

Minutes of the Dudley Borough Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 23rd September, 2014 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room 1
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

T Boothroyd, R J Brooks, R Burgess, P Greenaway, A Nicholls, N J Williams
(for part of the meeting only) and S Yeadon.

Officers:

D Jacobs – Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation), D Keeley –
Countryside Manager and K Buckle - Democratic Services Officer.

16. **Change In Order of Business**

Following further discussion it was:-

Agreed

That Agenda Item Numbers 3,4,5 and 6 be considered as the
next items of business followed by Agenda Item numbers 1 and 2
and the remaining Agenda Items.

17. **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of D
Bates.

18. **Declarations of Interest**

Mr R Burgess and Ms S Yeadon declared an interest in Agenda Item No.
6 – Pottery Farm, as a Member of Coobeswood Canal Trust and Chair of
Coombeswood Wedge respectively.

When he entered the meeting Mr N Williams declared an interest in
Agenda Item No. 8(a) – Paths on the Leasowes as a local resident within
the park.

19. **Minutes**

Agreed

That the Minutes of the Informal meeting of the Forum held on 15th
July, 2014 be approved as a correct record.

20. **Pottery Farm**

D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation referred to a site visit that had taken place with the land owners and Mr A Radford, Technician Engineer when a mutual agreement had been reached that the right of way could be cut back into the embankment with work being funded from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It was confirmed that the work would be completed during the 2014/15 financial year and should be finalised by April, 2015.

D Jacobs referred to the work to be completed, advising that the holloway had eroded over time and the work would not encroach upon the geology and features of the holloway.

It was noted that a start date for commencement of the work had not been finalised as yet and following a request from a Member, D Jacobs confirmed that should volunteer groups wish to assist with the preparatory work this would almost certainly be welcomed. Members who wished to assist with the work were requested to contact the Council's Wardens. D Keeley confirmed that he would discuss the commencement time for the works with A Radford, Technician Engineer and liaise with Members in relation to this.

Members expressed their thanks to A Radford, Technician Engineer for his help and assistance in relation to preservation of the right of way at Pottery Farm.

It was agreed that this item be carried over to the next meeting of the Forum.

Agreed

That the information reported on at the Meeting be noted.

(Mr N Williams entered the Meeting)

21. **Election of Chair**

Agreed

That T Boothroyd be elected Chair of the Forum for the period up to the Annual Meeting in July 2015.

22. **Election of Vice-Chair**

Agreed

That R J Brooks be elected Vice Chair of the Forum for the period up to the Annual Meeting in July 2015.

23. **Planning Applications**

D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation referred to a planning application that had been received in relation for the proposed six barn conversions on Manor Farm, Halesowen. It was noted that it was also proposed that a definitive right of way be established in order to provide an access route to the Abbey in Halesowen.

24. **Access/Rights of Way Issues**

Paths on the Leasowes

The Decision Sheet relating to the dedication of footpaths over Leasowes Park, Halesowen together with plans of the area detailing the relevant footpaths were submitted to the meeting. D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation reported that the Decision Sheet made the rights of way definitive and permissive in accordance with the plans submitted.

It was noted that the paths would not appear on the Ordnance Survey Maps until these were updated which could take a number of years, however D Jacobs undertook to write to the relevant department advising of the paths that were now permissive and definitive.

In response to a request of R Burgess, D Jacobs advised of the Section 106 monies that were to become available in order to fund stone paths from the canal embankment to Leasowes Park leading up to Manor Way, Halesowen.

The Chair referred to the barrier which had been erected by Halesowen Golf Club preventing access for the disabled around Leasowes Park and D Keeley, Countryside Manager confirmed that he and R Newey, the Team Manager of Green Care were to arrange to meet with the Secretary of the Club, Mr T Bytheway to discuss this matter.

The Chair advised that Access in Dudley would also write to the club objecting to the erection of the barrier and requesting that this be removed in order to provide access for those with disabilities.

It was agreed that this Item be carried forward to the next meeting of the Forum for further discussion.

B and Q Dedication

D Jacobs reported that B and Q had undertaken to write to the Freeholder from whom they leased their land expressing the urgency in relation to dealing with the paths which surrounded Coombeswood Green Wedge.

R Burgess requested D Jacobs to also advise the Ordnance Survey Department of the definitive paths on Coombeswood Green Wedge.

R Burgess referred to the signage and photographs that had been erected on Coombeswood Green Wedge and the sixty volunteers from the Duke of Edinburgh scheme that were to help with clearing the steps to the Canal during the forthcoming weekend.

It was noted that a blocked culvert to the north of the cricket club was causing flooding to paths and R Burgess undertook to liaise with H Edwards, Park Warden in relation to installing piping to prevent the flooding.

It was agreed that this item be carried over to the next meeting of the Forum for further discussion.

Hasbury/Tack Farm

D Keeley advised of the site visit that had taken place when it had been agreed that quotes for the work to the bridge and board walk would be obtained by A Ravenscroft, Senior Nature Reserve Warden and external funding would be investigated as the work required could not be financed by the Council's Countryside Department.

Agreed

That the information contained in the Decision Sheet, submitted on the Dedication of Footpaths over Leasowes Park, Halesowen and reported on at the meeting, be noted.

25 **Gating Orders**

A report was submitted by D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation on Gating Orders present procedure and future under new legislation.

It was noted that it had been agreed that the Forum would remain consultees in relation to future Orders following the implementation of the new legislation.

D Jacobs briefed the Forum on the new legislation, referring to his concerns in relation to the Public Spaces Protection Orders including the ability to gate certain highways as far as the level of proof of anti social behaviour had been lowered, however the requirement to consult would be greater.

D Jacobs referred to the relevant Sections of the new Legislation.

D Jacobs advised that perpetrators of anti social behaviour could in future be taken away from the areas under investigation for possible gating and in his view rights of way issues would become largely diminished.

In relation to existing Gating Orders D Jacobs confirmed that those would continue to be reviewed upon a three yearly basis and the Forum would continue to be consulted upon review.

D Jacobs read out an email received from A Hodgetts of West Midlands Police in relation to the review of the Gating Orders in place at Enterprise Drive, Lye, Church Road to Summerhill Road, Coseley and Murcroft Road to Wychbury Road, Wolescote advising that they strongly recommended that the closures remain.

Agreed

That the information contained in the report submitted on Gating Orders present procedure and future new legislation and reported on at the meeting, be noted.

26. Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Vice-Chair referred to the report submitted on the programme of works that had been agreed and approved by the Cabinet Member for Transportation which detailed the locations and footpath reference numbers of the rights of way. He confirmed that the work would be completed upon a priority basis and referred to the current budget for the works in the sum of £60,000.

The Vice Chair requested Members to continue to advise himself and/or the Chair of any further areas of rights of way which required improvement.

The Chair referred to the work that was to commence on the Woodsetton Paths, Sedgley in October, 2014.

Agreed

That the information contained in the report submitted on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and reported on at the meeting, be noted.

27. Any Other Business

No further items had been received for discussion.

28. Dates of Future Meetings

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

- Tuesday 2nd December, 2014
- Tuesday 17th February, 2015
- Tuesday 28th April, 2015
- Tuesday 14th July, 2015

It was noted that all future meetings would be held in Committee Meeting Room 1 at 6.00pm.

The meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.

CHAIR