

Tees Valley Local Access Forum

Minutes

8th September 2015, 4:00-5:30pm
Kingsway House, Billingham, Stockton on Tees

Present: Robin Daniels (Chair), Chris Scaife, Rob Morrow, Malcolm Thompson, David Reed, Mike Cherrett, Christine Corbett, Beryl Bird, Councillor Carson, Laurie Norris (NFU County Advisor).

Apologies: Yvonne Ramage, Fiona Campbell, Judith Underwood, Mike Roff, Stewart Williams, Graham Clingan, Rob Brown (Vice Chair), Councillor Rooney, Councillor Rose, Councillor Clark.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Robin (RD) welcomed everyone to the meeting all introduced themselves.

2. Apologies – as above.

3. Ratification of meeting held 30th June 2015

All agreed the Minutes of the meeting were correct.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Glossary of Terms circulated

4.2 Network Rail are hoping to address the next regional meeting

4.3 No news from the TVLNP as yet.

Action: BB to try again.

4.4 Training presentations are being developed; Officers have shared notes about topics they are confident of covering.

Action: BB/CS to update at next meeting.

4.5 Officers updated members as to the status of vegetation cutting – all are taking place, although a number are several weeks late, all spray invasive weeds on RoW (and have no policy in place), but not on river banks as they are largely private. MR asked if separate funding was available to control invasive species, the Officers described no separate funding, and MT described joint work in Darlington with volunteer (The Tees River Trust) and landowner groups and highlighted the problem on the river bank with Yorkshire as there was little public access and as a consequence little control.

5. Laurie Norris, County Advisor NFU

RD welcomed Laurie to the meeting; Laurie began by handing out signs used by farmers and land managers on RoW, co-designed by the Kennel Club. It is an attempt to remind visiting public with dogs of their responsibilities around farm animals, particularly cattle. Laurie described as a 'common and growing occurrence' that dogs are let of their leads around livestock.

The NFU's response to dogs worrying sheep are the use of Dog Control Orders, which can be used in conjunction with the Local Authority, the Police and are far cheaper than diverting paths, which can lead to the creation of another RoW.

A discussion ensued around the Officers experience of Dog Control Orders, the cost split with farmers, NFU branches, and Local Authority, and the legal implications of such orders. All Officers agreed it was a positive way forward and CS volunteered to trial such an order, with the assistance of the NFU and the Hartlepool Police.

Action: It was agreed to keep the item on the agenda and support HBC where possible with this trial. Laurie closed with a request to the Officers - if they are handling a complaint about a RoW, please contact the NFU, and Laurie will make sure their local NFU Officer has a private word with the land manager/farmer to attempt a solution before legal proceedings begin. She would remind NFU members of their legal obligations in this month's NFU newsletter and request that hedges around stiles and bridleways are also trimmed. RD thanked Laurie for her very positive suggestions for a way forward to address sheep worrying on RoW.

6. Chairman's Report and Regional Roundup

Robin welcomed Christine Corbett to the meeting as a new member, and thought that her contribution to the work of the Forum would be very welcome.

RD expressed his frustration at the lack of progress with regard to the regional work; the stalling of the Regional Access Priorities project, and the interest shown by Network Rail to address the Regional Group with no meeting planned.

Action: RD to establish progress with Jim Milner of Natural England.

7. Members Activities

7.1.1 Co-ordinate LAF Activity – Natural England have asked members to consider the use of Facebook or Google + as a potential for networking as well as huddle. Huddle was described to Councillor Carson, and it was acknowledged that few members were involved with huddle in the TVLAF.

7.1.2 BB had very positive meetings with Councillor Carson of Darlington Borough Council and Councillor Rose of Stockton on Tees Borough Council, describing the work of the Forum to these new Cabinet members. Their active contribution would be valuable.

7.1.3 Editorial had been submitted to the national LAF newsletter, with contacts for Network Rail included. This has been published.

7.1.4 BB described the application being made to Sita Trust for funding to improve the permissive byway to Seaton Common by the Friends and the Hartlepool Borough Council.

7.1.5 RD asked if Anne Louise Orange could be invited to update the members on the Teesdale Way at the next meeting in December.

Action: BB to invite.

7.2 Coastal Access – CS described the Newport Bridge to Filey consultation as closed, the more difficult section to access between Newport Bridge and North Gare was being costed; with geophysical surveying taking place in those areas that require structures constructed. RM offered to ask Keith Mathews for further information from Stockton on Tees. A number of organisations were being approached to support the funding.

Action: BB to contact Andrew Best to provide an update from Natural England as regards this latest stage.

7.3 River Tees Re-discovered – CC enthusiasm for the work she is undertaking for the RTR project is evident, in the last four months she has developed 8 different types of walks

with local experts; they include Floral Foray, Butterfly Count and Rails and Sails. She is developing working relationships with local historians and archaeologists, making walking links to local festivals, and organising litter picking events. Work is underway developing a core team of Walk Leaders. The RTR project involves joint work with the four local authorities of Stockton on Tees, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland; RM has replaced all stiles with kissing gates and are considering boardwalks at Newsham Woods and MT are planning to link with their work programmes. Redcar and Cleveland are in discussion with Tata Steel regarding a redundant rail bridge as the Teesdale Way has had to be re-routed around it; it is anticipated work to replace it will begin this Autumn. The Re-discovering Skills project has led to volunteers tidying South Bank Train Station, and volunteer support is also being provided by the Friends of Snipe Pond. Middlesbrough have agreed to way mark Teesaurus Park.

The RTR are also planning a review event at Rockcliffe Hall with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson as guest speaker on the 20th November 2015.

Some discussion took place about the access at Broken Scar on the Teesdale Way; employees from Cummins are at an event over the weekend of the 19/20th September 2015 improving the Pumping Station and it is planned to cut back the vegetation, with Darlington's aim to use the path at the top of the flood bank to create a disabled access. Cummins may fund surfacing access to the field at the bottom. RD explained that local residents at Blackwell are interested in improving the privately owned footpath and install information boards.

8. Rights of Way Officers Reports

8.1 No report from Middlesbrough.

8.2 MT reported a problem on a cul-de-sac on a housing estate on Sutton Close in Darlington and has been advised that Darlington Borough Council wish to address the problem via a DMMO.

8.3 RM reported that Nacro were of great assistance in keeping up-to-date with the vegetation cutting required and any maintenance work.

8.4 CS had nothing to add to his submitted paper.

Please see papers already circulated.

9. Issues raised

None reported.

10. AOB

None reported.

11. Date of next meeting

8th December 2015 at Summerhill in Hartlepool, 4:00pm - 5:30pm.

Meeting closed at 5:30pm