

Minutes of Herefordshire Local Access Forum Meeting
22nd November 2024 11.00am
Shell Store, Rotherwas Munitions Factory Canary Drive, Skylon Park, Hereford HR2 6SR

ATTENDANCE

LAF members:

Arthur Lee, Chair.
Duncan Green.
Ian Carr.
Malcolm Louch
Cllr Peberdy
Joannah Weightman, Deputy Chair

Members of the Public:

Andy Parr
David Howerski
Peter McKay
Peter Keyse
Chris Marsden
Chris Fowler
David Irwin
Cllr Highfield
Cllr Mason

Herefordshire Council:

Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic
Callum Bush, TRO and PROW Team Leader
Stephen Organ, Volunteer Development Officer
Cllr Price, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure

APOLOGIES

Nicola Short, Viv Burdon, Peter Newman, Sue Enfield, Angela Martin

DISTRIBUTION

LAF Members, Herefordshire Council Officers in attendance, Herefordshire Council website

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were noted as above. SO apologised to the group for the delay in providing the minutes and will endeavour to collate and send out as early as possible following this meeting. It was agreed to keep Minutes focused on key issues and advice given by the LAF and actions agreed.

2 MINUTES OF MEETING – 2nd AUGUST 2024

2.1 Agreed and signed

3 MATTERS ARISING / ACTION POINTS

3.1 Greenways. DG would like to know the Council's plans for Greenways and would like an update at the next meeting. Action: Update at next meeting. **Action: CB**

3.2 Noted all stakeholder interests should be represented on the LAF and numbers were dwindling allowing new members to be recruited. All aspects of countryside access to be focus of the LAF. Action: Vacancies to be advertised and new volunteers recruited.

3.3 Definitive Maps Process (DMMO) – This is a national political issue. DG and CB are working on this and will follow up with Jesse Norman MP given huge cost, excessively time consuming process, etc. DG to revisit the protocol for dealing with such a backlog. Jesse Norman had previously been asked by John Harrington to escalate through DEFRA. Contact has been made with Jesse Norman's Office, awaiting response. **Action: CB to hold meeting with DG and AL to look at way forward.**

3.4 OS PSGA licences - OS will not provide to LAF members. Steve Bell (Hoople) has been approached to look into the potential of getting access and to check legal issues around using data sets. **Action: CB to feedback to DG**

4 GOVERNANCE

4.1 It was suggested we should revisit the governance of the LAF to ensure we are functioning to the best of our abilities and that we are aware of our responsibilities. Our focus was set out in the ROWIP which should be a "living" strategy setting out principles and policies we all agreed and adhered to.

SO provided presentation slides to the group around governance of and recruitment to the LAF.

4.2 A discussion was held regarding a review of membership, recruitment and LAF terms of reference with Democratic Services. A need for new LAF Members to undergo training was also discussed.

4.3 David Howerski Open Spaces Society confirmed that the OSS offers such training. **SO to contact David Howerski to understand what the training involves, which could be the place we point new members to in the future.**

Action: SO to review documentation and have all relevant recruitment information in place by end of year.

4.4 The need for the LAF to produce an annual report by April 2025 was discussed – JW agreed to lead on submitting an Annual LAF report.

Action: Annual report to be worked on by LAF members, led by JW

5 ENFORCEMENT

5.1 Enforcement sub-group had not met since the last LAF meeting. Discussions around PROW enforcement performance have taken place outside of the meeting. It remains a major concern to LAF members that agreed procedures are not followed.

5.2 Also the LAF would like to see the number of defects on the network displayed on the website. EB confirmed that work is ongoing in respect of this.

5.3 The report on the status of Browns Lane was requested by subgroup.

5.4 The issue of timely responses to legal notices was raised.

5.5 In the ROWIP it sets out the categories of enforcement and the LAF would like to see figures against these. The PROW Team will investigate how we can pull this information from Confirm.

5.6 There was some concern over how the figures are presented in the PROW report. EB commented that work is ongoing regarding data collection and presentation.

6 RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS REPORT

6.1 The PROW team delivered the PROW report. It was regrettable that members had not received this in advance as previously agreed.

6.2 LAF members requested that reported defects should be shown as such. Not as "enquiries". Many enquiries then disappeared as they became "resolved" while the defect remained, making the reports meaningless

6.3 EB rejected this request and explained that the team needs to maintain clarity and reduce confusion when providing data, further explaining that there is a distinction between enquiry and defect in Confirm software. The LAF therefore only would like to see the number of defects on the network presented and not the number of enquiries. **Action: To show figures to the LAF on the number of "defects" on the network, as a regular report .**

6.4 The LAF would also like to see a list of unclassified roads drawn up and understand how issues are raised relating to them.

6.5 It was further agreed that a group of LAF members should get together to work out what data they wish to see in the PROW reports for future meetings and inform HC.

Action: Enforcement sub-group to draw up what figures are required going forward. AL to convene a subgroup meeting to take this forward.

6.6 LAF members asked why we are still using a BBLP system i.e. Confirm. EB explained that there is a bigger picture of IT, how systems are integrated and data is shared. EB explained that that there is currently a one way transfer of information from Granicus to Confirm and there has been work completed to make this a two way transfer, which is in the testing stage and will go live in the new year. This will enable the HC website to be updated with information on defects reported.

SO has explained that we had approached Essex to see how they used their version of Confirm and how we can learn from their experiences. EB explained that we need to be clear on how it best works for us.

6.7 EB talked through DMMOs and diversions, We have brought in the services of Robin Carr to assist with some of the more complex cases.

6.8 Information was shared on progress relating to capital bridge improvements, with 11 currently out to tender to be delivered this financial year. Further bridges are being scoped for delivery in the future. CB explained that we are using an off the shelf design by Bison to deliver these bridges. Expenditure over recent years on bridges was missing and should be shown for past 2 years at least. The LAF had an important role in helping to ensure best value. **Action: for future reports**

6.9 AL asked about publishing the work we are carrying out. EB agreed to contact Herefordshire Council's communications team.

6.10 SO talked through simplifying the PFO scheme, and the proposed outline of initial training, which is moving forward. Cllr Highfield suggested that Councillors can assist with encouraging Parishes to have PFOs.

A member of the public suggested we follow a support group system that they run as PFOs for PFOs. SO confirmed that this is a good idea and we should promote it.

7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Pre submitted questions from members of the public

7.1 Browns lane report, why haven't the Council acted on it.

EB can make the report available to Cllr Price and those concerned.

7.2 I would like to ask a Question at LAF, along the lines of 'If ways on the LoS are highways, why are s56 Notices still ignored, and Notices under s130A are not being processed in line with Statute?' submitted by Chris Marsden

This matter was discussed.

7.3 DMMO put in in February, it is still waiting to be categorised, why can't we prioritise the cases with substantial information.

SO explained that there was a meeting taking place to look at the priorities of DMMO, and if the member of the public would like to send SO details, he would look into it.

7.4 Herefordshire is a county in which Parishes submitted CRF's and CRB's in conformance with Government Guidelines that were intended to be shown as Roads Used as Public Paths, see the Herefordshire Council Public Rights of Way Glossary at

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4279/prow-glossary> , but were in fact shown as Footpaths and Bridleways, with use by others scheduled to be extinguished in 2031, and being roads ought be greenways not subject of ploughing. Is there any prospect of a sub-group reviewing this, going through the Parish submissions, adding an addendum to the HLAF webpage setting out the facts, followed by raising Definitive Map Modification Order Applications as appropriate to correct the records? Peter McKay

Noted and may be something for sub groups to look into in the future.

7.5 Guidance around s26 if there is a gap rather than a gate. **SO agreed to look into this matter.**

7.6 ML has asked if the PROW grant scheme is to be extended. Dinedor would like stock to be issued.

8 AOB

8.1 It was noted members of LAF could claim travel expenses – forms were available, and Steve would deal with them.

SO to send out proposed dates for the following year. It was essential dates were adhered to, once set, and fully integrated into the corporate meeting schedule, enabling Councillor participation.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 SO to send out proposed dates for the following year. It was essential dates were adhered to, once set, and fully integrated into the corporate meeting schedule, enabling Councillor participation