

DUDLEY BOROUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Tuesday, 16th July, 2013 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 4
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

PRESENT:

Ms T Boothroyd, Mr R J Brooks, Mr R Burgess, Mr P Greenaway, Ms J V Lea,
Ms A Nicholls and Mr N J Williams.

Officers:

Mr D Jacobs – Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation), Mr D Keeley –
Countryside Manager (Both Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Miss K
Fellows - Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

Also in Attendance:

Mr J Cuthbertson – Vice Chair of the Disabled Ramblers Association and
Mrs L Cuthbertson

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

AGREED

That Ms T Boothroyd be elected Chair of the Forum for the period
up to the Annual Meeting in July, 2014.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

AGREED

That Mr R J Brooks be elected Vice Chair of the Forum for the
period up to the Annual Meeting in July, 2014.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mr D
Bates, Mr A Cutler, Councillor Woodall and Ms S Yeadon.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr R Burgess declared an interest in Agenda Item Number 7 – Coombeswood Greed Wedge as the Chair of Friends of Coombeswood Wedge and a Member of Coombeswood Canal Trust.

5. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the Forum held on 14th May, 2013, be approved as a correct record.

6. THE DISABLED RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

Mr J Cuthbertson Vice Chair of the Disabled Ramblers Association gave a power point presentation outlining who the Disabled Ramblers Association were, what they did, where they go and the background to the formation of the Association.

Mr Cuthbertson reported that the Association organised thirty Rambles each year across England and Wales and detailed the wide range of how disabled ramblers accessed areas including details of vehicles and scooters used by them.

Details of the Rambles organised this year were provided and photographs of the places visited were displayed. Difficulties with the terrain and the support provided to ramblers to access areas was explained.

Mr Cuthbertson referred to the “By All Reasonable Means Document” explaining that the Disabled Ramblers had a large input into the ways that routes should be categorised which were then contained in the document.

He also reported on the work with the Local Authority in Worcester and Landowners to remove man made barriers in order to make areas accessible advising that the Association had some success in the Worcester area in relation to this. Photographs were displayed of large mobility gates operated by radar keys and the improvements that had taken place in relation to the above work with landowners.

Mr Cuthbertson reported on a three mile circular ramble that himself, his wife and the Countryside Manager had attended at the Leasowes and photographs of the route were displayed and access to the Leasowes was outlined.

He referred to vehicles known as Trampers being available for disabled ramblers to use at many sites and photographs of the vehicles were displayed together with terrain that could be accessed by them.

Following the presentation, the Chair referred to the work that had been carried out by Access in Dudley together with Parks and Countryside Managers in order to set standards within the Dudley Borough in relation to accessible routes.

In responding to a question from a Member, the Countryside Manager advised that there was not a specific source of funding available to make routes more accessible however in some cases Section 106 monies would be available.

Members discussed the creation of circular routes at Cotwall End, the Leasowes and Coombeswood Green Wedge.

AGREED

That the power point presentation and the information reported on at the Meeting by the Vice Chair of the Disabled Ramblers Association, be noted.

7. COOMBESWOOD GREEN WEDGE

Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager gave a brief verbal update in relation to the Coombeswood Green Wedge advising that himself, a representative from the Wildlife Trust and Ms H Edwards, Park Warden at Leasowes Park had arranged to meet with a representative from St Modwen at the Coombeswood Green Wedge.

Members discussed clearing projects at the Coombeswood Green Wedge and it was agreed that volunteers from the Friends of Coombeswood would liaise with the Park Warden at Leasowes and volunteers from Cotwall End in order to organise a clearing project.

Mr R Burgess agreed to walk the paths that he wished to make definitive on the Coombeswood Green Wedge with Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation).

The parties referred to above also agreed to arrange to meet at the Pottery Farm site in order look at the possibility of diverting the public right of way around the farm.

AGREED

- (1) That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.
- (2) That Mr Burgess be requested to liaise with the Park Warden at Leasowes and volunteers from Cotwall End in order to arrange a clearing project at the Coombeswood Green Wedge.

- (3) That Mr Burgess and Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation) arrange site visits to:-
- (a) Coombeswood Green Wedge.
 - (b) Pottery Farm, Halesowen.
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8. HALESOWEN GOLF CLUB

Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager gave a verbal update in relation to the signs erected by the Halesowen Golf Club reporting that following discussions with representatives from the Club they had declined to remove the signage. Following further discussion it was:-

AGREED

That Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager and Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation) arrange a site visit to the Halesowen Golf Club.

9. DRAFT ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT OF THE FORUM.

The Chair agreed to meet with Forum Members Mr R Burgess, Mr P Greenaway and Ms S Yeadon in order to compile the report.

AGREED

That the draft Annual General Report be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Following a discussion in relation to the former Sunrise Medical Building in Wollaston it was :-

AGREED

That Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation) would meet on the above site with Mr R Brooks in order to investigate the walkway along the Stour River.

11. ACCESS/RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES

It was noted that there were none to be considered.

12. GATING ORDERS

It was noted that there were none to be considered.

13. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Forum's Representative, Mr Brooks advised that the ROWIPS Programme for improvements for this year would be circulated to Members of the Forum and other funding sources for schemes that had not been possible would now be investigated together with the funding for local sustainable transport.

Details in relation to the next ROWIP meeting were noted.

AGREED

That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr D Keeley, the Countryside Manager reported that there was a new Cycling Improvement Fund and a bid for this funding had been submitted by the Council, the outcome of which would become known on 31st July, 2013.

Mr D Keeley, the Countryside Manager reported on the Plan of Engagement between Natural England, Defra and Local Access Forums outlining details of the Plan to Members, including the roles of Defra and Natural England.

Mr Brooks reported that although it had been intended that Environment Agency meetings would take place quarterly this had not been the case, however Mr Brooks would attend these meetings as and when they take place.

Mr Brookes requested that the possibility of extending the path alongside the Stour between Harrop Way, (off Richardson Drive) and Meadow Park Road in both directions along the Stour and requested details of whether a Section 106 Agreement was in existence in relation to Meadow Park Road.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation) reported that the landowners Leisure and Housing wanted the facility to move the path rather than expend monies in order to bring this up to an acceptable standard and following further discussion it was:-

AGREED

That Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation) would arrange a site visit with Mr Brooks in order to walk the paths outlined above.

15. DATES OF AGENDA PLANNING MEETINGS

Noted, that the future Agenda Planning meetings of the Forum would be held on:-

- Tuesday 27th August, 2013
 - Tuesday 12th November, 2013
 - Tuesday 28th January, 2014
 - Tuesday 8th April, 2014
 - Wednesday 2nd July, 2014
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16. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted, that the next meetings of the Forum would be held on:-

- Tuesday 24th September, 2013
- Tuesday 3rd December, 2013
- Tuesday 18th February, 2014
- Tuesday 29th April, 2014
- Tuesday 15th July, 2014

It was noted that all future meetings would be held in Committee Room 4 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN