



Hertfordshire Local Access Forum



MINUTES

21st June 2021, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

70th Meeting

Conference call

Present & Apologies - Welcome by LL and apologies from Bianca Badham.

7.35 **Minutes & Matters arising – Re;** Talk about landowner experiences during pandemic with welcoming the public onto an estate - add notes to LAF webpage and email to all.

- **What influence does the LAF have in planning matters?**

- e.g. trunk road RoW severance and Pelican vs Pegasus crossings?

DH – RoWIP will be a material consideration

TB – RoW better comms with Growth team and Development Mgmt. team, so able to get Access arguments across – Non-Motorised User Routes specifications being added into responses for consideration when looking at the RoW network in the cut & thrust of the development world.

- **Does the LAF get consulted on major housing developments?** – Yes, e.g. including new access roads & their impacts on the safety of RoW users.

7:45 **CRoW Service update** – Tony Bradford, Head of CRoW

- Post-Covid Recovery Funding Themes – massive increase in use during Covid as highlighted by last mtgs presentation. Combined with very poor weather conditions
 - – bid for £1M for improvements to and restoration of the network, in addition to existing Revenue & Capital funding – a large sum but it won't cover everything, so being prioritised to local routes well-used by walkers & riders. Tackling improvements such as pot holes (water and user caused) and depressions in kissing gates for example. Signposts at roadsides and good standards for replacement with descriptions, logo, path number, distance and destinations etc – thought of as a great way for new users to understand where the path will take them. Condition of these assets varies and 1000 have been selected from the large amounts of data we hold to be categorised (by volunteers) and plan for those that can be replaced under that theme, e.g. with QR stickers pointing people to the Google 'MyMaps' RoW map (now with 1M hits).
 - Talking with Ros & co. at the NFU, to understand their perspective & the 'Find Your Way' project.
 - Increased use can be exemplified by platforms such as 'Strava' which show an 80% increase. Positive news in terms of people's physical health and mental wellbeing. TB very keen to ensure that publicity of the benefits is demonstrated & included by getting Councillors engaged in works in

their divisions, reported to the Env Member Panel and they give updates to Full Council.

- Staff Recruitment – 2 staff currently being recruited to work with the team to help deliver these themed areas of workload. Access Officers working with Capital Officer to throw all ideas into the pot and build a programme to meet the themes above.

Q CB – s147 & British Standard specified type structures – is it economical to insist farmers do this? TB everything we can do to help people can still use the paths is of benefit, but not necessarily what the Council want this money to deliver.

RD shared concerns with those landowners not doing their bit, but aware of SSSIs and what materials can / should be used. Where urban fringe pressures are higher let's exploit that relationship to show benefits – keep in-touch with NFU.

DH Radlett received new sign at the Warren – very welcomed and the contrasts with other Local Authorities standards is marked.

LL – is it all allocated or are thoughts still welcomed? – TB; all suggestions & ideas still welcomed, and volunteers are being asked to do the same.

- Can the Alban way be widened?, it's so well used it's almost dangerous / difficult getting around all types of other users
- TB active and sustainable travel aimed to be 60%, so former railway lines do not have the capacity alone – they are only a part of the picture, but not the whole answer as they weren't built 6m wide.

8:15 Member Updates

- DH – Aldenham Reservoir path case rumbles-on with HCC assistance much appreciated. New MSc in Transport Planning and hoping to include RoW – TB/RC liaise with DH to ensure access issues are included.
- IG – Barriers and Sustrans push on restrictive barriers on the network (e.g. route 12 onto Bridge Road, WGC) & complaints; now modified to reduce speeding while improved for all legitimate users.
- Funding for local user groups available due to Covid – Members discretionary locality budgets, can be used for local organisations. Wel-Hat BC focus for supporting local organisations worth investigating.
- LL – can HCC send general advice to all local groups? E.g. alert all local Cllrs that this is a problem / website page for advice. TB will ask about corporate approach.
- RD – weather issues for all farmers, so patching-up those paths which can be done with the funding, will be very welcomed. Asking all to ensure crossfield paths are marked-out and with stock being turned-out, to highlight route options.
- MMB – Top Field Broxbourne & idea of a concrete path is concerning.
- LL – Regional LAF mtg in early July to inc report from Herts. Disappointing not to have got a field trip together and little point in a business mtg while current issues ongoing. STA are going to start charging for garden waste, bringing concerns of increased fly-tipping – Duncan Jones can be asked if position is escalating? And RD sits on that group as well and able to report 100% increase in fly-tipping, but not all garden waste. RoW junctions with roads are

targeted by both tippers and clearance teams. Clear-up pilot, funded from P&CC's office for landowners.

- Issue of uncontrolled dogs particularly with aggression, wildlife disturbance often in woods and animal welfare issues due to rapid increase in dog ownership. Kennel Club leading, with NFU & NE.
- LL – can advice be shared via HCC QR codes?
- RD – NFU awareness raising in the countryside includes dog issues and info on what is growing in a field, or where ground-nesting birds are at risk. Poster can be shared for LAF members.
- BW
 - Where are we with a co-ordinated Greenways policy across Herts? – Liaising with neighbouring authorities.
 - Have the LAF seen the Active Travel Standards Specification for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs)? – will be consulted-on via Roads in Herts review.
 - Any update on the 2026 legislation due to be passed this year? - None

8:35 CRoW Service News

- **Access** news & updates – Lee Tyson, Team Leader Countryside Management
 - HHW restarting with 102 trained volunteer leaders on a more limited programme than before, when there were 300 trained leaders. Now at 30 walks a week, attracting new walkers and overall attendance levels, while reasonable, are nowhere near pre-Covid levels, due to ongoing restrictions and booking system for limited numbers. Looking for funding to push the scheme more. Close to 30% target for those with health issues and similar figure for those who are 'inactive'.
 - Communities - Volunteering up to 30 new apps per month, but still having to limit numbers who can engage, so trained volunteer leaders and first aiders being engaged to create multiple groups working independently at the same time.
- **DM&E** news & updates – Richard Cuthbert, Team Leader DM&E
 - PTRO Review – set-back due to staff turnover, and requests for new PTROs coming-in as well, which take a lot of time and need sorting, to reduce that hit on time, whereas the Review, while needed, will happen as soon as resources allow.

8:55 AOB:

- **Consultation from Tees LAF** on Highways England's plans for the Historical Railway Estate – Not covered any further during meeting, but all LAF Members have the email to consider and respond. No impact in Herts.
- **CB 1.** Why officers appear to be instructed that a path marked 'Maintained Hertfordshire County Council' on the public gazetteer doesn't mean that it is maintained by Hertfordshire County Council, e.g. Bushey 74 Sparrows Hearn. – RC to look into details.
- **2.** Why do we omit little bits of paths from diversion orders solely because the centre line there hasn't necessarily changed. Latest example Bishop's Stortford 7 (Carol Ramsden, presumably at HCC's instruction). – National issue of not including whole paths beyond the red line in TCPA cases, but HA cases should be looked at holistically. RC to look-into specific examples & respond.

- 3. HA80s119(3) requires diversions requiring works to have a proviso in the order delaying the diversion until the works are done. Why doesn't HCC always do that? e.g Abbots Langley 60, Bishops Stortford 7. – **Works Orders should include this; non-works may not need it.**

Dates of future meetings 2021:

- 20th September
- 6th December