

TORBAY LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
MINUTES OF MEETING (HELD IN PUBLIC)
IN CECIL ROOM, OLDWAY MANSION
ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2007 FROM 7.00 – 9.00 P.M.

Present : John Gibson (JCG) (**Chairperson**), Robert Boyd (RB), Cllr. Ian Doggett (ID) [Torbay Council], Julie Green (JG), June Haywood (JH), Peter Huff (PH), Mike Soper (MS).

Council Officers attending : Patrick Carney (PC) [Service Manager, Highways], Janine Clarke (JC) [Public Rights of Way Officer], Mark Wilson (MW) [Sustainable Transport Officer].

Others Attending : Bob Harvey [Chairman, Devon Countryside Access Forum], Valerie Simpson, (VCS) Torbay LAF Secretary (Minute Taker).

SI = Standing Item

ACTION

Cllr. Doggett opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present, making them aware of emergency procedures, exit doors and facilities. ID informed that John Gibson had been nominated (proposed by June Haywood, seconded by Peter Huff) as future Chairperson of the Torbay Local Access Forum (TLAF) until the AGM on 23 July 2007 when a new Chairperson would need to be appointed.

JCG thanked the members for electing him as Chairperson. The meeting continued with JG as Chairperson.

Housekeeping:

Data Protection Forms – Blank and partially completed forms were distributed to those members who had not completed these. VCS requested these to be completed and returned before end of the meeting.

Webpage address - the meeting was reminded that the Torbay LAF's webpage is www.torbay.gov.uk/localaccessforum

Guidance on Local Access Forums from DEFRA – document still not available – when published it will be sent to all members. [See 2.1 2nd para]

Bob Harvey, Chairman of Devon Countryside Access Forum – JCG welcomed BH and thanked him for his ongoing support for the Torbay LAF and through attendance at this meeting.

1. **Apologies (SI)**

Andy Darvell (AD) [TCCT], Hilary Winter (HW)[Regional Co-ordinator for SW LAFs]

2. **Minutes to be agreed (SI)**

- 2.1 Minutes of Meeting (held in public) on 24 May 2006 – as these had not been made available to members of LAF until this meeting, JCG recommended approval of Minutes without discussion. This was agreed by the meeting. JCG requested that PC/JC arrange for Minutes to be put on LAF webpage for public record.

PC/JC

Natural England Handbook for Members - reference Item 3 in Minutes, ID requested update on when Natural England's Handbook for Members would be produced. JC informed that there was no funding available for financial year, but it was hoped this would be published in the 2007/08 financial year.

- 2.2 Minutes of Meeting on 26 July 2006 (AGM) – these were agreed subject to the following amendments :

4.0 - should read 'Minutes of the LAF's previous AGM held on 25 July 2005.'

10.0 – TLAF needs to acknowledge that Torbay Council, as appointing authority, bears the cost of running the TLAF, i.e. its administration and secretariat. A Report of the Devon Local Access Forum states: "The Devon LAF is funded by Devon County Council. The LAF operates within a yearly budget of £3,200 plus a part-time secretary ". JCG raised the issue as to whether a financial amount should be mentioned. PC would enquire with Devon as to how costs are evaluated before this could be agreed. JCG stated that regulations require that LAFs must publish an Annual Report and acknowledge how they are funded. PC to report back to April meeting.

PC/
MATTERS
ARISING
APRIL
MEETING

Report to Torbay Local Access Forum AGM 24 July 2006 – JCG referred to:

Item 4, page 2 - understanding was that although there was a case, it was 20 years ago which was too long ago to be taken into consideration.

Page 3 (top) - TQ86 - TLAF might wish to revisit this matter. LAF members were surprised that the Council's Legal Department took a neutral stance on this and it was felt a dialogue should be arranged with this department. To be discussed at April meeting.

JCG

Page 3 – Fisherman's Way – Understood there was an appeal with Planning Inspector – consultation ends in 12 weeks and all relevant parties have been notified. At request of PH, PC agreed in future that the LAF would be informed of any order, diversion, modification or closure, etc. PC to forward LAF members a copy of the Legal Order and a critique of the process,

information on how LAF could get involved and how the Council sees the situation. JCG to liaise with ID as to how Councillors could be involved.

PC
JCG/ID

Thatcher Point – PC pleased to announce that agreement had been reached with the landowners for this section of the South West Coast Path to be reinstated. Funding had been approved (Torbay Council). At end December 2006 TCCT was already on site to commence work. No finish date known as yet but anticipate this by end February 2007. A Press Release and photo call would be arranged for opening. On behalf of TLAF, JCG asked PC to pass on its appreciation to Highways and Legal Team for the work done to enable this to happen.

Page 3 - Adoption of Footpath – JG reported ongoing emails sent to Mike Yeo [Strategic Director], but no resolution as yet.

- 2.3 Action Points emanating from 2006 Introduction Event and Training Day – JCG apologised for not producing a summary of action points for meeting but would send these out to members in near future.

JCG

- 3 Agree Topic Groups and Nominate Chairpersons and Tasks of each Group – these were agreed.

- 3.1 - 7 Develop Workplan – It was agreed this would be a gradual process and only include a particular task group, if and when LAF felt appropriate. Each Topic Group would appoint a lead person and work to the remit set by the LAF, and assess what secretarial back up was required, bearing in mind the cost implications and time allocated for LAF secretarial support.

JH voiced concern at dividing such a small number of members into so many groups and highlighted the need for a simple structure to be in place for doing this work and reporting back to LAF so as not to be subsumed with work.

BH informed that Devon had working groups that reported back to the main forum and this was seen as an advantage as there were lengthy periods between main meetings.

JG suggested Disability Access to ROW & Open Spaces should include Mental Health and RB highlighted that issues around these should be included and taken into consideration in and by *all* groups.

ID agreed to act as liaison with LDF and would report back to LAF on work involved to enable members to make decision as to whether to be part of group.

ID

A sub-group was set up [re 4.1 and 4.2] to propose advice for the LAF to endorse.

- 4.
- 4.1 `Which routes the Forum feels should be regularly maintained, e.g. hedges cut back, as part of the Cyclical Maintenance Programme` – PC apologised for the length of time taken since the July 2006 AGM to move this forward. Tight budget leads to reactive rather than proactive solutions. Council undertakes an annual survey to rectify any issues. The Council wants to be proactive and recognise any problems before they happen, e.g. hedge cutting, flooding. As users of the network, PC requested that LAF members help by informing of paths that were a problem, overgrown or waterlogged. PC agreed to forward list of proposals to JCG to get feedback and initial response by the end of February 2007. **PC/JCG**
- PH informed that when the LAF was newly formed, members did a survey where they walked the paths in the TQ's and completed the Council's questionnaires. No work appears to have been completed on issues raised. It was queried whether members needed to repeat this exercise to comment on Cyclical & Maintenance Programme. PC agreed the input had been useful and would welcome feedback if this work was repeated.
- JH requested that all new members should receive a map of Torbay showing the definitive pathways. JC/PC agreed to do this. **JC/PC**
- JG highlighted the importance of proactive work being undertaken on these footpaths regarding use for those with mental or physical disabilities informing they will not be used if overgrown, dangerous underfoot, not in close proximity to bus stops, etc. JG to list all issues and email to JCG to enable them to be included in the ROWIP. **JG/JCG**
- 4.2 ROWIP Update – PC informed the meeting that last year's draft ROWIP consultation document that was sent out to all concerned, neighbouring authorities, etc. Many responses had been received and had been collated in the Schedule of Changes. PC informed there were five main areas that needed guidance from the Torbay LAF. JCG requested that PC list these with a brief synopsis and email to him. Members would then meet to discuss and respond on them. The LAF fully supported Torbay Council on this and were keen to progress it. The five areas are listed below : [4.2.1 to 4.2.5] **PC/JCG**
- 4.2.1 Page 8 – Amanda Hunt – Cycling Representative – PH commented that if LAF needed to give advice on this section it might be useful to invite Amanda Hunt to attend a meeting to talk to members. JCG/PH to discuss best way to take this forward, taking into consideration restrictions of the LAF. **JCG/PH**
- 4.2.2 Page 12 – Footpath Signing and Maintenance – maintenance categories **JCG/PH**
- 4.2.3 Page 19 – Strategic/Operational – the meeting felt the draft ROWIP had been pitched at the right level by keeping it specific Torbay could pride in delivering what it said it would deliver.

- 4.2.4 Page 22 – Feedback from the British Horse Society – recognised Torbay is too urban for serious horse riding but LAF would support a horse riding strategy that had to be produced by Torbay Council. The way forward was about building in and providing the links for horse riding, e.g. Marldon and South Hams, issue of crossing roads, etc.
- 4.2.5 Page 26 – Implementation and Monitoring – should LAF be more involved?
 BH, Devon CAF, requested a copy of the consultation document. JC to send. JC
- 4.3 PH raised concern that comments sent to the Council on the consultation did not appear on the Schedule of Changes supplied or had been truncated. PC confirmed that the document was complete and informed if LAF members would like sight of any of the information used to produce the document it could be requested through the LAF Secretary.
5. **South West Regional Meeting :**
 JG, WH and VCS would attend to represent Torbay LAF. JG and WH to report back on the day at April meeting. JG/WH
APRIL
AGENDA
ITEM
6. **Dates for Future LAF Meetings :**
 Agreed dates and Oldway as venue. VCS
 Monday 23 July 2007 (AGM) – agreed to invite Tracey Kebash, Ward Partnership Officer and request Torbay LDF Display for meeting. JCG/ID
VCS
Publicity - Need highlighted for more publicity for meetings and LAF generally. Suggestions made : local radio, invite Press, write press releases (to pass to Council for submission), contact Brian Carter at Herald Express.
7. **Regional Support for Local Access Forums and the Role of the National Forum :**
 It was agreed that JCG would write a positive response along the lines of the letter from Somerset LAF attached to the Agenda. JCG

8.
8.1 Draft Agenda for Wednesday 18 April Meeting - Agreed

8.2 Agree Tasks to do before next Meeting –

ALL

- Election of Chairperson/Vice Chairperson July 2007 – JCG requested members to consider who should be elected as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from July 2007 and open dialogue between each other on same.
- New Membership – LAF can be up to 20 members in total – consider who could be invited to join group.
- Leaflet – by April the LAF should start to draft an Information Leaflet – members to bring ideas to April meeting.
- Webpage – members to suggest what the LAF webpage should include at April meeting.

8.3 Arrangements during February - As VCS had accrued a considerable number of hours overtime whilst starting up the home-working role of LAF Secretary, it was agreed that she would not work for the month of February 2007. JCG agreed that, during February, all emails could be sent direct to him. PC offered administration support through the Council – email Highways@torbay.gov.uk.

8.4 Updating Webpage – Updates to be sent through LAF Secretary to Highways@torbay.gov.uk.

9 Any Other Business :

9.1 Draft Job Description for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of Torbay LAF – comments to JCG by end of February 2007.

ALL

9.2 Bob Harvey, Chairman, Devon Countryside Access Forum, commented on the following :

- Reference 'public meeting' - LAF meetings were not public meetings where the public can say what they like, they were meetings that the public can attend.
- ROWIP - note that if hedges are cut between 1 March and 31 July subsidies are lost.
- Specialist Input – useful to have specialist speakers at LAF meetings.
- Annual Report – Funding for LAF's comes from Central Government through Torbay – LAF's are not a drain on financial resources, Government has allocated money for this.
- Surfaces – lot of debate on this – worth contacting Hilary Winter, Steve Gardner or Mark Owen. S/W Coastal Path.
- The Torbay LAF had now become a dynamic forum and was congratulated on a good, positive meeting.
- Postponed - St. Valentines Day Meeting – Conservation –v- Dog Owners - as could not arrange for Dog Owners to attend.

10. **Date of Next Meeting/s (S/)**

10.1 **Wednesday 18 April 2007** at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, 7 - 9 p.m. **ALL**

10.2 **Monday 23 July 2007 (AGM)** at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, 7 - 9 p.m. **ALL**

10.3 **Wednesday 24 October 2007** at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, 7 – 9 p.m. **ALL**