEETING ON 16TH AUGUST 2010**

7.1 EE had asked for this issue to be raised at the meeting but was unfortunately unable to attend. It will be added to the agenda of the next LAF meeting.

8 **GREENHEART PROMOTIONAL DVD**

8.1 Unfortunately the audio equipment in Committee Room B wasn't working so KJ was unable to show the Greenheart promotional DVD. The DVD formed part of the submission to the UK Landscape Awards and the UK award winner will be announced in November.

8.2 The video is also available on Wigan Council's YouTube channel. KJ will provide a link to this with the minutes from the meeting.

9 **INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

9.1 EP stated that no feedback had been received on the layout and contents of the Incident Report Form.

9.2 RK informed that she had replied with comments that the space to describe the incident is too small. However EP and KJ hadn't received them.

9.3 JG pointed out that the title of the form should be "Equestrian Incident Form" as the form is tailored towards incidents involving horses.

9.4 BK pointed out that the online form could be formatted so that it allows the user to write in as many words as possible and asked if there was scope to have a more generalised form to report a variety of incidents.

9.5 EP will look into the possibility of creating a "Guidance for all Users" page on the Rights of Way website.

KJ

EP
KJ

10 **HIGHWAY CODE FOR MOBILITY SCOOTER USERS**

10.1 JG has contacted the Disability Partnership in Leigh regarding mobility vehicle training and has granted permission to use their car park for the training. If the Council were able to provide training JG would provide a presentation on it.

10.2 EP suggested getting in touch with Active Living and perhaps contacting Lancashire Council to see if they could perhaps loan the tramper vehicles they have available. Katherine Barker the Disability Access Officer may also be able to assist. EP
KJ

10.3 KJ has an electronic copy of the Think! Road Safety Highway Code for mobility scooter users and is hoping to provide a link to this on the PROW section of the Council website to make users more aware of how to use vehicles correctly and safely. KJ has emailed the publisher to see if ROW can have permission to do this.

10.4 KJ advised that in June the Department for Transport (DfT) produced a consultation document on the proposed changes to the laws governing powered mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs.

10.5 KJ informed that a new DfT study has revealed that 53% of those questioned wanted drivers of mobility vehicles to take a test, 78% of people said they should have training, 81% said they should have an eye test and 61% felt users should have insurance like motorists. Following this study and growing public concern over the number of accidents caused by the vehicles, a new Highway Code for Britain's mobility scooter drivers has recently been launched known as 'Safe Scoot'. It has been produced in partnership with Norfolk Constabulary, Halfords and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

10.6 JG requested a copy of Safe Scoot from KJ KJ

11 **ROWIP IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

11.1 KJ gave an update on the ROWIP progress.

Martland Park

The Great Crested Newt Licence has been granted and is valid until 31st October, meaning all work needs to be completed by the end of October. The Temporary Amphibian Fencing is going up on site next week and the 30 day trapping will commence ASAP.

11.2 **Wigan 91 Beech Walk to Anthorn Road, Winstanley**

The creation order for the route was confirmed on 18th August, quotes for the work were received on 3rd Sept a contractor has been appointed and work should commence ASAP. The Environmental Education team are involved with the scheme and are hoping to plant wild flowers with children from the two primary schools that are located along the route and have the schools 'adopt' path sections. Hopefully this will encourage children to use and respect the path. Wigan Council's new dog fouling campaign is also currently in the area.

- 11.3 **Sandyforth Farm Land Reclamation**
The site is currently in the maintenance period until summer 2011. There will be an establishment period of 36 months with £135,000 to spend on the site over three years. This can include footpath/bridleway links and improvements on and into the site. KJ is currently looking at Billinge 79 which links into the site from Beech Walk via the M6 underpass.
- 11.4 **Red Rock Line**
KJ recently had a site visit to the Red Rock Line with EP. There is potential for a long distance cross boundary circular route along the dismantled railway and canal towpath. The dismantled railway line is in Council ownership and KJ is currently in the process of dedicating it as a Bridleway.
- 11.5 **Amberswood**
There is the potential for Forestry Commission Funding to manage Amberswood. Within the funding money may be available to improve footpath/bridleways that link to Amberswood.
- 11.6 **Lawnswood/Crooke Village**
KJ and others from Wigan Council recently met with members of the residents association at Crooke Village who are keen to make improvements to Lawnswood and create a circular route through the woodland that links to existing PROW nearby. A site visit to discuss this further with residents has been arranged for October.
- 11.7 **Three Sisters – Wigan Flashes**
The initial consultation regarding this scheme was with LAF member user groups. There wasn't any feedback received from the Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group or the Standish District Bridleway Group.
- 11.8 KJ was asked at the Greenheart Operations Group meeting to consult with the Biodiversity Partnership for their comments on the proposals. This ended on 31st August. Moving forward KJ needs to contact the land owner and begin discussions.
- 11.9 TB raised concern that in the Greenheart Access Strategy Action Plan the route between Wigan Flashes and Three Sisters is listed as being too narrow for a bridleway when in reality the route is no less than 5 metres. TB feels that it is despicable that this went out in Gary Harold's name.
- 11.10? **Walk4Life Miles Project**
The project aims to make it easy for everyone, but especially people who are not currently active, to get more active by walking more. The new website associated with the project will provide a place where everyone can find a walk near to where they live.
- 11.11? KJ will be uploading the Rights of Way Health Walk routes, 10 in total, onto the site when it goes live on 13th September. There will also be the opportunity to provide a link to the Rights of Way page on the Wigan Council Website where people can download the leaflets and read about PROW in Wigan.

RK asked whether Joe Hitchen at Active Travel was involved with this.

KJ stated that she hadn't contacted Joe Hitchen regarding this but will contact him to find out Active Travel's involvement in the project.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 RK informed that a fire at Victoria Fields bridge has made it unsafe and there is also an unsafe bridge at Amberswood.

12.2 EP is aware of this

12.3 RK informed that the landscape gardener on Withington Road Aspall has created a private drive and gated it.

12.4 EP stated that Withington Lane is unadopted and has no status, it is not definitive route. Similar situation to Crankwood Road

RK would like to be added to the consultation list. KJ will send details to legal to do this.

KJ

EP informed that the Bolton Rights of Way Officers have been told that they will lose their jobs. EP asked if LAF members can write in support of the Officers. EP will provide LAF members with email addresses.

12.5 BK informed that Network Rail is looking at removing level footpath crossings. They don't have the money to build bridges therefore it is likely that links in the Borough will be lost.

12.6 BK enquired how many flat crossings there are in Wigan

EP

13 **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

13.1 The next meeting of the Local Access Forum will be held at Wigan Town Hall on Wednesday 8th December 2010. Sandwiches and refreshments will be provided from 5.30pm with official business starting at 6.00pm.