

Minutes of the Dudley Borough Local Access Forum

Wednesday 25th September, 2019 at 2.00pm in Conference Room 1
at 3-5 St James's Road, Dudley

Present:

R Brooks (Chair)
Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge
R Burgess, P Greenaway, T Pritchard, N Williams and S Yeadon

Officers:

D Jacobs – Project Engineer, (Place Directorate) and K Griffiths – Democratic Services Officer (Chief Executive's Directorate).

13. **Election of Chair for the 2019/20 Municipal Year**

Resolved

- (1) That Mr R Brooks be elected as Chair for this meeting of the Forum only.
- (2) That the election of Chair for the remaining 2019/20 municipal year be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

14. **Appointment of Vice-Chair for the 2019/20 Municipal Year**

Resolved

That the appointment of Vice-Chair of the remaining 2019/20 municipal year be deferred to the next meeting of the Forum.

15. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of T Boothroyd, A Nicholls and D Keeley – Countryside Manager.

16. **Declarations of Interest**

R Burgess and T Pritchard declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to Agenda Item No. 8 – Access/Rights of Way Issues and Updates as Members of the Halesowen Abbey Trust.

S Yeadon declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 8 – Access/Rights of Way Issues and Updates as Chair of the Friends of Coombeswood Wedge.

17. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th July, 2019, be approved as a correct record, subject to the replacement of R Burgess to D Jacobs in the actions of minute no. 8(m) – Desire Line at Hodge Hill, Wollescote (to be added to the definitive map as a public right of way to connect paths S128 to S133).

18. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Future Maintenance Programmes**

The Group Engineer updated the Forum on issues relating to various footpaths that had been included in the 2019/20 maintenance programme for improvement. An update would be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

Action	Officer/Member
An update be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.	A Radford – Maintenance Manager

19. **Planning Applications**

D Jacobs referred to the proposed Planning Application in relation to Dudley Leisure Centre, Flood Street, Dudley and indicated that should the application be approved, a new cycleway and footpath would need to be provided. A Plan of the requirements was circulated to Members of the Forum, which revealed that the new proposals would improve the area significantly and in view of this Members had no objections to the Planning Application. Updates would be provided to future meetings of the Forum.

Action	Officer/Member
Updates to be provided to future meetings of the Forum.	D Jacobs – Project Engineer

20. **Access/Rights of Way Issues and Updates**

(a) **Monarch's Way Signs**

S Yeadon reported that although progress had been made in relation to the signage, advice was currently being sought on the requirements of the positioning on some of the posts. An update would be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

Action	Officer/Member
That the item remain on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer

(b) Lower Illey between Path 107 in Dudley and Path 6 in Worcestershire

An update was provided in relation to the ongoing issues associated with defining the path as a definitive path and including this on the definitive map. Forum Members were advised that, following consultation with Worcestershire Local Access Forum, consideration be given to entering into a Public Path Creation Agreement under Section 25 of the Highways Act 1980. The signed declaration would provide provision for the creation of a new public path by agreement between the landowner and the highway authority.

It was suggested that the Forum contact Worcestershire County Council's Highways Section with a view to discussing the possibility of them funding and supplying a "Bridge Kit", with Dudley MBC taking on the responsibility of undertaking the required work. Should the proposal be agreed by all parties, the current owner of the path be approached with details of the plan to ascertain agreement.

Ongoing consideration was currently being explored on alternative funding options to rectify the neglected culvert should the proposal be refused and an update would be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

Action	Officer/Member
(1) To contact Worcestershire County Council's Highway Section with a view to discussing the possibility of them funding and supplying a "Bridge Kit", with Dudley MBC taking on the responsibility of undertaking the required work and if agreed by all parties, the current owner of the path be approached with details of the plan to ascertain agreement.	T Pritchard/D Jacobs – Project Engineer
(2) That the item remain on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer

(c) Footpath H115 Site of Hawne Colliery and Footpath 116 rear of Oil Refinery Shelah Road, Halesowen

It was reported that the statutory signage for footpath H115 was currently still outstanding. It was suggested that Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge raise the issue under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7th October, 2019 for consideration and action.

Action	Officer/Member
(1) That the overgrown vegetation on pathway H116 be cleared in the Autumn.	Volunteers of the Halesowen Abbey Trust
(2) That the issue in relation to the erection of statutory signage be raised under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7 th October, 2019 for consideration and action.	Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge
(3) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer

(d) H129 and H130 Furnace Coppice, Hawne, Halesowen

Action	Officer/Member
(1) That the issue in relation to the erection of statutory signage on footpath H130 be raised under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7 th October, 2019 for consideration and action.	Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge
(2) That the item in relation to footpath H130 be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer
(3) That the item in relation to footpath H129 be removed from the agenda.	Democratic Services Officer

(e) H119 Stour Valley, Hawne, Halesowen

Action	Officer/Member
(1) That the issue in relation to the erection of statutory signage be raised under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7 th October, 2019 for consideration and action.	Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge
(2) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer

(f) H124 and H125 Hawne Bank/Park, Belle Vale to Hawne Lane, Halesowen

Reference was made to the missing statutory signage and it was requested that signs be erected on the footpath.

Ongoing consideration was currently being explored to ascertain a solution to essential improvement work to ensure the paths were safe to use, however, it was suggested in the meantime, the Maintenance Manager and officers from Leisure Services be contacted to arrange a site visit and discuss the matter further.

Action	Officer/Member
(1) That the issue in relation to the erection of statutory signage be raised under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7 th October, 2019 for consideration and action.	Councillors C Elcock and G Partridge
(2) The Maintenance Manager and officers from Leisure Services be contacted to arrange a site visit and discuss the possibility of improvement work being undertaken.	R Burgess
(3) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.	Democratic Services Officer

(g) Footpaths – Oldnal/Foxcote area

Reference was made to the following footpaths:-

- (a) Public Right of Way H214 – Completely obstructed with thorny regenerating woodland and two statutory signposts missing. The Group Engineer indicated that the improvement work had not been included in the 2019/20 Maintenance Programme and Improvement Works and therefore would not be undertaken this year. In view of this, Members of the Forum agreed to remove the item from the agenda and re-visit in the future if necessary.
- (b) Public Right of Way H215 – Obstructed with thick regenerating woodland in the area to the rear of former Nursery Land and Deer Park Gardens. It was reported that a group of volunteers would clear the pathway in the Autumn.
- (c) Public Right of Way S108 – It was considered that Old Green Lane from Oldnall Road to public rights of way S156 and H125 should be added to the Definitive Map. The Group Engineer indicated that the path was included on the urban/rural maps and undertook to make arrangements to include on the definitive map.
- (d) Public Right of Way S156/S155. Following discussion, it was agreed to remove the item from the agenda and revisit if necessary in the future.

- (e) Public Right of Way H163 – Path obstructed through woodland/wetland areas, the definitive route was not available in certain places and that a statutory signage post was missing on Abbey Road.
- (f) Public Right of Way H162a and H161 (Bridleway) – Two statutory signposts missing off old Lutley Lane. It was confirmed that the statutory signage had now erected and it was agreed to remove the item from the agenda.

Action	Officer/Member
---------------	-----------------------

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) That the work outlined above be considered and actioned if necessary and that Members be updated at the next meeting of the Forum. | A Radford –
Maintenance
Manager |
| (2) That the issue in relation to the erection of statutory signage on footpath H163 be raised under Questions Under Council Procedure Rule 11 at Full Council on Monday 7 th October, 2019 for consideration and action. | Councillors C
Elcock and G
Partridge |
| (3) That the items referred to above be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum. | Democratic
Services Officer |

(h) Footpath H398 Manor Way to site of Fordrove Bridge, Halesowen (not shown on the Definitive Map)

Action	Officer/Member
---------------	-----------------------

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| (1) The footpath be included on the Dudley Definitive Map during the programmed update of the Ordnance Survey. | D Jacobs –
Group Engineer |
| (2) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum. | Democratic
Services Officer |

(i) Footpath H359 Amber Way to Chancel Way, Halesowen (not shown on the Definitive Map)

Consideration to the possibility of arranging improved signage on the footpath was requested.

Action	Officer/Member
---------------	-----------------------

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| (1) The footpath be included on the Dudley Definitive Map during the programmed update of the Ordnance Survey. | D Jacobs –
Group Engineer |
|--|------------------------------|

The possibility of erecting improved signage on the footpath be considered. A Radford – Maintenance Manager

(2) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum. Democratic Services Officer

(j) Desire Line at Hodge Hill, Wollescote (to be added to the Definitive map as a Public Right of Way to connect paths S128 to S133)

Following investigation, it was reported that the land was privately owned. It was suggested that the Group Engineer arrange a meeting with the landowner with a view to discussing the ongoing safety issues associated with the pathway and the possibility of including the path on the definitive map.

Action **Officer/Member**

(1) To arrange a meeting with the landowner to discuss the ongoing safety issues associated with the path and the possibility of including the path on the definitive map. D Jacobs – Group Engineer

(2) That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum. Democratic Services Officer

(k) Request to Stop Up public footpath, section 66 through Stone Mill Walk, Upper Gornal

An update was provided on the ongoing issues in relation to the request to stop up the public footpath through Stone Mill Walk. Advice was being sought on how to progress the matter and an update would be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

Action **Officer/Member**

That the item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum. Democratic Services Officer

21. **Any Other Business**

Leasowes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

N Williams indicated that he had been invited to provide a presentation on the background of the SSSI at Halesowen College on 19th October, 2019 at 10.30am. Further details would be circulated in due course and Forum Members were encouraged to attend.

9 Mile Walk – Stourbridge to Halesowen

D Jacobs provided the Forum with an update following a meeting held with officers to discuss various issues related to the “9 Mile Walk”. It was considered that the whole 9 mile route would not be used significantly and suggested that shorter routes also be considered to suit people with different requirements. The option was currently being pursued and an update would be provided at a future meeting of the Forum.

Action	Officer/Member
(1) An update on issues regarding the “9 Mile Walk” from Stourbridge to Halesowen be provided to a future meeting of the Forum.	D Jacobs

22. Future Meeting Dates and Times

Future meeting dates and times of the Forum were noted.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm