

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

Sussex Downs Conservation Board HQ, Ford

6th May 2005

Meeting Minutes

Present

Members:

Ben Perkins (BP)	Jon Willis (JW)
David Ashcroft (DA)	John Rennie (JR)
Derek Cleaver (DC)	Malcolm Walford (MW)
Glynn Jones (GJ)	Nigel Sloan (NS)
Janyis Hyatt (JH)	Paul Millmore (PM)
	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
Phil Belden (PB) : Countryside Manager – Sussex Downs Conservation Board
Andrew Whitnall (AW) : East Sussex Local Access Forum Officer
Mike Smith (MS) : Eastbourne Borough Council
Tim Squire (TS) : Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum Officer

Public:

three

Apologies

Andrew Shaxson (AS)	Janyis Hyatt (JH)
Craig Thomas (CT)	David Taylor (DT)
David Brookshaw(DB)	Kuljit Randhawa (KR)

Item	Minutes	Action
1	<p><u>Introductions and apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GJ introduced James Ort to the forum. JO will be acting as a temporary replacement for Keith Tyrell as the South Downs Access Forum Officer. Apologies were received from six members (see above) 	
2	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GJ declared an interest as Area Manager for The National Trust in the presentation by Rev'd Caffyn on access to water and the RoWIPs. 	
3	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM was concerned about SDAF information (e.g. on RoWIPs) going to the four mother forums, then on to four separate local highway authorities – how could we ensure a unified and consistent approach? PB suggested that once information from the LHAs/mother forum has been passed back to the SDAF, its recommendations could be cross-checked and any inconsistencies to the approach highlighted. JR asked that at the next meeting, a proposal for a more consistent way of passing on advice to the mother forums be brought forward. The proposal would include mechanisms to identify and iron out inconsistencies (9.1). 	JO
4	<p><u>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Actions from the last meeting were followed up with the forum. Two letters were sent off to the CAFWS regarding the Consultation on the West Sussex Local Transport Plan and the misleading signs on Access Land in West Sussex (Telegraph House). Regarding the matter of farmers declining to open up access to their land, information had yet to be passed onto DT. NR assured the forum that JO would pass a list of farmers who were causing problems with regard to access infrastructure on their access land to DT (9.2). NR reported that the maps showing the current position of the new open access infrastructure has been passed from the SDCB to the Access Authorities as part of the Access Management Grant Scheme agreement. BP suggested the revised map should be made available to the public. He also expressed an interest in this information be put on the web. NS suggested that the Countryside Agency could do it. JO agreed to write to the mother forums requesting they ask the Access Authority to make the revised open access infrastructure maps publicly available (9.3). JO also agreed to write to the CA to request they put the location of access infrastructure on the web based maps and to ask of whether forums would do this too (9.4). MW also raised the question as to whether the Parish Councils should have this knowledge too, hopefully making the information more accessible to the public. GJ resolved to write letters through the mother forums, asking Access Authorities to pass on new information on open access and access infrastructure to Parish Councils. GJ signed the Minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate reflection of the last meeting. Before moving on, two more matters arising were discussed. Following the advances made at Telegraph House, NS told the forum that the West Sussex County Council have been asked to arrange a meeting with the landowner to discuss how much of the land will be open access. NS suggests that a SDAF member should attend this meeting, proposed AS as a possibility. The date for the site visit had been arranged for 11th May 2005. DM stressed that very 	JO JO JO

	<p>positive progress is being made on this issue. GJ proposes that the SDAF offer a member to be present at the site visit. JO will ask WSCC whether a SDAF member could attend the site visit on May 11th 2005 (9.5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM raised the issue of new cross-boundary RoWIP routes, wishing to ensure that routes identified in the RoWIP on one side of an administrative boundary linked up properly with associated new routes on the RoWIP on the other side of the boundary. NR agreed to co-ordinate a meeting with RoWIP officers to discuss RoW improvements that cross boundaries or impact on a neighbouring authority (9.6). 	<p>JO</p> <p>NR</p>
5	<p><u>Access to water presentation & discussion – Rev'd Douglas Caffyn (RC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC gave a presentation on the unsatisfactory situation of access to water. He talked of how the likes of canoes, skiffs and sailing dinghies are environmentally friendly and left no trace of having been there. RC paid particular attention to the situation at the Cuckmere, discussing the Environment Agency's plans for the restoring the natural estuary and the potential negative impact it could have for canoeists. RC requests that the forum write to the appropriate Minister asking for clarification of the legislation relating to access to water. BP asked whether RC was talking about access to the water or riparian access. RC replied that access to water was needed first, although access to banks is very important, for car parking, loading and unloading. GJ supported the need for clarification on the topic. JO to write to the appropriate minister for clarification (9.7). 	<p>JO</p>
6	<p><u>West Sussex RoW Improvement Plan Working Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NR stated that NS and AS have drawn up details of improvements and upgrades on WSx RoW. NR asked the forum to discuss and agree on the routes for prioritisation. It was felt that many routes (e.g. Point 10, South Downs Way Greatham Common) needed the opinion of horse riders before a suitable priority rank could be established. SM offered assistance on prioritising WSx RoW routes (9.8) and also pointed out that riders and cyclists face similar risks when crossing roads, making it appropriate for cyclists to input with ranking the proposals as well. GJ proposed the forum supports the WSx sub-group's RoWIPs suggestions and prioritisation. Any changes in prioritisation of horse routes should be forwarded as amendments later. There was a second debate on whether BOATs should be included in the RoWIP working groups submissions to CAFWS. JW outlined motorised vehicle users' interests and their right to utilise certain RoW. JW asked for the for the SDAF to support the re-classification of routes which have evidence of allowing vehicular use, stating these should be more clearly identified and given BOAT status. He presented personal experiences illustrating how other countryside users are very accepting of the presence of vehicles on appropriate RoW. NS stated his opinion that the South Downs is one of the few places to experience tranquillity and get away from traffic. It is his belief that peace and quiet is what the vast majority of the South Downs users want and that this is what the SDAF and mother forums should recommend. JW argued that only a small percentage of RoW are open to the use of vehicles and that even these are not adequately highlighted as being so. PM and BP suggested the need for tranquillity in the South Downs outweighed the needs of the motorised vehicle users. The forum voted in a majority of promoting a quieter, more tranquil South Downs over vehicular use on the Downs, passing the motion (3:7) to remove the proposed BOATS from WSx Working Group RoWIP submission. JW raised an objection to a vote being taken on the subject, on the basis that as the CAFWS and Local Highway Authorities have a legal duty to be inclusive of all RoW users, the 	<p>SM</p>

	SDAF should do so too. NS said that as the SDAF is a non-statutory body, there is no legal duty on its members to be inclusive.	
7	<p><u>Inclusion of non-CRoW access land on maps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NS stated that not all access land is included on maps. Whilst CRoW and National Trust areas are mapped, other open access land, such as Country Parks and land open to the public owned by other authorities, are not. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that non-CRoW access lands are included on OS maps. GJ asked JO to write to the SDCB asking them to investigate the process and costs for including non CRoW land on ordnance survey maps (9.9). PB explained non-CRoW land has been GIS-mapped by SDCB but some owners of the data could not always be identified in order to seek their permission for the maps to be published as they could not verify their accuracy. DA raised concerns that once non-CRoW access land was on the map it would be hard to remove it. GJ suggested that dates of validity or a ‘check before use’ solution might be viable on non-CRoW land. JR suggested that the SDAF could ask the National Access Forum and the Countryside Agency to clear up any grey areas concerning production of OS maps showing non-CRoW land (9.10). GJ confirmed the forum’s desire for permissive routes/areas to be included on OS maps. 	<p>JO</p> <p>JO</p>
8	<p><u>WSCC’s Traffic Regulation Order policy – David Marshall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DM stated that his presentation on WSCC’s Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) policy was an unbiased presentation of the facts. The presentation’s major case study was the instigation of a TRO on a RUPP at Graffham 952. This TRO was imposed to stop motorised vehicular use whilst permitting access by horse-drawn carriages. It was suggested to the carriage driving communities that gates be installed with locks for which their members would be given the keys. This idea was turned down by carriage-driving representatives. A special Kent Gap was installed as an alternative. In the Kent Gap bollards being positioned at such a height as to allow carriages through whilst stopping four wheeled vehicles. However this design did not stop access to motorbikes and some makes of quadbikes. Since the Kent Gaps implementation there have been some complaints due to noise and erosion of the ROW’s surface in the area. Vandalism of signage was also a problem. JW argued that motorbikes and quads are currently not a problem, but even if they were it would be very hard to stop their access altogether any way because they access the TRO through other routes. Only policing could stop illegal use. The TRO costs to date are £5,784.84 (covering supply of signs, gates, fencing, installation and repairs, excluding legal, maintenance and officer time costs). DM stated that Graffham 952 was a fairly straightforward TRO, so whilst they may be a good idea, the benefits may not justify the cost. SM volunteered to champion the use of gate keys with carriage groups to avoid the need for Kent Gaps in the future, so that all motorised vehicles could be physically prevented from accessing the TRO ROW. 	
9	<p><u>Replacement of Sue Coles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three Hampshire-based cycling representatives have been put forward by Sue Coles as her possible replacement. JO gave a brief summary of each of the possible representatives (Jim McDonald, Bob Damper, and Mike Wilson). Queries were made by forum members as to how Forum members were selected. NR suggested that application packs be sent to the three candidates and this was agreed (9.11). BP suggested that new representatives could be drawn from further afield, possibly through a public advertisement. 	JO

	improvements that cross boundaries or impact on a neighbouring authority.	
9.7	JO to write to the appropriate Minister asking for clarification of the legislation relating to access to water.	JO
9.8	SM to help on prioritising WSx RoW routes.	SM
9.9	JO to write to the SDCB asking them to investigate the process and costs for including non CRoW land on Ordnance Survey maps.	JO
9.10	JO to ask the National Access Forum and the Countryside Agency to clear up any grey areas concerning production of OS maps showing non-CRoW land.	JO
9.11	JO to send application packs to the three potential new cycling representatives.	JO
9.12	JO will write to Defra accepting the invitation on behalf of the SDAF.	JO
9.13	JO to keep SDAF members more up to date of consultations between the different forums where practicable.	JO