

Item No.	<p style="text-align: center;">LOCAL ACCESS FORUM Thursday 7pm 23rd November 2023 Committee Room 2, Shire Hall, Warwick, WCC</p>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<p>Present: Mike Patrick, Cllr Andy Wright, Sheila Cooper, John Hall, Kenneth Thomas, Mike Murray, Roger Waring, Byron Melia, Sarah Jane Cash, Diane Smith, Gina Rowe Via Teams: Steve Hawley (SMBC), Sharon Bayne, Consultant</p> <p>Apologies: Craig Williams, Robin Hickin, Vaughan Owen, Claire Sangster, Joe Carroll, Alex Le Marinel (CCC), Marion Borman (WCC)</p> <p>Members of the Public: Luke Rolls, Peter Norris</p> <p>Officers in Attendance: Darren Lee, Charles Barlow (WCC)</p> <p>Other attendees:</p> <p>Notes: Alistair Rigby (WCC)</p>	
2.	<p>Introductions and apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote of thanks to Elizabeth Birtley <p>Sheila Cooper, Vice Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everybody.</p> <p>Lizzie Birtley was thanked for her time on the LAF as a member and more recently as Chair. Lizzie has given birth to a baby girl. A 'congratulations' card was passed round for members and officers to sign. Individual name plates were handed out to members. Apologies were noted.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes from meeting on 23rd April 2023 & matters arising</p> <p>Notes were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Alex Le Marinel (CCC) has sought advice from CCC Legal Services about where the authority lies for amending and updating the LAF's Terms of Reference (2006). Alex stands by the advice given at the last meeting, confirming that the advice sought is legally privileged, and as such will not be released to the LAF.</p> <p>Country Parks & Green Spaces Team, WCC gave the following responses to actions from the last meeting (Item 4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i)The Team does not have any noticeboards on the Greenway. The Common Lane noticeboard is most likely the responsibility of Warwick District Council ii)The Grand Union/greenway 'barrier' – The Team hasn't been aware of a barrier there in recent years 	

	<p>iii) The general thinking about Haul roads is that the increased levels of resource and cost to maintain them would not be something to take on currently. Haul roads would be assessed on a case-by-case basis</p>	
4.	<p>Opportunity for Public participation Luke Rolls was welcomed as a member of the public from Solihull. <i>[Peter Norris arrived later]</i></p>	
5.	<p>Reports: Rights of Way teams (WCC, CCC & SMBC) <u>Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)</u> Steve Hawley presented his report which included photos of work done by Solihull Brambler volunteers including a new flight of steps, Dorridge and work done by the contractor to provide a boardwalk across a ditch.</p> <p>A new ad-hoc vegetation maintenance contractor is in place. The initial work has been very thorough. Summer strimming is complete – 3 week programme, strimming 131 sections of paths</p> <p>Steve updated on Division Orders and DMMOs.</p> <p>Steve announced this would be his last meeting before taking up a new post with Walsall MBC in January 2024. Paul Tovey, Head of Highway Management would be the point of contact while the post is recruited to.</p> <p>Steve was thanked for his work and contribution to LAF, with best wishes for the future.</p> <p><u>Coventry City Council (CCC)</u> A brief report was submitted highlighting some work done on the network but with little context. In general it was poorly received by members who were expecting a more comprehensive report having not receive one in 2023.</p> <p><u>Warwickshire County Council (WCC)</u> Darren Lee presented the report which highlighted a programme of works by volunteer groups across the county network. Strimming by Radford Semele volunteers; bridge building by Stratford Ramblers, boardwalk construction by Coventry Ramblers. In all 22 different volunteer groups help to maintain the network, overseen by a volunteer co-ordinator. 3 DMMOs nearing conclusion. 1 PPO has gone to a public enquiry.</p> <p>A Public Inquiry was held which resolved the status of an E route – Sawbridge to Wolfhampcote as a road. All responsibility for the route now lies with County Highways.</p>	

	<p>WCC successfully defended a s130 action. The claim was rejected by Magistrates Court and costs were awarded against the litigant. There has been an upturn in Section 130 notices.</p> <p>WCC is defending an insurance claim for a slip on a bridge</p> <p>Severn Trent has closed a dangerous bridge it owns in Rugby until it can be repaired.</p> <p>A well used bridge in Offchurch/Cubbington is closed because the piers have moved and cracked due to flooding. Recent inspections indicate the bridge is still moving.</p> <p>It was noted that the bridge on Radford Road, Leamington that crosses the river remains closed despite it being a popular route to local allotments and Newbold Comyn park as well as being part of Sustrans Route 41. It was also noted that there are no diversion signs to guide those who may be using it as a long distant route</p>	
6.	<p>Update: Warwickshire ROWIP – Sharon Bayne, Consultant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation stage <p>Sharon Bayne, Director, Blackwood Bayne Ltd presented on Teams.</p> <p>Rights of Way Implementation Plans need to be reviewed every 10 years. WCC has already decided it would like a new Plan produced.</p> <p>The CROW Act requires: i)The Assessment – to form the basis of the Plan ii)Statement of Action – to set out the actions needed</p> <p>The first stage of producing a new ROWIP is ‘Evidence Gathering’. This is currently the stage that the project is at. In January 2024 extensive public and stakeholder engagement will start. LAF will be invited to be involved as an interested party.</p> <p>Other stakeholders include: Town/Parish Councils, Land Owners; disability & equality groups; user groups</p> <p>The Assessment is drawn from the collated Evidence and Engagement to form the main body of the ROWIP report and the Statement of Action.</p> <p>In answer to questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners will also include tenants and agricultural businesses • The whole process takes a minimum of 12 months • Evidence gathering will include taking account of other plans eg Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan • Public accessibility to woodlands will be included in ROWIP • WCC would need to find the funding to implement the Plan 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation will be sought from neighbouring authorities eg Highways • Presentation to be shared with minutes 	
7.	<p>Presentation: The Definitive Map and Statement – John Hall Deferred to next meeting</p>	
8.	<p>Feedback: Decision on outcome of ROW/3295978 relating to the proposal for E2289 to be recorded as a BOAT</p> <p>In Robin Hicken’s absence, Sheila read out his feedback.</p> <p><i>‘The public right were upheld by the inspector and the ridiculous order there for quashed.</i></p> <p><i>I expect it was a hollow victory for the public as the whole process will have cost the Council Tax Payers of Warwickshire in excess of £25,000, money which could have been better spent on highway repairs and improvements across Warwickshire.</i></p> <p><i>In conclusion there is a footpath off the E2289 that has been closed to all traffic for five years now as there is no money for the required bridge repair along the route.’</i></p> <p>Darren Lee’s response was openly hostile saying the decision from PINS confirmed it was right to go with a DMMO to allow an independent Inquiry to take place. Mr Lee questioned the facts as presented on Mr Hicken’s behalf saying the costs stated by Mr Hicken were incorrect – being £9,000 and £700 for hall hire.</p> <p>As Mr Hicken was not present to respond, The Acting Chair closed the item promising to read the Inspector’s Decision Notice.</p>	
9.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair From 9 postal votes cast by members prior to the meeting it was declared by a majority that: Sheila Cooper is hereby elected Chair John Hall is hereby elected Vice Chair</p>	
10.	<p>Feedback: Approval for further LAF response to Coventry City Council's planning application PL/2023/0001062/FULM</p> <p>Sheila Cooper and John Hall presented the item first showing the site of the Solar Farm in NE Coventry, which is right on the boundary with both North Warwickshire and Nuneaton & Bedworth local authority areas. The proposed site is next to M6 motorway and the Oxford Canal and is part of Sowe Valley Country Park – a green wedge linking to the wider countryside</p> <p>There are 3 public footpaths cutting across the site (although none are shown on the Definitive Map).</p>	

	<p>LAF members gave approval for Sheila to attend the Planning Inquiry and pursue lines of inquiry.</p> <p>LAF could ask Coventry CC to be put on the list of non-statutory consultees</p>	
11.	<p>Consultation on A46 Walsgrave Junction Improvement LAF members gave approval for Sheila to pursue lines of inquiry to keep LAF informed of developments.</p>	
12.	<p>Training It was requested to have training on ROWIP so LAF members can respond constructively to the consultation and be an active participant in the engagement process</p>	
13.	<p>AOB Permissions have been granted to all members to access Natural England LAF website which is co-ordinated by Danielle Radley, Lead Adviser, NE. Please check your emails for notification</p>	
14.	<p>Suggested agenda items for next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Definitive Map & Statement – John Hall • ROWIP – Sharon Bayne • Speaker from Planning Inspectorate • CPRE – national office 	
15.	<p>Date and venue for next meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th January 2024 Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, Warwick, WCC 	ALL