

West Leeds country park & green gateways
Progress report

Notes on the Meeting held Monday 11.06.07.

Didy Metcalf attended on behalf of Leeds Local Access forum

There seemed to be a general feeling of satisfaction with the project amongst everybody attending the meeting. The whole process has been designed to be as inclusive as possible, with very positive results.

- Consultations on Phase 3 of the scheme (Apperley Bridge to Woodhall Lake) are almost complete.
- Leaflets for phases 2 and 3 are expected to be printed very soon.
- The design of the information boards and way marking has been finalised.
- Plans are in place to roll out the project to the wider public during this summer.

In terms of improving access to the green space around West Leeds: phases 1, 2 & 3 of the project have succeeded in providing practical and enjoyable routes for everyone. A network of paths is now in place, designed to accommodate the needs of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The routes have been planned taking into account the appropriateness of the locations and it is anticipated that they will be welcoming, well signed and easy to use.

However, there is still one serious outstanding problem: a dangerous road crossing on the Pudsey Bridleway Link. Before this route can be publicised and promoted, it must be safe. In order to resolve this, Leeds City Council need the co-operation of Bradford Council but despite repeated requests this has not been forthcoming. LCC will be sending out a follow up letter addressed to the Chief Executive of Bradford Council.

Leaflets: as well as providing guidance to the paths, the leaflets provide a host of other information; access points, car parks, refreshments and interesting historical notes which explain Leeds' heritage.

The paths will be way marked and five large notice boards are to be installed in strategic places. These have already been ordered and they will be enclosed in a robust plastic protective coating to minimise the effects of vandalism.

Elaine Hill (the council's officer in charge of the project) is promoting a photographic competition, which will involve local school children with a view

to publishing a calendar. It is hoped that the competition will raise awareness of the existence of the scheme and encourage children and their families to explore the Country Park. A poster campaign has also been proposed.

The modern thinking behind this scheme is also bringing benefits to the environment and an improving the quality of life for residents of West Leeds. Local voluntary groups have been tidying up and monitoring previously neglected areas of woodland and open space. The extent of the existing wildlife across Leeds is also being surveyed with the help of volunteers. This will assist the council in better understanding and managing the local wild spaces.

Everyone who has been involved in planning the Leeds West Country Park and Green Gateways is justly proud of their achievements. It has needed a lot of careful planning behind the scenes and now they want to show everyone what they've been up to. Music and Art events will be happening in the green spaces during the summer and the council are actively exploring the possibility of media coverage to publicise the launch.

Elaine Hill went through the short term and long term objectives for the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways and has asked for comments on this by 17 July. The first draft of the management plan is also out for consultation.