

Minutes

Minutes of the Bury Local Access Forum Meeting Held at Bury Town Hall on Wednesday 31st July 2019 at 1.30pm

1.0 Present

LAF Members

Edgar Ernstbrunner (Chair)
 Lesley Tierney
 Irene Pope
 Debra Batchelor
 Fal Binns
 John Ireland
 Peter Varetto
 Valerie Johnstone
 Christine Taylor
 John Southworth

Also Present

David Chadwick (LAF Secretary) - Bury MBC
 Jon O'Connor – Bury MBC
 Nik Taylor – National Trust
 James Nevitt – MOD Access and Recreation Team
 Major Phillip Ingledew – Security and Public Access Officer, DIO
 Cllr Tony Cummings
 Barry Smith – public

Apologies – No Apologies

		Action
2.0	Minutes of the Last Meeting Accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3.0	Matters Arising No Matters Arising	
4.0	Draft Statement of Priorities – Processing Definitive Map Modification Orders JOC introduced a draft Statement of Priorities for dealing with Definitive Map Modification Orders. EE stated that it was quite straightforward and he was happy with it.	

Discussions clarified that the numbered points were not in priority order. This clarification allowed the LAF to approve the Statement.

5.0 Public Access to Holcombe Training Area

EE believed the matter is heading to a satisfactory conclusion. JS attended a meeting with the MOD on Monday (29th). Lt Colonel Mark Holden agreed access to the sheep track at Bull Hill when the red flags are not flying and that there is an undertaking for members of the community with an appropriate platform to publicise the need to respect the red flags.

PI added that the MOD do not want anything confrontational when it comes to people challenging those who are ignoring the flags and notices. It should be done through the correct channels. The MOD are looking to run a campaign specifically addressing the issues at Holcombe. Lt Colonel Holden's emphasis is on delivering a "safe place" under the health and safety requirements – this includes people who shouldn't be there.

PI introduced JN who is part of a team of three people looking after access to all MOD sites.

EE believed the reaction to this issue illustrates the community's interest in access to the Moors.

PI responded that the MOD are keen to promote safe access.

JN acknowledged the presence of a clear linear route at Bull Hill. There will need to be something introduced on site to recognise that it is available as a permissive route. In general, the MOD try to work with user groups, such as The Ramblers regarding the "dos and don'ts" on MOD land.

EE mentioned that the North West Region LAF had discussed the existence of a Warcop Access Group which has been successful and wondered whether this could be introduced at Holcombe.

PI responded that the group had been created in response to the decision of a public inquiry but he would take the request to Colonel Holden.

EE asked if there was a timescale for reinstatement of the permissive route.

PI replied that as all the signs indicating that the path was no longer available have been stolen, it can happen immediately. The aim is to publish the decision regionally in due course. It is intended that the information will be included on the website that publishes the firing times at Holcombe.

CT believed that access meetings would be beneficial to discuss issues that exist on the rights of way network across MOD land. A number of examples relating to signage and surface issues were highlighted.

PI pointed out that such matters should be addressed with the Highway Authority which is responsible for maintaining the public rights of way network.

Cllr Cummings asked if CT had made the Authority aware of the problems.

EE outlined the background to the footpath survey that has been completed which will include any issues on paths across MOD land.

It may be that these paths should be given priority.
 Cllr Cummings said he would report back to the relevant people about ensuring the matter is addressed.
 IP asked if television coverage of the problems faced by the MOD had been considered.
 PI responded that this had been tried but was unsuccessful. He will speak to the Brigadier to clarify what can be done to get the message out about public safety at Holcombe. It is apparent that these issues do sometimes become overshadowed by similar but more acute problems in the south of England.
 LT asked if Facebook had been utilised.
 JN pointed out that there are security issues related to the MOD using social media and this restricts the available options.
 FB informed the meeting that she could distribute information through her role as the Chair of the Bury Rural Inequalities Forum. But she was concerned that any information needs to be exactly what is required by the MOD. The use of posters was also suggested.
 PI reminded everyone that signs explaining the situation on Holcombe Moor had been installed but have been stolen, but that consideration would be given to erecting new signs with wording approved via the secretary of the LAF. He added that JN chairs the national user group meetings and this could be an advantage in spreading information.
 NT added that the National Trust can play a role in spreading the message. They want to do more active rangering on the Holcombe estate.
 PI acknowledged that the MOD and National Trust needed a catch up. He highlighted that despite the restrictions on resources faced by the MOD, a small contribution had been secured for works to reinstate the bridleway on Moorbottom Road and Footpath Number 3, Ramsbottom.
 BS stated that the leaflets outlining the access to the moor and Redisher Woods are still available via the Heritage group.
 PI asked if anyone had any information regarding the stolen signs.

6.0 Moorcarbon Project Update and Associated Countryside Stewardship Application

NT described the project which is based on the principle of making the moor wetter and surrounding areas drier. Ideas had been requested from the LAF in terms of access improvements via funds received through Moorcarbon and a Countryside Stewardship scheme. £1 million has been secured for Moorcarbon to be spent on the Holden Reservoir catchment area. This is specifically for keeping carbon on the moor and not for access work. However the Countryside Stewardship scheme can include access and the proposal is to install stretches of millstone flags in the wettest areas. The proposals will go to Natural England for negotiation. Initially NT could only apply for non-definitive rights of way due to the crossover with the Highway Authority's duty to maintain. A number of locations have been suggested and it is possible that 100% funding

could be secured. NT added that it was revealed at a late stage that definitive rights of way across blanket bog could be included in the bid and this has been taken into consideration. The drainage works intended to "slow the flow" were explained to the LAF. The intention is to delay water entering the river valleys. NT felt it is an obvious opportunity to improve access and signage and that everyone should take an interest in the possibility of making a change. BS asked if scramblers would be a problem on the flagged paths. NT emphasised that they will not be circular routes, only short stretches and that land to either side would be very wet, giving a risk that machines might become stuck. IP asked if horses could use the tracks. NT confirmed that they would be multi-user routes but will only be 1m in width. He asked if flagged paths are easy to ride on a horse. IP/DB confirmed that they are easy to ride and asked if the National Trust are happy to have horses on their land. NT confirmed that the National Trust are happy to have horses on their land although he could only speak for the Holcombe estate. EE raised the possibility of planting trees on the slopes at Red Brook to stabilise the land and to retain water. NT stated that it is something the Trust are looking into but it doesn't form part of the current scheme. The fact that the area is a common means the fences that are usually erected to protect saplings would be problematic. FB added that Alan Hayworth helped with the Peel wind farm public inquiry and is an expert regarding peat and moorland. She offered to put NT in touch with him if it would be of benefit. JN said the MOD would support the increased wardening that the Trust are proposing and the MOD will ensure that NT is invited to future Conservation Meetings at the training camp. NT clarified that the schemes have not been officially confirmed as yet but that they should be signed off by the end of September for a start in January 2020.

7.0 Bury PROW Survey Update

DC informed the group that a colleague had put the survey information into a database and ensured it was all in one format. This will then allow the interrogation of the information to create a list of priorities and approximate costings. An initial search of the information, looking for use of the words obstruction and obstructed revealed 85 paths. EE asked about the consolidation of the definitive map and suggested an action plan should be created as the matter should be given a high priority. JOC suggested that extra resources would be required to take on the amount of work that the survey could generate alongside the bridleway claims that have been submitted. The Authority would look to estimate the resources that are going to be required to allow the matter to be considered further up the management chain. EE reminded JOC that it is a statutory duty to keep the Definitive map and statement up to date and it was clear that this was not

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	<p>being done. FB asked if the LAF and its members could lend some support by communicating the need to allocate more resources to public rights of way issues through letters to the appropriate persons. JOC said any such action would be of assistance.</p>	
8.0	<p>Prospective Capital Projects Update DC distributed an updated list. Little had changed other than a slippage in proposed completion dates for bridge replacements and repairs to paths in Ramsbottom. The former is due to the need to prioritise bridge works on road bridges following on from the damage caused by the Boxing Day floods and the latter is due to the need to delay works to allow for ground nesting birds in a SSSI and to carry out an investigation for unexploded ordnance on MOD land. DC added that the list would include a lot more information at the next LAF as he is looking to add the information from the path survey and in particular the 85 paths that have been identified as obstructed. PV asked that the landowner at Castle Farm be consulted on the new timings for the installation of the footbridge to be funded by the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society. EE asked if there had been any increase in capital funding. JOC confirmed that there has not been an increase.</p>	
9.0	<p>Officer Report DC provided an update on some of the issues he has progressed since the last meeting. Reference was made to the completion of the annual vegetation clearance programme; Improvements to Footpath Number 150, Bury have been completed and the path was "officially opened" by James Frith MP; Long Distance Walkers Association have promised a contribution to improvement works to Footpath Number 19, Tottington in Redisher Woods; maps showing a circular walk around Burrs Country Park have been erected and appear to be popular; Ramsbottom Countryside Access Volunteers have continued to carry out works to paths in the area and applications have been submitted for Bee Network Funding on highways that include public rights of way in the vicinity of Elton Reservoir, Pimhole and Pilsworth. EE stated that if he received details of the work and funding for Footpath Number 19, Tottington the matter would be presented to The Ramblers Area Executive Committee with a request for a contribution.</p>	
10.0	<p>Bridleway Strategy Update IP updated the LAF on a number of potential bridleway routes. 1. Three Acres Farm, Hawkshaw Lane – IP is ready to make a DMMO application but is meeting with the landowner next Thursday to see what can be agreed. 2. Footpath Number 21, Walmersley Golf Club, Bury – Another application is ready to be submitted, but as it appears there is only one landowner – Walmersley Golf Club – she has written to them</p>	

		Action
	<p>but has not received a reply.</p> <p>3. Old Kays Park, Tottington – IP submitted a DMMO application to DC. Most of the application runs across Council land.</p> <p>IP added that she had a meeting with David Brown, Director of Operations to discuss the creation of more off-road routes for horses. A request was made for access to cycle routes and that walking and cycling strategies should include horse riding. It is estimated that cyclists contribute £3bn to the economy and horse riding creates £4.3bn, rising to £8bn if horse racing is included. This should be reflected in the provision of riding facilities.</p> <p>IP also mentioned that including new routes as part of the Bee Networks might remove the need for some of the DMMO applications to be considered.</p>	
11.0	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>IP asked for the views of the LAF members of the downgrading of byways to bridleways. This would be an issue as it would stop the use of traps and carriages.</p> <p>DC responded that the proposal that led to the question was no longer under consideration.</p>	
12.0	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 23rd October 2019, Committee Room A, Town Hall at 1.30pm</p>	