



Derby and Derbyshire
Local Access Forum

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

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



**September 2011 -
March 2013**



Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum Ninth Annual Report September 2011 - March 2013

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1 Chairman's introduction

This report covers an extended 18-month period of the Forum's business between September 2011 and March 2013 in order to bring the annual reporting period in line with that required by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Details of the work carried out in that period are described below but I feel all members have to be congratulated for their significant contribution to debates. Topics raised at the quarterly meetings generate much discussion and members regularly demonstrate their commitment to sharing opinions and reaching a consensus view which takes careful account of the local circumstances in Derby or Derbyshire.

Of particular importance in the past year has been the scrutiny of the new Statements of Action for the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (2013-2017) and LAF members have been fully consulted about the proposals for Derby and Derbyshire. There is a real sense that members' views are given very careful consideration and our thanks go to the officers for this.

The proposed building of HS2 will be a major issue for our LAF in the coming years and we are hoping to play a significant role in the forthcoming consultations. Recently there has been increased emphasis on the links between general health among the population of all ages and the use of our countryside, parks or rights of way for recreation. The LAF is ideally suited to build on that knowledge and to recommend projects to the appointing authorities which will enhance provision in the local areas.

Recently, the LAF has seen several changes to its membership and I wish to pay tribute to those members who have retired from the LAF, some having been members since its inception. The timetable of four LAF meetings per year is only a small part of the commitment given by many of these members, serving as they have done on numerous subgroups over the years and also working in response to the steady flow of consultations to which we are invited to respond. They have been able to offer the local knowledge which is the crucial ingredient in the responses to these consultations. Correspondingly, we have welcomed several new members to the LAF and they have shown themselves keen to participate fully in the life of the LAF.

In conclusion, we must thank Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council for the support they have given us in the last 18 months, both in terms of essential funding for the LAF but also for the good relationship they have maintained during the period. Special thanks should also go to the officers - their input has been essential for the smooth running of the LAF and we thank them sincerely for their contributions.

Joan Dryburgh,
Chair



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 east and south 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 its area for the purpose of open air recreation and enjoyment of the area
- to provide advice to other bodies in relation to strategic access and recreation issues

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

2.3 Membership of the Forum

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, health and access for all.

The Forum has the capacity to have up to twenty two members including two Councillors, one from each authority. Membership of the Forum is reviewed regularly and appointments are made on renewable three year terms. Recruitment is made on the basis of expressions of interest made in response to adverts in the local press, on the websites for the 2 authorities and through direct mailing. Interviews are held to ensure the correct balance of views is maintained and to ensure that prospective members are clear about their roles in trying to form a consensus view in comments made.



A full list of the members of the Forum during the period September 2011 - March 2013 can be found in Annex 1, together with details of their fields of interest and attendance at meetings.

During the period covered by this report 4 new members were appointed to the Forum and 6 resigned.

3 What's happened during the year?

3.1 The Forum at work

The Forum has held 7 meetings during this period:

- 23 September 2011, Heart of the Park, The Arboretum, Derby
- 02 December 2011, Shipley Country Park, Heanor
- 27 January 2012, Shipley Country Park, Heanor - special meeting
- 23 March 2012, Heart of the Park, The Arboretum, Derby
- 15 June 2012, Elvaston Castle Country Park, Elvaston
- 21 September 2012, Heart of the Park, The Arboretum, Derby
- 07 December 2012, Hollingwood Hub, Chesterfield
- 22 March 2013 (reconvened 19 April 2013), The Quad, Derby

Five sub groups have been active during this period. These groups have been set up either 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:

- To develop the Erewash Bridleway Strategy Project
- To respond to the Defra consultation 'Improvements to the policy and legal framework for public rights of way'
- Two sub groups to advise the City and County Councils on the delivery of their respective Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) and the revision of the new 5 year Statements of Action
- To progress work to improve access to Open Access Land within the LAF area

Forum members have represented the Forum at meetings, seminars, regional and national events and have used their own networks of contacts to gather information and to help the authorities to disseminate information.

The Forum has standing items on all of its agendas to receive progress reports from both councils on their Rights of Way Improvement Plans, to consider issues relating to Open Access Land and Town & Village Greens, Gating orders, Press releases and more recently to discuss items raised on Huddle, the interactive forum set up by Natural England for LAF members.



3.2 Major issues discussed

The Forum has received reports and discussed or given its advice on the following subjects during the year:

Rights of Way Improvement Plans

The Forum has actively provided comments and advice to both councils on the production and subsequent delivery of their Rights of Way Improvement Plans. The Forum considered the outline annual work programmes for each year as well as detailed annual monitoring reports. The two sub groups looked into the delivery in more depth and provided both Authorities with comments and observations.

Both authorities were working to a 5 year Statement of Action (2007-2012) which ran out during the period and the Forum was actively involved in the review of these Statements of Action to cover a second 5 year period 2013-2017. The sub groups and main meetings provided a considerable amount of advice and comments to help the authorities with these revisions. In the case of the Derbyshire RoWIP a joint sub group was convened with the Peak District LAF to help produce the draft Statement of Action for the County which was the subject of a wider public consultation and then held a second meeting to consider the consultation responses in more detail and agree any changes to the document. The consultation also included a workshop session held during one of the meetings where members discussed and tried to prioritise the aims and identified actions with the RoWIP Statements of Action

Vehicles in the countryside

The Forum was consulted by the County Council on the revision to the policy on Managing Recreational Vehicles in the Countryside. The Forum considered this subject to be too important for consideration by a sub group as the majority of the members wanted to have an input into the response. In view of the time limitations during one of the routine meetings the Forum took the unusual decision to hold a Special Meeting solely to discuss the County Council's draft policy with the aim of providing a response that reflected the consensual approach that singles out the Forum's response from other bodies/ organisations.

Open access land

A very active sub group was convened during the period, set up with the aim of assisting the County Council to review the areas of open access land that it is responsible for. Members of the sub group carried out several site visits and then met with officers from the County Council to agree a work programme for the sub group to deliver including improvements to signage and negotiating new access points.



Public health agenda

The Forum received a briefing paper from the two appointing authorities about changes in public health and how they affected the local authorities and pointed to implications/challenges for the LAF.

HS2

The proposed route of the HS2 between Birmingham and Leeds will run right through the LAF's area and there are several key implications for access, including the crossing of the Chesterfield Canal in several places and the impact on the Trans Pennine Trail. The LAF has received some initial briefing on the scheme and welcomes the opportunity to get more involved with the formal consultation process over the coming year to ensure that access issues are fully addressed.

Social networking

The Forum was dragged into the 21st century with information and suggestions for possible ways for the LAF to promote itself and the work it covers.

Consultations

The Forum considered and responded to several consultations during the period:

- Derbyshire County Council consultation on - Policy for the Management of Motorised Vehicle Use in the Countryside including the resulting Management of Green Lanes Action Plans for 12/13 and 13/14
- Defra consultation on Improvements to the policy and legal framework for public rights of way
- Derbyshire County Council - draft RoWIP Statement of Action for 2013-17
- Derby City Council - draft RoWIP Statement of Action for 2013-17
- Department for Transport - Traffic Orders - Simplifying the Process

Working with others

The Chair of the Forum met with the Chair of the Peak District LAF to discuss opportunities for joint working

The Forum was represented at the regional and national meetings organised by Natural England for Local Access Forum Chairs (or their representatives) to discuss regional issues such as training requirements and other regional or national matters.

3.3 Training and information

Training and information sessions are organised at the request of LAF members by officers from the two authorities. During the period covered by this report officers organised a training session, following the December 2012 meeting, primarily for new members which included an introduction on Rights of Way Law and Practice and information about how LAF operates.



The Forum had a **site visit** following the meeting in June 2011 to look at the newly installed Long Horse Bridge and Greenway link which provides for a long awaited multi user link between Derbyshire and Leicestershire.

The Forum also received **presentations** about the following topics:

- Cycle Derby - from Cycle Derby Education, Training and Promotions Co-ordinator for Derby City Council
- Chesterfield Cycle Network - Senior Transport Officer, Derbyshire County Council
- Access to Inland Water for Bathing - a paper presented by a new member of the Forum
- Natural England - Current issues including Paths for Communities and Local Nature Partnerships from Lead Advisor in NE People and Partnerships Team
- Working with Volunteers on Access Projects from the newly appointed Volunteer Project Officer from Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service

4 The coming year

The Forum has plenty of challenges to face over the coming year:

- The effect of the proposed HS2 scheme on the county
- Exploring the links between countryside access and health.
- Helping to encourage more sustainable ways for society to travel around
- Supporting the production of the County and City Council's new 5 Year Statements of Action for the Rights of Way Improvement Plans

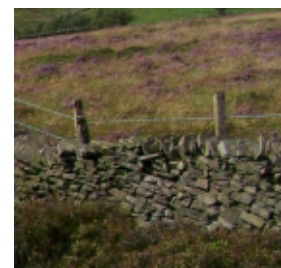
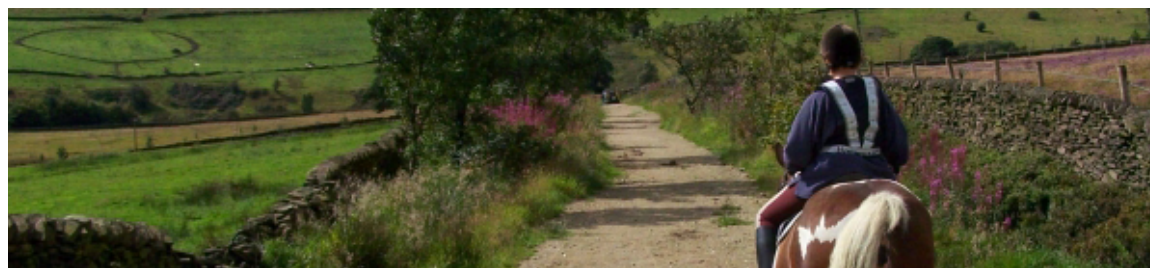
5 Contact details

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

Members of the Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum can 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).



Appendix 1

Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum - interests and attendance September 2011 to March 2013

Member	Representing	23.09.11	02.12.11 Special Meeting	27.01.12	23.03.12	15.06.12	21.09.12	07.12.12	22.03.13
Chris Allen (from Dec 2012)	Cycling & volunteering/ conservation	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Robert Aspey	Access to water	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
David Blackburn	Walking	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Tim Brooks	Conservation	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	resigned	-	-
Mike Carr (not appointed for June meeting)	Derby City Council appointed member	✗	✗	✓	✗	-	✓	✓	✓
John Clarke	General rights of way	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Geof Cole	Walking & cycling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Richard Curzon	Land use & local history/ Parish Councils	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Disney	Small business & sustainable transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Joan Dryburgh	Community/ volunteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ian Else	Land use (estate management)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Richard Felton	Community/ disability	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
David Giles	Recreational motor vehicles	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marilyn Hambly (from Dec 2012)	Disability & health/social care	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Irene Hayward	Cycling & conservation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	resigned	-	-
Edward Hicklin	Land use (farming)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Robert Johnson (from Dec 2012)	Countryside crafts/equalities	-	-	-	-	-	-	✗	✗
Lyndsay Jones	Equestrian & walking/cycling	✓	✓	✓	✓	Site visit only	✗	✓	✓
Howard Langley	Countryside management & health walk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Boyd Potts	Outdoor pursuits & local councils	✓	✓	✓	✗	resigned	-	-	-
Barbara Robinson	Land use (Equestrian) & disadvantaged groups	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Andrew Shirley	Land use (farming)	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	resigned	✗
Paul Tame (from Dec 2012)	Land use, land management & walking	-	-	-	-	-	-	✗	✓
Noel Walsh	Disability	✗	✓	✗	✓	resigned	-	-	-
Jean Wharmby	Derbyshire County Council appointed member	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
John Wiltshire	Land use (small farms and forestry)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	resigned	-	-