

CALDERDALE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING - TOWN HALL, HALIFAX THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2016

PRESENT

Julie Swift (CMBC)
Sarah Whiteley (Chair)
Sarah Talbot-Greaves
Janet Kerr
Eleanor Green
Graham Ramsden
Steve Priestley (Ryburn Valley Greenway)
Peter Ehrhardt
David Wakeford

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

JS opened the meeting, welcomed attendees - introductions ensued - handed over to new Chair - Sarah Whiteley.

2. APOLOGIES

Moy Cash, Rodney Collinge, Dave Austin, Corinne Kielty of RVG (represented today by Steve Priestley)

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING

None

4. RYBURN VALLEY GREENWAY

Steve Priestley in attendance in lieu of Corinne Kielty to give update on Ryburn Valley Greenway: Project set up to give fully accessible path between Rishworth and Sowerby Bridge. Corinne Kielty is the Chair. Survey carried out and received 700 replies and 90% of these were in favour of proposal. Met with the Council, feasibility study undertaken by Mary Seaton of Sustrans – report published and accessible on www.ryburnvalleygreenway.com

Next challenge is carrying out a public consultation on the proposals. Met Peter Stubbs, Transport & Strategy Manager – CMBC; agreed that consultation will take place between April and June and will be led by an independent organisation. No detail though major step forward.

There are objections, some long standing, particularly in relation to horses between Ripponden and Sowerby Bridge. There are a lot of land owners on the route – some support, some object to the proposals.

Railway is a good place to walk and just needs mud scraping off. **EG:** Any links in? **SP:** Yes – one being by The Silk Mill Pub (was the Besum) amongst others. The route would be accessible to walkers who cannot not manage hills. The Ryburn Valley Greenway group are going to form a steering group for the project which ideally could include someone from LAF.

SW: – any horse riders on the steering group? No, though a couple have attended the general meetings. **STG:** – Calderdale Saddle Club may have members who are willing to participate. **SW:** – if no one else comes forward to represent equestrians she will do it.

SP: Not thought of the niceties yet but want it to be multi-purpose. **GR:** – yes done like the route at Woodhead route, near Huddersfield.

EG: Not looked at the site – what are the results/finances – any costings? **SP:** – Yes, but only broad estimates at this stage.

SP: Advised the meeting that the AGM for Ryburn Valley Greenway would be on 3.3.2016 – 7pm if anyone wished to attend they would be welcomed.

5. FACEBOOK

As David Austen who volunteered to set up an Access Forum Facebook page is not present – this item deferred until next meeting.

6. NORLAND MOOR

JS: – Not got as far as we would have liked due to Lockhill Depot flood wiping out January. Survey participation was very good and reached people far and wide by a variety of different means. From the results we found common themes which have been presented to focus groups – 39 people attended representing walkers/cyclists/wildlife enthusiasts/rescue teams, Questions covered cycling, dogs, habitat management, i.e. removal of trees, and restoration of Heather etc .

Habitat management: Results showed clear support for the proposals around habitat management

Access: Results were less clear cut with the majority of people in favour of reducing paths – 74.3% of participants gave a positive response, but there was less support for putting in a path which would allow access for all.

Because the moor is an Urban Common we would need permission from the Secretary of State to carry out some types of work even if we do have public support e.g. proposed flagging around the Trig point,

Dogs: Very mixed response regarding dogs. Half of people who attended in favour of extending dog control orders and half would leave as it is. However, there was universal support for having a Code of Conduct.

Cycling: The majority of people who took part in the focus groups supported cycling on the moor with 79.5% opposed to prevention of cycling on the moor.

EG: are they allowed on the moor? **JS:** not legally but difficult to enforce. **JK:** It is an important site and needs money spent on it or it will become a wood with a cycle path attached.

STG: Need to make it so that everyone has an opportunity to use Norland Moor.

JS: Next thing is to pick up on two areas that the consultation so far hasn't given a mandate to proceed with – dogs and cycling and explore the options further. We are going to produce an options appraisal to ensure people have the information they need to make an informed decision around different options. This will enable us to look at strengths and weaknesses of each option and get feedback. Robin Dalton (Area Countryside Officer who manages Norland Moor) is currently analysing information received during the focus group meetings before producing the options appraisal. **JS:** – This will help us to focus on main issues and allow us to proceed with writing the site management plan which will go out for public consultation (including to Natural England).

Habitat management: Results of the focus groups show that there is a clear mandate for tree removal, management of the heather and Molinia grass.

Rights of Way

Chair to e-mail Highways to request update/info on ROW and attendance at the next meeting of Access Group to answer member questions – members please send any questions you would like to raise to Julie or Sarah W so we can forward to whoever attends prior to the meeting.

ACTION: SW/JS/ACCESS GRP MEMBERS

Management Plan will be circulated to all who completed Visitor Survey if they left their contact details, attendees of focus groups and other interested parties

7. REGIONAL LAF CONFERENCE

JS: We are unable to access a place at this Conference now as it is oversubscribed, though they will send us the papers.

PE: Needed to be decisive earlier so as not to miss opportunity of attendance.

JS: Has an invitation for members of Local Access Forum to attend
Protecting our public rights of way. – DEFRA Conference in London on 21st April

Free to attend (*Amendment from JS: sadly I later found out that this is not the case and we are unable to pay for the conference fee*) and we could pay travel expenses for LAF members. JS to circulate details

- Initially DW expressed an interest in representing group. **ACTION: JS**

8. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

GR: – Pennine Horizons last 3 years working on self-guided walks which can be accessed on-line or through an App. Currently there are 13 routes. To download the App or access the text for the routes visit

<http://www.pennineheritage.org.uk/Pennine-Trails>

EG: – Wanted to know what is happening regarding flood discussions. **JS:** spoke to Jan Gibson for update. **EG:** Concerned about impact of work CROWS and others do when repairing paths - how do we integrate work such as this? **JS:** I suggest you contact Moy Cash who is involved in the natural flood management project: moy.cash@calderdale.gov.uk **EG:** Whilst attempting to improve footpaths we may be inadvertently making things worse for flooding which we don't want to happen. **JS:** Jan Gibson has said they are still trying to get their heads round what has happened and are at the moment reacting to issues raised by members of the public. Hoping to receive funding from Central Government to fund necessary work but amount unknown at present time. It will take some time to resolve issues. Problems with retaining walls, culverts, etc., which are now coming to their attention. If any members of LAF come across any problems, please e-mail Highways&Engineering@calderdale.gov.uk

ACTION: ALL

9. PROPOSED FOOTPATH DIVERSIONS

JS: No proposed footpath diversions received.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JS: Wellholme Park: On hold at present due to issue with Woodland Plan.
Hope to have this resolved soon.

JS: Survey of Calderdale Way – CROWS doing survey of Upper Valley and Chris Sutcliffe (Area Countryside Officer) is surveying the Lower Valley starting next Sunday - Putting up way markers and carrying out a condition survey.

EG: Some of the link paths not accessible. 40 years birthday next year so need to get the route in good order.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17th May – 6.15pm Town Hall, Meeting Room D