

# NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Annual Report 2007

## Chairman's Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce this Annual Report on behalf on all the members of the Forum. Like me, all of us have a love of the countryside and North Lincolnshire presents many superb areas for access and enjoyment of the great outdoors.

New members are always welcome and I extend an invitation to anyone who is interested to contact the LAF secretary – details at the end of the report.

The Forum was initially involved in the Open Access Areas as defined in the CROW Act 2000 but has extended its role into the general area of public rights of way. The forum is closely linked with the officers of the Public Rights of Way department and I am pleased to say an excellent working relationship has evolved.

As you all know, we are being encouraged to take more exercise and the LAF is keen to encourage the provision of access areas, footpaths and bridleways for all to enjoy. I urge you to check out the footpaths in your local area and in the wider county and enjoy the views, the wildlife and the flora and fauna.

**Edward Anderson**  
Chairman

## 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.



Above is a photograph of Edward Anderson (Chairman) and Councillor Bernard Regan (Forum Member) at Burton Stather, Public Bridleway 167 after major re-surfacing of the Bridleway following damage caused in the June 2007 floods.

## Who is on the Local Access Forum?

The North Lincolnshire Local Access Forum consists of 12 members of the public plus three elected members (two members of the ruling Group and one member of the opposition 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
Edward Anderson (Chairman) Andrew Towns	Landowner's Consultant Farmer, Landowner	Walking, landownership, conservation 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
Katherine Hammond Steve Ball	Access User Access User	Walking, conservation 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 Suki Jackson	Access User Farmer, Landowner	Tourism, conservation, farming Walking, dog-walking, landownership, farming
Margaret Nixon Cllr Bernard Regan Cllr Alan Smith Cllr David Wells	Access User Councillor Councillor Councillor	Walking, cycling, disabled access Environmental issues Environmental and access issues Conservation and environmental issues, member of English Heritage

## What does the Forum Do?

### LAF Visit to the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve

A joint visit to the above was made on probably the hottest day of the summer in 2006. We were invited along by the Doncaster LAF and ably looked after by PROW officers from Doncaster MBC. We visited both Thorne and Hatfield Moors to see the huge task of returning the former peat workings back in peat wetlands. There are already plenty of walks and longer term there will be many more paths. Access and parking issues are being addressed and hopefully more people will soon visit these internationally important areas. Further details can be found on Natural England's website. <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

## Visit to Alkborough Flats

Early in 2007 the LAF meeting was held at Whitton Village Hall and was preceded by a visit to Alkborough Flats to view progress on the flood prevention scheme.

Environment Team Manager – Tim Allen – led the tour and LAF members were able to see first hand the work on this important scheme. Members were pleased to see the creation of new footpaths between the new lagoons and the care taken not only to make provision for walkers but importantly to cater for wildlife.

Whilst the need to provide adequate parking had not yet been dealt with, this was in hand and further work throughout the next year should bring the project to an end.

This area, besides being an important flood measure, provides a superb opportunity for North Lincolnshire residents to explore the new footpaths – some 9 miles - and to get close to the wildlife which are rapidly making the area their home.

The LAF plans a further visit when the work on the footpaths etc is complete.

## Training for LAF Members

Members attended a training session over two half days entitled 'An Introduction to Public Rights of Way' after receiving an invitation to do so from the Chair of the Planning Committee. The training was primarily intended for Council members and was well supported.

The course began with a background presentation to public rights of way and the recording of Legal Rights. The role of the Highway Authority including enforcement, maintenance and improvement of rights of way was illustratively covered. Another item which proved interesting was Village Greens and Common land.

LAF members learnt a lot from the session in particular the extent of the legislation officers have to abide by in dealing with public rights of way issues. Members also feel they are now better able to comment and express views on matters affecting PROW.

The session demonstrated the close working relationship which is developing between the officers, councillors and LAF members and was very worth while.

## Access to the English Coast.

Defra recently published proposals to improve access to the English Coast and there was a period for consultation and comment which ended in June 2007. The proposals include estuaries up to the first major crossing point inland. LAF members discussed the Humber Estuary which is on the northern most boundary of the Local Authority and it was agreed the Humber Bridge was the sensible designated crossing point. It is thought that Natural England (the body which has superseded both English Nature and The Countryside Agency) may consider designating more upstream crossing points and the LAF will monitor any new proposals.

## Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

Local Authorities are required by central government to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the LAF was able to comment on the draft proposal before the final version was presented to North Lincolnshire Council's Planning Committee for final approval on 4 January 2008.

Many of you will have seen a recent report in the local press publicising this document and the LAF agrees it is important to improve, maintain and develop new paths and bridleways. It is keen to encourage the Council in promoting its 'walking to health' project and the scheme to improve the footpath network will take some twenty years.

However, the LAF is disappointed to note that central funding for the RoWIP is based on just £2.00 per hectare and bearing in mind North Lincolnshire has about 334 miles of public rights of way there is very little money to carry out works.

The council will be looking for money from such bodies as the National Lottery, landfill tax credit schemes, agri-environment schemes and charitable trusts.

LAF agendas, minutes and dates of future meetings can be viewed on:  
[www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Transportandstreets/Publicrightsoway/LocalAccessForum](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Transportandstreets/Publicrightsoway/LocalAccessForum). If you require any information please contact the Secretary on (01724) 296235 or [dinah.lilley@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:dinah.lilley@northlincs.gov.uk).



Alkborough Flats