



An informal gathering will be held at 6.00pm
followed by the formal business at 6.30pm

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**Meeting to be held in The Civic Hall, Leeds on
Tuesday, 14th November, 2006 at 6.00 pm**

MEMBERSHIP

Councillor C Fox	-	LCC
Councillor R Harington	-	LCC
Fred Hirst	-	Owners and Occupiers
Doreen Lawson	-	Owners and Occupiers
Vacancy	-	Owners and Occupiers
Phillip Maude	-	User of local rights of way
Didy Metcalf	-	User of local rights of way
Mike Willison (Chair)	-	User of local rights of way
Vacancy	-	User of local rights of way
Vacancy	-	User of local rights of way

A G E N D A

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

To seek nominations for the election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Leeds Local Access Forum for the period 2006/07.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence (if any.)

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1 - 10

To consider the minutes of the previous meetings held on 17th January 2006 and 6th June 2006.

(Copies attached.)

4 MATTERS ARISING

To discuss any matters arising.

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE (LOCAL ACCESS FORUM REVIEW)

11 - 14

To consider the Terms of Reference for the Forum.

(Copy attached.)

6 ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06

15 - 20

To receive a copy of the Leeds Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2005/06.

(Copy attached – please note bound colour copies of this document will be available at the meeting.)

7 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Verbal report.)

8 OPEN ACCESS

21 - 28

To consider correspondence received from the Rivers Access Campaign regarding river access in England for non-powered craft.

(Copy attached.)

9 **DOG CONTROL AND GATING ORDERS - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS**

(Verbal report.)

10 **UPDATES**

To receive verbal updates on the following issues:

- (i) Parlington
- (ii) West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways
- (iii) Kirkstall Forge

11 **LEEDS COUNTRY WAY**

(Verbal report.)

12 **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY FORUM MEETING - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(Verbal report.)

13 **CIRCULARS AND CONSULTATION PAPERS**

(Verbal report.)

14 **PLANNING POLICY AND CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

(Verbal report.)

15 **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

To identify issues to be considered at the next meeting.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To determine the date and time of the next meeting of the Forum.

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LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17th JANUARY 2006

PRESENT Mr M Willison in the Chair
Mr M Dyer, Ms S Goodall, Mr P Maude,
Mr F Hirst, Mrs D Metcalf and Councillor Fox

IN ATTENDANCE Joanne Smyth – Public Rights of Way,
Countryside & Access
Manager
Roger Brookes – Public Rights of Way,
Countryside & Access
Douglas Louis – Technical Manager, Parks &
Countryside Division
John Grieve Legal and Democratic
Services

24 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

25 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harington and Doreen Lawson

26 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair identified 2 minor corrections to the minutes, Item No 14 the word landowners should be substituted with the word Farmers. Minute No17 delete the phrase SSI and replace with SSSI

RESOLVED – That, with the inclusion of the minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2005 be agreed as a true and correct record

27 Matters arising

- (i) Outstanding Owners and Occupiers vacancy on the LLAf (Minute No.14 refers) - Further to minute 14 of the meeting held on 20th October 2005, Joanne Smyth updated the forum on progress in respect of filling the outstanding Owners and Occupiers vacancy on the LLAf. Following the unsuccessful recruitment exercise it was now planned to send a flyer to the NFU, Young Farmers and the

CLA and ask for applications by invitation. The closing date for receipt of applications is 3rd February 2006.

- (ii) Annual Report of the Leeds Local Access Forum (Minute No.15 refers) – The Chair said the report, as far as he could see, had not yet been published on the Council's Web site. Before it was the front page needed altering in order to show that it was from the LLAFF and not Leeds City council. The Chair suggested the Chair and Secretary progress the matter.

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the course of action been taken to fill the current vacancy
- (ii) To authorise the Chair and Secretary to re-visit the format of the LLAFF Annual Report with a view to implementing the suggested corrections

28 Kirkstall Valley Project –Update

Members received an update from Martin Sellens, Area Planning Manager, West Area Team, Development Department on the Kirkstall Valley project.

Mr Sellens acknowledged the receipt of the LLAFF's comments on the scheme. This particular application was a very long and complex process.

Mr Sellens said that Transport/Highway issues and possible flooding to the site continue to be unresolved. There are significant highway concerns in respect of the A65. On 27th January 2006 the application will be put before Plans Panel (West) for consideration. Officers will submit a substantial report providing a comprehensive overview. Panel Members will undertake a site visit prior to this meeting taking place.

It was reported that discussions had taken place with Network Rail and Metro to achieve a Railway Station at the Kirkstall Forge site, it is hoped that the station may be delivered as part of a substantial Transport benefit. It was noted that the developer is prepared to commit £4m towards a station at the site.

There has been very little progress made on the Public Rights of Way issues. The Railway Station is the key to crossing the line of the railway to achieve a link with the Rights of Way in Bramley Fall Woods. There are to be two traffic-controlled crossings of the A65, one at each end of the site, which will allow safe access to the Rights of Way in Hawksworth Wood. Discussions are taking place with the developer as to the status of the footpaths within the site and the phasing of the development. It is hoped to

achieve at an early stage a link along the riverside to Kirkstall Abbey but there are health and safety issues to be overcome. These links require establishing earlier on within the planning process.

Councillor Fox referred to the possible plans to provide a Railway Station at Apperley Bridge. In responding Mr Sellens said he was aware of such issues, two stations was not possible, the Kirkstall Forge site was the preferred Park & Ride site.

Mr Sellens reported that through negotiation a number of contentious elements had now been removed from the scheme (Office Development along the Kirkstall Road frontage). Further discussions continue to be ongoing with off site links being pursued through a Section 106 Agreement.

Mr Maude re-emphasised the comments made earlier that it was very important to get footpath provision in at the very early stages of the planning process.

The Chair thanked Mr Sellens for his attendance and presentation

29 West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways

Members received a presentation from Mr Douglas Louis, Technical Manager, Parks & Countryside Division, Department of Learning and Leisure on the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways objectives

Mr Louis advised Members that the aim of the initiative was to develop the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways ensuring suitable and sustainable greenspace availability, quality recreational areas, diverse wildlife habitats and a strong community involvement. To achieve this goal the following objectives had been produced:

Short Term Objectives

- Examine the feasibility of extending the Country Park and Green Gateways area to include greenspace around the south of New Farnley and in towards Beeston Royds
- Explore potential routes from Beeston Royd, Post Hill and/ or Silver Royd Hill to Armley and the City Centre to create a complete circular route. Route to use existing green corridors and/ or greenspaces as “stepping stones”
- Once the route is affirmed produce a standard interpretation board for the Country Park and Gateways Scheme. Suggest compartmentalise the Park due to its size so the interpretation boards within each compartment contain a simple generic map of

the Park along with a more detailed map for the compartment in question

- Produce a general leaflet about the Country Park and the Green Gateways. Supplement this with specific leaflets for each compartment within the Park
- Establish a framework with Bradford so cross-border issues can be discussed and acted upon. This will have particular relevance to the various Public Rights of Way that cross the boundary and in the development of mini circular trails
- Way mark key routes through the site and spur paths to sites of interest and ensure these are included in the leaflets
- Set up a consultative forum that will include key stakeholders to discuss issues relating to the development of the Country Park and Green Gateways
- Organise a number of guided walks through the proposed area using the Countryside Rangers and Volunteers

Medium Term Objectives

- Organise a number of bigger events with the emphasis on promoting health in all its guises. Orienteering, horse riding, cross-country running, walking, mountain bike rides and conservation work
- Improve key Public Rights of Way within the site and develop a West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways Trail for walkers, horse riders and mountain bike riders
- Select sites within the Country Park and Green Gateways that would benefit from conservation works e.g. pond construction, wild flower meadows establishment or restoration, hedge planting, tree plantations, fencing and dry stone walling
- Formal framework with the various stakeholders to implement improvements in the greenspace areas
- Seek grants to improve or provide facilities to the various greenspaces. For example the installation of seats, picnic tables, steps, ramps and directional signage. Also to include removal of fly-tipped waste and general litter besides installing appropriate barriers to prevent unauthorised access
- Look at creating mini circular trails within the Country Park & Green Gateways area
- Develop a management plan for the initiative that encompasses the various sites, links, consultation and objectives

Long Term Objectives

- Resolve outstanding ownership of various greenspace that lie within the area of the proposed Country Park and Green Gateways

- Where appropriate open up new public rights of way or permissive ways to provide links between various existing public rights of way and thereby develop continuity in routes through the proposed Country Park and Green Gateways
- Develop and expand access to new areas of greenspace within the urban and countryside areas that will positively contribute to the initiative

When questioned by Members about funding to maintain the park, Mr Louis responded by saying that appropriate funding was available to maintain the park area

Referring to the short term objectives and the establishing of consultative forums, Mr Louis suggested that a forum was being held on 20th March 2006 and representative from the LLAFF would be welcome

Both Diddy Metcalf and the Chair expressed an interest in attending the forum

RESOLVED –

- (i) That Mr Louis be thanked for his attendance and his informative presentation
- (ii) That Diddy Metcalf and the Chair be contacted in the first instance concerning attendance at the West Leeds Country Park Forum to be held on 20th March 2006

30 The ROW Improvement Plan Update

Roger Brookes provided Members with an update on the ROW Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Referring to the Leeds ROWIP – User Survey, Mr Brookes said that some preliminary results had been obtained using the first 100 questionnaires processed. Various graphs were circulated to illustrate the number of users and the use type. The outstanding questionnaires were still being processed and it was hoped that this work would be completed by the end of summer

Speaking on other areas of the ROWIP, Mr Brookes said that Bridleway connections were ongoing, the definitive map process was very complicated and time consuming with all footpath applications going to Public Inquiry. It is important to determine where the prior areas are, and this can be achieved through the results of the users survey

In passing comment Phil Maude said he was aware that up to 12 public footpaths were currently obstructed, was the Council considering taken any kind of action

In response Joanne Smyth said prosecutions were only done as a last resort

RESOLVED – That the progress made be noted

31 Feedback from the LAF Event in September 2005

Members received a summary report following the staging of a Yorkshire and Humber Local Access Forum event which was held in York on 16th September 2005

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

32 Summary of Jim Knight’s Speech to the Local Access Forums in the North West

Members received a summary of a speech given by Jim Knight, Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity to a gathering of representatives from Local Access Forums in the North West of England

RESOLVED – That the contents of the speech be noted

33 Further Discussion on the Way Ahead for the LLAF

In opening up the discussion the Chair suggested that the LLAF should concentrate on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the Kirkstall Forge Scheme, West Leeds Country Park and possibly the former St Aidan’s Opencast Coal Site.

In passing comment Phil Maude suggested that the LLAF had the greatest influence in making schemes more accessible to the general public. Looking at things at a strategic level was very important, for example the West Yorkshire Transport Plan was a good example of how the LLAF could provide influence. Dialogue with other Local Authorities, “tapping” into corporate projects and Statutory Forums has a lot of influence in strategic terms.

Joanne Smyth commented that a great deal of officer time was spent investigating diversions/upgrades to the Public Right of Way network. Referring to the Parlington Area of the City, she said that entering into consultation with all interested parties had been a major problem, specific issues at specific paths. It was necessary to hold surgeries twice a year separate to the ROWIP process

Roger Brookes suggested the LLAF's efforts should be concentrated on ROWIP and not so many Kirkstall Forge Projects

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the LLAF be the subject of a site visit to the Parlington Flyline

34 Open Access

Joanne Smyth reported that work was currently being undertaken to look at all Open Access Land. Site surveys would be carried out to establish means of entry and exit, the work would take some time given the very large area to cover. It was reported that the work was currently being done by a temporary appointment however, funding was being sought to secure a permanent post

RESOLVED – That a further update be provided at a future meeting

35 Bulletin

Members received a copy of BULLETIN, (Issue No. 6). Published by the Countryside Agency the newsletter provides an update on the Access Management Grant Scheme

RESOLVED – That the contents of the Bulletin newsletter be noted

36 Items for the next meeting

With reference to minute 33 above, and the decision to visit the Parlington Flyline. Members requested to receive documentation which would be of assistance during the course of their visit

37 Date of Future Meetings

RESOLVED – That meeting's of the Leeds Local Access Forum be arranged as follows:

- (i) Tuesday 6th June 2006 (Site visit to Parlington Flyline, assemble 5.30pm at Parks & Countryside Offices, Redhall, Estate)
- (ii) Tuesday 19th September 2006 at 6.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds preceded by informal gathering at 6.00pm.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the proposed improvement measures be noted
- (ii) That a report, providing an update, be prepared for the next meeting of the Forum

3 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 19th September 2006 at 6.30pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds preceded by informal gathering at 6.00pm.

LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Terms of Reference

Title

The Forum shall be known as the **Leeds Local Access Forum** and will cover the whole of the Metropolitan District of Leeds

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Leeds Local Access Forum shall be a function under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and associated regulations. Principally to act as a statutory advisor to the City Council on the improvement of public access to land for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.
2. The Forum shall provide advice to the City Council and the Countryside Agency on all relevant countryside access issues, in ways that address social, economic and environmental interests, bearing in mind the needs of land management, conservation and all other varying interests.
3. The Forum shall consider and provide advice on issues regarding the statutory right of access to the countryside and improvements to the rights of way network.
4. The Forum shall be aware of, and responsive to, any national and local guidance and "good practice" issues.
5. The Forum shall work to develop a constructive and inclusive approach to recreational access to the countryside.
6. The Forum shall seek to reach consensus wherever possible regarding their advice, where this is not possible, the differing views shall be made known.

Membership

7. The Leeds Local Access Forum shall consist of 10 Members.
8. Two Members of the Forum shall be nominated by Leeds City Council and may be elected Members of Leeds City Council.
9. Eight members of the Forum shall represent either:
 - a. Users of the rights of way network and rights of access to open country;
 - b. Owners or occupiers of land over which rights of way pass or access land;
 - c. Any other interests relevant to the work of the Forum;and provide a balanced representation of a and b above.
10. Members not experienced in the topics at paragraph 9a or 9b, or aligned with any particular interest group, but having a specific interest relevant to Leeds may be appointed.

11. Members of the Forum will be appointed by Leeds City Council using the "Member Specification" and current selection and appointment procedures. The selection panel shall consist of the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning and Leisure (or their nominee), the Director of Learning and Leisure (or their nominee), and the Human Resources Manager of Learning and Leisure.
12. Members of the Forum shall serve for a period of one, two or three years, based on their individual preferences. A Member replacing another member who has retired or otherwise vacated membership, may also choose their period of appointment between one to three years.
13. The Chair and Vice-chair of the Forum shall be elected by the Forum Members at their first, and as necessary any subsequent, meetings, so as to provide a balance of interests.
14. The Chair and Vice-chair will hold office for a period determined by the Forum of not less than one year or more than three years as may be determined by the Forum at its first meeting.
15. The Chair may suspend any meeting if in his/her opinion the meeting does not accord with paragraph nine above, or if the meeting falls below a quorum of one third of members currently appointed.
16. Any member who does not attend for three consecutive meetings may be removed from the Forum by the Forum or Leeds City Council.

Administration

17. Meetings will be held at least twice a year and more frequently when necessary.
18. An Officer of Leeds City Council shall provide secretarial support to the Forum by:
 - a. Distribution of papers.
 - b. Arranging and publicising meetings.
 - c. Liaison between the Forum Members, City Council and the Countryside Agency.
19. Meeting agendas will be agreed between the Chairman and the Secretary and distributed ten days before any proposed meeting (except in the case of an emergency). Members may suggest items for inclusion on agendas, all papers for inclusion on an agenda will be submitted to the Secretary three weeks before any proposed meeting (except in the case of an emergency).
20. Meetings will be advertised in advance and held in public. Except with the permission of the Chair, they shall not be recorded or broadcast.
21. Agendas, papers and minutes of the meeting will be available to the public.
22. The Forum may invite observers to the meeting when appropriate. Leeds City Council and the Countryside Agency shall be entitled to send observers to any meetings who may contribute to the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

23. Members of the public may ask questions on the business of the meeting at the discretion of the Chairman at the start or end of any meeting.
24. The Forum may decide to set up such committees, sub-committees and working parties as it considers necessary and they will be subject to the same rules (altered as necessary for the circumstances) as the Forum.
25. The Forum shall prepare an annual report that shall be available to the public.
26. Members of the Forum are entitled to claim reasonable expenses (relating to travel and subsistence costs and the cost of arranging care of their children or dependants) incurred by them in connection with attending meetings of the Forum.

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Leeds Local Access Forum Annual Report 2005-2006



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM APRIL 2005 - APRIL 2006

Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to the second Annual Report of the Leeds Local Access Forum, the independent body established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and whose primary purpose is to advise Leeds City Council on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable.

The past year saw the final tranche of access land in England opened on 31st October 2005 for responsible access on foot, and included the 352 hectares of access land within the Leeds Metropolitan District. Much of this access land comprises the open country of Hawksworth Moor and Otley Chevin. In addition, there are four smaller parcels of open country, as well as a number of areas of registered common land that are also classed as access land. Although much smaller compared to the large expanses of access land in areas such as the Yorkshire Dales, nevertheless it forms an important part of the countryside within Leeds. It is hoped that, with the help of funding from the Access Management Grant Scheme, progress will be made on making this land more accessible.

The main focus of the Forum has been the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), particularly advising on the assessment process to establish whether local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public. The Forum looks forward to commenting on the draft RoWIP next year.

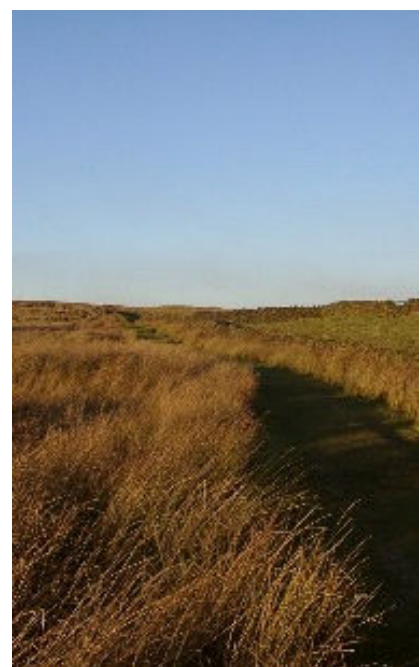
Local access forums are very still evolving. During the year the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) consulted on proposed changes to the regulations for the operation and membership of forums to which our Forum responded. We hope that the new regulations and accompanying guidance will provide clearer way ahead.

All meetings of the Forum are open to the public. If there is a topic you feel the Forum should address please contact me through the Secretary*.

Finally, I should like to thank the members of the Forum for their help and support, and also to thank officers of Leeds City council, in particular Joanne Smyth (lead officer) and John Grieve (secretary), who have ensured the smooth running of the Forum.

Mike Willison
Chairman
Leeds Local Access Forum

*Hannah Bailey
Governance Services
4th Floor West, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
hannah.bailey@leeds.gov.uk



Hawksworth Moor, our largest area of access land

1. Background

The Leeds Local Access Forum first met on 27 April 2004. Since that time the Local Access Forum Representatives have responded to many of the DEFRA Consultation papers and have given their advice in compiling the Rights of Way Improvement Plan questionnaire.

Although the main focus has been on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the Representatives have also been actively involved in giving advice on wider recreation issues involving large new development sites in Leeds such as Kirkstall Forge and have also attended the Liaison meetings for the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gate Ways.

2. Dates of Meetings

21 June 2005
20 October 2005
17 January 2006

Members of the Forum and attendance at the various meetings of the Leeds Local Access Forum can be seen in section 12.



The local access forum site meeting at Parlington estate, 6 June 2006

3. Business of the Forum

The following is a record of the main items of business dealt with by the Forum; further detail can be obtained by referring to the minutes of the meetings.

Particular reference is made to items which gave rise to discussion and to items where the Forum agreed that specific advice be made to the Countryside Agency and the Government.

5. Kirkstall Forge development site

A presentation was given outlining the proposals for this development site. The proposals for the site include 1,385 new houses 16518m² of office space, support facilities including bars, restaurants, small-scale retail, health and fitness, a hotel and multi story car parking.

The Forum members asked to be kept informed about progress and stressed the importance of establishing public access to and through the site.

6. Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The questionnaire survey was amended and agreed by members of the Forum who advised on the best way forward to implement this survey.



Test-driving Tramper scooters with the Otley Disability Advisory Group on the Chevin, 24 February 2006

6. Open Access

A number of Access Bulletins were circulated to each member of the Forum, giving the latest information from the Countryside Agency and DEFRA.

During the course of the year, Leeds City Council was able to apply for funding through the Access Management Grant scheme. As part of this funding a temporary Open Access Ranger was appointed who could deal with the process of managing the interpretation / signs on open access land. It was envisaged that the second phase of this funding would cover costs to extend this new post.



Ranger-led guided walk on Burley and Hawksworth Moor. 25 October 2006

7. Recruitment of Forum Members

A number of adverts / flyers were produced throughout the course of the year to fill the vacant posts on the Forum. Unfortunately, no application was received and it was felt that the recruitment procedure was too complicated for a voluntary position. It was agreed to look at this again to expedite matters

8. Annual Report

The first annual report of the Forum was received. A discussion took place about presentation of the annual report and that the annual report should perhaps be from the Local Access Forum as opposed to a Leeds City Council Report.

It was acknowledged there was a lack of funding to produce this annual report and although it may not be a glossy report, did reflect the business of the Forum and met the statutory requirement.

9. West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways. A presentation was given outlining the proposals for this new project. The aim is to develop the Country Park to ensure suitable and sustainable green space availability, quality recreational areas, diverse wildlife habitats and a strong community involvement. In order to achieve this, a number of short, medium and long term objectives were set out.

10. Responses to Consultations on Draft regulations and Circulars

Throughout the course of the year, the Forum discussed and gave responses on some of the following documents:

DEFRA Confirmation of Byelaws relating to Countryside Recreation: Proposals for Change - A consultation document

DEFRA Consultation relating to the Amendment of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002

DEFRA Consultations on Diversions of Rights of Way

Countryside Agency - Review of Local Access Forums: Report of research commissioned by the Countryside Agency

West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan

Kirkstall Forge development site

11. Relevant Documents

Copies of the following documents can be obtained by contacting the Leeds Countryside and Access Unit on 0113 395 7400. These documents will also be available on Leeds City Council Website.

- 🌳 Leeds Local Access Forum Terms of Reference
- 🌳 Approved minutes of all the Leeds Local Access Forum meetings

12. LEEDS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM - ATTENDANCE OF MEETINGS

Name	Representing	21/06/05	20/10/05	17/01/06
Dr M. Willison (Chair)	Walking interest	✓	✓	✓
Ms S Goodall (Vice Chair)	Horse Riding interest	✓	A	✓
Mr P. Maude	Cycling interest	✓	-	✓
Mrs D. Metcalf	Horse Riding interest	✓	✓	✓
Mr F. Hirst	Farming interest	A	✓	✓
Mr A. Hepworth	Farming interest	Resigned	-	-
Mr M. Dyer	Walking interest	✓	-	✓
Mrs D. Lawson	Land Owning interest	A	✓	A
Cllr R. Harrington	Ward Member for Gipton and Harehills & Shadow SpokesPerson for Leisure	A	A	A
Cllr C. Fox	Ward Member for Adel & Wharfedale	✓	✓	✓

In attendance				
Mrs J. Smyth	Leeds City Council (Countryside and Access Manager)	✓	✓	✓
Mr J Grieve	Leeds City Council (Secretary of the Leeds LAF)	✓	A	✓
Mr R Welbourn	Leeds City Council (Support Services Manager)	A	No longer contact Officer	-
Mr R. Brookes	Leeds City Council (Development Officer)	A	✓	✓
Douglas Louis	Leeds City Council (Technical Manager)	-	-	✓
Mr M Sellens	Principal Planning Officer	✓	-	-
Mr P Bowers	Leeds City Council Legal Services	A	✓	

Key: a: attended the meeting A: apologies - did not attend

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River Access in England for Non Powered Craft.

Further to my letter of 10 May 2005 when letters from the Rt Hon Alun Michael and Rt Hon Richard Cahbon were included showing that the issue of access to waterways should be considered within the Local Access Forums. The purpose of this letter is to further update you as to the rivers access issue.

One of the biggest issues that face British Canoeists is the lack of access to the rivers of England and Wales. Canoeing, for the fifth year running, has been recognised as the fastest growing watersport (RYA Survey 2005) Canoeing is a socially inclusive healthy activity which is attractive to people of all ages and abilities.

The debate concerning access to inland rivers in England and Wales has increased in volume and profile. As the debate develops we have become aware of misconceptions about what we are trying to achieve. The type of legislation that we are seeking is a version of the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003. This Act is applicable to manually powered craft. The Act codifies responsible access to land and water it protects the environment and activities of all canoeists, anglers, other users, and landowners who are all required to adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The Act has been successfully implemented.

Canoeing is not seeking a conflict with anglers and other river users. It wants to successfully co-exist to the wider benefit of the whole community, as canoeists do in Scotland, all over Europe and the rest of the world. Clearly enshrined with any legislation will be the need to reach local agreement concerning environmental issues and times when some users may need exclusive use. However, this would be set against a background of right to pursue a pursuit rather than the current privileged and exclusive arrangement.

The EA has research to prove that Canoeing is not harmful to Fish Stocks. DEFRA have recently recognised this and now quote "*Whilst all water-based activities can have a direct impact on the environment, research undertaken on behalf of the Environment Agency found that over all canoeing is not harmful to fish populations....*" "*The BCU's Access strategy makes very clear that paddlers should undertake their sport in ways which do not have an adverse environmental impact*" It is also worthy of note that English Nature states "*there is unlikely to be any significant impact on or lasting disturbance to wildlife and the water environment from the passage of canoes*".

The Government have also recently stated that it "*is a firm believer in the benefits of outdoor recreation on land or water. The visitors are good for the local economy and people who exercise regularly are healthier than those who do not. So we are keen to promote recreational opportunities as widely as we can and this includes canoeing*".

It is a fact that lack of access to the inland waterways prevents us all.(swimmers, boaters, gorge walkers, waders etc) enjoying the waterways and participating in healthy outdoor activities. We are **all** restricted to using the rivers that have either an ancient right of navigation still existing or have statutory rights of navigation created in more recent times. This restriction also affects anglers.

The offer to come and present to your LAF is still available and we would be happy to update you as to the issue and how we are working with other organisations in order to change the access to water situation.

Yours sincerely

Tamsin Phipps

Rivers Access Campaign
British Canoe Union
Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre
Bisham, Nr. Marlow
Buckinghamshire SL7 1RT
tel 0118 9404252
07701 001 714

www.riversaccess.org

BRITISH CANOE UNION PRESS RELEASE

10th August, 2006

Canoeing is the most popular watersport for the 5th year running!

A recent survey has shown Canoeing is the most popular watersport for the fifth year running, ahead of all other watersports. This was reported in the independent survey carried out on behalf of the RYA*, BMF, MCA and RNLI.

The trend is also evident in the steady and consistent growth in the British Canoe Union's membership figures, which are increasing between 6-9% per annum.

It would seem that the National Governing Body is not the only organisation to benefit from this dynamic sports' popularity. The dramatic increase in the sports popularity effects have been well received in the commercial sector. Many of the key canoe manufacturers have seen huge growth in sales this season. At the recent CLA (Country & Business Land Association) Game Fair held at Romsey, Hampshire the huge interest was evident from the thousands of people who were keen to try canoeing for the first time. A rapidly increasing number of the people who are interested in canoeing and the purchase of kayaks is from fishermen who are taking up the growing pastime of Kayak Fishing i.e. fishing from a canoe/kayak.

Dean Maragh, Chief Executive of the Association of Canoe Trades, comments,

"Our Canoe Village has been one of the most popular features at several large, National shows, Over half a million people have been directly exposed to the Canoe Village with millions more seeing canoeing through the associated press campaigns, it's been a real boost for the trade and many more people are enjoying paddling"

Given sharing similar objectives of which getting more people on the water to try canoeing and kayaking, the BCU, ACT (Association of Canoe Trades) and the BMF (British Marine Federation) have been working more closely together to build positive relationships with the manufacturers and work towards promoting all of the different types of canoeing one can do

The popularity of the sport is quite clear, given its many benefits, including:

Truly inclusive

Regardless of age, ability or goals with 8 different types of canoeing, 500 clubs in the UK and over 8,000 qualified coaches there is something for everyone.

Great recreation

Whether it is fast flowing, white water, or flat recreational paddling or even a team activity like canoe polo, canoeing caters for all tastes.

Healthy active

The attractive combination of getting close to nature, getting fresh air and keeping fit at the same time is difficult to ignore. It is a great way to build strength and to work the cardio vascular system.

Social activity

Canoe and kayaking is a great way to meet new people. This could be by going to a local club, paddling with friends or volunteering.

Economic Benefits

The canoeing industry in its widest sense put in a phenomenal amount of money in to the national, local and rural economies.

Paul Owen, Chief Executive of the BCU comments:

“The survey is no real surprise to us, this is a fantastic sport with many benefits and is enjoyed by so many, which is why it continues to be such a popular and rapidly growing sport.”

Ends

For further information please contact:

Chloe Nelson-Lawrie, British Canoe Union & Canoe England on 0115 982 4211

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The BCU is responsible for leading and setting the overall framework for the National Associations; including representing canoeing interests through coaching, competition and campaigning for increased access to Britain’s waterways for paddlers. In the Athens Olympics, Canoeing was one of Team GB’s most successful sports with medals for Ian Wynne (Bronze), Helen Reeves (Bronze) and Campbell Walsh (Silver).

Today the BCU has a membership of over 50,000, including over 500 affiliated clubs and 145 approved centres. According to the Paddlesport Review there are an estimated 2 million people take to the water in a canoe each year. The vast majority do so under a watchful eye of one of the 13,000 BCU Qualified coaches or as part of an affiliated organisation. For more information visit: www.bcu.org.uk.

The RYA is the national body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating. It represents dinghy and yacht racing, motor and sail cruising, RIBs and sportsboats, powerboat racing, windsurfing, inland cruising and personal watercraft. On average over 185,000 people per year complete RYA training courses at any one of over 2,220 RYA Recognised Training Centres in 20 countries. There are over 103,000 personal RYA members.

Contact details: RYA Press Office: 02380 604208.

*RYA – Royal Yachting Association
BMF – British Marine Federation
MCA – Maritime and Coastguard Association
RNLI – Royal National Lifeboat Institution

BRITISH CANOE UNION PRESS RELEASE

2nd October, 2006

The BCU highlights the flaws in the Environment Agencies report into rivers access - Putting pilot voluntary canoe access agreements in place

On the 3rd October the Environment Agency will be publishing their report **Putting pilot voluntary canoe access agreements in place**. The work was carried out by the University of Brighton but commissioned by the Environment Agency (EA). The British Canoe Union (BCU) has raised grave concerns over the piece of work and the manner in which it was undertaken. This announcement highlights the dire lack of public access to rivers in England and Wales, unlike Scotland where there is a right.

NB Access to and along water was omitted from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) that gives public access to land areas. The BCU unsuccessfully lobbied for access to water to be included in the Act and pressed for further government action. England and Wales are unique with 41,000 miles of inland waterways with no public access; whereas in Scotland and other countries there is public access to inland waters.

The purpose of the study

On behalf of DEFRA the EA asked Brighton University to test and demonstrate the processes involved in negotiating voluntary agreements and to secure voluntary canoe access agreements on four rivers in England (Mersey, Teme, Waveney and Wear). These rivers had featured in an earlier feasibility study carried out by the Countryside Agency. The study concluded that additional access to rivers could be provided through voluntary arrangements, but that more advice and guidance was needed.

The claims

- ***Demand in England for recreational access to inland waters is not widespread.***

This claim contradicts the reality* that canoe & kayaking is the most popular watersport for the fifth year running, with over 1.5million paddlers participating and membership levels increasing month by month. There is an overall demand by the recreation and sport of canoeing and kayaking for access to inland waters.

Furthermore, the Countryside Agency – Land Recreation and Access Report concerning National Parks (June 2005) stated that there was a great unmet demand for white water canoeing in the National Parks.

- ***Approaches to securing canoe access by voluntary agreement are successful.***

On approximately half of the rivers in this study access was already in place or not contested. On one river the agreement is for a 1 mile stretch and for very restricted time periods. Given the popularity of canoeing, this is not successful, sustainable or acceptable. In fact on a couple of the pilot study rivers there is now less canoeing available than before the intervention of the work by the EA/Brighton University.

What has the study actually achieved?

72kms (45 miles) has been negotiated for paddlers, but in reality there was already agreement and acceptance for canoeing to take place on much of the area of study. (the EA had sponsored a Canoeists Guide to one of the rivers). So in two years a meager 20 miles of access have been gained with some of that being highly restrictive and complicated.

There are over 41,000 miles of rivers (over 3 meters wide) with no access! At this rate gaining access to rivers is too slow and certainly not adequate!

The EA report demonstrates the difficulties and limitations of gaining access to water by voluntary agreement where it is contested; and where it is granted the uncertainty of access remaining in place as parties can change and withdraw:

The R Teme is over 60 miles in length and only 1 mile of access has been negotiated on certain days for 9 months of the year. From over 50 miles of the River Wear, 7 miles of access is agreed, some we understand only in principle. The opposition to access faced by the consultants in their negotiations with local interests is in keeping with the national picture. This is why the BCU believes legislation is the only way to gain access that is both secure and has certainty.

Just a few reasons why the study is flawed

- On approximately half of the rivers addressed in this study access was already in place or not contested
- There was very little consultation with the British Canoe Union, the National Governing Body of the sport, representing the interests of over 50,000 paddlers.
- Rather than finding an innovative solution this study fuels the angling versus canoeing debate.
- In the light of the Scottish Land Reform Act and following example from other European countries, Canoeists are right to expect a more realistic approach to access.

The Four Projects

- River Mersey: 28 km from Stockport city centre to Carrington - This is, in fact, a realisation of an earlier scheme put forward by the British Canoe Union in 1994/5 and supported by the Environment Agency NW Region. A gain brought about by Local Authorities, who have a statutory remit to promote recreation. Access was uncontested by other interests, so the voluntary agreement could be considered a formality.
- River Teme: only 1 mile or 1.6km of whitewater around Ludlow – including four weirs- This is highly restrictive with no access in June, July and August and considerably reduces access the rest of the year with a potentially unmanageable booking system. The current arrangement is for all year round paddling based on suitable water levels. The intervention of the Brighton Team has given the opportunity for locals to close down the paddling opportunities.

- River Waveney: 33 km from Brockdish (east of Diss) to Ellingham (east of Bungay) – This is nothing more than a duplication of the work undertaken by the British Canoe Union, Environment Agency, Local Authorities and the East of England Development Agency in 1999. This previous work was not identified by the EA and Brighton Team and as canoeing has taken place for many years access was not contested. The Paul Hiney Secret Rivers programme this month paddled it and traced navigation on it back to the Romans.
- River Wear: 9 km from Houghall south of Durham to the Sands north of Durham.- In reality this is probably 3 mile (5km) stretch around the Durham peninsula which has always been used by canoeists. The extra distance is taking in Houghall College. There is no certainty that this will be included, as they only own one of the riverbanks. In August 2006, the Environment Agency admitted that they had achieved nothing and could only claim success if the owner opposite to Houghall would agree access.

Why voluntary rivers access agreements do not work

From over 41,00 miles (66,000kms) of rivers in England and Wales without a public right of navigation, only 510 miles (812 kilometres) of mostly highly restricted access has been negotiated. Some agreements are for just a few days each year adding very little (1.2%) to the 4% of inland waterways with a public right of navigation. Ultimately, access is in the hands of riparian owners. If they refuse to engage in negotiation, there is no way canoeists can make progress. This leads to unauthorised access to rivers and possible conflict. For example, in Wales only eight out of 300 rivers have negotiated access.

Why legislation for rivers access is needed

Legislation such as the successfully implemented Scottish Land Reform Act 2003, codifies responsible access to land and water. It protects the environment and activities of canoeists, anglers, other users and landowners who are all required to adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Canoeing is not seeking a conflict with anglers and other river users. It wants to successfully co-exist to the wider benefit of the whole community, as canoeists do in Scotland, all over Europe and the rest of the world.

A legal right of access to rivers would provide more recreational opportunities for a whole group of people including canoeists, swimmers, and boaters with, knock-on benefits for public health. The recreational aspects of canoeing could coincide effectively with government's "everyday sport" and Welsh Assembly Government's "Climbing Higher Strategy" if only river users had more access.

It is not just recreational paddlers that would benefit. British Canoeing has an outstanding record in the Olympic Games. Our athletes achieved three Olympic medals in Athens and in London 2012 we want to achieve 4 Olympic Medals including possibly 2 gold. A legal right of access will directly help to improve the UK's Olympic standing.

In addition to increased opportunities for recreation and elite sport, increased access to rivers would mean more money for rural communities. Research has shown that canoeing contributes about £750 million a year for the economy of England and Wales as well as supporting over 15,000 jobs.

Legally protected access would provide clarity and certainty for those visiting our rivers and remove conflict from the situation.

For more detailed information visit: <http://www.riversaccess.org/>

* RYA 2005 Survey

Ends

For further information please contact:

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Tamsin Phipps on 0115 9821100

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