



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Approved Minutes of meeting, Thursday, 2nd March 2023

Date: Thursday, 2nd March 2023

Time: 2:00pm

Venue: Community Space, Market Walk, Keynsham, BS29 1FS

Present: JLAF Members: Kathy Thomas (Chair of the JLAF) (KT), Donald MacIntyre (Vice-Chair of the JLAF) (DM), Rennie Dickins (RD), Keith Weller (KW), Ken Mill (KM), Ann Fay (AF), Andrew Gough (AG).

Also in attendance: Jeff Rowland (JR), Duncan Venison - Bristol City Council (DV), Lindsay Saunders – South Gloucestershire Council (LS), Graeme Stark – Bath & North East Somerset Council and Secretary to the JLAF (GS).

		Action
A	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
A1	Introductions KT welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced JR who is attending as an observer and considering applying to join the JLAF.	
A2	Apologies Chris Bloor, John Darvill, Peter Bird, Tessa Fitzjohn, Michael Bell, Ryan Wills and Charlie Moore.	
A3	Declarations of interest None.	
A4	Minutes of the last meeting held on 27th October 2022 The draft minutes from the October 2022 meeting have been circulated to all JLAF members. The minutes were approved unanimously as a true and correct record.	
B	<u>MAIN BUSINESS</u>	
B1	WECA's Strategic Transport Policy Bill Davies from WECA was scheduled to give a presentation about WECA's Strategic Transport Policy but he has had to cancel at short notice due to ill health. AG - Previous Metro Mayor was advocating a new J18A; is this still a proposal? GS to ask WECA. RD – Are the existing plans ambitious enough to reach the Net Zero target?	GS

B2	<p>ELMS</p> <p>DM stated that ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes) is the replacement for the £2bn of funding that farmers received via the CAP. Public access to the countryside was a key stated policy aim but that hasn't fed through into ELMS. There's some provision for paid permissive access to woodland but no other firm commitments, so there's much less access provisions than under the CAP. Money paid to farms has been cut by half and ELMS was supposed to make up the difference but this hasn't happened. There is funding for Landscape Nature Recovery schemes but this hasn't been a substitute for what's been lost. ELMS is in disarray, so Countryside Stewardship is to continue under ELMS but there's almost no provision for public access. Natural England are pushing for paid access to the countryside but government are not interested.</p> <p>RD asked LS if they're seeing any impact on permissive access in South Glos; LS said that they're quite reliant on a particular landowner who has kept open their permissive paths but it's unclear if this will continue into the future. KW asked what stage ELMS is at; DM stated that it was still being formulated and the final scheme has not yet been agreed. KW suggested there's merit in lobbying government to improve ELMS before it is finalised; DM to draft letter advocating for improved public access under ELMS to be sent to Natural England and local MPs. GS to forward other LAF's letters to DM to assist with drafting.</p>	<p>DM GS</p>
B3	<p>Ramblers Green Routes</p> <p>The Ramblers' Green Routes campaign is seeking to ensure that every community should be able to access open space. They are urging each local authorities to create and promote networks of green routes and to improve connectivity. The Ramblers website has information about how people can get involved if individual JLAF members want to find out more - https://www.ramblers.org.uk/greenroutes</p>	
C	<p><u>ITEMS TO REPORT / FOR INFORMATION</u></p>	
C1	<p>News from the PROW Teams</p> <p>DV highlighted BCC's report in the background papers. BCC now has increased funding for rights of way which has allowed them to progress larger schemes which could not previously be considered. S106 funding has also helped to build up a 5-year plan of works and to improve lighting. RD asked about the two-year closure of the Conchord Way and raised concerns whether rights of way are being 'asserted and protected'. DV stated that the Concorde Way is not actually public highway and that there's very good communication between development control and highways. The TTRO did lapse but this has now been picked up and this shouldn't happen again in the future. The continuing works mean that it wouldn't be safe to reopen the path at the present time. RD stated that it is a public right of way but it's just not that it's been recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement.</p> <p>GS stated that Sheila Petherbridge will be retiring in the spring and will be sorely missed. The proposals to divert BC62/3 will be determined by the Planning Committee on 8th March. The Council is progressing with proposals to build a bridge across the River Avon at Somerdale in Keynsham. GS thanked KW who is stepping down from leading the BRAM volunteer team after along a decade in charge.</p>	

	<p>LS stated that SGC are progressing with the replacement of stiles with gates and SGC's budget is largely unchanged. The England Coast Path is still progressing; there's been a difficult relationship with the Environment Agency as their plans have often contained errors. A permissive bridleway has been secured across a solar farm and at other solar farms access improvements have been made. RD asked whether the alignment of the Coast Path has now been agreed; LS stated that one landowner is still resisting but enabling works are being carried out.</p>	
D	<u>OTHER BUSINESS</u>	
D1	<p>Access Land Mapping Review</p> <p>The review of Access Land mapping is being pushed back a further five years as Natural England do not consider it practicable to carry out the review in 2024/25.</p>	
D2	<p>Badminton Road Cycle Lane</p> <p>SGC have stated that the cycle lane at Badminton Road has been created by Committee resolution and that this prohibits horses from using the lane. AF was told by a Councillors that they could use cycle lane on horseback, but this just isn't being promoted.</p>	
D3	<p>JLAF Recruitment</p> <p>The three appointing authorities will shortly be carrying out the periodic JLAF recruitment process to appoint new members. Chris Bloor, Ann Fay and Robert Davies' current membership terms are coming to an end and will be considered for reappointment based on their previous application forms. Keith Weller has decided to step down after nine years on the JLAF and KT thanked him for his contribution over such a long period of time. GS urged JLAF members to engage with anyone that they think might be interested in applying and highlighted the particular need for members from a landowning background to apply. It was suggested that Right To Roam, should be contacted to make them aware of the opportunity.</p>	
D4	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None.</p>	
E	<u>FUTURE JLAF MEETING</u>	
	<p>The next JLAF meeting is scheduled for 2pm on 6th July 2023. The delayed WECA presentation will be given at the July meeting and the Woodland Trust are expected to give a presentation at the November meeting.</p>	
	Close 15.25	