

# **SOUTH DOWNS ACCESS FORUM**

*A sub-forum of the Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex, the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, and the East Sussex, and Brighton & Hove Local Access Forums*

## **South Downs Joint Committee HQ, Ford**

**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2005**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Present**

##### *Members:*

Andrew Shaxson (AS)	Jon Willis (JW)
Craig Thomas (CT)	John Rennie (JR)
David Brookshaw (DB)	Nigel Sloan (NS)
David Taylor (DT)	Paul Millmore (PM)
Derek Cleaver (DC)	Sue Montila (SM)

##### *SDAF co-ordinator:*

James Ort (JO) : South Downs Access Forum Officer

##### *Observers:*

Jane Noble (JN) : West Sussex CC  
Nicola Redwood (NR) : Strategic Access Officer for the South Downs  
Nigel James (NJ) : Western Area Manager CMS  
Phil Belden (PB) : Countryside Manager – South Downs Joint Committee  
Andrew Whitnall (AW) : East Sussex Local Access Forum Officer  
Bill Jenman (BJ) : South Downs Way National Trail Officer  
Chris Fairbothor (CF) : Countryside Agency  
Petronella Natrass (PN) : Hampshire CC

##### *Public:*

three

#### **Apologies**

Ben Perkins (BP)	Janyis Watson (JWa)
David Ashcroft (DA)	Leo Hickish (LH)
Glynn Jones (GJ)	

Item	Minutes	Action
1	<p><b><u>Introductions and apologies</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies were received from five members (see above)</li> <li>• PM asked that forum members introduce themselves.</li> </ul>	
2	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no declarations of interest.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NR introduced the Forum to Nigel James (NJ). NJ is the Western Assistant Area Manager of the Countryside Management Service (SDJC CMS). He had agreed to become involved in the SDAF, taking over the more strategic elements of the SDAF officers job from JO. NR informed the Forum that this decision was reached after reassessing the work done by the Forum. It was felt that there could be significant benefits from developing a closer working relationship between the SDAF and CMS in the future.</li> <li>• AS questioned whether would there be any feedback from the first year of Open Access becoming available. NR replied that a landowner's questionnaire was been composed and was due to be sent out by the CLA. The voluntary ranger scheme, funded by the AMGS 2, would also be carrying out site monitoring. AS was also aware of a proposed questionnaire by the NFU which was due to ask more about the mechanics of open access legislation. PM asked that NR and AS establish more details after the meeting.</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b><u>Approval of minutes of last meeting and matters arising</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AS expressed concerns over how the monitoring of open access land at Telegraph House will be achieved thoroughly enough to establish whether there was a need for a second access point.</li> <li>• NS questioned why an update of progress made from the previous meetings 'matters arising' had not been emailed to the Forum beforehand. JO admitted that he had not fully understood NS request that a full update of progress made be sent to Forum members in the form of a table. JO assured the SDAF that this would be done in future.</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b><u>Mother Fora updates and feedback</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>B&amp;H LAF.</b> DB said the main areas discussed by B&amp;H LAF at the last meeting were B&amp;H CC's recent employment of a new land management agent, Smith Gore, and recent cliff falls onto the undercliff walk near Brighton Marina. DB said that the undercliff walk represented an important local access issue. Members agreed that an absence of elected councillors on the B&amp;H LAF could affect the likelihood of positive outcomes. PB said that liability was always a concern in these types of cases, which may mean that public access loses out. DB said that the B&amp;H LAF would report back that the public should be allowed to use the walk at their own risk.</li> <li>• <b>CAFWS.</b> NS said that the Chairman of the RoW Committee sits on the CAFWS and is very beneficial to have a person in this position sitting on the Forum. At the last CAFWS meeting, the Forum talked about RoWIPs and had a presentation on TRO's.</li> <li>• <b>HCAF.</b> SM said that the HCAF received presentations on access to water by the British Canoe Association and on monitoring devices used to measure access land and the RoW network use. The forum discussed Southampton CC adding existing routes to a definitive map. Feedback of the South Downs Countryside Access Plan (CAP) was also given. PM questioned why such a range of different monitoring techniques were used in the countryside. There</li> </ul>	

	<p>should be a set methodology. CF said that the Countryside Agency is looking for research topics and that he would recommend that monitoring techniques be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ESx LAF.</b> AW said that the last meeting was mainly a RoWIP closed session. The forum also received a presentation on verge/footway maintenance and a report on the installation of two zebra crossings. AW also told the forum that he was gathering information on non-CRoW access land to submit to the OS.</li> <li>• PB pointed out that three of the four mother forums had elected members and that these member were in a prime position to influence access authorities.</li> <li>• NS questioned why a mother fora feedback session had been included in the agenda instead of mother forum minutes being emailed to the SDAF. Some members expressed a liking for the feedback sessions because it meant they did not have so much reading to do. It was agreed that members would be emailed mother forum minutes and that cross-forum representatives would give a summarised update. The updates would only include matters that were relevant to the South Downs and matters of interest relating to LAFs or access issues at a national level. <b>JO to forward mother forum minutes to members of the SDAF (11.01). Cross-forum representatives to only give updates that are relevant to the South Downs and LAF or access issues that are directly relevant at a national level (11.02).</b></li> </ul>	<p>JO Cross- forum reps</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>RoWIPs updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ESx RoWIP.</b> AW said that at the present time the CC's RoWIP plan was at the information gathering stage. Initial priorities had been identified as well as two 'quick win' targets which were improved signage and new bridleways. The draft LTP document included a section on the development of the RoWIP. The draft RoWIP document will be done in 2006 and the final document 2007. AW said that the SDAF suggestions were useful and will be fed into ESx LAF comments on the RoWIP. There will be an opportunity for the SDAF to feedback into the written draft as well. JW asked whether the ESX LAF working groups dealt with motorised vehicle users needs in their RoWIP work. AW said that suggestions and improvements had been put forward.</li> <li>• <b>WSx RoWIP.</b> JN emphasised that the RoWIP in West Sussex is strategic and does not look at specific route improvements. The WSx RoWIP would build on the milestone statements so while the RoWIP may not deal with all specific route suggestions made by the Forum, they will be noted and probably put into an action plan at a later date. Some large route specific improvements may be included in the RoWIP, for example the maintenance of larger bridges and green lanes. JN thanked the Forum for it's suggestions. The draft RoWIP will be done by November 2005. The CAFWS and sub-forums will make comments in December, followed by public consultation over the winter. The RoWIP consultation will be advertised through WSx Connections, local papers, libraries, internet and Parish Councils. PB stressed that money from the LTP needs to be allocated specifically to RoWIP projects, otherwise it drains away into other schemes. JN said that many RoWIP suggestions do not fit into LTP funding streams. Other sources of money, e.g. community groups, would be required to deliver non LTP fundable projects.</li> <li>• <b>Hants RoWIP.</b> PN said that a Local Working Group was formed from representatives of the East Hants AONB Recreation &amp; Access Panel plus 5 Hampshire-based members of the South Downs Access Forum. The Local Working Groups were most helpful in the Countryside Access Plan (CAP)</li> </ul>	

	<p>production process. The pre-consultation draft was circulated to the Local Working Group, HCAF, SDAF and officers for comment in early September. PN received lots of useful feedback. The consultation draft would go public around the end of September or beginning of October through local press, libraries, information centres, DC's, PC's, county councillors, HWT, National Trust, plus over 100 respondents to the 'have your say' leaflet. PN was pleased that a substantial sum had been allocated to the RoWIP within the LTP, it having received 60% of the original bid. NS asked whether the blank columns in the estimated cost section of the CAP indicated that the costs were not known. PN said that it depended on whether the Hants CC thought they could deliver it. PM raised concerns about plans to use destination and distance signposting on narrow fingerposts. Extra wide fingerposts were recommended. It was agreed that a consistent approach to signage was needed across the SDs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>B&amp;H RoWIP.</b> DB said that it was good to hear updates from the other RoWIPs and that it was a shame the B&amp;H RoWIP Officer could not attend. The B&amp;H working group meeting had taken place the previous Wednesday. DB reported that the RoWIP bid was included in the LTP. It focused on four main areas, easy access routes, missing links, network improvements, and health walks. The RoWIP bid was for £600,000, of this a sum of £270,000 was granted (a 57% cut). The LTP will receive £35.2 million over 5 years, of which walking and cycling outside the RoWIP will receive £4.7 million. Concerns were raised that there was nobody to manage or implement the money granted to the RoWIP. The Forum agreed that the removal of several key points from the RoWIP was disappointing. In addition, B&amp;H members of the SDAF were disappointed their offer of help on the B&amp;H RoWIP had not been accepted. Members wanted to comment on the draft RoWIP document to ensure consistency in RoWIPs across the South Downs.</li> </ul>	
7	<p><b><u>Countryside Management Service's (CMS) Area Work</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AMGS update by Nigel James.</b> NJ reviewed the AMGS 05/06. As opposed to the 04/05 AMGS bid, the AMGS 05/06 was put in directly through to the Countryside Agency, and not via the local authorities. With regards to the AMGS 05/06 bid, a variation of percentage funding will need to come from the local highway authority's. This has been verbally agreed by Esx CC. A response was yet to come from WSx CC. The SDAF recognised why it was not given a chance to comment on the AMGS 05/06 bid, but hoped that it would be able to do so for the AMGS 06/07.</li> <li>• <b>Introduction to RoW Area Work Plans 2006/7.</b> NJ told the forum that at a recent SDJC-CMS meeting, RoW representatives from the four areas had all been keen to have the SDAF's input into the CMS's Area Work Plans. At that present time it was solely down to area rangers as to what rights of way work should be given priority. The SDAF multi-user perspective may help add a new dimension to prioritising this work in future. The Forum agreed that this was a good idea.</li> <li>• <b>Prioritisation of potential AMGS 2 RoW work 2005-06.</b> NJ told the Forum that part of the AMGS 2 bid was for resurfacing work, however this did not receive full funding. There was a possibility that this work could be completed in the future if more AMGS funding becomes available due to underspend. If money does become available, the CMS would like to have some resurfacing projects already lined up. Members were given a handout with details of resurfacing work that failed to get funding under AMGS 2. NJ requested that Forum members assess which 5 routes they felt most needed resurfacing and</li> </ul>	

	that they submit their views to JO by the end of October 2005. <b>Members to submit their top five routes for resurfacing to JO by the end of October 2005 (11.3).</b> PM said that the paper highlights the lack of maintenance on certain RoWs that the LAs have a statutory requirement to maintain. It was noted that there were no ESx RoWs in the leaflet. NJ said that ESx did not have as many RoW in need of restoration and those that did would be very expensive. PB said that endorsement from the SDAF would be beneficial if money became available for the work to be done.	Forum Members
8	<b>TROs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JO said that BP had requested that TROs be added to the agenda. This was in light of Graffham PCs application to WSx CC for a blanket TRO over a number of RUPPs between Graffham, Cocking and Duncton. BP wanted the Forum to establish a position on the application, taking into account Defra's delays in applying the new 'restricted byway' status to all existing RUPPS. JW pointed out that WSx CC had to readjust its TRO policy to fit in with Graffham's application <sup>1*</sup>. It was decided that TRO's should be discussed in greater depth at the AGM once researched by JO. <b>JO to produce a summary document of the local TRO policies for the AGM (11.04).</b></li> </ul>	JO
9	<b>AOB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JO said that he would draw up a bid to GIS map all South Downs open access sites and submit it to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) on behalf of the SDAF. <b>JO to submit an application to the SDF on behalf of the SDAF (11.05).</b> If the bid is successful, the completed data set can then be submitted to the Ordnance Survey allowing them to show all non-CRoW public access land on the next edition of the maps. The bid would need at least 25% match funding from alternative sources. <b>JO requested that the Forum think about where the other sources of funding could come from e.g. the South Downs Society (11.06).</b></li> </ul>	JO  Forum Members
10	<b>Agenda items for next meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Downs Way Bridge on the A26</li> <li>Hang gliding access presentation</li> <li>SDAF to comment on the South Downs Way Management Strategy</li> <li>Changes to National Trust car parking on the South Downs</li> </ul>	

*Summary of Actions from meeting 11*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Who by</i>
11.01	<b>JO to forward mother forum minutes to members of the SDAF.</b>	JO
11.02	<b>Cross-forum representatives to only give updates that are relevant to the South Downs and LAF or access issues that are relevant at a national level.</b>	Cross-Forum Reps
11.03	<b>Members to submit their top five sites for resurfacing to JO by the end of October 2005</b>	Forum Members
11.04	<b>JO to produce a summary document of the local TRO policies for the AGM.</b>	JO
11.05	<b>JO to submit an application to the SDF on behalf of the SDAF.</b>	JO
11.06	<b>Forum members think about where the other sources of funding could come from.</b>	Forum Members

<sup>1</sup>Lisa Creaye-Griffin raised an objection to this comment. WSxCC had not readjusted its TRO policy to fit in with the Graffham's application.