



**Minutes – Meeting 36
Arreton Community Centre
Thursday 7th June 2012**

Present at the meeting:

Forum Members:

Mrs Sheila Weedall (Chairman)
Mr Mark Earp (Vice-Chairman)
Miss Janie Feakes
Councillor Paul Fuller
Mrs Anne Noon

Others:

Mrs Fiona Hanna (AONB)
Mr John Gurney-Champion (guest)
Mrs Trish Merriemfield (guest)
Mr Alec Lawson (guest)
Mr John Moreno (County Press reporter)

Forum Secretary:

Darrel Clarke, Definitive Map Officer, IWC Public Rights of Way Section (PROW)

1. Apologies, minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:

- Apologies were received from Christopher Bull, Gail Yardley, Margaret Honeybourne, David Farnham, Councillor John Hobart and Martin Gilchrist.
- The minutes were approved as a true record of the last meeting and signed by the Chairman.
- SW referred to the presentation of David Ashcroft at the previous meeting and his suggestion that the LAF should draw upon the expertise of its members. SW put forward a proposal to set up a sub group of members from a horse riding interest to identify dangerous locations where bridleways meet roads. PF said that other users should also be considered. ME said that consideration should also be given to 4x4 drivers and byways. although SW made the point that where byways meet main roads the access is usually wider and not a problem. AL and JF both expressed an interest in pursuing this. **(action JF & AL)**
- SW also referred to David Ashcroft's reference to education. SW put forward a proposal for the LAF to contact schools to provide information/education on access to the countryside. ME said that he is aware of the Police/Crime prevention officers visiting schools to talk about cycling safety and rules e.g. where cycling is not permitted. SW

suggested that AN could pursue this. AN said she would require a brief on what would be involved and what is to be achieved. DC mentioned that a new edition of the Countryside Code has recently been issued and he is also aware that Island Tourist Products are currently designing a new version of the long distance trails booklets both of which could be used for education purposes. PF said the aim should be to encourage walking and cycling and that a school pack could be prepared and that Highways may be able to work with the LAF to prepare this. FH mentioned that AONB has experience of assisting schools to encourage use and that they like something that they can pick up and use. Thought needs to be given as to what is required for different age groups. SW said that she would like to see the LAF and AONB working together as they may well cover the same ground. FH said she is happy to help with information for AN.

- HUDDLE – SW and ME said that they would sign up for this. **(action SW & ME)**
- Letter of thanks to David Howarth – a copy of this letter was passed round to the members present at the meeting for information.
- Appointment of Vice Chairman – ME was proposed and seconded at the last meeting to be appointed as the Forum’s Vice Chairman. ME confirmed he was happy to be appointed. SW confirmed his appointment.
- Litter – SW asked if any members had come up with any ideas or thoughts as to how the LAF could get involved as a way of promoting who the LAF are and what they do. SW put forward a suggestion of organising a “litter pick” and that the Council has agreed to assist with this (e.g. providing bags) and to work with AONB regarding the matter. A discussion then ensued as to safety and liability issues in the event of accident or injury during a litter pick. SW asked DC to enquire about the liability/risk issue. PF said that he considered litter signage to be a good idea to generally warn people that dropping/leaving litter and fly-tipping is a criminal offence and a fine can be imposed. The signs could be relatively small and would be useful at car parks where litter seems to be a particular problem. ME suggested that “Keep Britain Tidy” stickers could be placed on bins to improve the message. SW asked DC to enquire which department in the Council is responsible for providing signs regarding litter. FH mentioned that as far as signage is concerned the right balance has to be found to avoid over signage in the countryside. SW said the LAF could contact the “One Island” magazine regarding an article. ME suggested that Anne Marston in the Council’s countryside department should be contacted. PF suggested that an Environmental Officer (Mike Rowlands) could be invited to make a presentation to the LAF on litter. **(action DC)**

2. Any Declarations of Interest:

- There were no declarations of interest.

3. Presentation by Fiona Hanna of AONB:

- FH explained that the areas on the Island that are within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were designated as such in 1963 pursuant to the National Parks and Countryside Act 1949. The primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. Through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 AONBs were afforded increased profile and protection and are now given the same regard as National Parks. The management of the Isle of Wight AONB is by the Isle of Wight AONB partnership formed in 2002 and funded by the

Isle of Wight Council and DEFRA. The IW AONB is currently in the second statutory management plan with the next one due in 2014. For this next plan consideration will therefore be given to what has happened in the past, what is working and how the IW AONB can move forward. There is a lot of scope to work with the IW LAF and they have a number of common interests. Consideration will also be given to the impact of the PFI contract and the LSTF grant. These are both good opportunities. 2013 will be the IW AONB's 50th anniversary and thought is currently being given as to how to celebrate this. PF pointed out that the current boundaries of the AONB have been in place for 49 years and asked if there is any plan to review and change the boundaries in order to increase the areas. FH said that this was difficult and that she would like to be able to say yes. Boundary changes are complex, involve a high level of work and are very expensive. The cost would be funded by Natural England and the Isle of Wight Council and she considers that other areas in the country, where no AONBs currently exist are likely to have priority at present. ME mentioned that he considers that the whole of the Isle of Wight should be designated as a National Park and this should be looked at rather than increasing the boundaries.

4. Disability Sub Group update:

- AN reported that she had no update and that she would be contacting David Howarth and will provide an update at the next meeting. **(action AN)**

5. IW Bridleway Group update:

- JF reported that the group continued to work on the safety access points where bridleways meet and cross roads. They were pleased to learn that PROW have the issue of visibility splays on their list of things to do and that hedges would be cut in the late summer/early autumn.

6. Public Rights of Way update:

- DC confirmed that PROW are currently recruiting for an assistant rights of way officer and that interviews were taking place next week. The maintenance team is still down to 2 operatives. The maintenance team were very busy in the lead up to Walk the Wight and the Walking Festival and had to carry out works to make paths useable due to the very wet weather. In respect of legal matters the diversion of footpath N46 at the top of Staplers Road has now been completed. The next diversion orders to be made will be at New Fairlee Farm (N117) and Busy Bee (R57). PROW are also working on their long term closures as the expiry date of these is June 2013 and the Department for Transport have indicated that it is unlikely that they will grant further extensions. SW asked for further details. DC said that a path at Niton known as Tunnels, NT30 will hopefully be opened over the summer and that works are being organised by the Parish Council to be overseen by PROW. The Rights of Way manager has contacted numerous land owners in respect of Public Footpath BB10. The paths through Whale Chine (C34) and Luccombe Chine (SS3) and various paths in the Niton Undercliff are unfortunately looking unlikely to be opened due to extensive landslip problems. Consideration will be given to permanent traffic regulation orders as opposed to extinguishment orders as it is possible that ground conditions could change or improve in the future to enable the paths to be reopened.

7. Any other business:

- SW referred to the DEFRA consultations and in particular the proposed changes to the processes for recording public rights of way. The consultation period ends on 6th August 2012. ME confirmed that he would look at this. **(action ME)**
- SW referred to the LSTF grant and said that the LAF should be involved in an advisory capacity and consulted on this from the start. Whilst in support of multi use paths the surface and possible segregation of those paths should be considered as opposed to all the proposed routes simply being tarmaced. ME stated that he thought the LAF should be thoroughly involved. SW confirmed a letter would be sent to the Council from the LAF to this effect. **(action SW)**
- FH referred to the long term path closures and the Paths for Communities scheme and other practical solutions and the potential to contact Parish Councils. AN said that perhaps something unique should be considered, perhaps walkway/bridges. FH said the complex geology needs to be considered and options would need to be looked at carefully. PF said that there was an organisation known as the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils and they could be approached with a view to suggesting to Parish and Town Councils that they could work with LAF in order to get paths open.

8. Next meeting:

- The next meeting will be at 4pm on Thursday 6th September 2012 at Arreton Community Hall.

End of meeting.