

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Annual Report 2005

Chairman's Introduction

I took over as Chairman of the North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum at the last meeting, which was held on 25th January 2006, having been a member since its inception in December 2003. I am a retired chartered accountant and a local committee member of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

My main interests are walking, shooting and bird watching, with an overall desire to see the countryside "well used, but not abused".

The first thirty eight months of the forum have seen it well attended by the members who have given of their time in ensuring that the draft and provisional maps of open country and registered common for North Lincolnshire were fully checked. I would particularly like to thank my two predecessors as chairman, Councillor David Wells and Guy Hoey, for ensuring that a base was set on which I hope and expect the future work of the form can be advanced.

The work of the forum is dependent on the support of the officers of North Lincolnshire Council and I would like to thank those members of staff for their contributions. On the downside, the lack of a full complement of staff has meant that work that is required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and other relevant legislation is behind schedule.

The forum was set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and its first duty was to comment on the proposed areas of open access in North Lincolnshire. These are areas of widely varying sizes. The largest of these, Risby Warren, raised questions of public safety because of the disused iron-ore mines that lie beneath. Furthermore, the Environment Agency's plans for Alkborough Flats – to return the land at high tides to the Humber Estuary to alleviate the risk of flooding elsewhere – have been discussed with the aim of maximising the opportunity for additional access and paths. In the future, questions of access, signage, etc., will need to

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What is the North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum?

The North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum was established by North Lincolnshire Council in response to sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and had its first meeting in December 2003. It works as an advisory body on the improvement of public access to land for open-air recreation and enjoyment, having regard to the needs of land management and the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area.

Who is on the Local Access Forum?

The North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum consists of fourteen members of the public plus three elected members (two members of the Conservative Group and one member of the Labour Group). Members are appointed, following open advertising, and the representation is balanced between those who use the countryside for recreation and those whose main interest or experience is in land management or farming. Other interests are also represented such as conservation, tourism and regeneration.

Who are the Members?

Forum Members	Status	Expertise and Interests
Guy Hoey	Access User	Walking, estate management, disabled access rights
Martin Broadbridge	Access User, represents Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Walking, conservation, countryside
Edward Anderson	Landowner's Consultant	Walking, landownership, conservation
David Dukes (Chairman 2006)	Access User	Walking, dog-walking, conservation, tourism
Andrew Towns	Farmer, Landowner	Farming, landownership, cycling, walking, conservation
Richard Alderson	Landowner's Consultant	Walking, landownership, farming, cycling, conservation
Hazel Armstrong	Access User	Green tourism, health, riding, cycling, walking, sees the future in connected Rights of Way
Katherine Hammond	Access User	Walking, conservation
Steve Ball	Access User	Area Access Officer for the Rambler's Association, walking, cycling
Frances Ross	General Interests	Walking, Rights of Way, member of the Lincolnshire Field Paths Association
Mary Jenkinson	Access User	Walking, motorised vehicular use, disabled access rights
Giles Dixon	Access User	Tourism, conservation, farming
Suki Jackson	Farmer, Landowner	Walking, dog-walking, landownership, farming
Yvonne Holmes	Access User	Walking, conservation, cycling
Cllr John England	Councillor	Walking, cycling, environmental issues, member of the Chesterfield Canal Trust
Cllr David Wells	Councillor	Conservation and environmental issues, member of English Heritage
Cllr Bernard Regan	Councillor	Environmental issues

Members were appointed for a period of three years; 2005 saw the appointment of three new members to the forum in October.

be addressed more fully.

Although North Lincolnshire has only limited areas of open access (statutorily defined as mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common), there are nevertheless major tasks for the forum ahead. The primary one is to ensure that all public rights of way are recorded as required in law upon the definitive map. Less emphasis appears to have been placed on this aspect of public-rights-of-way work by previous administrations, with the result that there is a lot of catching up to do with limited resources. Public assistance in this matter, therefore, will be appreciated. We also have to get on with ensuring that the public is aware of what they can and cannot do in the countryside.

As a group I feel we have learned a great deal since the inception of the Local Access Forum and I feel confident that we can become even more active in the years to come.

David Dukes
Chairman

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

North Lincolnshire Council have a statutory duty to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan setting out their vision for access improvements in the County. The forum has a statutory and strategic role to advise on:

- The extent to which public rights of way meet present and likely future needs.
- Existing and new opportunities that can be provided by rights of way networks for exercise and open-air recreation.
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind and partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.
- Priorities for implementation of the plan.

LAF agendas, minutes and dates of future meetings can be viewed on:

www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Transportandstreets/Publicrights/way/LocalAccessForum. If you require any documents on paper please contact the Secretary on (01724) 296433 or alex.dawson@northlincs.gov.uk.

What has the North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum achieved?

The forum had met on the following occasions:

- 16 February 2005
- 18 May 2005
- 19 October 2005

The North Lincolnshire LAF has considered the implications of new rights to walk on designated open country and registered common land.

During the year the forum:

- observed the progress of appeals following publication of the provisional maps
- responded to various consultations of CROW (Countryside and Rights of Way) Act implementation
- responded to consultation on the Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) document Amendment of the Local Access Forums (England) 2002

The following topics were discussed:

- Alkborough Flats
- Risby Warren
- Access to open countryside
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The LAF welcomes open access which was implemented in 31 October 2005. The forum is keen to ensure that land can be opened up without adversely affecting maintenance budgets for the existing rights of way network. The LAF will have a continuing role in advising on priorities, information boards and appropriate signing, education about rights and responsibilities of users and landowners and the need for restrictions on access.

