

Yorkshire and The Humber Regional Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at Wakefield Town Hall 17th May 2010

Joint Chairs Hazel Armstrong-Hull and East Riding, Richard Holmes-Wakefield,
 Attending: T.Howard, L.Seaman, C.Bolton, M.Bartholomew, K.Wainwright, B.Martin,
 N.Wareing,
 D.Northcliffe,P.Haines,T.Norris,C.Cook,P.Ashton,P.Woodyer, J.Harker, S.Schultz,
 H.Scott.

Apologies A.Hodgson

1. Introduction

- R.Holmes and H. Armstrong presented the background to the meeting. Yorkshire and The Humber Regional Local Access Forum (Y&H LAF) has not met since March 2009. At the England Access Forum (EAF) on 8.3.10 it became apparent that the support from Natural England for LAFs across the country was uneven and this was reflected in variable regional meetings. In the South West all LAFs reported individual support from Natural England, all other regions have a Regional Co-ordinator, apart from Y&H where there has been no activity. Hence RH and HA as Regional Representatives arranged this meeting with the support of Wakefield MDC.
2. All of the Y&H LAF secretaries had been contacted about the meeting. There were concerns that not all LAF's were present and some had not responded to the invitation – this is possibly due to secretaries not passing on the information or is there a breakdown somewhere in communications.
 3. North Yorkshire, Leeds and North Lincolnshire did not respond to the communication and were not represented. York City were contacted and confirmed their LAF has been disbanded.

4. England Access Forum

- Natural England has written to all LAFs (14.5.10) to review the England Access Forum. It was suggested that review be put on every LAF's agenda AND robustly debated and responded to by September.
5. Discussion within the EAF suggested that the Forum needed a statutory status in order to provide a national voice in raising front-line issues This should include influencing policy at the earliest stage, formal consultation, campaigning for access at the highest level, providing communication between LAF's, NE, and Government Departments, and being somewhere to provide advice and support for LAFs faced with problems. Other issues included 'health' and other social benefits of access.
 6. The EAF acknowledged that funding was and will be a major issue in this work. EAF noted all actions, including those of volunteers, do have a cost.
 7. Further the relationship between the LAFs, EAF and Natural England provided considerable debate both within EAF and with NE.

8. News from Individual LAFs

- There followed a "round-the-table" report from members of the state of affairs in their region. It soon became very obvious that different authorities had widely varied appreciation of their LAFs.
9. WestYorkshire have no attendance from elected members, perhaps because, it covers three local authorities (Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees). The two former

authorities are "supportive", but the latter has as yet no ROWiP. There is no landowner representation.

10. Sheffield, with its varied area (1/3 green belt and 1/3 National Park) has developed a comprehensive RoWiP document, has Local Authority funding and is represented on Transport and Health committees.
11. North Yorkshire Moors has something of a quandary as the National Park has access as its remit, but has, nonetheless been involved with work on exclusions. They have also been involved in the expansion plans for the National Park and have met with Northumberland LAF.
12. Wakefield have found that the RoWiP has raised Parish Council awareness. In order to raise the profile of the LAF a number of "ready to roll" projects are being developed to be used when funding become available.
13. Barnsley are involved in the 21st Anniversary of the Pennine Trail to be held in June. They are responsible for information boards with regard to Access land and have also been involved in "walking routes to school".
14. Rotherham had a CROW Act officer appointed early on and were given a budget from the outset. The Council, UK Coal and the Environment Agency have all helped to produce an active RoWiP, and, at local level (i.e. parish) "mini-RoWiPs".
15. Hull and East Riding have had "constitutional problems. Like West Yorkshire they lacked member support in certain areas. Access land is dealt with by the Rights of Way Officer, who has managed to keep in contact with the LAF. The Hull RoWiP was delayed but the LAF are pleased with the final document. A recent concerns are "travellers" occupying Green Lanes.

16. Natural England

LAF Regional Co-ordinator.

NE are keen to appoint a Co-ordinator. The role and description were explained by S. Shultz and applicants invited.

17. Unrecorded Routes.

The Stepping Forward report produced by the Discovering Lost Ways Project was published in March 2010 (see link below).

<http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NECR035>

This should be brought to the attention of all LAFs and made an agenda item for debate and response. The report quoted "there are 32 recommendations which aim to make the process more simple, more speedy and cheaper. All parties are able to give in-put"

18. The original Act envisaged a 25 year implementation, and concern was expressed that significant time has elapsed as we have waited for the results of the DLWP and the Stakeholder Working Group. Therefore an amendment of the Act is essential to reflect this delay and to extend the cut off time for ten years.
19. A further issue for LAFs to consider are the new Local Transport Plans. For more information please see the NE report 'LTP and RoWiP integration: good practice note' (See link below).

<http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/Product.aspx?ProductID=a9f67df9-f61d-40ae-9ed7-457b60b89394>

20. S.Schultz explained the nature of her role and some of the NE projects.
- 21. Landlocked Access Land**
22. H.Scott talked about the problems of isolated pockets of Access land and explained the work of P.Wharram (E.Yorks RoW Officer) in mapping these and contacting the landowners to discuss access. Where possibly circular routes are being explored. So far there has been a mixed response from landowners with some of the larger estates being less receptive. The report is due out soon.
23. Further access may be created through agri-environment schemes, which the NFU and CLA are promoting. It was noted that that such schemes are temporary being merely a ten year agreement. Questions raised included time-scales for the establishment of access points and what constituted "reasonable access" Lacking a barrister the matter was not resolved.
24. S.Schultz agree to provide minutes of the last meeting (25.3.09). NE also agreed to fund the next meeting.

25. Next meeting :- Town Hall Wakefield Monday 13th September (10.00- 2.00pm)
PLEASE NOTE : new date for the meeting.
26. The meeting closed at 1-13 pm.