

Minutes of the Informal Meeting of the Dudley Borough Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 15th December, 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room 1,
Lower Ground Floor at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

T Boothroyd (Chair)
R Brooks, P Greenaway, A Nicholls, N J Williams and S Yeadon.

Officers:

A Ravenscroft – Senior Warden Leasowes Park, D Jacobs – Project Engineer,
(Traffic and Transportation) and K Buckle Democratic Services Officer.

Also in Attendance:

Mr A Pritchard.

21. **Election of Vice-Chair**

This item was not considered.

22. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of
D Bates, R Burgess and Councillor C Elcock

23 **Declarations of Interest**

Ms S Yeadon declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 7(a) – Path
H13 Monarch's Way, Halesowen as Chair of Friends of
Coombeswood Wedge.

24. **Minutes.**

Recommended

That, the Informal Minutes of the meeting held on 29th
September, 2015, be approved as a correct record.

25. **Opening Remarks**

It was noted that unfortunately A Cutler had resigned as a Member of the Forum and had been thanked for his work and participation to the Forum.

A Ravenscroft referred to the attendance of T Pritchard, a potential new member of the Forum and T Prichard formally introduced himself and outlined his interests. Members welcomed T Pritchard to the Meeting.

A Ravenscroft referred to the possible recruitment of further Members to the Forum, namely the Chair of Butterfly Conservation, West Midlands who would represent the Stourbridge area of the Borough and Mr I Dyer who was a retired Doctor from the Wrens Nest area of the Borough.

The Chair referred to the possible recruitment of the owners/occupiers of Pottery Farm, Halesowen.

It was noted that as the meeting was not quorate, recommendations would be made for ratification at the next quorate meeting of the Forum.

26. **Change in Order of Business**

Recommended

That Agenda Item No. 6 – Planning Applications be considered as the next Item of Business followed by Agenda Item No. 5 – Local Access Forum Consultation and the remaining Agenda items.

27. **Planning Applications**

(a) P15/1842 – Cradley Road, Netherton

D Jacobs displayed photographs of the house adjacent to a public right of way that accessed a playing field, referring to the owner wishing to erect fencing on part of the public right of way in order to abate anti social behaviour. It was noted that it had been agreed that the Applicant would erect chain link fencing and would cultivate the piece of land in order to retain views of the playing field.

A Ravenscroft suggested the Council enter into a Lease Agreement in relation to the land required and agreed to correspond with the Council's Planning Department in relation to the agreement referred to.

(b) P15/1667 – Development of Goodrich Mews, Gornal

D Jacobs displayed plans of the proposed housing development of Goodrich Mews, Gornal and it was noted that there were issues in relation to the current public right of way on the site with houses plotted too close to the right of way and potential problems in relation to access especially given the amount of heavy goods vehicles that accessed the main road adjacent to the site. There followed further discussions in relation to design and the height of proposed fencing.

Recommended

- (a) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That A Ravenscroft be requested to email the Council's Planning Department suggesting that they enter into a Lease Agreement in relation to Planning Application No. P15/1842 – Cradley Road, Netherton.
- (c) That, although not quorate, the Democratic Services Officer was requested to advise the Council's Planning Department that the Application for the development of Goodrich Mews, Gornal raised several issues for the public right of way, mainly the three houses plotted to the South Western Corner, numbers 9, 10 and 11 were too close to the existing right of way and positioned inappropriately to heavy goods vehicle access and the proposed wall and fence should be no higher than the current wall and fence adjoining plots 12 to 20 and expressed concerns that the current development would not meet current policies of the Council in relation to secured by design.

28. **Local Access Forum Consultation**

A Ravenscroft gave a verbal presentation on the Local Access Forum Consultation, advising of the proposal that Local Access Forums around the Country consider the suggestion of Natural England that an overseeing body be appointed in order to provide advice and guidance to Forums in the future which would provide Forum's with a voice regarding national policies such as HS2 and other future issues. A Ravenscroft referred to the need for a national body and distributed a report and questionnaires to Members, requesting them to advise him directly of their views.

The future changes to Stewardship Schemes were also outlined together with the proposal that Natural England, the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs provide funding to Forums in order for them to manage their own access/rights of way issues in the future. The high level of Stewardship Schemes within the Dudley Borough were noted and the need to address funding issues in relation to those

rights of ways which were not maintained by the Council.

Recommended

- (a) That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That Members questions and comments in relation to the Local Access Forum Consultation be considered further at the next meeting of the Forum.

29

Access/Rights of Way Issues

- (a) Path H13 Monarch's Way, Halesowen.

S Yeadon referred to the positioning of sand bags in an attempt to divert the flow of water that was running from under the culvert on the pathway, however flooding continued to be an issue and S Yeadon stated that she would contact R Morgan, Section Engineer, in relation to the work conducted to the pathway to date, including a request that a detailed technical worksheet including costs be provided.

- (b) Path H69 Lye Close Lane, Lapal, Halesowen

D Jacobs advised that the land owner had failed to install a gate into the fence to maintain the right of way and access. D Jacobs undertook to arrange a site visit together with A Ravenscroft and the Chair of the Forum.

Recommended

- (a) That S Yeadon liaise with R Morgan in order to establish the work and costings in relation to Path H13 Monarch's Way, Halesowen.
- (b) That D Jacobs arrange a site visit at Lye Close Lane, Lapal, Halesowen.

30.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Arising from consideration of the details provided in relation to the schemes allocated funding from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan it was

Recommended

That R Brooks be requested to obtain further details in relation to the Schemes included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, including the work required.

Any Other Business

D Jacobs advised that in relation to Pottery Farm he had now revised the drawing which he displayed to Members. It was noted that the proposed footpath boundary was in a straight line from gate post to gate post, which had originally been agreed and included a pedestrian gate at the main farm entrance at Mucklow Hill.

A Ravenscroft reported on the work on site that had been completed to date, advising that the first flight of steps had been completed together with the next phase of levelling, and the owners of Pottery Farm had allowed the Council to store materials at the Farm and provided access to the site including access to lay the stone path which was to be completed.

It was noted that re-surfacing work had been completed to the Tow Path on the Stourbridge Canal.

Following a query in relation to the signage at Leasowes Park, A Ravenscroft reported that the signage had been incorrectly produced and had been re-ordered. A Ravenscroft undertook to telephone Carole Freer to advise her of the current position.

32. Dates of Future Meetings

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

- Tuesday 23rd February, 2016
- Tuesday 26th April, 2016
- Tuesday 12th July, 2016

The meetings to commence at 6.00pm

The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.

CHAIR