



MINUTES
Held via Teams
Tuesday, 8th November 2022 at 2pm-4.30pm

Present members:

Katherine Evans (Chair)
Vernon Glashier
John Victory
Sam Iddison
Jan Arthur
Ray Booty
Martin Crisp
Rowena MacAulay
Louise Fuller

Apologies:

Ed Dixon, Martin Towns, Malcolm Lees, John Buchanan

LA Officers present:

Shirley Anglin (SA)
Roy Read (RR)

Members of the Public

Jenny Moss

Guests

1	Chairman's Welcome and Minutes of the previous meeting	Action
	Katherine welcomed everyone and asked if anyone had anything to discuss from the minutes of the last meeting which was held on 09th August 2022. Minutes from the last minutes were approved by Katherine and seconded by John.	
3	New Chair and Vice Chair Katherine mentioned the new chair / vice chair positions. She is willing to stay on in the role until the work on the A12 is finished unless there were any volunteers.	

	<p>Experience of PROW is not needed, the role is to facilitate the meetings. Katherine suggested a buddy system. She asked if it would be ok for her to rescind until the A12 is finished and Shirley said she would welcome that.</p> <p>Shirley asked Ray if he still wanted to stand down from his role as vice chair. Ray said he would stay on until someone else takes over.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>ECC Report</p> <p>SA had circulated the ECC report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Vernon asked about the footpath 57 Little Burstead diversion and the TRO currently on the path. Shirley explained that there is no bridge on the definitive line currently and that the TRO was required whilst the path is moved.</p> <p>Katherine agreed that the development of more defect types was a good idea. Shirley noted that it will help them programme works better and be more efficient.</p> <p>Louise asked for an update on structure, who is in post etc. Shirley replied it was herself, Simon and Helen Baker. They manage the PROW between the three of them.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>AONB – Landscapes Officer</p> <p>Jenny Moss for Suffolk CC joined the meeting to discuss her role and her ambitions for the AONB.</p> <p>Jenny introduced herself and explained she is new to her role having only been in post for two months with AONB Suffolk. This is her first LAF meeting. She explained she is part of a team looking to create new landscapes for equality, diversion, and inclusion. The role was created after looking at statistics for engagement among groups such as ethnicity, deprived, disability etc. this proved to be revealing. Jenny explained her role is broad.</p> <p>Jenny stated she wanted to do work along the coast in Suffolk with volunteers to survey and locate barriers to access. Dedham Vale sits inside Essex and overlaps into Suffolk. Jenny would like to engage with Suffolk LAF and is waiting for a response from them.</p> <p>Jenny explained she will ask volunteers to photograph the path. They will be working alongside the Green Access team. She stated there is a lot to be done and she is working on finding out who to approach with issues as they come up. She would like to attend LAF meetings whenever possible.</p> <p>Katherine suggested Vernon, John and Rowena could attend one of Jenny's meetings and explained the next regional LAF meeting will be held in January / February 2023.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>Solar Farms – report from sub-group</p> <p>Katherine is circulating representation for Longfield solar farm examination. All published on planning inspectorate website. LAF requested access on Permissive routes for all, but they end up only as footpaths which cannot be used by cyclists or horse riders. It was questioned how permission can be given but as the solar farms are only medium-term changes to land they are not able to upgrade routes as part of the planning permission as when the solar farm is decommissioned, all land will revert to the landowner.</p> <p>It is thought to be unlikely Lord Rayleigh would grant long term permission at Longfield solar for anything longer than 40 years. Katherine will find out if this land was bought freehold.</p> <p>The LAF were disappointed but permissive bridleways through the site would be obsolete because footpaths are the only access on either side which can't be accessed by cyclists or horse-riders so there would be no continuity with the wider network.</p> <p>Martin shared that he felt like a storm was approaching with the number of Solar applications.</p> <p>Katherine stated neither she nor Shirley had received any volunteers for the sub-group to respond to solar planning applications.</p>	<p>KE</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Coastal Path inclusive access</p> <p>Katherine asked Rowena to speak about the coastal path. Rowena stated after the last meeting she, John and Vernon carried out an audit on 4 sections. She contacted Natural England to ask if they had recorded barriers. They replied and stated yes, they are electronically mapped. Historical information has been passed onto the Local Authority and is their responsibility now. They would be happy to attend LAF and could be invited in the future. Rowena explained they were interested in all man-made and natural barriers to access, they surveyed, photographed and recorded anything that comes up along the 4 stretches. Rowena shared her screen to demonstrate some information.</p> <p>Rowena stated there is ramped access at Goldhanger which is rough ground with good quality resting places at the Goldhanger end. There is a steep camber downward slope single footpath, the steepness is a bar to independent access. Assistance would be needed due to the camber. There is a redundant gate which makes it inaccessible, but there is a path to the right which could be taken. Assistance would be needed but the grassy path could be used. There is an obstruction in Heybridge which is caused by a crack in the tarmac. There is a steep bank, and the coastal path is falling away.</p> <p>John stated an effort has been made in Burnham on Crouch, with resting places and pubs along the line. There is a stile which looks old and is possibly a redundant feature. The route from Southend to Wallasea features obstacles such as a steep bank, kissing gate and stiles. This could be readily improved. The stile is not being used for livestock. John believes another visit is needed.</p>	

	<p>Vernon suggested the biggest barriers are sluice gates. Access up a ramp makes it difficult for wheelchair users. The fact that it is overgrown makes it a struggle. To the side of it there is a farm access road which would be ideal.</p> <p>He suggested setting up a small working group to include himself, John and Rowena through the LAF. This should include ECC disabled ramblers, although there may not be an active group locally, so should invite non-disabled ramblers, who may be interested in a walking project, or possibly other groups. Scope has a wider audit, and it may be possible to set this up without commitment.</p> <p>Shirley suggested looking at the open stretch between Maldon and Salcott. Barriers have been mapped here all around the RSPB land into Salcott, kissing gate, steps and structures have been picked up.</p> <p>The Natural England trails website is available, and it is possible for businesses such as cafes and cycle hire to upload information and photographs onto. Roy tried it and found it easy to upload photos. It would take ten days to moderate and make sure it's appropriate.</p> <p>Rowena thought this would be useful for marking all locations of barriers, she had not known the interactive map was there. Vernon stated this could be a ready-made answer, and that it would be possible for Rowena to replicate it.</p> <p>Shirley mentioned the Slow Ways Project. MD is looking for people to survey routes and can post photos to show how muddy, overgrown it is and what barriers etc. there are. Rowena stated slow ways follow PROW where possible but take walking routes which don't follow the coast. They don't divert for tourist attractions.</p> <p>Shirley suggested working in partnership with the local ramblers workings groups along the coast. They do waymarking, fix steps, remove structures, and have a vested interest. Rowena asked who would be a good person to approach to invite to the meeting? Shirley suggested inviting Andy and would set up the meeting.</p> <p>Rowena advised contact should be made with disabled ramblers Maldon to Salcott. Shirley wondered if this should be done now or if it should be done with Darren. Rowena suggested getting ideas first before inviting Darren. Shirley and Katherine suggested inviting Darren to the LAF meeting on 21/02/2022 and then possibly to a site meeting at a later date.</p> <p>Rowena stated that would be fine as long as there's time, Vernon advised an initial meeting first to give an idea of timescale. Katherine suggested a site visit when the weather improves, the date can be confirmed later. Shirley stated she will send an email to include Ray and Andy from the Maldon Ramblers as a starting point.</p>	SA
8	<p>A12 Widening update</p> <p>LAF is registered as an interested party in the DCO with the Planning inspectorate and have been to meetings along with Parish Council. ECC invited the parish council to a meeting to discuss Feering. There is the main A12 scheme</p>	

	<p>DCO which is at PINS and then there is also Designated Funds which provides for local improvements schemes and is funded by the A12. It is unclear what funding applications have been made. ECC and National Highways are applying for designated funds. It would be useful to discuss designated funds more at the meeting on February 21st.</p> <p>Shirley stated the A12 application has been accepted by the planning inspector. When the Inquiry opened National Highways admitted people with legal interest had not been contacted. They had to extend the consultation to 28/11 because of this.</p> <p>The first meetings set up by PINS were to discuss procedural matters only. Shirley mentioned that this is a positive PROW project dealing with dead end paths being moved and diverted to line up with a footway. There will be bridges over the A12 so people can walk along it.</p> <p>Katherine commented there were a lot of plans. Shirley stated nothing has changed. Clarity is needed around footpath etc. she explained it can generally be worked out that blue lines are for cycling, and orange for footpaths. Shirley believes these to be positive changes but is not happy that a new footpath creation is to be joined up to a busy road in Feering, Inworth Road which has no footway and no verge. She has queried that with NH.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Introduction Lara - Landscape review</p> <p>Ray explained LARA (The Land Access and Recreation Association) is a trade body for motoring associations and has seventeen associate members. They represent many road users and are looking to establish better dialogue with the government on issues such as how to manage TROs and they have a database of every unsurfaced road in the UK. Ray presumes there will be an interactive map which will show which highways are temporarily closed.</p> <p>During the summer of 2022 a government questionnaire was completed. One section of this related to motorised users in the countryside. GLEAM were trying to get better access banned. Ray stated he doesn't know what response DEFRA received regarding this, but their mission statement suggested they weren't going to use a legislative approach. Safeguarding access to green spaces for all users will be difficult to change.</p> <p>Lord Benyon, minister of state, suggested banning vehicles but realised this would have consequences for certain groups. DEFRA would have lots of work to do to change laws. Legal advice would suggest the current process robust enough to keep as it is.</p> <p>Shirley believed that was an interesting outcome as she had expected a potentially different tack.</p> <p>Ray explained they realised it would be difficult to do what they had planned, and they would be no further forward, it would be beneficial to work cooperatively with users to gain a better outcome for all.</p>	

	<p>Katherine asked if there was anything that needed to be raised at the meeting. The answer to this was “no”.</p> <p>Sam was asked if anyone had heard anything about ELMS, whether it would be watered down, or changes made to public access. It was agreed there have been a lot of changes recently and it was probably best to see what Teresa Coffey will do.</p> <p>Katherine asked if the NFU are back on LAF? Shirley replied there is a CLA NFU annual meeting before Christmas. She will ask Adam Scott if he can recommend anyone.</p> <p>Katherine asked if LEAF is a farmers' group. Sam suggested NFU would be best for an overall view although they are quite busy with the pylon scheme and working on what will be the impact farmland and also on bridleways and footpaths. Sam explained he was waiting for the National Grid to obtain licences and give a more definitive route, possibly early next year.</p>	SA
10	<p>Items for next Agenda</p> <p>A12 Designated Funds Update May meeting – Revise date? Site visit? England Coast Path: Inclusive access group Solar Farms</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>21 February 2023 2pm via Teams</p>	