

# Tees Valley Local Access Forum

## Minutes

29<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 10:30am

Kingsway, Billingham

**Attending:** Rob Brown (Vice Chair), Councillor Carson, Mike Cherrett, Peter Clark, Graham Clingan, Councillor Cranney, Yvonne Ramage (Chair), David Reed, Mike Roff (Vice Chair).

**Officers Attending:** Rob Morrow, Chris Scaife, Steve Petch, Beryl Bird.

**Guests:** Lucy Chapman, River Tees Rediscovered Partnership Manager, Tony Gordon Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Strategic Planning Team

**Apologies:** Councillor Rooney, Councillor Smith, Robin Daniels, Fiona Campbell, Judith Underwood, Stewart Williams, Paul Harman, Christine Corbett.

### 1. Introduction and Welcome

Yvonne Ramage welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Rob Morrow for hosting. In particular Yvonne welcomed Darlington Borough Council's new Countryside Access Officer Steve Petch, Tony Gordon from the Strategic Planning Team at Redcar and Cleveland Council, Lucy Chapman the new Partnership Manager at RTR, Councillor Kevin Cranney Chair of Regeneration at Hartlepool Borough Council and new member Peter Clark.

### 2. Apologies

As above.

### 3. Minutes of AGM 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

Councillor Carson proposed they were an accurate representation and RB seconded.

### 4. Matters Arising

#### SSSI and dog waste

YR described the background for the letter to the Hartlepool Mail, objecting to the volume of dog waste deposited on the SSSI at Seaton Dunes. The letter was published in October 2016 with no responses from readers. BB was able to confirm the Countryside Wardens had reported no change. Councillor Cranney contacted Tony Hanson Regeneration Director at HBC requesting a site meeting with CS; and requested an increase in the number of visits from Enforcement Officers.

*Action: CS to keep meeting updated.*

### 5. Chairs Report

5.1 YR confirmed the detail in the **Regional meeting** held in May, and in particular our shared interest in sustainable transport and recommended the TVLAF make contact with the Officer responsible for Sustainable Transport in the new Tees Valley Combined Authority.

*Action: BB to confirm details.*

5.2 YR confirmed no one was available to attend the **National Conference** in Birmingham, but was looking forward to studying the papers.

*Action: BB to circulate when available.*

5.3 YR described the outline of the **Countryside Access Officers' Meeting**, which had taken place before the main TVLAF meeting. All Officers present at that meeting agreed that the

TVLAF members need to be consulted about relevant developments at the informal planning stage, at One Stop Shop.

*Action: The Officers had been asked to remind their Planning Teams to include the TVLAF as part of this initial consultation. YR agreed to write to each Head of Planning.*

In addition, the Officers and the Chair intend to pull together a draft listing of those legal orders that the TVLAF membership could consider the most relevant.

*Action: List to be developed by Officers and circulated to the members for discussion.*

CS suggested that the TVLAF develop a Supplementary Planning document, which could be individually tailored to each Partner Authority and which could form part of the standard planning documentation available.

*Action: CS to provide master document for individual Officers to include in their own Authority Planning Pack.*

GC thought the key access to sustainable travel must be reflected in the local policies held within the Local Plans, which are all taking place over the next few months.

Councillor Cranney agreed and believes sharing of good practice is already underway as the HBC is already meeting with neighbouring Local Authorities to share information and develop their Local Plans.

YR welcomed Lucy Chapman to the meeting.

## **6. River Tees Rediscovered**

LC outlined the latest stage of RTR; which is now into year 3 of a 5 year Landscape Partnership Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery, developing over 20 projects covering Access and Learning, Skills training, Nature, Building and Social Heritage. Of the total £3m funding award, the team has committed approximately one third. Following last winter's withdrawal from the project by the Forestry Commission, it was necessary to re-profile the bid with the HLF and this has meant that the Teesdale Way and the associated Heritage Trail project now has £380K committed to it, with a further £30K available for promotion.

LC outlined her latest discussions with the new Combined Authority, who have agreed to use the Teesdale Way and the Heritage Trail Project as the backbone of a tourism - based website. This was very welcome news for the members, as concern had been expressed at the stalling of the website development, after including neighbouring LAFs in supporting this crucial part of the re-launch of the Teesdale Way.

The Combined Authority will give the site a longer life with national coverage and an experienced marketing team to develop it. LC hopes to use the £30K to match fund a complementary Arts and Culture activities programme engaging the local community using the Teesdale Way as the focus.

Following the re-profile, the Partnership team took the opportunity to introduce two further projects; re-naturalising parts of the River Skerne and cleaning up the river and becks, and a coastal wading birds project jointly managed with Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

The whole project has recently undergone a mid-term review, which highlighted the strength of their partnerships, and informed them that their figures showed they were exceeding volunteer contributions and local community engagement. For example, CC walks were booked weeks in advance and the project team was considering whether it

should charge for these, so introducing some longevity into this part of the project. Walk Leader training was also very busy.

Tony Gordon outlined his authority's present difficulties with the now - redundant steelworks site at South Bank and particularly the route the Teesdale Way takes alongside it. After some discussion about the route's elevated status to National Trail and the sensitive nature of the site, LC wondered if the re-opening of the path in the coming months could coincide with the launch of the Phase One of the North Tees Trail.

Councillor Carson asked about the overlap between Bright Water and RTR. LC confirmed that their boundaries meet and hopes to begin work with the Northern Heartland project, which has emerged from the now - closed Heart of Teesdale Project, in order to promote the Teesdale Way along the length of its route.

GC confirmed to the meeting that a tourism team is about to be recruited by the Combined Authority and that further links needed to be made across the partner authorities as well as into local businesses and the Tees Valley Rural Community Council.

MR thought the Barnard Castle based 'bedroom browser' was a model that could be used to develop the Teesdale Way website, with manageable sections promoted to include cycling/walking and tourism.

LC noted that Denise Orange, from Public Health England, is now on the RTR partnership board and is keen on assisting the uptake of physical outdoor activity, and Public Health Tees is investigating appropriate apps. Groundwork is also considering this technology approach to increasing access.

YR thanked Lucy for her news.

*Action: BB to circulate CC RTR walks programme.*

## **7. Members' Updates**

### **Traffic Lights for dogs/North Brierton Dog Control Project**

RB confirmed the news of the project had now appeared in the NFU newsletter and NFU online, and in Farmers Weekly magazine and Farmers Weekly on line, and had also appeared as a feature in BBC Look North news last week.

After a brief roundup of the project Rob was able to confirm that since installation in January 2017 there hadn't been a single incident; there had been no problems with dogs on the loose, and only 4 walkers had not had their dogs on leads on the site. He also thanked CS and BB for their work in developing the scheme.

CS said that IPROW (The Institute of Public Rights of way and Access Management) had tagged the Farmers Weekly story on their facebook page, with lots of likes!

CS had been asked by HBC to consider extending the project across the Hartlepool Borough offering to install the project on farms with RoW and sheep, and apart from one sign being vandalised believes that the signage could remain in place and be updated by Rob as appropriate. Cleveland Police have shown an interest in developing the project in their area.

*Action: CS and RB continue to liaise.*

## **England Coast Path Update**

RM described the 1.8km of new paths forming Phase One (opposite Saltholme and north to opposite Seal Sands car park) which was now complete, at a cost of £131K. It is expected that Phase Two (down to Calor Gas) will be completed later this year; however this would depend on their designations. One of the areas, at East Lagoon requires the construction of a stone causeway and fence and, for the first time, will allow dogs onto an RSPB site.

GC described the funding gap that remains, and SBC has applied to the RDPE for £130k to construct this causeway. CS thought the success of the ECP through the Teesside area was a good reflection of the excellent working relationships between large employers and sensitive landscapes managed in the first instance by local officers.

*Action: RM/GC agreed to keep the meeting up-to-date with developments.*

## **Local Nature Partnership Conference**

CS attended the conference at Preston Park, wearing a number of different 'hats', representing both HBC and the TVLAF. He described a very positive meeting with Linda Tuttiett, new Head of Culture and Tourism at the Combined Authority, and attended Workshops delivered by RTR, INCA and Middlesbrough Environment City. He thought it was a successful conference, and gave clear messages as to how the Local Nature Partnership work is developing.

LC had also attended the conference and described it as a joint one with the Tees River Trust, with emphasis on our natural assets, natural capital and natural health and wellbeing.

*Action: When Conference papers are available, BB to circulate.*

## **8. AOB**

8.1 Councillor Carson wanted to let the meeting know that the multiuser path, linking the £5 note bridge over the River Skerne, a RTR project – was now open from John Street South to Halfords.

8.2 LC said that the Apprenticeship Team, numbering 9, was available for £350.00/day. They had completed the recent landscaping work at Ingelby Hill.

8.3 A Taste of the Tees Festival will begin in the second weekend in August and continue throughout September. If you have any ideas for walks, or ideas to promote, please let Lucy know.

8.4 RM circulated a postcard reminding members to contribute to the consultation presently underway into the Stockton on Tees Rights of way Improvement Plan.

[https://consultation.stockton.gov.uk/portal/egd/d/rights\\_of\\_way\\_improvement\\_plan](https://consultation.stockton.gov.uk/portal/egd/d/rights_of_way_improvement_plan)

8.5 YR wanted to say thank you to the Elected Members for their support, as their influence was extremely important to the success of the work of the volunteers.

YR also thanked Tony Gordon from Redcar and Cleveland, for attending the meeting, and hoped that some shared work between the two Forums could develop.

YR hoped Peter Clark and Lucy Chapman had both enjoyed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

In Middlesbrough in September, date to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 12:30.