



**Minutes – Meeting 41  
Arreton Community Centre  
Thursday 12 September 2013**

**Present at the meeting:**

**Forum Members:**

Mark Earp **ME** (Vice-Chairman)  
Tricia Merrifield **TM**  
Stephen Darch **SD**  
Alec Lawson **AL**  
John Gurney-Champion **JGC**  
John Heather **JH**  
Karin Wall **KW**  
Christopher Bull **CB**  
Heidi Marshall **HM**  
Cllr Paul Fuller **PF**  
Cllr John Medland **JM**

**Others:**

Fiona Hanna **FH** AOBN Officer Isle of Wight Council  
Mike Slater **MS** Isle of Wight Ramblers Access Officer  
David Howarth **DH** Isle of Wight Ramblers Area Chairman  
Matthew Chatfield **MC** Countryside & Rights of Way Manager, Isle of Wight Council  
Will Ainslie **WA** LSTF Project Manager, Isle of Wight Council  
Darrel Clarke **DC** - Definitive Map Officer, IWC Public Rights of Way Section (PROW)

**Forum Secretary:**

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

**1. Apologies:**

Apologies were received from: PC Tim Campany  
Belated apologies were received after the meeting from James Hewitt and David Farnham

**2. Recruitment / Resignations:**

Anne Noon the Chairman had resigned as Chairman and forum member, therefore the members voted for a new chairman and subsequently a new vice chairman.  
New Chairman is Mark Earp  
New Vice Chairman is John Heather  
Margaret Honybourne (carriage driving) had also resigned as a forum member  
The forum welcomed Cllr Fuller and Cllr Medland – who are the IW Council's appointed Councillors to outside bodies.

### 3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising from previous meeting:

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

- Outstanding letter re dangerous bridleway / road crossing points – the members agreed this still needs to be brought to the attention of new cabinet members and the PROW team was tasked with drafting a letter which would ultimately be sent to Cllr Shirley Smart with a copy to Cllr Medland. – **TASK** PROW to draft letter
- Lost Ways **AN** was not present to ask if she had contacted John Hague from the IW Ramblers regarding a list of “lost ways” which he had already started to construct. JM said he would get John Hague’s contact details from Mike or Dave of the IW Ramblers who were present at the meeting and he would provide an update for the next LAF meeting – **TASK** JM to give update at next meeting about the list of lost ways

### 4. Any Declarations of Interest:

Only one - Cllr Paul Fuller is involved in the Northwood Neighbourhood Plan

### 5. IW Bridleway Group update

TM advised the Bridleways group had a very successful summer programme of volunteer working parties - members undertook cutting back at some bridleway road junctions.

The Bridleways Group had started 6 monthly meetings with the Council’s Rights of Ways team in order that issues important to riders could be directly discussed.

Applications will be submitted to the Council’s Definitive Map Officer to propose that the status of two footpaths (Cowes and Newport areas) are changed to bridleways.

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

DC reported the PROW team had been very busy. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April this year the department has received approximately 600 defect/problem reports in respect of rights of way. At present there are approximately 100 remain to be dealt with.

- **Traffic Regulation Orders**

At the last meeting PROW consulted with the Forum on the proposal to make permanent TROs on the paths which need to be remained closed in the long term due to them being unsafe because of ground conditions. These Orders are now likely to be made next month before the Secretary of State deadline in November. One of the paths which will not be subject to a TRO will be Public Footpath N59 at Carisbrooke church. This path has been closed for many years due to a dangerous leaning wall. This wall has now been demolished by St Thomas Canterbury School and the path is now open.

- **Diversions**

BB10 School: The Order in respect of the section of the coastal path behind Bembridge school has been made and no objections were received. The works on the path have started this week and are likely to last 6 weeks to two months.

BB10 Forelands: On the other section of BB10 from Forelands to the School the latest development is that the owner of the land which was refusing to enter into discussions has sold his land. PROW

are meeting with the new owner next week and it is hoped that we can make some further progress in the reopening of this section.

CS16: PROW are currently consulting on a proposal to divert public footpath CS16 at Gurnard Luck to prevent the loss of a long stretch of coastal path in the future.

Y10: PROW are about to consult on a proposal to divert public footpath Y10 at Tapnell Farm. This is part of an Easy Access route. The new route will take the path over fields as opposed to being through a busy working farm yard and will be a more enjoyable, easy route.

DC thanked the IW Ramblers and the IW Bridleways Group and their volunteer working parties that have helped so much by keeping the Rights of Way network usable and open by undertaking projects and clearance works.

HM thanked the PROW team for responding quickly to requests and mentioned a possible bridleway extension in the Carisbrooke area. DC will liaise with her regarding a site meeting. MC informed the forum he works part time but together with his manager Lee Matthews they keep on top of any Rights of Way contentious matters. MC expressed his appreciation of the help and input from the user groups which support the PROW team.

MC advised cycle tracks are now the responsibility of Island Roads, and generally PROW tarmac surfaces in urban areas fall into the Island Roads network.

TM asked if the new LSTF routes once developed will pass over to Island Roads, MC advised we are not sure yet.

JM raised the issue of the long term closure of T34 (Colwell / Totland sea wall). DC advised in this case as the damage is to the retaining sea wall (and not just the path surface) any possible reinstatement has been passed to the IW Council's Coastal Management team to obtain feasibility reports and to explore funding options. In the meantime the diversion route T1 may have an improvement scheme to widen and resurface in parts. This is a proposal in the Rights of Way capital programme 2013/14.

Mr Will Ainslie, is the new project manager for the LSTF projects. Will advised he had only been in the post 9 days. He recapped that the LSTF grant was awarded to promote sustainable access in tourism, the use of public transport and cycling and walking. Some of the components of the project he was tasked with delivering are:

**Integrated Transport Hubs** to be located at strategic tourist points. These will assist with travel choices using real time information, mobile technology updates, signage and improvement with cycle hire.

**Public Transport Information** by providing real time information for Rail and Buses, improving Southern Vectis coastal timetable and conversion of buses to accommodate cycles. The number of people using the cycle converted buses has increased already.

**Walking and Cycling Infrastructure** the development of new and enhanced walking and cycling routes / shared use routes.

**Marketing and Promotion** marketing the island as a car free environment and DMO David Thornton has advertised a job vacancy recently for a Sustainable Travel Coordinator to work with tourism providers to promote and encourage car free visits.

It was asked if the LSTF had thought of promoting equestrian tourism and JM said this element was missing from the bid documents as well as coach and taxi operators.

LSTF route St Helens to Brading – JM advised he had a meeting scheduled with the planning department regarding this proposal for a shared surface route.

It was asked that should it not be “policy” that any new path creations should automatically be shared surface routes? MC replied that each route should be considered on its individual merits and we should be mindful in every case and an adopted policy would probably not be helpful.

JH reminded the forum that there is already a Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which all groups worked very hard to produce.

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

Mike Slater and David Howarth from the Isle of Wight Ramblers talked about the decision to exclude the IW from the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the way forward from this point. The IW Ramblers have over 500 members and are a self-funded charity that represent all walkers. They have strived to improve access for all in our countryside and work with Southern Vectis to provide rambles by bus. They have over 18 walking for health schemes and run the donate a gate scheme which uses public money (£460 per gate) to install gates to improve access i.e. remove stiles and install gates. They have easy walks published in the County Press and have invested in over 100K improving paths and access on the Island.

In 2009 the Marine and Coastal Access Act was made but the Isle of Wight was excluded from this act as the Isle of Wight was not accessible from the mainland by foot. As it is not possible to walk from mainland England (or from another island) across the foreshore or by using a bridge, tunnel or causeway it was not an island specified by the Secretary of State to be included within the act. By 2012 the IW Ramblers had launched a campaign to get the IW included within the act and DEFRA held a public consultation. In July 2013 the results of the consultation were published but the outcome was still to exclude the IW from the act and advice was to progress the IW route by **voluntary agreement**. The exact words are as follows:

The Government has decided that it will not make an order for the Isle of Wight as it is not a priority for the coastal access programme. It considers the Isle of Wight Ramblers should work with local landowners and the local authority to see what can be achieved by voluntary agreements.

How does this exclusion affect the Isle of Wight? MS advised that the exclusion affected the IW as it denied improvement to the coastal path. Under law, there would have been set out a process and an appeal process for aggrieved landowners. There would have been land which was exempt from inclusion i.e. no routes would have been created through gardens or ports.

The Ramblers feel the existing IW coastal path has many shortcomings and is in need of improvement. However, they think there is merit in exploring voluntary agreements but to do so there needs to be active support from CLA (County Landowners Association) and Government – if this is obtained then the IW Council could try and explore improved access.

JH advised that his members (NFU) objected to the proposal due to loss of land for production purposes, but in general the NFU would be happy to adopt the voluntary approach.

Funding – it was asked how funds would be raised to make this achievable. DH explained the Ramblers are exploring funding streams. There maybe a second phase of LSFT moneys (and discussions took place to consider if any newly created paths should be multi user routes as opposed to just for pedestrians). The IW Ramblers are on the lookout all the time for different ways to secure funds. East Cowes has been awarded a windfall development fund of £500,000 (s106 money) for community projects and maybe this can be utilised for a route between East Cowes and Wootton? It was asked if English Heritage lobbied against the introduction of the Act but MC advised English Heritage was supportive (Osborne Estate in East Cowes is managed by English Heritage and is one place between East Cowes and Wootton where the coastal path has to deviate away from the coastline). It was pointed out the PROW team has very limited resources but if this goes ahead and the Ramblers can raise funds some of the money could be used to employ extra staff to run the scheme.

FH advised that meetings had already taken place between IWC, Lee Matthews (Recreation and Public Spaces Manager) and Carole Flux from Natural Enterprise. They had a brain storming session regarding a different approach to access and an outline paper was to be drafted. This would need to be approved by IWC Strategic Manager, Ashley Curzon and will have to take into account sensitive locations.

HM asked if the Ramblers had been to the IW Tourism Partnership (i.e Destination Management Organisation (DMO)). The Ramblers advised they had not talked to them but had been in conversations with the Chamber of Commerce who expressed broad support and that they are talking to the CLA regarding voluntary access.

JM has said he will be happy to be the point of contact if people have ideas for coastal routes.

**TASK** – All to provide JM with any ideas and landowner contacts for improved coastal routes so he can collate and present to Ramblers.

It was asked if the Ramblers can appeal against the decision made. There is a Juridical Review process but this is extremely long winded. The Ramblers are in discussions with DEFRA to see if the cut-off date for such an appeal could be extended.

MS asked if the LAF would make representation to the IWC that the forum supports voluntary access proposals? MC commented that it is important what this forum thinks. At the present time the IWC are maintaining the current coastal path and not creating a new one so it is important this forum forms a view.

DC requested clarification on what “Voluntary Agreement” means in practice. MS advised this is entering into liaisons with landowners to create access where there isn’t any. The Ramblers do not want the coastal path along main roads and if possible as near to the coastline as possible. DC can we clarify “voluntary” i.e is this to dedicate to a Public Right of Way or create a temporary permissive route? The Ramblers advised they would prefer a dedicated Right of Way but realise there is no compulsory element to this only the power of persuasion!

#### **ACTION**

The Forum voted unanimously to support the voluntary agreement proposal

The Forum voted unanimously to wait to the next meeting for a form of words to be present to describe the framework around the Voluntary Agreement – **TASK** IW Ramblers to construct the wording of the voluntary agreement and present this at the next LAF meeting.

## **8. Any Other Business:**

Parkhurst Forest Cross Track. ME met with the Forestry Commission who were very supportive and also had the Country Watch Police Team’s support. This would be permissive access only which would not require a permit to ride. The riding would only be permitted on the track and not be allowed to deviate.

#### **ACTION**

The Forum voted unanimously to support the proposal - **TASK** ME to get back in contact with the Forestry Commission to try and take this forward.

Marks Corner to Whitehouse Road bridleway link –with regard to the above proposed permissive track in Pankhurst Forest the horse groups were concerned as this would link onto Forest Road which is not good for riding. But a separate Marks Corner to Whitehouse Road bridleway link would be helpful as this would improve access. Back in the 70’s a Public Right of Way (CB5) was reclassified from a bridleway to a footpath.

## **ACTION**

The Forum voted (one abstained from voting) to support the proposal of a bridleway link to be looked into. **TASK** TM to investigate and give feedback at next LAF meeting

KW raised equestrian bridges with chicken wire covering. This is very dangerous to horses as it can pull the shoes off horses. **TASK** – KW to provide PROW team with list of equestrian bridges with chicken wire covering so they can be inspected.

AL Langbridge cycle track and adjacent footpath – can the low rail separating the two be removed this will improve the width. **TASK** AL to investigate this (this is on the Island Roads network)

SD Islands 4 X 4 club undertook a recent survey of the byways – 3 issues identified and forwarded to the PROW team for action (ambiguous signage at Bobblestone, Fallen Tree across A28B and Dungewood Farm byway overgrown).

JM mentioned island wide Public Rights of Way signage needs to be improved. DC advised the PROW team have a signage programme and when locations are brought to our attention, i.e missing or poor signs they are added to the programme for investigation and possible replacement.

JGC has requested an up to date list of current members and their contact details be circulated.

## **9. Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be at 4pm on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013** at Arreton Community Hall.

## **End of Meeting**

### **Useful and interesting websites**

Visit Isle of Wight Destination Management Organisation

<http://www.visitwight.org/>

Island Roads

<http://www.islandroads.com/>

Isle of Wight Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<http://www.iwight.com/azservices/documents/2782-D6-Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan.pdf>

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

Consultation on the order for the Isle of Wight under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/216007/coastal-access-consult-sum-resp-20130716.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216007/coastal-access-consult-sum-resp-20130716.pdf)

Isle of Wight Ramblers

<http://www.iowramblers.com/>

Country Land & Business Association

<http://www.cla.org.uk/>

National Farmers Union

<http://www.nfuonline.com/home/>

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/>

Natural Enterprise

<http://www.naturalenterprise.co.uk/pages/island>

English Heritage

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.iwchamber.co.uk/chamber-connect>

Forestry Commission

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>

Isle of Wight 4 X 4 Club

<http://www.iow4x4club.co.uk/>