

Minutes of the Dudley Borough Local Access Forum

Tuesday, 6th January, 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room 1,
Lower Ground Floor at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

Present:

T Boothroyd (Chair)
R J Brooks (Vice-Chair)
D Bates, R Burgess, Councillor C Elcock, P Greenaway, N J Williams and S Yeadon.

Officers:

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

29. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of A Cutler and A Nicholls.

30. **Declarations of Interest**

Ms S Yeadon and Mr R Burgess declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 4 – Pottery Farm and Agenda Item No's 6(a) and (b) – Access/Rights of Way Issues as the Chair of Friends of Coombeswood Wedge and as a Member of Coombeswood Canal Trust and Halesowen Abbey Trust respectively.

Mr N Williams declared an interest in Agenda Item No's 6(a) and (b) – Access/Rights of Way Issues as a local Leasowes Park resident and an adviser to the Friends of Coombeswood Wedge.

31. **Minutes.**

R Burgess advised that in relation to Access/Rights of Way Issues, Minute 24, he had not undertaken to liaise with H Edwards, Park Warden in relation to installing piping to prevent flooding at the blocked culvert to the north of Halesowen Cricket Club, indicating that the blocked culvert should be referred to the Council's engineers in the Highways Department.

R Burgess also requested that the matters relating to Path H13 Monarchs Way, Tack Farm, Paths on the Leasowes, the definitive paths on Coombeswood Green Wedge, the obstruction on footpath H69 Lapal and the several walks that had been planned by R Burgess and his colleague be further considered at the present and future meetings of the Forum.

Agreed

That, subject to the deletion of the sentence “and R Burgess undertook to liaise with H Edwards, Park Warden in relation to installing piping to prevent the flooding” from paragraph four, B and Q Dedication – Access/Rights of Way Issues, Minute number 24, the Minutes of the Forum held on 23rd September, 2014, be approved as a correct record.

32. Pottery Farm

R Burgess referred to a site visit that had taken place at Pottery Farm, advising that work had commenced on footpath H26A to deal with the obstruction, however spoil earth and brash had been deposited across the trackway and the field gate and ancient pond area and requested that the area be tidied and levelled. R Burgess also requested details of the specifications for the work to be undertaken together with any drawings and also that a site visit be arranged with A Radford, Technician Engineer and any other interested Members of the Forum both during and on completion of the work.

Agreed

That D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation be requested to liaise with A Radford, Technician Engineer to arrange a site visit with Members of the Forum to Pottery Farm for the inspection of current and future works.

33. Planning Applications

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation referred to three planning applications that had been received as follows:-

Oak Farm Quarry and Landfill Site.

Plans submitted on behalf of the client Himley Environmental Limited were distributed to Members for their consideration.

D Jacobs referred to the background of Oak Farm Quarry advising that clay excavation work had taken place for many years and although planning permission was sought for the continued excavation to the west of the site the overall plan was restoration of the area resulting in a deemed grassed area of open space and although it was intended that the space would be a public area it would be privately managed.

D Jacobs reported on the proposed footpath diversion, the proposed cycle track section and the proposed visitor's car parking facility and it was to

be requested that the developers construct the footpath diversion work prior to the landfill work being undertaken.

In responding to a Member's question regarding continuing traffic issues in relation to heavy goods vehicles accessing the site, D Jacobs responded stating that hopefully the developers would compile new management structures in order to address major traffic issues.

It was noted that some of the old railway lines that linked Wombourne, Wolverhampton and the Pensnett Trading Estate were impassable due to self seeding and there had been no indication by British Rail that those lines would be reinstated.

The Chair suggested that accessibility issues in relation to the footpaths on the site should continue to be investigated and D Jacobs confirmed that investigations would continue in relation to both flatter and circular routes on the site.

The Chair confirmed that she would raise the planning application at the forthcoming Access in Dudley meeting and D Jacobs agreed that subject to his availability he may attend the meeting on Tuesday 13th January at 1pm in order to consult with Members regarding the proposed application.

4 Masons Close, Ladysmiths Road, Halesowen

D Jacobs referred to an application for retrospective Planning Permission for the erection of a wall to the rear of 4 Masons Close which was over three metres high and had been erected along a right of way.

D Jacobs referred to a letter of support in respect of the retrospective planning permission advising that it had replaced large conifers that had been subject to arson attacks in the past.

D Jacobs advised that he would be attending a site visit at the property and invited Members to view the site and provide their comments to the Chair of the Forum.

Earls High School, Halesowen

D Jacobs referred to the proposed application to the Magistrates Court to divert the public footpath H131, Earls High School, Halesowen.

It was noted that the diversion would result in a much safer and accessible public footpath which would be disability compliant and include provision for lighting.

Agreed

- (1) That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to advise the Council's Head of Planning that the Forum welcomed the proposals for the new footpath network on the Oak Farm Quarry and Landfill site and wished to see the long views from the site retained and path

levels and gradients in accordance with the Council's policy on disabled access and other access and concerns were raised regarding the proposed location of the visitor car park advising that it would be better located at the Crooked House site for security reasons.

- (2) Members were invited to attend a site visit at 4 Masons Close, Ladysmiths Road, Halesowen and forward their comments to the Chair
- (3) That D Jacobs be requested to advise the Council's Legal Section of the Forum's unanimous support for the diversion of public footpath H131, Earls High School, Halesowen in accordance with the terms referred to in Decision Sheet Reference DUE/01/2015.

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

- (a) Halesowen Golf Club – Paths on the Leasowes

Mr D Keeley advised of the progress that had been made with the Halesowen Golf Club including their agreement to remove the obstruction and that they had amended their signage.

It was noted that a new entrance was to be created to the side of the Golf Club with the assistance of the Council's Green Care Team and Park Wardens who would discuss the new entrance with Access in Dudley in order to ensure that it was disability compliant.

R Burgess advised that he was pleased with the dedication of footpaths on the Leasowes and with the stoning of the path along the canal embankment on both sides and leading up to the Manor Way school which had resulted in a great improvement with paths now being used and appreciated by members of the public.

N Williams commented on the Serpentine Pool path which was a great improvement and referred to work that was required to the path from Halesowen Abbey Trust to the walled garden.

D Keeley advised that all paths on the Leasowes site would continue to be monitored for improvements.

R Burges requested D Jacobs to provide the footpath numbers for the definitive and permissive paths on the Leasowes.

- (b) B and Q Dedication.

In view of the lack of progress with B and Q dealing with the path which surrounded Coombeswood Green Wedge it was agreed that this item should be further considered at the next meeting of

the Forum.

R Burgess provided D Jacobs with details of the paths on Coombeswood Green Wedge that were not shown on the Ordnance Survey Map. In responding D Jacobs advised that he would arrange to discuss this issue further with R Burgess following the meeting.

R Burgess referred to flooding on path reference number H13, Monarchs Way resulting from a blocked culvert which was washing away the footpath. Following further discussions S Yeadon agreed to discuss the matter further with R Morgan, Principal Engineer to ascertain whether groundwater monies would be available to deal with the flooding.

Agreed

- (a) That the definitive and permissive paths on the Leasowes be considered further at the next meeting of the Forum.
- (b) D Jacobs be requested to organise a meeting with R Burgess and S Yeadon prior to the next meeting of the Forum to discuss the numbering of the paths throughout Coombeswood Green Wedge.
- (c) That flooding on path reference number H13 Monarchs Way be considered further at the next meeting of the Forum.

35. **Gating Orders**

Following further discussions and as a result of a change in legislation relating to Gating Orders it was

Agreed

That Gating Orders be removed as a standard Agenda Item from future meetings.

36. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

D Keeley advised that Hasbury/Tack Farm had been added to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

It was noted that the 2015 budget had not been set for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Chair advised that photographs of the improvements carried out during 2014 would be circulated at the next meeting of the Forum.

Agreed

That the information reported on at the meeting be noted.

37. Any Other Business

R Burgess circulated a leaflet in relation to one of the planned seven country walks around Halesowen's Green Borderland that were being conducted by himself and his colleague inviting members' comments.

The Chair requested R Burgess to include wheelchair routes and R Burgess confirmed that symbols that were displayed on parks would be included to indicate the accessibility of walks and advised that the walks were being promoted via the internet and at visitor centres.

R Burgess referred to an electric fence that had been installed which obstructed footpath H69 Lapal which was near to the stables off Lye Close Lane and requested that A Radford, Technician Engineer attend a site visit.

D Bates referred to the construction of the Woodsetton footpath which was near completion following the Woodsetton Charitable Trust raising £73,000 for the work that was required, with an official opening taking place in the summer.

The Chair suggested that the Annual General Report of the Forum include details of the Woodsetton footpath together with photographs of the area and D Bates confirmed that he would provide background details and photographs.

38. Date of Next Meeting

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

- Tuesday 17th February, 2015

The meeting to commence at 6.00pm

The meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

CHAIR