



**Minutes – Meeting 42  
Arreton Community Centre  
Thursday 5 December 2013**

**Present at the meeting:**

**Forum Members:**

Mark Earp (Chairman)  
Tricia Merrifield  
Stephen Darch  
Alec Lawson  
John Gurney-Champion  
John Heather (Vice-Chairman)  
Karin Wall  
Heidi Marshall  
James Hewitt  
Cllr Paul Fuller  
Cllr John Medland

**Others:**

Helena Hewston - Shalfleet Parish Council  
Mike Slater - Isle of Wight Ramblers Access Officer  
David Howarth - Isle of Wight Ramblers Area Chairman  
Matthew Chatfield - Countryside & Rights of Way Manager, Isle of Wight Council  
Lee Matthews - Recreation & Public spaces Manager, Isle of Wight Council  
Will Ainslie - LSTF Project Manager, Isle of Wight Council

**Forum Secretary:**

Jennine Gardiner -Rights of Way Assistant, IWC Public Rights of Way Section (PROW)

**1. Apologies:**

Apologies were received from:

David Farnham  
Christopher Bull  
Sergeant Mark Lyth  
John Pullen  
Darrel Clarke

**2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising from previous meeting:**

The minutes were approved as a true record of the last meeting.

- Letter to Cllr Smart re dangerous road / rights of way crossing points. Lee Matthews gave an update on behalf of Cllr Smart who due to prior engagements was not able to attend today but is more than happy to attend a future meeting. Cllr Smart wanted to let the forum know she was very supportive and will try and do what she can to help. In the meantime she

has tasked the Rights of Way team to take initial action by auditing the list of sites identified. This audit was underway and the results will be used to rank the locations in priority so they can be considered for possible capital funded visibility improvement schemes. Tricia Merrifield added that hedge cutting / visibility splay work had already been carried out at Island View at Whitely Bank (a location which had led to many complaints of restricted visibility over the years) and initial feedback from riders was very positive.

- Feedback from Marc Griffin re the low rail at Landbridge cycle track. Mr Peter Brooke from the PFI contracts monitoring team had advised Rights of Way that they are looking into this matter. On the face of it this seems a simple and logical task but their concern is that there is a reason the rail is there i.e. a condition within the land dedication. The PFI Contract Monitoring Team is investigating this and as long as we are not breaking any conditions then it maybe possible to remove.
- Lost Ways – there was a misunderstanding regarding this point. Cllr Medland had thought lost ways referred to the long term closures in force i.e. Niton Undercliff, Whale Chine, Luccombe Chine etc. Matthew Chatfield commented that we are tackling these issues by proposing permanent TRO's on the locations rather than extinguishing them, which will then allow us to monitor the locations over the coming years until such time as landslip or movement may allow an opportunity to reopen the paths. Whereas lost ways refer to old rights of way / routes on the ground not currently recorded on the definitive map. No action was proposed for taking the true meaning of the lost ways issue further.
- Feedback from landowners via Cllr Medland re improved coastal access – Cllr Medland had not had any contacts.
- Forestry Commission feedback re the permissive path for bikes and equines in Parkhurst Forest. Mark Earp had not received any feedback. There has been a change of staff within the Isle of Wight Forestry Commission and the initial contact had now left. Her interim replacement has been contacted but we are still waiting for a reply.
- Bridleway link Marks Corner to Whitehouse Road – Tricia Merrifield has been investigating the old records and it appears this has never been ridden. It is known that the current landowner is no fan of horses so it seems this would not be a productive link to try and pursue.

### **3. Any Declarations of Interest:**

None

### **4. IW Bridleway Group update**

Tricia advised that following on from the Marks Corner to Whitehouse Road discussion (above) there could be another footpath which maybe appropriate to be reclassified as a bridleway. Tricia issued maps to highlight the location – public footpath N160 which runs from the track in Parkhurst Forest (behind the Forest Road dump / Sydenhams) and emerges onto Whitehouse Road. Tricia said it would be better for equestrians to use Whitehouse Road rather than the busy Forest Road. Tricia would need the OK from the Forestry Commission to access the Forest from this point. Contact will be made with Mike Pittock of the Forestry Commission and following his feedback contact could be made with the landowners of the private land which exits onto Whitehouse Road.

Tricia is currently working hard collecting user statements in respect of a claim which is anticipated to be submitted regarding Station Road and Ashe Down. It was pointed out that once a claim is

submitted it can take several years (even if it is successful) to complete the process and the route reclassified.

Members agreed with the idea of bridleways as these can be used for walking, equestrians and cyclists and the creation of new ones assists with the marketing of the island as a walking and cycling destination.

Tricia has been liaising with Island Roads because the new tarmac they have been laying on highways has no grip for equestrians. This skid road surface has caused many problems to horse riders including horses which have fallen. If left untreated it will take a long time to wear in (has to be trafficked to wear the surface) and in the more rural areas less vehicle traffic means a longer wearing in period. Island Roads say they will carry out testing in the forthcoming weeks and they may have to apply a covering of horse friendly grit to assist with grip.

## 5. Public Rights of Way (PROW) update:

Jennine Gardiner advised the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) previously discussed at the last two LAF meetings (for the permanent prohibition of pedestrians on the list of long term path closures) are now in the public consultation stage. These were advised on the 15 November and the consultation ends on the 13 December 2013.

It was asked why there is a proposed permanent TRO for part of BB10 if the second phase of works will be progressing? Jennine advised that this is because the temporary TRO's will run out on the 28 February 2014 but the negotiations relating to the diversion order and remedial works will not be completed until much later. Once we are in a position to reopen this stretch of BB10 the permanent order will be revoked.

The diversion at Gurnard Luck footpath CS16 mentioned at the last meeting was not now proceeding due to lack of support from the Parish Council. However, it was an intention to proceed with 3 diversion orders in the New Year, being: Footpath CS16 / CS17 at Gurnard Farm, Footpath Y9 Tapnell (creating an easy access route) and Bridleway F64 at Dunsbury Grange.

## 6. LSTF Update

Will Ainsley (LSTF project Manager) gave updates on the progress of schemes which are current works in progress to be delivered in this financial year:

**Shanklin to Wroxall** – currently 2/3 done, the final surface dressing to be laid in April - it is intended to dedicate this route as a bridleway once completed.

**Quay Lane, Brading** - at old brickworks path widening scheme anticipated to start in January 2014

**Fishbourne Lane to Quarr Abbey** – in negotiations

**Ladies Walk, Ryde Golf Club** – golf club being helpful, in negotiation stage

**Island Harbour to Newport Quay** – planning application (**TCP/31656, P/01364/13**) has been made; the consultation end date was 29 November 2013 - waiting for the planning decision to be made.

Heidi Marshal asked if Ladies Walk will be a mixed use path therefore equestrians can use this route? Will said as this will be a tarmac path and has steep parts it would not be an appropriate surface for horse riding. Heidi and Tricia both said Chris Wells had assured them it would be a bridleway. Will is to take Tricia and Heidi's comments back to the office to talk to Chris and this location will be discussed further.

There was then a discussion about a list of additional Rights of Way schemes which could be delivered before the start of the next financial year allocated from the underspend 2013/2014 LSTF funds. This is because the final surfacing for the schemes quoted above (which is weather

dependent so can only be applied in late spring/summer) cannot be delivered in this financial year thus leaving unallocated funds which need to be allocated to schemes or repaid.

It was asked what the criteria was which resulted in the standby list of schemes and have any of these schemes come from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)? Will and Matthew Chatfield explained that these standby schemes were drawn from the scheme requests that the Rights of Way team had already identified and included on their possible future capital schemes. From this list only the ones which could be delivered before the April 2014 deadline could then be considered for inclusion. These schemes may be within the ROWIP and the ROWIP is a helpful guide for prioritising schemes.

Cllr Medland asked if the list of proposed LSTF schemes could be re examined at the next meeting and members could raise their own ideas for access and tourism projects.

David Howarth mentioned the East Wight Landscape Partnership and that this is a 5 year project and what possible projects may come out of this. David also referred to Tom Ransom who is the Marketing person employed by Visit Isle of Wight whose job it is to promote the Isle of Wight as a destination to visit without a car and using sustainable transport.

## **7. DEFRA Consultation – IW Coastal Path - Isle of Wight Ramblers**

David Howarth recapped on the last meeting. The Judicial Review was not needed as the new Government minister, Dan Rogerson, is prepared to review the decision and it is expected he will make a statement in the next few weeks. It seems the new minister will review the whole of the coastal access act for England and first impressions are that the Government are not keen on the coastal path.

Questions?

Why is the Island being treated differently to the Mainland? One reply was that we have a higher coastline to land mass thus with the 4 metre spreading room there is potential for more land to be out of production. The spreading room is 4 metres on rough grazing land but no spreading room on arable land. Some locations are excluded such as garden land & harbours, in which case the footpath would have to go around.

Concerns were raised about the estimates and the legitimacy of the figures used to justify the economic benefit of a coastal path. Even with respectable organisations carrying out the studies, what evidence is there to prove that these are not over estimated figures. It was felt there would be economic benefits but we need justification of the figures provided.

We already have a coastal path - the places where it is not close to the coast is due to specific reasons i.e. landslip or safety. Helena from Shalfleet Parish Council made the point that they did not make comments at the time of the consultation as even though Shalfleet has coastline most of this is dangerous due to blue slipper clay. The Ramblers confirmed that there is approximately 20 miles of inland routes which are troublesome and need attention as they involve dangerous road walking or are on undesirable routes.

The idea of voluntary agreements was supported (Welsh path was done under voluntary agreements) but some members had concerns about enforcement under an Act of law, some likening it to stealing land and no compensation for spreading room. It was asked what powers of enforcement action are under the Act, would land be compulsory purchased and would owners who did not comply be taken to court? It was mentioned that any statutory powers would be the last resort.

The IW Ramblers made the point that although the Government had made the statement that Isle of Wight Ramblers should work with local landowners and the local authority to see what can be

achieved by voluntary agreements, there is no mention of how this is going to be funded and staffed, whereas the Government body called Natural England who oversees the Mainland coastal path under the Act has 70 / 80 staff working on this and a budget of millions.

#### **Conclusion:**

It was voted to defer the proposed IW Rambler motions until after the announcement by the new minister. Once we know what his decision is we can then revisit the motions. However, voluntary agreements should still go ahead.

#### **8. Chairman's Update**

There was a range of leaflets and information on the desk for to view, which had been sent to members by email between the last and this meeting.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

Cllr Medland feels there will be further LSTF funding via the Solent Partnership and there is a potential to put in bids, but it would need a strong bid to secure any funding.

Heidi Marshall asked if we could have an update of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) at the next meeting.

Steve Darch asked if the previously raised issue of misleading signage at Bobberstone had been addressed. Jennine Gardiner advised when the site was visited no ambiguous signage was found. Steve advised this is not the case and misleading signage is present on site. It was left that Steve will email photos of the signage along with a description of its location to the Rights of Way team so it can be investigated.

Heidi Marshall said the annual LAF report should be published on the website.

#### **10. Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be at 4pm on <b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014</b> at Arreton Community Hall.
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**End of Meeting**