

Item No.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Of the Local Access Forum meeting That took place on Thursday 17 July 2025, 7.00pm to 9.00pm Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, Warwick</p>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<p>Present: Sheila Cooper (Chair), Gina Rowe, Michael Orlik, Vaughan Owen, Craig Williams, Ken Thomas, Simon Storey, Gina Rowe, Cllr Chris Kettle, Sarah-Jane Cash.</p> <p>Apologies: Mike Murray, Luke Rolls, Paul Tovey</p> <p>Guests and Members of the Public: Peter Norris, Liz White, Jonathan Cooper, Dale Fittes.</p> <p>Officers in Attendance: Shail Chohan (Head of Highways, Warwickshire County Council), Charles Barlow (Head of Community Partnerships, Warwickshire County Council) (Secretary), Richard Fenwick (Director of Highways, Warwickshire County Council), Neil Benison (Transport Planning Manager, Coventry City Council).</p> <p>Minutes: Emily McFadyen (Business Support, Warwickshire County Council).</p> <p>There were no objections to the meeting being recorded for minute taking purposes.</p> <p>Sheila Cooper declared a declaration of interest as she lives on Coventry Rd in Berkswell and near which there are several live or pending development applications.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2025 and any matters arising</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising not covered by other agenda items.</p>	

3.	<p>Opportunity for public participation</p> <p>All members of the public present were welcomed.</p> <p>Cllr Kettle followed up on the discussion at the last meeting about SD228. This has been pursued with Stratford District Council planning department and although some of the development is contrary to details of the granted planning application, more than four years has elapsed, and so little action can be taken. However, discussions continue.</p>	
4.	<p>Presentation from Grenergy on the proposed Battery Energy Storage System off Benton Green Lane Solihull, followed by a question-and-answer session. Jonathan Cooper, Senior Development Manager, and Norome Campanile, Project Developer at Grenergy Renewables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based in Madrid and were founded in 2007 • Are present in 11 countries around the world and have over 70 renewable assets. • Entered the UK market in 2020, currently have 15 projects in development in the UK which equates to a pipeline of 1.5GW. • Currently building a 11GWh battery energy storage system in the Atacama Desert, Chile, which is one of the largest in the world. • The UK is facing an climate and energy security crisis <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Target to become net zero by 2030 2 UK spends £250 million per month on importing electricity and has the highest electricity prices in Europe. 3 Our electricity demand is expected to double by 2050 4 The solution is renewable energy derived from natural resources that are constantly replenished such as wind and solar power. 5 However, there are challenges with renewable energy such as it depends a lot on the weather i.e. the sun shining and the wind blowing, especially as the weather is becoming more unpredictable. 6 Renewable energy lacks inertia which makes us more vulnerable to power cuts. 7 When the grid is at capacity the government often switches of the wind turbines which adds up to millions of pounds of wasted energy. • Battery Energy Storage systems (BESS) are devices that enable renewable energy to be stored and used when demand is high. It can help stabilise the grid and can be used in emergency events to keep the lights on. • Currently have 4-5GW of BESS in the UK but it is anticipated by 2030 we will need 23-27GW 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Benton Green Lane Site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 70MW capacity. 2 132,000 volts. 3 Approx 3ha in size. 4 Will power 230,000 homes in a single hour. 5 Will connect to the Berkswell main substation through underground high voltage cable under the public highway. • Site enhancements proposed will double the mandatory biodiversity net gain and it will also include hedgerows and tree planting. Noise assessments will be carried out to make sure that sound is not above background noise level (500 metres away from the nearest residential property but 100 metres from a public right of way) regulations state you must be at least 30 metres away, no nighttime lighting in normal conditions. Will take 6-9 months to construct and there will be 1-2 visits per week for routine maintenance. • New woodland area to the north and south of the site and there will be wildflower planting in between. Also proposed an attenuation pond with some wet grass. • The one entrance that forks into two roads counts as two access as per fire safety guidance. • Fire Safety as BESS sites use Lithium-Ion batteries. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Internal battery management systems with emergency shutdowns. 2 Heat, smoke and gas detection (alerts fire service). 3 Aerosol based fire suppression system. 4 Firewater will drain to basin so that no contaminated water leaches into the ground. • Grenergy submitted a full planning application in June 2025, the application is available on the Solihull Borough Council planning portal where stakeholders can upload comments. • Discussions: Smoke plume analysis indicates that smoke dissipates at 20 metres so is unlikely to impact residents or even potentially the scout group who operate in the fields nearby. • It was pointed out that the photos in the PowerPoint presentation of Benton Green Lane make it appear far wider than it actually is. • Anticipate getting water supply from fire hydrants if that is not possible then they will look at getting a water tank. • The reason this project is being built on greenbelt land and not brownfield is the needed connectivity to the major substations which is found on the outskirts of cities which is where you will also find the greenbelts, it is less common to find a brownfield site. Also, for brownfield sites they would have to approach a landowner and ask them not to touch the land for 3-5 years while they get planning permission etc. while they could get a quick sell elsewhere. 	
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5.	<p>Reports from the Warwickshire, Solihull, and Coventry Rights of Way Teams.</p> <p>1) Warwickshire -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) is now live as of the 8 July, better allows to monitor customer contacts and allows the team to append legal documents. It's a map-based system that will allow members of the public go in it will give you the route number and if you have an account, it will show you the issues you have highlighted and the case management. • Allows mobile working so that rangers etc can raise queries, map assets, raise job work items while on the go. • Will be exploring more functionality of the CAMS pro in the future. • Maintenance carried out in the period – Nuneaton and Bedworth group installed a ditch crossing a flight of steps on M359 in Fillongley on 10th April. Signposts installed on M463 at Wishaw on 1st May. The Coventry Ramblers also installed signposts on T41/T42 at Hurley on 24th April. The Rugby Ramblers cleared the R103 Path at Cosford on 13th May and they also cleared Bridleway R86 at Cathiron on 8th July. • A new pedestrian gate was installed in Bishops Itchington SM85 in June 2025. • A new 8m bridge was installed (SD180) in Langley in May • The team are currently look at identifying structures (i.e. long bridges) on the rights of way network that need significant maintenance, putting a list together and have identified a source of funding for this financial year. • Volunteers – North: 8 days between 8th April and 8th July, South: 564 hours logged in the same period. • DMMOs in the last 12 months 3 determinations have been reached (orders to be made) and 0 orders made. • Diversion Orders: 32 applications received for Public Path Orders. In the Last 12 months 2 creation agreements have been made and 0 orders made. • Team is not fully staffed at the moment due to two team members moving outside of the organisation. • A concern was raised about a fallen over oak tree that was being held up by a wire fence near the allotment on W1651 and if it was on the council's radar. • Shail to get back to the group about if there are two different queues for those applying for a planning application and those who require a diversion of a footpath to secure their planning application (would need to apply for a diversion order). • Discussion was had around the use of formal letters and the use of volunteers. 	SCH
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	<p>2) Solihull -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which includes contributions of volunteers: M177 Drainage issues with pathway and flooding, M161 Repair to damaged stile, M221 Repair to handrail and removal of wire, SL8 Removal of broken boardwalk, M202 Check footway for crop clearance, M117, M117a, M116, M118 vegetation clearance & SL79 Cutting back around stile. • Improvement works: Repair to boardwalk, repair to bridge, repair to gates and stiles & repair to marker posts. • Diversion orders: Request for diversion SL81/SL82 Hockley Heath – on hold awaiting formal application. SMBC led diversion at SL78 Illshaw Heath, on hold following temporary closure in place. Request for diversion M121 Hampton Manor—on hold awaiting formal application. Request for diversion M169 Heronfield Cottages—on hold awaiting formal application and maintenance issue. Request for diversion M166 Brook farm—on hold awaiting formal application and maintenance issue. • 62 service requests received since 1st April 2025. • DMMOs – 5 ongoing requests. • Impacts of schemes on Network: HS2: 13 PROWs affected with closures and diversions. Early work on the legal processes being undertaken on diversions, closures and signage. M42 Jct 5A: 8 PROWs affected with closures and diversions. Early work on the legal processes being undertaken on diversions, closures and signage. <p>3) Coventry -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have dealt with 4 planning applications since the last meeting, 2 are still live and relate to Park Hill Lane which is a byway open to all traffic alongside the A45, however there is a traffic regulation order restricting vehicle movement along large parts of the lane. An application has been put in to build 5 residential units. The Public Right of Way is currently being looked at and how to regularise its status, some comments have been submitted to the developers so are waiting for a response. 2nd development is also residential being put in alongside the A45 and crosses Park Hill Lane (proposing using a footpath that leads up to Park Hill Lane as access to the development). Coventry City Council has serious safety concerns of using the footpath as vehicular road access to the development both for the safety of the people in the existing residential properties and those accessing the footpath as visibility is poor etc. So an objection has been lodged for the 2nd application. • Bridge on FP 250 repaired by rangers after a board had rotted through, the bridge was then vandalised, and the damage was so extensive that a completely new bridge was installed. The matter was reported to the police but no updates yet. 	
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6.	<p>General Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrive Project, Wishaw and Curdworth • Warwick District Council APP/T3725/W/24/3347138 (Land south of Chesterton Gardens). • Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council PL/2025/00806/PPFL (Hill House Farm, Coventry Road, Berkswell) • Coventry City Council PL/2025/0000826/PIP and PL/2025/0000828/PIP • Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Permanent Traffic Regulation Order - Notice of Implementation - A41 Corridor – Various Roads • All Party Parliamentary Group for outdoor recreation and access to nature – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Cllr Kettle to draft some wording regarding his experience as a landowner (farmer). 2 Discussion was also had on the struggle and balance of walkers accessing the public right of way and farmers protecting their livestock. • HS2 Public Rights of Way Working Group. • WCC Active Travel Overview (update on Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) • Natural England consultation on standing advice for ancient woodland, ancient trees, and veteran trees 	
7.	<p>Update on the Forum Secretariat</p> <p>Charles gave an update on Secretariat arrangements, observing that, with current capacity issues in the Rights of Way Team and broader Highways Service, he continues to be the Secretary, although this will change for the October meeting.</p>	
8.	<p>Members' session.</p> <p>Deferred to the October meeting, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of Forum Chair and Vice-Chair. • Review and refresh of the Forum Terms of Reference. • Workshop with planning officers from the 7 Local Planning Authorities 	CB
9.	<p>Date and venue for next meeting</p> <p>9 October 2025, 7.00pm to 9.00pm, Shire Hall, Warwick.</p>	