

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Access Forum
 Wednesday 16 May 2007
 Leigh Town Hall



		Action														
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Dr Ernstbrunner welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Present:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Edgar Ernstbrunner</td> <td>Ramblers Association - Manchester area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Burns</td> <td>Peak & Northern Footpath Society</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Allen</td> <td>Long Distance Walkers Association</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jackie Roberts</td> <td>Crankwood Bridleways Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brenda Gaskell</td> <td>Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Pimblett</td> <td>Wigan & District Ramblers Association Officers:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elizabeth Parry</td> <td>Public Rights of Way Officer Highway Services.</td> </tr> </table>	Edgar Ernstbrunner	Ramblers Association - Manchester area	Peter Burns	Peak & Northern Footpath Society	David Allen	Long Distance Walkers Association	Jackie Roberts	Crankwood Bridleways Group	Brenda Gaskell	Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group	John Pimblett	Wigan & District Ramblers Association Officers:	Elizabeth Parry	Public Rights of Way Officer Highway Services.	
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2	<p>Apologies</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Judith Burton</td> <td>British Horse Society</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Edna Booth</td> <td>Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eileen Rybka</td> <td>Standish & District Bridleway Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Scrivens</td> <td>Assistant Rights of Way Map Officer</td> </tr> </table>	Judith Burton	British Horse Society	Edna Booth	Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group	Eileen Rybka	Standish & District Bridleway Group	David Scrivens	Assistant Rights of Way Map Officer							
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3	<p>Minutes of the last meeting</p> <p>3.1 Item 6.5 third paragraph should read: "JP stated that the LAF" and not "JB"</p> <p>The minutes were accepted as a true record.</p>	DS														
4	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>4.1 Item No 6.7. EE sought confirmation that the network had been surveyed in 2003; EP confirmed that it was undertaken as part of the computerised management system for ROW. EE asked for an update on the LEMO's and also the Claims Register. EP advised that she had spoken with Christine Brown Highway Solicitor recently who had agreed to give an update for the Highways User Group. With regard to the register EP explained that the Council's website has been revamped, which did result in problems with access to the draft ROWIP through the size of document. The current position is</p>															

that there are a number of Sections within Planning and Engineers that have to make information such as registers available on line, there are various discussions taking place to identify the best way in doing this, Dave Green our IT officer will give EP an update for the Highways User Group.

EE was concerned about the delay in this and suggested that if a favourable update was not forthcoming at the HUG, a letter should be written to the Chief Executive, this was agreed.

4.2 Item No. 4.1 - Woodland Trust – BG had requested a full copy of the Woodland Trust Report on access to woodlands ‘Space for People’ EP provided a copy.

4.3 Item No. 7.1 - Martland Park Orders – ER & JB had previously expressed concerns on whether all the orders were confirmed. EP advised that it would appear that of the overall Orders proposed for the site only three were initially confirmed, the others were not followed up by Legal. As such a meeting has been held, and Christine Brown is looking into completing the remaining orders in line with the agreed status; footpath and bridleway.

5 **Ramblers Association Initiative – “Use your paths”**

5.1 EE explained that this initiative was aimed at encouraging Members of the Ramblers Association (RA) as well as Members of the Public to participate in this challenge; to walk all the public rights of way in England and Wales by September 2007.

EP circulated some information that had been downloaded from the RA web site. Respective areas have been split into 1km grid squares with the aim of individuals surveying the network within each square then reporting any defects to RA Central Office, Regional Offices and or Local Authorities. One of the issues that had been raised as a result of the challenge was the availability of the Definitive Map; EP had attempted to assist EE in this matter, but Wigan Council was not aware of this initiative by the RA.

There was considerable discussion about this initiative, EE advised that he had contacted RA Central Office to clarify matters but they seemed to be taking a ‘relaxed’ approach on issues such as risk of duplication. There was some concern aired as other organisations were not aware of this initiative and JP mentioned that he felt that the scheme was not well managed or co-ordinated and lacked ownership.

One issue that was raised was the accessibility of information that was secured through this initiative; no doubt the RA will be making

such detail available. EE asked if Wigan would make such information available; EP doubted this as firstly there are over two thousand public rights of way in the borough and secondly the computer system is designed as a management tool. All issues remain recorded on the system, whilst efforts are made to up date

Issues: items highlighted from the initial survey of 2003 may not have been addressed updated on the system.

EP will discuss the matter with management to determine how best to proceed and whether information can be made available to the public.

EP

6 **LAF Secretarial role - DEFRA Guidance – Dave Allen**

6.1 DA referred to the recent Defra Guidance on LAF's and specifically the following points;

Page 19; The role of Secretary,
Page 7; Statutory Function, and
Page 13; Annual Report.

DA was concerned that the role and position of the secretary needs to be secured, failure to resolve this may have implications on the effectiveness of the LAF.

EP expressed some concern about the amount of time being put into both the LAF and the HUG by ROW staff. EP did advise that she was in negotiation with Mark Tilley to investigate the possibility of a full time ROWIP Officer; part of the remit of this Officer will be to provide administrative support to this Group.

With regard increasing the profile of the LAF EP advised that some LAF's have designed their own letterhead thus creating a clear identity, when completed it would be appropriate to write to all Heads of Department to outline the LAF's position. EP offered to speak to Dave Green in Engineers to see if he would come up with some design.

EP

PB expressed concern about the production of annual reports; he felt that there was a possibility that an inordinate length of time may be spent dealing with the report rather than addressing key issues.

7 **ROWIP**

7.1 EP circulated a reply from Barry Gardiner MP Minister for Biodiversity, Landscape & Rural Affairs to all LAF's re. Implementation of LAF, plus a follow up letter from Kent Access Forum in response.

- 7.2 There was some concern that authorities were under no obligation to actually implement anything within the ROWIP, no penalties for doing nothing.

EP advised that two responses had been received thus far to the draft ROWIP from Dave Allen and Barry King.

JP asked if it was possible to receive a paper copy of the draft ROWIP, EP to arrange.

DS/EP

After some discussion it was noted that the closing dates for comments was the 30th June, as such it was agreed that EP will speak with Helen Cumiskey from JMP to find out when the final report would be ready so that the LAF could see it prior to it going to cabinet. In the meantime any comments received will be forwarded to LAF Members.

DS/EP

8 **Any other business**

- 8.1 EP circulated two sets of leaflets:

River Access Latest campaign, and
Access Newsletter Issue No's. 23 & 24 February 2007

- 8.2 EE asked about the List of Streets / Definitive Map issue, EP advised that some routes which are included in the List of Streets but not on the Definitive Map have been brought to the attention of the Discovering Lost Ways Project. EE was concerned about the possible implications of back streets, those that may be adopted but are not on the Map; EP advised that as far as she was aware the main area within the borough that had some adopted back streets was Leigh; EE said this was useful information.

- 8.3 JR informed the Group of a recent incident that had occurred in Pennington Country Park which involved a horse rider. BG reminded the Group that there is a concessionary bridleway through the site however at one point which is a pinch point for all activities there is a play area located near the bridleway. This area has recently been extended resulting in a swing suitable for disabled children to use being located on the opposite side of the bridleway; apparently the swing is torpedo shaped and when in 'full swing' extends over the bridleway.

The incident occurred in this area, a horse reacted when an individual was using the swing; whilst it is believed that no one was injured, the matter was reported to the Park Wardens. As a consequence Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust have undertaken a

risk assessment, the outcome of which is unknown.

The horse riders have concerns that a repetition does not occur of that which happened at Haigh Hall a while back when an incident occurred where a horse drawn carriage collided with a pedestrian

after the horse had been spooked; horses were then banned from the entire site.

EP advised that she had received a phone call from Peter Alker Warden at Pennington Country Park on this matter, EP had used the opportunity to bring to his attention the ROWIP and that this provides funding to explore new opportunities and routes.

Whilst there was concern about the incident LAF Members raised the question as to whether WL&CT had done a risk assessment prior to putting in the new swing.

EP advised that she had received a request for WL&CT to be put on the agenda for the next Highways User Group meeting, EP had asked Sharon Saunders from WL&CT to do a presentation but she had declined stating that there was some reshuffling taking place within the organisation and that it would not be a good time.

Whilst EP is happy to keep the item on the HUG agenda she expressed concern that WL&CT representative Anne Cockram does not take flak for the lack of response and cooperation from the Trust generally. As such EP suggested that at the HUG meeting this be used as an opportunity to identify key issues and areas of concern that both the LAF and HUG Members have with the Trust and that a formal request be made to a senior manager to do a presentation and to respond to the questions identified, this was agreed by Members.

- 8.3 Leigh Guided Busway – BG raised this as there were concerns that the bridleway from Holden Road Leigh to Ellenbrook will not be extended into Salford. EP reminded the Group that she had attempted to progress matters with Officers from Salford but it appears that they are unwilling to allow horses on the dismantled railway and that they are not prepared to discuss the matter. EE stated that he would contact members of the Manchester, Salford and Trafford LAF and seek their opinion on the matter; it may also be an opportunity to explore cross boundary routes and involve other user groups and representatives in the area.

EE

9 Date and venue of next meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting will be held at Wigan Town Hall the date will be confirmed by EP after discussion with JMP and EE.

EP