



**Dedicated to the promotion and improvement
Of public access and rights of way**

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

September 2007 – August 2008

**Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum
Fifth Annual Report
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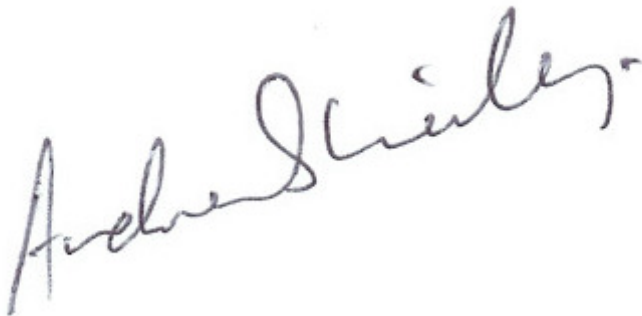
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1. Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to the fifth annual report of the Derbyshire and Derby Local Access Forum, but my first as chairman. We have had a busy year fulfilling our statutory duties and planning the future work programme, negotiating priorities, setting targets and the agenda for the future years. As part of this work we are taking on some proactive work looking at where there is currently an unmet demand for access – this is potentially vitally important work to ensure that improvements in the network benefit all. The challenge still remains not only to promote outdoor recreation, but also to get people out using and enjoying it regularly.

2008 is an important year and I think marks the turning point for public access and rights of way. All authorities have had to produce Rights of Way Improvement Plans and both Derby County Council and Derby City Council were in the first tranche within the East Midlands. The Right Of Way Improvement Plans (ROWiPs) set out for the first time, in one document, the spending by the public rights of way of way department and also sets out clear strategic priorities for the years ahead. Whilst these documents are produced by the local authorities the Local Access Forum has been very involved in the process of developing the ROWiPs and also was a key consultee when the draft ROWiPs were produced. Whilst the ROWiPs themselves will not deliver extra monetary resources they should help when bidding for additional finance and show clear priorities.

Finally communication is vital to any forum so we welcome views from authorities and members of the public on strategic issues of concern or potential conflict. Whilst the Forum is currently at capacity each summer there are a number of vacancies that arise and we always welcome applications. Do not just participate, get involved!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Shirley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned diagonally across the page.

Andrew Shirley
Chair Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum
September 2008

2. The Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum

2.1 Vision Statement

The Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum is established to advise on the development and promotion of access to the countryside and of public rights of way in Derby City and Derbyshire, east and south of the Peak District National Park. The Forum takes into account the interests of all countryside users, including recreational users, landowners and conservation managers.

2.2 Statutory Purpose

The Forum is a statutory body, set up by Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is concerned with Derby City and Derbyshire County to the south and east of the Peak District National Park.

The purpose of the Forum is:

- To advise the City and County Councils on the improvement of public access to the land within it's area for the purpose of open air recreation and enjoyment of the area
- The Forum can also provide advice to other bodies in relation to strategic access and recreation issues

2.3 Background to the Forum

The inaugural meeting of the Forum took place in August 2003, followed by the first formal meeting in September 2003. The meetings are hosted alternatively by the City and County, and are open to interested members of the public.

This report covers the fifth year of the Forum's business over the period September 2007 – August 2008.

3. What's happened during the year?

3.1 The Forum at work.

The Forum has fulfilled its role in a number of ways:

- The Forum has held 4 meetings during the year: in September 2007, December 2007, March 2008 and June 2008.

- This year saw the Forum electing a new Chair and Vice Chair. The previous Chair had held office since the inaugural meeting of the Forum.
- The Forum has established a series of sub groups. These groups have been set up either in order to be able to consider issues in more depth than is possible during the main meetings or to progress matters that require a resolution outside of the timetables permitted by the meeting regime. 4 sub groups have been designated over the year to consider the following:
 - Formal consultations from Natural England involving the future of the "Lost Ways" Project
 - The consultation from the County Council on the draft West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy
 - The Way Forward and Future Work Programme for the DADLAF –looking at the Erewash Bridleway Strategy as an initial topic
 - Looking at a "Lost Ways" Project for Derby and Derbyshire
- Forum members have represented the Forum at meetings, regional events and training sessions
- Forum members have used their own networks of contacts to gather information and to help the authorities to disseminate information, particularly during the consultation stages within the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

3.2 Working with the City and County Councils

The Forum has received reports and given its advice on the following subjects during the year to the two appointing authorities:

- It has provided comments and advice to both councils on the production and subsequent delivery of their **Rights of Way Improvement Plans**. Comments have been made on the draft reports and the final Plans which were both completed in November 2007. With the adoption of both Plans the emphasis has moved on to looking to their delivery. The Forum considered the format and content of detailed annual work programmes from both councils for 2008/09 as well as annual monitoring reports for 2007/08. In the case of the work programmes the Forum was keen to push both councils into identifying more measurable targets than were evident in the main Plans in order to be able to monitor progress.
- The Forum has received updates from the County Council on matters relating to the **Use of Motorised Vehicles in the Countryside**. Individual members have also been very involved with the County Council on exploring ways to progress this issue.

- The Forum provided quite critical feedback to the county council on the draft **West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenway Strategy** that they produced during the year
- The Forum has also received information reports or discussed the following:
 - The management and maintenance of the Public Rights of Way networks in the City and County
 - Gating orders in the City – one order at Bloom Street was considered in detail
 - The situation with respect to Town and Village Green claims (which count as access land) in the City – specifically in relation to a claim at Wilson Street

3.3 Other matters discussed and information received

The Forum has **standing items** on all of its agendas to receive progress reports from both councils on their Rights of Way Improvement Plans and to consider issues relating to Open Access Land, and Vehicles in the Countryside. During the year two other standing items were added to the agenda in respect to Gating orders and Press releases. In addition the item on Open access land was expanded to specifically include information on Town and Village Greens.

Forum members have received the following briefings and information:

- A presentation from the County Council's Rights of Way officer on the work carried out to manage and maintain the Public Rights of Way network in the County.
- A presentation from the County Council's Greenways Officer about the West Derbyshire and High Peak Greenways strategy.
- Information about the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme on offer to farmers including details of the access targets and priority areas.
- A presentation about the work of Natural England.
- Site visits following the June meeting at Attenborough Nature Reserve Visitor Centre to look at the funding and development of the Trent Valley Greenway.
- A briefing note on new case law involving the "Winchester" case at the High Court relating to the path claims for Byways to be added to the Definitive Map.
- A comprehensive Handbook for LAF members produced by Natural England.
- The Forum also received a considerable amount of information during the year including information from Defra (Access Newsletters

and Legal briefing sheets), Natural England (Coastal Access, Lost ways and general updates), the Kennel Club and copies of local, regional and national newsletters relating to access matters.

Forum members were also invited to comment on the following:

- A new sign produced by the County Council for use on Rights of Way to advise the public on who can use each type of path.

3.4 Liaison with others

- Several members attended an East Midlands Regional Workshop for LAF members organised by Natural England in March 2008.
- Members of the Forum once again attended a “Meet your Local Access Forum Member” walk promoted as part of a festival of walks in Derby City during June.
- The Chair of the Forum, attended a meeting of the newly formed England Access Forum organised by Natural England on behalf of the East Midlands Region

4. The Way Ahead

The Forum continued to build on the report considered at the meeting on 15 June 2007 produced by a sub group set up to look at the future working and way ahead for the Forum which was described in the previous annual report.

The Forum started by adopting a Vision Statement (see Section 2.1) and by designing its own headed notepaper which it felt would help establish its own identity and independence from the two appointing authorities.

The Forum also felt that it had skills and advice to offer to a wider range of public bodies and on that basis sent a letter out to all of the District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils within its area in order to introduce itself to them and offer advice on access to the countryside and other matters relating to outdoor recreation in general.

Members of the Forum were also keen to progress specific projects via sub groups, thereby providing the opportunity for members to drive the agenda. The working of the sub groups was discussed, including using local and expert knowledge of members, whether on the sub group or not. Possible topics included:-

- looking at “missing links” dividing work into manageable sections of the County (excluding the Peak LAF area)
- considering publicity and leaflets.

The Forum decided to start looking at the first topic and two sub groups were set up, one to look specifically at progressing a scheme for identifying “Lost Ways” within its area and the other to look at how it could develop an existing document produced by horse riders on proposals for a Bridleway Strategy for the district of Erewash.

The following suggestions for training and speakers in the future were put forward by Members, the list was not in any preference order:-

- Dispute resolution and consensus building
- Disability Training
- Networking Events and interaction with other LAF’s
- Information about Planning processes
- Speaker from a Primary Care Trust on Health issues
- Woodland Trust
- External funding opportunities.

5. Membership of the Forum

5.1 Members and representation

The Forum is constituted so that there is a balance of views representing:

- Different users interests
- Landowners or occupiers and land management issues
- Other relevant local interests relating to issues such as: nature conservation and heritage, local community involvement, tourism and local business, sustainable transport and access for all.

The Forum has the capacity to have up to twenty two members. Twenty members were originally appointed in July 2003, plus two Councillors, one from each authority.

A full list of the members of the Forum during the period September 2007 – August 2008 can be found in Annex 1, together with details of their fields of interest. Annex 2 provides details of member’s attendance record at the formal meetings

5.2 Contact details

Further details about the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum and minutes of the meetings can be found on the web pages set up for the Forum, which can be accessed from either Derbyshire County Council or

Derby City Council's web sites: (www.derbyshire.gov.uk or www.derby.gov.uk).

The Chair can be contacted by e mail: andrew.shirley@cla.org.uk.
Members of the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum can also be contacted by writing to the Secretary of the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum, c/o County Secretary, Derbyshire County Council, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3AG (for the attention of Anne Barrett).

Annex 1**Membership of Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum 2007-08**

Name	Representing	Other Interests
Robert Bacon	Land use (farming)	Walking
Judi Bateman	Disability issues	Voluntary sector, charity
Mike Benten (Vice Chair)	Conservation and access	Walking and bird watching
David Blackburn	Walking interests	
John Clarke	General rights of way	Historical routes, walking
Cllr Michael Carr	Derby City Council	Climbing and walking
Debbie Chesterman	Forestry, community involvement	Health
Hon Richard Curzon	Land use (farming)	Local History, Parish councils
John Disney	Small business and sustainable transport	Walking
David Giles	Motor vehicles interests	Mountain leadership and canoeing
Lyndsay Jones	Equestrian interests	Walking, cycling, education & environmental issues
Cllr Brian Lucas	Derbyshire County Council	Environmental issues & Sustainable communities
Michael Missett	Community, sustainable transport	Community
Martin Pape	Walking interests	Cycling, orienteering
Boyd Potts	Access, conservation and outdoor recreation	Walking, climbing, caving & community involvement
John Pountain	Local Community	Walking, disability issues
Nancy Pountain	Disability issues	Elderly, general countryside issues
Andrew Shirley (Chair)	Land use (farming) and rural business	Walking
Des Sims	Land use (farming)	Community
Dave Walker	Conservation and orienteering	Cycling
Terry Williams	Cycling interests	Walking
John Wiltshire	Land use (farming)	Walking, education access and conservation

Annex 2
Members Attendance Register 2007- 08

Dates of meetings	28 Sept 2007	07 Dec 2007	14 March 2008	20 June 2008
Robert Bacon	✓	✓		✓
Judi Bateman	✓			
Mike Benten	✓	✓		✓
David Blackburn	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Mike Carr	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Clarke	✓		✓	
Debbie Chesterman	✓	✓		
Hon Richard Curzon	✓			✓
John Disney	✓	✓	✓	✓
David Giles	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lyndsay Jones		✓	✓	✓
Cllr Brian Lucas		✓		
Michael Missett	✓		✓	
Martin Pape	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boyd Potts	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Pountain	✓	✓	✓	
Nancy Pountain	✓	✓	✓	
Andrew Shirley (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Des Simms				
David Walker	✓		✓	
Terry Williams	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Wiltshire	✓		✓	✓