

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2015 to March 2016

Name of LAF	Hertfordshire LAF
Name of LAF Chair	Liddy Lawrence
Name of LAF Secretary	Richard Cuthbert, HCC

Total number of LAF members	14 + 2 Co-Opted standing members
Number of members representing users of public rights of way or access land	8
Number of members representing owners and occupiers of access land or land over which PROW subsist	5
Number of members representing other interests	3

Number of full LAF meetings held	4	Number of sub-group meetings held	8
Number of working groups led by others	3	Number of training days provided by the Appointing Authority	2
How many km of PROW have been improved due to LAF input?		How much funding did the LAF (or an associated body) raise?	£46,000.00
How many extra volunteer hours were committed to public access (not including LAF committee meetings)?			2500

Partners your LAF worked with during 2015/16 (click on a box or type 'x')

Local Nature Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Enterprise Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Wellbeing Boards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LEADER funding Local Action Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>

LAF achievements/making a difference?¹ Please give examples to illustrate how your LAF has improved public access to land for the purpose of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. Do you think your LAF has made a difference to public access in your area via its discussions and actions?

Waiting list of one member application (approved subject to keeping the overall membership balanced between landowning & user group interests).

Working with HCC planners and landowners (Lafarge / Tarmac) in the development of the new Panshanger Country Park.

Planning public access improvements across the Tyttenhanger Estate with all user group representatives, landowner & tenant.

4.6% added to the PROW network over the past 5 years in the St. Albans District, where the St. Albans Access Forum are very active compared with 2.5% added to the PROW network across the rest of Hertfordshire.

What activity did your LAF undertake to help record historical PROW before 2026?

¹ These achievements form an important part of the national annual report that is submitted to Defra/Minister and help to promote the work and good practice of LAFs

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Restoring the Record Training delivered by BHS and hosted by Appointing Authority at County Hall.

Presentation from Dr Phil Wadey to the LAF regarding Restoring the Record process.

Co-opted member liaising with Bucks LAF on Restoring the Record process and activity.

Helped agree with HCC and Restoring the Record volunteers an exchange of data sets and scanned maps & documents from the archives.

Please add numbers to the following differentiating between formal consultations and general advice given by the LAF on particular subjects. If a consultation covered more than one subject area, please count separately.

	Consultations	Advice	Optional Detail
Green Infrastructure strategies		1	
Transport (LTP, traffic management, rail, DfT, Highways Agency)	2	2	Network Rail level crossing closures and plans & Cycling network improvements
Water / Coast (slipways, flood defence, EA, shoreline)			
Public open space (public space protection orders)			
Dog control/exclusion/on leads/fouling orders	1		NE Dogs Code of Practice
Planning applications /Housing development schemes	5		
Land use and planning matters (e.g. informal advice on land development)	2		Minerals Plan consultation
Local development frameworks and planning strategies		4	
PROW creation, diversion or closure - number of each	10		
Recording lost ways/historical rights - working towards the 2026 cut-off	2		As mentioned above
Right of Way Improvement Plan review		1	
Route improvements (to PROW and other multi-user/cycling/horse-riding/walking routes)		3	Route surfacing options with Royal Vets College and surface techniques with private sector suppliers
Promotion of access, open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area	4	4	4 main meetings advice given on subjects - but ongoing all the time.
Vehicular access and issues relating to motorised use of PROW		4	
Parish Council or other grant schemes			
Access for people with reduced mobility	3	4	Standing item at formal meetings and all reports passed to 'Herts Action on Disability' for comment / oversight
Commons, village greens		5	Main issue is grazing and associated fencing of commons

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Open Access land restrictions			
Coastal Access/National Trails		1	Ridgeway NT
NNR dedication			
Greenspace including Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves	4		Ongoing
Nature conservation (including SSSIs)		2	Panshanger Country Park
Agri-environment scheme issues (HLS and new Countryside Stewardship) e.g. expiring permissive access agreements, effects of land management options on public access etc.		12	Writing to a dozen landowners whose HLS access agreements were ending, to continue public access on a permissive basis, with some successes.
Forestry and woodland	1		Woodland Trust's developing 'Heartwood Forest'

Any other LAF activity (please specify):

'Consultation with 4 parish councils to adopt RoWIP review and updates.
Integrating the RoWIP with developing parish Neighbourhood Plans.

What are your top priorities for the year ahead?

Ongoing pressures to RoW Service regarding cuts, outsourcing and support.
Review of RoWIP.
Recruiting more members from landowning interests.
Severance of RoW network by; railways, NR level crossing closures, HE & HCC major highway developments.
Absentee landowners - issues of PRow management when landowners are remote.

Do you foresee any issues or challenges that may affect your LAFs operation and/or its ability to deliver improvements to public access in the coming year?

Maintaining the level of support from the RoW team for the LAF's operation.
Maintaining the balance of membership.
Being under-equipped to meet the Lost ways and the 2026 cut-off date.
Budget cuts to the RoW Service.
Sheer level of development pressure in Herts. and turning them in to planning gain / mitigations where PRow are affected.
The ability to apply for and win external grant bids.

Is there any particular support or training that you need to deliver your priorities or work program for next year?

A regional members' meeting / conference coordinated by NE and a regional LAF coordinator.
Ongoing training needs in specific topics as they arise & national leadership on issues facing all LAFs, e.g. rail level crossing closures.

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We would like to see more communication from the Minsiter regarding the role of LAFs and where our work fits / its importance in the wider aims of public health, RoW and public access.

Summarise any feedback received from section 94(4) bodies²

Responses from one local district council to LAF correspondence on; equestrian access to an old railway line shared use path, and the promotion of new cycling routes over existing footpaths.

Comments from the Appointing Authority

The LAF have had a busy and productive year with lots of useful advice given to the Authority on a whole host of access issues, both strategic and local, as they have arisen in the county. The membership turnover has been successfully replaced and it is a very positive sign that we have had good applicants and been able to appoint.

We look forward to continuing our positive relationship with the LAF and working with the members to improve the access network across Herts.

Comments from LAF Chair

This past year has been an incredibly difficult year, when we were threatened with the outsourcing of the RoW & CMS Services in Herts. and the LAF lost its dedicated admin hours.

Our Vice-Chair and several new members have been recruited which has refreshed the group and added new aspects to our work.

We are now involved in a large number of local organisations and groups which are seeking support and input from LAF members and eager to work with the LAF on access issues, but this is not reflected in being able to work with either the LEP or the LNP in Herts, who seem to have other agendas.

The LAF in Herts. is seen and supported by the public as a body which is worth joining and the public awareness of the LAF seems to have grown. We continue to welcome new members and it is pleasing that we are able to recruit.

Once again thanks to the RoW team and the LAF members for their time over the past year.

Any other comments

We would welcome more certainty from NE on its contribution to LAFs and a single national LAF meeting (rather than the 2 split).

² The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, Section 94(4) specifies that it is the function of a local access forum, as respects to the area for which it is established, to advise the appointing authority; the local highway authority; other bodies exercising functions under CROW Act Part 1 (Natural England, Forestry Commission and English Heritage) and such other bodies as may be prescribed. These other bodies are set out in the LAF Regulations 2007, paragraph 21, and include: any conservation board established by the Secretary of State, any parish or town council in the area covered by the LAF, and Sport England.