

Somerset Local Access Forum

Minutes for the Meeting held on: 18th October 2018

At Langport Town Hall

SLAF Members Present:

Julia Gadd (Chair Person), Ann Fin (Vice Chair), James Bateman, Hugh Warmington Helen Stephenson, Anthony Gray, Suzy Dymond-White, Alicia Aras, Patricia Coombes, Cllr Paul Maxwell.

Cllr John Woodman joined the meeting at 2:30pm.

SCC Officers Present: Pete Hobley – Rights of Way Service Manager.

Apologies: Chris Sidaway, David Lovejoy, David Perris.

Minutes by: Natasha Tremelling – Business Support SCC

Welcome

JG welcomed everyone to the meeting and notified members of apologies sent by David Lovejoy and Chris Sidaway. The minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

Herepath

AF informed members that the tenders with regards to Herepath had been received and pointed out that the Forestry Commission were unlikely to be able to fund the complete cost.

PH responded that the funding gap would be better discussed once the tenders had been decided upon and the precise cost was known.

SDW enquired whether it was relevant that some of the land around Herepath was up for sale.

PH agreed this was relevant as a permissive agreement for Herepath had never been formalised and that discussions with the new owners regarding the maintenance of the path were necessary.

AF enquired if The Crown could dedicate the path.

PH replied that this had been raised previously but that Herepath was headed for a permissive arrangement.

AF indicated that she had some fundraising ideas and would raise them at the end of the meeting in Any Other Business.

County Farm Sales – access improvements

PH included this item into the agenda and invited comments from the forum regarding the potential for access improvements at the point of sale of County Farms. PH added that currently access rights were possible at the point of land sale and PH called attention to this as a 'once in a lifetime opportunity'.

Cllr PM commented that where County Farms were sold the best outcome for SLAF was to pursue improved rights of access.

HW commented that SCC may have a statutory obligation to maximise the value from any sales of County Farms, therefore the likelihood of increasing access rights was unlikely.

PH was not aware of any such statutory duty and reiterated his encouragement for the forum to comment.

A discussion followed on the logistics of SLAF being made aware of any County Farm sales in time to comment but without impacting on any commercial sensitivity.

PH encouraged members of the forum to write to his SCC colleagues requesting permission to be able to comment on each sale.

Cllr PM asked whether it would be possible for the SLAF forum to be formally consulted on future County Farm sales.

PH replied that he would support such a request from the forum.

JG volunteered to write a letter to SCC requesting this. **ACTION**

Cllr JW joined the meeting. Cllr JW introduced himself to the forum as the cabinet member for Highways with SCC.

Agricultural Bill