



West Sussex Local Access Forum

Annual Report: January 2018 – April 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the West Sussex Access Forum (WSLAF) Annual Report. I hope you find the contents informative and of interest.

The Forum has continued to cover a wide range of topics and has responded to an increasing number of consultations from a range of bodies, possibly as a result of the scale of development taking place in West Sussex. We anticipate that this will continue for the foreseeable future.



We have received excellent presentations from guest speakers which have been followed by lively question and answer sessions.

In Autumn 2018 West Sussex County Council (WSSC) informed us that, going forward, they would only fully support two meetings per year in place of the four held in previous years. The Forum considered that it would be difficult to maintain continuity, effectiveness, and interest with two meetings six months apart and decided to hold two 'Informal' meetings between the WSSC supported meetings, organised and run solely by the WSLAF members. An initial meeting has been held, which was very much enjoyed by Members, and it was considered that this arrangement will allow the Forum to continue our work throughout the year.

Recruitment of new members was a major aim for this year and following a recruitment campaign eight potential new members attended their first meeting in January.

Finally our continuing thanks goes to Jane Noble, our Forum Officer, for her support and encouragement throughout the year.

Graham Elvey – Chairman



WSLAF Meetings

In 2018 there were three 'Formal' and one 'Informal' meetings, generally alternating between Horsham and Chichester. The meetings covered items from our work programme and included the following presentations:

- Planning Presentation – Caroline West, WSCC, gave a wide ranging and informative presentation on the Planning System and the role of the County Council and funding mechanisms in WSCC
- A27 Arundel Bypass; Preferred Route – Fliss Drewett, Highways England, gave a review of the potential scheme at Arundel
- Public Rights of Way Annual Report – Jon Perks, WSCC Principal Rights of Way (RoW) Officer, gave a presentation on the work of WSCC's PRoW service over the year
- Volunteer work – Anthony Donithorn, WSCC PRoW Volunteer Coordinator, gave a presentation on the work of the Volunteer Rangers and Parish Path Inspectors.

Summary of WSLAF work

The Forum has continued to support the improvement and maintenance of existing public access, whilst actively seeking to create additional off-road links, via the PRoW and greater access network, for informal outdoor leisure, recreation and health.

This work has become vital for the safety of non-motorised users (NMUs), as the road network becomes increasingly busy with traffic generated by new housing development, but this has to be balanced by trying to ensure responsible use and respect for the people who live and work in the countryside.

Consultations and advice

The Forum has been particularly active over the last year in responding to consultations and requests for advice. We have commented on planning applications and Local Plan Reviews and have responded to both central and local government consultations to ensure good, safe access to the countryside is maintained and improved.

The consultations the Forum responded to include:

- England Coast Path, Shoreham to Eastbourne – Natural England
- Land West Of New Monks Farm, Mash Barn Lane, Lancing, West Sussex – Adur and Worthing District Councils
- Main Modifications to the Arun Local Plan (2011-2031) – Arun District Council (ADC)
- Heath Common Design Statement – Horsham District Council (HDC) (April 2018)
- Health and Harmony (Farming post Brexit) – Defra
- A27 Crossings – WSP (Agents for Highways England)
- Local Plan Review – Issues & Options – Employment, Tourism & Sustainable Rural Development – H DC (May 2018)
- National Planning Policy Framework – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Rosier Wood Management Plan
- 2018 Strategic Transport Investment Programme (STIP) scheme suggestions – WSCC
- A2300 improvements – WSCC
- Mid-Sussex Open Space and Play Study – Mid-Sussex DC
- Chichester Harbour Management Plan 2019-2024 – Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- Draft revised Statement of Community Involvement – Arun DC
- Chichester Local Plan Preferred Approach – Chichester District Council
- Southwater Neighbourhood Plan - HDC

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Access

Higher Level Stewardship agreements which provide permissive access in West Sussex expire in 2019-2020. The WSLAF Working Group has been inspecting all of the paths in our area to assess their value as additions to the RoW network against agreed criteria. The Forum intends to contact and work with the landowners of those paths deemed to be useful additions to the greater access network to endeavour to keep them open for users to enjoy.

WSLAF's views on the future of access post Brexit were submitted to the Defra consultation as part of the review on the future of Farming.

Improvement Projects

The Forum has continued to monitor and participate in the following projects to improve access:

- A23 Newtimber Bridleways – to provide improved connectivity to the RoW network
- Down's Link at Christ's Hospital – to re-establish and re-connect the DL off-road
- Kilnood Vale, Crawley – provision of a Pegasus crossing and bridleway links

Looking Forward

The recruitment plan devised and implemented by WSCC was a great success resulting in eight potential members attending their first meeting. Training will be provided and will be on-going. We are sure that the input of fresh ideas and views will be a positive stimulus to our work.

With the increasing pace and scale of development in West Sussex it is more important than ever that the Forum provides independent and balanced comment and advice to improve and maintain access for all.

The Forum will actively continue to seek and create additional off-road links and to improve connectivity throughout the greater access network.

Contact the Forum/further information

WSLAF meeting dates, agenda, minutes, work programme, consultation responses and a list of members can be found on the Forum's website:

www.wslaf.org

Members of the public are always welcome to attend our meetings as observers.

The Forum is always looking for new members, particularly from those representing landownership or land management to ensure a balance of members. Please contact the Forum Officer (details below) for further information.

Forum Officer Jane Noble

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If this information is required in an alternative format please contact us and we will try to meet your needs.