

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

		Paper Number
1.	3.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF13/09
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	3.10 Quiet Lanes Neil Winship, Parish Councillor Waldringfield, SALC representative on SC&H AONB Partnership Committee	Presentation
5.	3.40 Nick Collinson SCC Natural Environment Manager	Presentation
6.	4.10 LAF National Conference	LAF13/10
7.	4.20 Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Forestry Policy Statement • Rights of Way Improvement Plans of the Future • Review of Maps of Open Country and Registered Common Land 	LAF13/11 LAF13/12 LAF13/13
8.	4.40 SLAF Recruitment	LAF13/14
9.	4.50 Any Other Business	
10.	4.55 Public question time	
11.	5.00 Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds on Thursday 24 January 2013
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	Jill Christley
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

1. CLOSED SESSION – NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Open Access Restrictions

DF, BH and GM had attended a teleconference with Natural England at which the populations of rare ground-nesting birds in Suffolk had been discussed.

DF outlined Natural England's proposals to retain restrictions in some areas of Open Access land where there were populations of threatened bird species, and to lift restrictions in those areas where no threatened bird species had been identified, as per their guidance.

Having discussed the implications of the proposals, and the effect of visitors on vulnerable wildlife, the Forum agreed to Natural England's proposals.

DF BH and GM felt that the teleconference had gone well, using technology which allowed all delegates to see and interact with site maps and discuss issues effectively, although MT expressed some disquiet that teleconferencing is not the best way to address issues like this.

MOD Consultation

There are two areas of MoD land which would otherwise be Open Access sites. The MoD wish to retain bylaws restricting access to these sites. In the event of the land being sold the bylaws would 'drop off', and the land would become Open Access. The Forum agreed to the MOD renewing the bylaws.

Natural England National Nature Reserves (NNR)

Natural England had asked for SLAF's approval of a proposal to dedicate a large area of open access land to higher rights. This proposal would create a circular route for walking, cycling and horse riding.

The Forum agreed in principle, but MT believed some of the land belongs to RSPB and was outside NE's control to dedicate.

ACTION MT to check whether proposed Open Access land belongs to RSPB

2. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Bryan Collen (Chair) (BC), David Barker (Vice-Chair) (DB), Barry Hall (BH), Gordon Merfield (GM), Alan Moore (AM), Monica Pipe (MP), Norman Southgate (NS), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Mike Taylor (MT), John Wayman (JW), Anthony Wright (AWR).

SCC Officers Present: Jill Christley (minutes), David Falk (DF), Glyn French (GF), Andrew Woodin (AW).

Apologies: Melinda Appleby (MA), Margaret Hancock, Ann Langley, Cllr Sandy Martin.

Guests: Sharon Berry, Definitive Map Officer, Suffolk County Council. Saraid Cann, Professional Advisor, Adult and Community Services, Suffolk County Council.

3. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF 12/35)

The minutes of the meeting were agreed to be an accurate record, all action points had been completed. There were no matters arising.

4. Declaration of interest

None declared.

5. Issues Affecting a Walk in the Countryside

BC welcomed to the meeting Sharon Berry (SB), Definitive Map Officer.

SB had recently completed an MA on rights of way, and presented an overview of her findings, which had identified historical, psychological, physical and legal aspects to the use of rights of way. She noted young people no longer access the countryside as they used to, but when they do they are more likely to come back to it at some point in the future.

SB had set up a focus group to identify the factors that affect the confidence of people using rights of way, and asked:

- 'How does proximity to 'private' property, be it residential or agricultural, affect a person's experience of using a footpath?'
- If feelings of timidity or discomfort are experienced when walking close to 'private' property, what factors might influence these feelings and can anything be done to overcome them?
- What effect does the physical environment have on a person's experience of using a footpath and to what extent can the way we manage or adapt the physical environment encourage people to use a route?

On routes passing close to or through residential property people felt reluctant to enter, and afraid of conflict and challenge. They felt embarrassed, and concerned at being in the 'wrong place'. They didn't like to go through in a large group. Residential gates were off-putting, despite clear signage; it was felt that they were symbolic barriers. However, where there was a dedicated pedestrian gate and good signage, they felt more positive.

Around agricultural property they were concerned about machinery, vehicles and dogs. Where there was a well marked route, and a visible exit, and they were sure of their location they felt more confident.

It was found that un-tethered dogs, and in areas away from private property livestock, badly maintained stiles/gates/bridges and path surfaces and road links were off-putting, whereas good signage, well trodden paths, routes shown on map or in a leaflet or guidebook were all encouraging.

The presentation raised a number of topics:

Walking in large groups: Large groups of walkers can cause problems for farmers, as they spread out, particularly on cross-field paths. AW explained that people like to walk in groups, as this gives confidence to those who are unused to visiting the countryside, and reading maps, and is a social event for some.

Gates: AW told the forum that security gates across rights of way were unlawful. DB pointed out that with people using rights of way passing through or near to farms and domestic property there is an increased threat to the security of the residents.

Disabled users: AM said that kissing gates are easier for disabled people to use than stiles, and not all are suitable for wheelchairs. He added that well maintained paths are easier for disabled people to use.

AW asked members to consider what they could do to encourage people into the countryside. In response: BC observed that there were few young people visiting the country or joining LAFs; DB lamented the loss of stewardship schemes; AWr told the forum that Sustrans go into schools to raise awareness of cycling, he suggested that the Ramblers Association could do something similar; JW said that some people like to find their own way using maps, and enjoy paths that are not over-maintained; AWr suggested that farm tours were a good way to get youngsters into the countryside.

BC thanked SB for her presentation.

6. Countryside Access and Health

BC welcomed Saraid Cann (SC), Professional Advisor, Suffolk County Council. SC delivered a presentation 'Health and the Natural Environment'.

In April 2012 responsibility for Public Health was transferred from the NHS to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CGGs). Suffolk County Council's Adult and Community Services team are putting together a strategy for Suffolk, this will be announced soon. They have identified a number of areas of concern: The drop off in exercise in teenagers; childhood obesity; and low activity levels in adults. It is estimated that this will lead to increased health costs in excess of £12.2million per year in the future.

The team is looking at new ways of encouraging more healthy lifestyles, with the ambition of making Suffolk the "Most Active County". The aim will be to achieve 16,700 more active people with more healthy lifestyles, reduce health inequality and

preventable illness and to improve the life chances of Suffolk people. It is also hoped that this will boost Suffolk's economy.

To achieve these aims the team are looking at schemes around the country such as 'Activmobs' created by Kent County Council and the Design Council to improve the health and quality of life of Kent residents and develop a new style of service that starts with people's everyday lives. Modern social media and social marketing techniques are being used to encourage Kent residents to achieve a more active lifestyle. More information can be found at <http://activmob.org/about/>.

Nationally, the Change 4 Life initiative, the Olympics legacy and guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) are helping to raise awareness and improve diet, exercise, health and life expectancy.

Access to green spaces and being more active can lead to improved health and reduced obesity levels. This has many positive effects on the community such as increased life expectancy, improved mental wellbeing and self esteem and reduced stress levels, financial benefits, and social cohesion. Even a view of trees can help patients recover more quickly.

One of Suffolk's greatest assets is its natural environment, with gardens, allotments, town parks and village greens, farmland, coastline, woodland, forest, heath, marshland, lakes and rivers offering many opportunities to improve local health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. SCC noted that an outcome of the forthcoming Suffolk strategy will be healthy access to the natural environment.

The Forum discussed SC's presentation, and raised concerns regarding the lack of funding for facilities such as running clubs. BC felt that people need to know that they will enjoy being more active. DB suggested that more could be done through schools. It was agreed that SLAF should lobby local CCGs and the Department of Public Health for more resources.

ACTION SLAF write to CCG and DPH to lobby for resources to encourage healthy access to the countryside.

7. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

See LAF 13/01. NICE are developing guidance on walking and cycling. The evidence they were looking at was focused on urban environments. SLAF have a role to play in making other organisations aware of rural facilities and their benefits.

AWr – in order to make people more active we need to spend a lot of money. We need to improve access to the countryside for urban residents.

MP asked whether SLAF could give more focus and be more active on s106 agreements e.g. the Ipswich northern fringe. It was agreed that SLAF would lobby the Ipswich Borough Council planners.

ACTION SLAF to lobby IBC planners to incorporate healthy and sustainable countryside access in the northern fringe proposals.

GM left the meeting.

8. Triennial Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England

See LAF 13/02. AW was concerned that changes to Natural England may mean that rights of way and access are not given adequate priority. SLAF agreed to respond to the consultation, and champion access, including the successor to the stewardship schemes.

ACTION SLAF submit response to consultation.

9. LAF Chairs' and Vice Chairs' East of England Meeting

See LAF 13/03.

LAF National Conference 2013

See LAF 13/04.

BC noted rail crossings was discussed and AW responded SCC had recently met the Network Rail sub group to discuss level crossing closures. Priority has been given to crossings at Great Barton, Needham Market (Gypsy Lane), and Trimley. National Rail have appointed level crossing managers, focussing on safety. BH will be attending the conference.

10. Updates

- **A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement Scheme**

See LAF 13/05. Works are under way. There are still access issues. AWr noted work to make de-trunked roads dual purpose will not start until after the road is complete. SLAF must ensure that this is completed satisfactorily.

- **Independent Panel on Forestry**

See LAF 13/06.

- **Sizewell C Public consultation**

See LAF 13/07. SLAF were notified of the 'Coastal Processes Presentation' which to be held on 29 January 2013 at Snape Maltings.

SCC are asking EDF to upgrade the route between Sizewell and Aldeburgh to create a circular cycle route. AWr pointed out that traffic levels are likely to increase, and may make the route less suitable for tourists.

ACTION SLAF respond to consultation and request presentation from EDF to SLAF at next meeting.

- **Wild Anglia**

See LAF 13/08.

ACTION DF to invite Wild Anglia to next SLAF Meeting.

- **Gating Order Consultation**

A request to extend permission for a gate at Felixstowe had been received. DF explained that the gate had been erected due to anti-social behaviour in the area, and had been very effective. SLAF agreed to extend permission.

ACTION DF confirm that gate may be retained.

11. Any Other Business

No further matters were discussed.

12. Public Question Time

No members of the public attended the meeting.

13. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

18 April 2013 15.00 **Great Blakenham Village Hall** (NB this is a change to the venue discussed at the meeting).

11 July 2013 15.00 venue TBA.

17 October 2013 Elveden Village Hall.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	LAF National Conference
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	Barry Hall
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

Introduction

This year's LAF National Conference was held at Sheffield on 27 February 2013. It was attended by representatives from 71 of the 82 LAFs. The day was hosted by Martin Shaw from the Access Team at Natural England and Chaired by Steve Scoffin. The day consisted of three talks interspersed by workshop sessions covering 12 topics of which delegates could attend three.

Talk 1. Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) – Stephen Herbert (NE)

Started in 2009 by NE, Defra and Forestry Commission to capture information on visits to the natural environment to provide national data to Local Authorities on origin/destination, why people don't visit countryside and suggest ways of engaging with the natural environment. It will also help to provide evidence for the 2020 Biodiversity outcomes and influenced NE's White Paper with information on access to green spaces and children's engagement with the outdoors. The research is carried out by face to face interviews in the home (145,000 in three years).

Key results 2011 – 2012.

1. How many – 2.73 billion visits to the natural environment, 65 visits per adult per year, 42% of population visited in previous seven days, 10% non-visitors because of age or less affluent
2. Where – 1. Town parks, 2. PROW's, 3. Woodland/forest
3. How – 64% on foot, 29% by car, 3% by public transport
4. Visit duration – 2 hours
5. Activities – 1. Dog walking, 2. Walking
6. Expenditure – 26% involved expenditure, average £28 per visit (half on food), total £20.3 billion
7. Why – 1. Dog walking, 2. healthy exercise, 3. relax & unwind

There is an annual report of annual/regional data and results can be used at a local level.

Website; www.naturalengland.org.uk/mene

Talk 2. Providing Access to Hampshire's Heritage (PATHH) – Sue Coles (Hampshire LAF)

Consultation on the Hampshire Countryside Access Plan produced a strong desire for additional access through higher rights, access away from busy roads and improvements to the network. With the closure of Delivering Lost Ways Project and changes in legislation from 2016, Hampshire set up its own project PATHH which ran from Sept 2010 to November 2012. The LAF initiated the PATHH project which has been managed by a steering committee representing all interests.

This led to recruiting over 100 volunteers who were provided with training by staff at the County Records Office and the Definitive Map team to review up to four different maps for each of the parishes as well as aerial photos to identify routes that could possibly improve the rights of way network. The more promising routes would then be further investigated using the normal legal procedures. To date of the 30 routes identified, 5 taken further and 3 of these put on definitive map by 2011.

The project was supported by a grant of £46,600 from HLF enabling a project officer to be appointed. It also included a heritage and education element including an exhibition, workshops with 8 - 9 year olds in schools and talks to local history societies and user groups.

Talk 3. ROWIPs of the Future – Jonathan Twinney (DEFRA)

Natural Environment White Paper Para 4.33 states

4.33 Clear, well-maintained paths and bridleways are important to give people access to the natural environment and can be enjoyed by cyclists, walkers and horse riders. There is considerable scope to improve and extend this network, for example through Local Access Forums and Rights of Way Improvement Plans. We will make it easier for local communities and civil society groups to get involved in developing and maintaining networks of paths and accessible green space.

Highway Authorities have a duty to review ROWIPs and consult with LAFs. Defra/NE is sending a questionnaire to all LA's. LTP provides money to implement ROWIPs when opportunity arises especially for improved access for disabled and higher right user.

Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement – Access & Recreation mentions ROWIPs as a means to improve Rights of Way access, provides guidance to assist LA's, would encourage higher rights and routes being put on Definitive Maps.

National Nature Reserve dedications will include higher rights where possible to provide links with current network.

Canal & River Trust policy statement

Green Infrastructure Partnership (NEWP) linking green corridors between urban and rural areas could also include new PRoWs.

National Trails aim to maximise socio/economic benefits, provide multi use opportunities and circular routes linked to local communities.

Local Nature Partnerships should be made aware of the importance of public access and include it in their plans.

LAF Annual Reports are very important as both Defra and NE use them to provide feedback to the Minister

Workshop 1 – LAF involvement in Local Nature Partnerships – Eric Clark (Wilts & Swindon LAF)

Wiltshire & Swindon LAF involved with their LNP (not a statutory body) from the bid stage as there seems to be an overlap of responsibility. Although access is a small part of LNP remit, access to the countryside is a good way to improve wellbeing. LAFs need to be proactive in getting involved and develop a relationship with their LNP. There are problems where LNP bigger than county but links with them can aid links with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Health & Wellbeing initiatives, to support economy and health agendas, and health can supply funding for access e.g improved access furniture and improved routes for older people.

Several LAFs had representatives on LNP e.g. Durham & Cambridgeshire, some on working groups e.g. Wiltshire & Swindon. Question raised whether the money these groups have could be better spent on access improvements rather than healthy living leaflets.

Workshop 2 – Open Access/Coastal Access – Chris Pope/Andrew Best (NE)

NE decided in 2011 that for NNR's owned or on 99 year lease they would look at dedicating as open access under section 16 of CROW to be consistent with Forestry Commission in order to allow additional public enjoyment, support the message that people and wildlife can co-exist and as an example to other landowners. 40% NNRs already open access, 75% have rights of way, many permissive. 81 are eligible for dedication. NE board will decide. Existing access management formalised, budget to mitigate any conflicts and possibility of dedicating higher rights.

There was an update on the English Coast Path set up under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. First stretch opened in time for 2012 Olympics, work underway by delivery teams on a further five stretches, including part of Norfolk Coast Path all built to National Trail standards to create a long-distance walking route (any current higher rights remain), land between route and sea to be 'spreading room', automatic roll-back if route eroded. At present NE makes significant contribution to maintenance.

Workshop 3 – Impact of Cuts – Charles Ecroyd (Cumbria LAF)

This workshop was not as interesting as it was mainly some LAFs moaning about budget cuts to PRow maintenance, staffing cuts, including lack of officer/secretarial support for LAFs. It made me glad to be from Suffolk where our LAF is taken seriously by the County Council and supported by officers and members alike.

Plenary Session

NE looking to have funding to continue Regional Co-ordinators from 1 April (at present no one in post for East of England, Suffolk Norfolk Manager – Sarah Wilson, Local Delivery – Lynda Foster). The LAF Handbook is to be revised. Suggestions that examples of good practice should be circulated and there were requests for the National LAF should be reconstituted.

All papers and reports from the conference would be made available on Huddle.

Barry Hall – March 2013

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Government Forestry Policy Statement
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

Government Forestry Policy Statement

The Government's response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's final report was published on 31st January 2013 and can be found here:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2013/01/31/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement/>

It acknowledges the importance of the Panel's report and confirms that the Government shares its vision for the future of our forests. It covers, among other things, the future of the Public Forest Estate, woodland creation and management, the economic development of the forestry sector, community involvement in local woodlands, public access and tree health. The statement confirms that the Public Forest Estate will remain in public ownership, and announces that a new body will be established to hold the Estate in trust of the nation and manage it for the long-term benefit of people, the economy and the environment.

The statement notes a number of times that the Government is reviewing forestry functions alongside the Triennial Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England. Other statements of note by the Government relating to access include:

- "We will continue to look for ways to improve access to woodlands, particularly in and around our towns and cities."
- "We want as many people as possible to be able to access green space, including woodlands, for exercise, leisure and recreational purposes and, in particular, we are keen to see greater multi-use access to woodland in and around our towns and cities. We will work with others to explore opportunities for increasing access. We believe that this is best done at the local level, for example through the further development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans."
- "We will provide guidance to assist Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements and fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality, and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse."

Responses to recommendations in The Independent Panel on Forestry's report published on 4 July 2012 include:

<p>Recommendation 4 That Local Health and Wellbeing Boards implement their public health duties by investing in local access to nature and woodlands.</p>	<p>We agree that green space contributes to health and wellbeing. This is reflected in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, which underpins the new public health duty of local authorities, and which specifically includes an indicator relating to the utilisation of green space for health and exercise. The importance of green space is also recognised in the proposed guidance intended to support Local Health and Wellbeing Boards' development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments for local areas.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 Government and other woodland owners to give as many people as possible ready access to trees and woodlands for health and well-being benefits – this means planting trees and woodlands closer to people and incentivising more access to existing woodlands.</p>	<p>We agree that as many people as possible should have access to green space including woodland or to a wooded area close to where they live. We will continue to work with landowners as well as businesses, civil society bodies and community groups to explore opportunities for encouraging greater access to existing woodland and to incentivise the creation of new woodland in accessible locations, including in and around our towns and cities. We will be providing guidance to Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans and funding a project</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 Measurably increase the quantity and quality of access to public and privately owned woodlands, by incentivising provision through a combination of paths or open access, particularly where this delivers greatest public benefit; and by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government seeking to increase significantly the population with access to a wood within close proximity of their home. Progress in meeting this ambition to be reported regularly, using the criteria in the Woodland Access Standard. • Providing a single web gateway for information about access to woodlands open to public visits. 	<p>We agree that the quantity and quality of public access to woodland should be increased where appropriate. We will continue to work with landowners and others to extend access. We will also continue to use the Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard to measure progress. A new baseline will be available in 2013 for measuring access improvements. This will allow more effective targeting of future access improvement initiatives. We will continue to provide data for the Woodland Trust's VisitWoods web gateway and work with the Woodland Trust to identify future funding.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13 Local Nature Partnerships and Local Enterprise Partnerships, working with Forest Services, should identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and promote landscape scale initiatives for bigger and better 	<p>We agree that there is real scope for Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to identify and address local needs and priorities in areas such as habitat restoration and protection, climate change adaptation,</p>

<p>connected habitats, with greater resilience to climate change;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and promote opportunities for greater local access; • and promote opportunities to expand the production of timber; • trees and woods in need of better management, and areas which require woodland expansion to deliver ecosystem services; • woodland habitats that warrant greater protection, and work with Natural England to secure these as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; • those parts of forests in need of restoration to nationally important habitats. 	<p>access and recreation, woodland protection, management and creation, as well as timber business development. Defra and the Forestry Commission already work closely with both LNPs and LEPs and will continue to develop these relationships further.</p>
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Within these statements and responses it is possible that the forum's disappointment that the Panel did not make a more robust and focussed recommendation to extend the dedication of higher access rights of public access in the public forest estate can be addressed. The commitment to greater multi use access and providing guidance to local authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements, is encouraging.

Coincidentally, the recent posting of a Defra presentation on "ROWIPs of the Future" on Huddle has a page headed "Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement – Access and Recreation" which states:

"We want as many people as possible to be able to access green space, including woodlands, for exercise, leisure and recreational purposes and, in particular, we are keen to see greater multi-use access to woodland in and around our towns and cities. We will work with others to explore opportunities for increasing access. We believe that this is best done at the local level, for example through the further development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans."

- "Provide guidance to assist Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements.
- "Fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality, and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse."

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Rights of Way Improvement Plans of the Future
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

Rights of Way Improvement Plans of the Future

The Defra presentation (below) was posted on Huddle last month. It includes Defra's vision for rights of way on page 3, ROWIPs and LAF input on page 4, the forestry policy statement on page 5 and Govt's keenness to see greater multi use access to woodland, and on the last page the importance of LAFs making local nature partnerships (Wild Anglia) understand the benefits of public access as part of their plans...

The county council awaits further advice on the shape of future improvement plans from Defra, which in January sent a questionnaire to highway authorities to establish the current state of play across the country of the ROWIP review process.

DEFRA –RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS OF THE FUTURE

- Defra team update.
- The Review of ROWIPs.
- Areas of work for the LAF review of ROWIPS to consider.



Commons and Access Implementation Team

Head of Team – Margaret Read

Responsible for -

- Implementation of the Commons Act 2006.
- Review of town and village greens registration system.
- Policy advice on common land generally (e.g. commons in environmental stewardship).
- Policy on public rights of way.
- Management of public rights of way and commons casework undertaken by Planning Inspectorate.
- Open Access Land under part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Coastal access.



Defra Vision

The Natural Environment White Paper outlines the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years.



“4.33 Clear, well-maintained paths and bridleways are important to give people access to the natural environment and can be enjoyed by cyclists, walkers and horse riders. There is considerable scope to improve and extend this network, for example through Local Access Forums and Rights of Way Improvement Plans. We will make it easier for local communities and civil society groups to get involved in developing and maintaining networks of paths and accessible green space.”

Rights of Way Improvement Plans

- ROWIPS are still relevant, not old hat!



- NEWP has highlighted ROWIPS and links them with LAFs.
 - Local Highway Authorities have a duty to review their RoWIPs – many might already be doing that now.
 - Defra/NE ROWIP questionnaire.
 - Authorities have a duty to consult any LAF in their area in carrying out their review.
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Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement - Access and Recreation

“We want as many people as possible to be able to access green space, including woodlands, for exercise, leisure and recreational purposes and, in particular, we are keen to see greater multi-use access to woodland in and around our towns and cities. We will work with others to explore opportunities for increasing access. We believe that this is best done at the local level, for example through the further development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans.”

- Provide guidance to assist Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements.
 - Fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality, and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse.
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National Nature Reserves

- In 2012 Richard Benyon approved Natural England plans to dedicate its freehold NNR estate under section 16 of CROW.
- Defra is encouraging Natural England to pursue dedicated higher rights for horse riders and cyclists where possible.
- LAFs will be part of the process through their statutory role in the section 16 dedications process, but role is wider.
- Local knowledge will be vital to maximise the benefits for each local site.



Canal and River Trust

Policy statement. "Our trustees believe we can unlock our waterways' potential by:

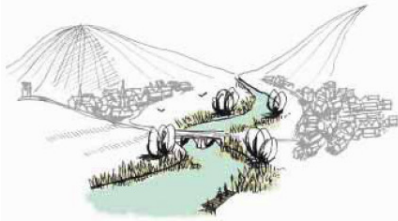
- Ensuring our canals and rivers are open, accessible and safe.
- Inspiring more people to enjoy the canals and rivers and support our work. "



Defra Green Infrastructure Partnership

The Green Infrastructure Partnership fulfils a commitment made in the Natural Environment White Paper. The Partnership brings together expertise from over 270 partner organisations from civil society, professional bodies, local authorities, developers, planners and social housing enterprises, and academics, among others to identify and develop solutions to help local decision makers adopt a Green Infrastructure approach in their day-to-day planning, development and delivery.

Richard Benyon – “It’s about ecological connectivity. It’s about bringing countryside into the city – trees where we need them, green transport corridors, connecting rural and urban areas. “



National Trails

Richard Benyon - “I believe that there is still more which could be done to realise the potential of these assets to our economy.”

- Consider the possibility of making links to existing National Trails from the existing public rights of way network.
- Look at where National Trails could become multi-use trails and be used by horse riders and cyclists.
- Consider short circular routes on National Trails linked to local communities



And finally.....

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

- LNPs are partnerships of stakeholders who will work at a strategic scale to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment.
- Important for LAFs to make LNPs understand public access and its many benefits and to include access as part of their plans.

Annual Reports

- It is important that Local Access Forums submit annual reports on time so Defra can gather national information on Forums and provide accurate briefing for the Minister.
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END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Review of Maps of Open Country and Registered Common Land
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

Review of Maps of Open Country and Registered Common Land – Deferred

Natural England is required under section 10 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to undertake a review of the eight conclusive maps of open country and registered common land in England, some of which were first published in 2004 and others in 2005.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires Natural England to undertake the first review not more than ten years after the issue of the conclusive map. Further reviews must also then be undertaken within ten years of that first review.

As a consequence of the Government's overall budgetary situation, which means that not all of the work that the Department and Natural England consider useful and important can be given priority at the moment, Ministers have decided to defer the review of the maps.

Regulations, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, will therefore be made to extend the review period in section 10(2)(a) of the 2000 Act to not more than fifteen years after the issue of the original conclusive maps, and to also extend the period in section 10(2)(b) of the Act to not more than twenty years after each previous review.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Recruitment
Meeting Date:	18 April 2013
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Great Blakenham Village Hall

SLAF Membership Terms, Renewals and Recruitment

SLAF membership currently sits at 15 members. Seven memberships terms expire in 2013 and 6 in 2015. Two members are elected to SLAF representing County and District Councils.

Current membership terms are:

Name	Term			
	April 2013	July 2013	October 2013	April 2015
Margaret Hancock	X			
Ann Langley	X			
Alan Moore	X			
Norman Southgate		X		
Gordon Merfield		X		
Barry Hall			X	
Melinda Appleby			X	
David Barker				X
Bryan Collen				X
Monica Pipe				X
Mike Taylor				X
John Wayman				X
Anthony Wright				X
Cllr Jane Storey	July 2013			
Cllr Sandy Martin	February 2014			

For terms ending in 2013, please advise if you would like to renew membership.

All membership ending in 2013 will be extended to October 2013 to bring renewals in line. Recruitment will commence in July, allowing applications to be sifted in August, interviewing in September, and new memberships to start in October.

END