

Local Access Forum
Minutes of a meeting of the Local Access Forum held on Thursday
1st September 2022 at 2pm in the
4th Floor Meeting Room Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way,
Telford TF3 4NT

In Attendance: Anthony Francis-Jones (Chair), Sally-Anne Robinson, Naomi Wrighton, Richard Spencer-Cotton and Katrina Baker

Also in Attendance: Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer), Gemma Crosley (Rights of Way Officer), Rhys Attwell (Democracy Officer) and Owen Dugmore (Legal Assistant)

1. Apologies for Absence:

David Hopkins and Malcolm Skelton.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes

It was agreed that the Minutes of the previous meeting be deferred to the next meeting of the LAF.

4. Terms of References

The Terms of Reference report was presented to the Local Access Forum by the Democracy Officer. The Democracy Officer explained that the Council Constitution delegated to each committee, the requirement to set their own Terms of Reference for each municipal year.

RESOLVED: - that the Terms of References were approved for the municipal year.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Senior Rights of Way Officer advised that the item be deferred to allow more members to be present to participate. The Senior Rights of Way Officer also advised that deferring until the next meeting for the election of Chair and Vice-Chair would help ensure that it is a fair democratic process. In addition this would allow any LAF members that were not in attendance to be able to nominate themselves at the next meeting if they wished.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that Anthony Francis-Jones would continue to act as provisional Chair until the next meeting.

RESOLVED: - that this Item be deferred until the next meeting

6. Meeting Dates for the Municipal Year

A discussion took place regarding the number of meetings in the municipal year. Current practice was to hold four meetings per year, with three meetings due to be held in the present municipal year due to the recruitment process which took place in the summer. It was suggested that one meeting be in person with the other two meetings being hosted remotely.

The Democracy Officer informed members of the meeting dates that had been scheduled for the current municipal year.

RESOLVED: -that the meeting dates for the municipal year were approved.

7. Janet Mees-Robinson

The acting Chair delivered a heartfelt speech about the passing of Janet Mees-Robinson, who was a former member of the Local Access Forum. Through her ambition and passion she helped raise the profile of the LAF. The acting Chair expressed that his thoughts were with her family at this difficult time.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer commented on Jan's passion for advocating an enhanced provision of rights of way and not just for horse riders, but for pedestrians and disabled users too. The Senior Rights of Way Officer also expressed his sincere condolences to Jan's family.

RESOLVED: - that participants noted the statements made by acting Chair and Senior Rights of Way Officer regarding the passing of Janet Mees-Robinson.

8. Appointment of a Planning Application Advisory Sub-Group

RESOLVED: - this Item be deferred until the next meeting.

9. Any other Items of business

9.1 Newport Innovation Park

The Acting Chair queried the diversion of the right of way for the Newport Innovation Park, following planning permission being granted. The Senior Rights of Way Officer discussed with members of the LAF that the Highway Authorities role was not to prevent approved development from taking place, but to ensure that the planning process, and subsequent public path orders, provided appropriate public access; particularly with existing rights of way.

9.2 The Wrekin

Members asked for an update on the current position in relation to the Wrekin Definitive Map Modification Orders following the subsequent objections submitted during the statutory consultation period. The Rights of Way Officer explained that the Council was preparing the Statement of Reasons to be submitted, along with other relevant documentation to the Secretary of State but that in relation to two further Modification Orders had now been made relating to routes on The Wrekin.

9.3 Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs)

Members of the LAF raised concerns that the list of DMMOs online was still producing an out of date list. The Rights of Way Officer expressed his surprise that this was still the case, as he had previously asked for the list to be amended. He said he would look into the list once the meeting had ended and would update the Forum at its next meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the LAF would be held on Thursday 1st December 2022.

The meeting ended at: 3:30pm

Chairman:

Date: