

Tees Valley Local Access Forum

Minutes

29th September 2016

4:00 – 5:45pm

Summerhill, Hartlepool

Present: Yvonne Ramage (Chair), Rob Brown (Vice Chair), Mike Roff (Vice Chair), Chris Scaife, Malcolm Thompson, Beryl Bird, Deborah Jefferson, Robin Daniels, Mike Cherrett.

Apologies: Fiona Campbell, Judith Underwood, Graham Clingan, Councillor Rooney, Graham Clingan, Councillor Sylvia Tempest Councillor Carson, David Reed, Christine Corbett, Paul Harman, Rob Morrow, Stewart Williams.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Yvonne Ramage (YR) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies – as above.

3. Thanks to Robin Daniels

Yvonne outlined the highlights of Robin's seven years in charge, and we all enjoyed his discomfiture!

4. Ratification of meeting

RB proposed and MR seconded the accuracy of the Minutes of the 30th June 2016, held at Kingsway House, Billingham.

5. Matters arising

5.1 YR outlined the latest detail regarding the Regional LAF, the latest meeting having taken place in Newburn on 6th July. Whilst there were no Minutes yet available from the meeting, all discussed the loss of Natural England direct links, further compounded by the news (today) that the National Co-ordinator Rob Leek had taken early retirement. CS had attended the official opening of the ECP at Middlesbrough's Transporter Bridge earlier in the summer as a rep from the TVLAF. He had a catch up with Brad Tooze (Natural England north east Area Manager) who explained that Defra had detailed the priorities of Natural England teams, that were now project specific, as opposed to area specific; in essence if there was a particular project the LAFs were working on, which needed Natural England input, this would be provided. They agreed to meet when there is a requirement to do so.

Action: CS has emailed Brad Tooze to confirm this, and was awaiting confirmation.

5.2 Liz Bray (Tyne and Wear Chair) had forwarded the Planning Guidance papers. These were discussed by MT and CS, each holding the view that they needed to be tailored to each LA.

Action: It was agreed that CS would circulate a further copy received during recent training that we could amend and circulate for use with TVLAF Officers.

5.3 YR had asked Geoff Hughes (Chair Durham) to join the joint work promoting the Teesdale Way with missing signage from Darlington to Piercebridge.

6. Teesdale Way – a Way Forward

YR outlined the recognised need for a website to promote the Teesdale Way, and asked if Tom Watson had been in touch. At the time of the meeting there had been no contact. CS outlined the RTR problem with the RTR website and the pressing need to improve it. This led to a discussion about maintaining such a site after the funding ended. It was suggested that those attractions listed would support it after the funding finished.

RD reminded the meeting that at a joint Chairs' meeting some years ago in Darlington, a website had been agreed and it was now a matter of some urgency that this be moved forward. A joint meeting with Durham LAF/Mike Ogden was recommended.

Action: TVLAF to host a meeting with Mike Ogden/Durham LAF and Tom Watson RTR to progress the website as soon as convenient.

Action: It was also agreed to invite Ian Tait/Redcar and Cleveland LAF to a similar meeting.

7. Standing Items

7.1 BB confirmed that the **Hartlepool Cycling Strategy** draft had been addressed; with joint use paths requested. RB thought that undertaken carefully, joint use promoted safety. YR thought the Hartlepool Draft Cycling Strategy made perfect sense, and 'well done' Hartlepool Borough Council.

7.2 CS described the latest developments as regards the **England Coast Path**. Newport Bridge to Filey was open, and Newport Bridge to North Gare was approved – the first stretch in England with no objections.

A section in Redcar and Cleveland through the now closed Tata steelworks was causing a problem; the present owners want the route closed for public safety, however the diversion is lengthy and unpleasant, alongside a busy dual carriageway. It had been agreed that Stockton on Tees Borough Council would hold the tendering for all works between North Gare and Port Clarence to allow the works to progress, managed by only one public authority. Certain wildlife designations will need to be met, however these were the only issues flagged.

7.3 YR asked that the meeting consider the good works being undertaken by **River Tees Re-discovered** (RTR) that appear to be largely unknown outside of the Working Group of Officers associated with the project; for example Snipe Pond, Broken Scar and much of the work so far on the Teesdale Way were all being managed, delivered and funded by RTR with the able assistance of local volunteers. BB had suggested that their press releases be forwarded in order to circulate their good news. The problems of their website only confounded the issue; that the investments were being unrecognised. Whilst the members all agreed the outstanding quality of Christine's regular update covering the walks undertaken and planned, could further updates be requested? Could RTR produce a quarterly newsletter that could be circulated throughout the area? DJ thought Sue Antrobus's WGP newsletter could be replicated for quality. RD thought whilst they already addressing the problem by recruiting an apprentice Marketing Assistant.

Action: It was agreed to ask Tom Watson to release a quarterly update to be circulated throughout the Tees Valley to partners and interested groups.

7.4 CS brought the meeting up-to-date with the progress of the **Traffic Lights for Dogs** project; all that remains is agreeing the signage & costings with the Hartlepool Police. It had been agreed that non-routine patrols from the Police and the HBC Enforcement Team would take place.

Action: CS to update the meeting with progress.

8. Ten Minute Training - PSPO

CS described the use of PSPO's, **Public Spaces Protection Orders**, as a replacement for Dog Control Orders, and are designed to be used by Local Authorities (to review every three years) any local issues with dogs and alcohol abuse in public spaces. With regard to access, the guidance from the Ramblers (attached) was the most clear; there need to be grounds for making an order and consultation with local residents in advance of this was recommended. Local Authorities do not need to consult with the Ramblers, BHS or indeed LAFs, but would be well advised to make sure any consultation was in place in advance of any order being made. To stop an order, representation needs to be made to the High Court within 6 weeks of commencement. Some discussion took place with regard to the Traffic Lights for Dogs project and the use by HBC of Dog Control Orders within Hartlepool. DJ described the need to request dogs on leads at the SSSI on the dunes at North Gare, and agreed with RB that professional dog walkers were walking sometimes 8-12 dogs, which they believed could not be managed. HBC Dog Control Orders detail no more than 4 dogs can be managed at any one time.

YR thanked CS for the first of the Ten Minute Training opportunity.

Action: BB to supply DJ and RB with HBC Dog Owners guide.

9. AOB

YR wanted to thank **Christine Corbett** for her 'magnificent programme' of walks and talks for RTR, and the programme for 2017 so far, and our thanks for including us in the progress of them.

YR also wanted to thank **Rob Morrow and Stockton on Tees Borough Council** for the completion of the South Stockton Greenway, she had 'the pleasure of cycling along the lovely sealed surface complete with edged LED lights, superbly way-marked traffic crossings, with access all the way to Castle Eden Walkway and beyond, all off road; it is fantastic, a great piece of work'.

DJ wanted to know if the SSSI at **Seaton Dunes LNR** could be protected under PSPOs, and as recent evidence cited the bags of dog excrement she and the volunteers collected - 284 in 2 x one hour visits in one week. 37 black bags of litter had also been collected during the same visits. Could a letter be sent to the Hartlepool Mail to flag up this situation? Can PSPO's be extended to the area of Local Nature Reserves?

Action: YR agreed to write to the Hartlepool Mail and CS/DJ agreed to investigate existing PSPO provision in Hartlepool.

RB wondered if HBC had any **usage figures for walkers** accessing the paths, as he thought 'there were not many people about'. CS thought visitors concentrated on honey pot areas, like Summerhill, and DJ agreed, everyone wanted to access a green space and felt less vulnerable in areas like Summerhill. She thought that Guided Walk Leaders were disappearing, and only large projects like RTR could build in Walk Leaders for guided walks to their bids. MR enquired if the liability issues were

putting off volunteers, and DJ was able to assure him that the Local Authorities shoulder this cost, to allow more volunteers to come forward.

10. Date of next meeting

December 8th 2016 at Darlington.

Meeting closed at 5.50pm