

Torbay Local Access Forum – Information Sharing as at 14 May 2012

(Most recently received shown first)

For Members who do not have access to a computer, please ask the TLAF Secretary for a copy of information OF PARTICULAR INTEREST ONLY shown below (always bearing in mind cost for printing same).

National Trails & Paths for Communities & Stepping Forward

Information from Hilary Winter, Forum Officer, Devon Countryside Access Forum, Lucombe House, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD Tel: 07837 171000

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/nationaltrails/review2012.aspx>

The **National Trail review** will be launched at the beginning of May. This is not a formal consultation but stakeholders will be invited to make comment and it is anticipated that LAFs will be part of that. I am attending a general National Trail meeting on 21st May and will cascade relevant information. The Devon CAF had a presentation on the South West Coastpath at its last meeting and the SWCP budget is being cut by 30% in 2012/13 - this will have implications for how the path is managed in the future and budgets, responsibilities and promotion will all be part of this review. Some local meetings are also being convened by National Trail managers and Natural England staff to do with specific trails. For those affected by the SWCP I will let you have details when a date has been arranged. For those LAFs in the Cotswold Way, Thames Path and Ridgeway areas I would suggest checking with the National Trail Officer to see how the LAF can contribute locally to this debate.

Paths for Communities is being launched next week, 8th May. Again, I will pass on details and no doubt there will be a lot of press publicity and enquiries from parishes and individuals about the process.

Stepping Forward. If you recall, the Stepping Forward report was a series of recommendations which came out of the post Discovering Lost Ways Stakeholder Group and set out ways in which the legal process for public rights of way could be improved and reformed. This report has been with Defra for a while and is likely to come out for consultation in the next couple of months. It may include wider proposals. If you are looking at work programmes or agendas for late summer/early autumn please bear this in mind as this could well be a very major consultation for LAFs to get involved with.

Meeting dates & Conference

Could you possibly let me have details of meeting dates for the remainder of this year? I would like to organise a conference in the early autumn. If anyone can offer a venue or has a suggestion please let me know. Ideas for speakers/topic areas and the balance between workshops/discussion and speakers would also be helpful.

Regional Coordination

On the regional coordination front things are progressing and I would like to thank you for your support. There will be a further year's funding, with Huddle being the main emphasis, and I am currently waiting for confirmation about the role 2012/13. **Received 30 April 2012**

Huddle It has been agreed by Natural England that up to five members per LAF can now go on Huddle. Although some LAF requested that all members should be able to go on this seems unlikely at the present time. Please could you discuss with members whether anyone would like to take up the opportunity. This will provide more scope for members to engage in discussions

on access matters with others across the country and to ensure other LAFs know of the useful work that is being carried out in your area. Members can be from the LAF or the Secretary/local authority officer. Training can be provided for small groups or on a one to one basis. **Received 30 April 2012**

Forestry Panel <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/18-April-Summary-note.pdf>

Notes of meeting held on April 18th. Most important thing - publication date for the final report is 4th July. **Received 30 April 2012**

Devon Countryside Access Forum Last meeting held on Wednesday, 25 April. An agenda is available on the website www.devon.gov.uk/devon_countryside_access_forum
Received on 17 April 2012

New Countryside Code Some LAFs commented on the revision of the Countryside Code. It has now been issued. Countryside Code page weblink
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/countrysidecode/default.aspx> **Received 11 April 2012**

Forestry panel update

http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/SummaryNote21_22March.pdf Notes of the meeting on 21st/22nd March have been published. Of particular interest are some comments from URS Scott Wilson who are undertaking some research in connection with the Panel.

"The Panel received a presentation from the economics research team, drawing on their work within the second phase of the commissioned research. The team described the work they had done to examine a range of possible mechanisms that might be used to support activity flowing from the Panel's recommendations. Such mechanisms included public funds such as Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and tax, payments for ecosystem services, forestry investment bonds and carbon payments." **Received 11 April 2012**

The new Planning Framework has been released following last year's consultation. It reduces the planning policies under which authorities should operate to a mere 50 pages.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

Of particular note are measures to improve sustainable transport and the following reference to public rights of way:

- Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails. (Paragraph 75)
- Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. (Paragraph 76)
- The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and

●where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. (Paragraph 77)

- Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.(Paragraph 115)
- Minerals -put in place policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place, including for agriculture (safeguarding the long term potential of best and most versatile agricultural land and conserving soil resources), geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation. (Paragraph 143 - last bullet).

Received 27 March 2012

Summary notes of Independent Panel on Forestry meeting held on February 23rd

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/SummaryNote23Feb.pdf>

Of particular interest to LAFs:

Item 2: Feedback from workshop on 8 February A sub-group of Panel members had met to consider in greater depth technical issues relating to “economic instruments” and access to woodlands. Fiona Reynolds and Shireen Chambers, as two Panel members who attended the workshop, gave a short verbal report of the day. The sub group had held discussions with Ian Dickie (Economics for the Environment Consulting Ltd) who gave a presentation outlining the potential of different “economic instruments”, such as tax, biodiversity offsets and payments for ecosystem services, to contribute to delivery of matters the Panel is considering. The Panel members also heard from and questioned Justin Cooke (the Ramblers and representative member of Forest Users Access Group); Karl Gerhardsen (North York Moors National Park Authority); Paul Johnson (Natural England) and Ben Taylor (Motor Sports Association) about access to woodlands and the wider natural environment.

Item 4: Access to woodland

The Panel had a discussion about access to woodlands building on the workshop held on 8 February. The future potential and role of both the public forest estate and woodlands in other ownerships were considered, along with the mix between open access and that on paths and other defined routes. Access to existing woodlands was considered alongside the potential of new areas of woodland creation closer to people. The motivations of individual landowners is an important factor to be considered as is the role of local partnership working to find solutions appropriate to the place. Ways were explored in which a step-change in informal access provision might be encouraged for a wide range of wellbeing benefits, including the role of incentives and other forms of income to enable this. Received on 8 March 2012