

REPORTS FOR LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Meeting Jan 2018

PLANNING AND TRAVEL COMMITTEE REPORT (Chairman - Roy Denney)

The major item receiving attention at the moment is the infamous Barrow crossing. Network rail were applied for an Extinguishment Order for the bridleway across the rail lines, something we have been fighting for years. We sent in an objection just repeating what we had said before. The Ramblers Association and the Leicestershire Footpaths Association had as well. Vicky Allen objected on behalf of the Bridleways Association and spoke personally at the hearing and John Howells our Chairman was in attendance. Despite a good debate LCC decided to make the order which now goes to consultation and we have prepared a formal objection which was hand delivered to County hall on December 13th. I would like to thank those members who contributed and checked it for typos etc.

We have studied a number of other issues and continue to monitor larger developments but this is the only action we have taken since our last meeting.

We have also made overtures to HS2 to set up a meeting to discuss the impacts on the R of W network. I now understand that they are working round the counties and after Derbyshire where they have met with the LAF, they will work on the issues affecting Nottingham which should not take long as the line does not enter that county. Our turn would presumably be next.

CHARNWOOD FOREST STEERING GROUP

John Howells and I were members of some of the working groups which worked up the lottery bid which has now been approved. I met with representatives of the Heritage Lottery 3 times in all to promote this project.

The individual projects within the bid include our suggested Access for All at a few sites which John Law has been promoting. Another is the improvement of connectivity which we have been campaigning for and this includes trying to promote additional bussing facilities. There will be an agenda item on this at the meeting. We have £250,000 for the development phase of about 18 months. Unless we fall down badly the rest of the funds will then be made available for this £3.9M project. They have been earmarked specifically for this.

A new Development Board is being set up to progress the projects and a Projects Development Officer is being recruited. I have invited to be on the board representing the public interests on your behalf and John and I offer ourselves again to be your representatives on the Steering Group. I have prepared a draft letter to go to the board outlining and putting some detail on our suggestions which I will seek comment on and agreement with at our meeting. One suggestion is that at the end of the process, the map we were instrumental in having produced should be updated and I have arranged that the head of the production company will come up in the new year to have a look rounds with me. He is also keen to bring out some form of walkers guide to the area and possibly a similar production for horse riders if the network is sufficient to make it viable.

The letter as written also invites Sam Lattaway who is heading up the project to attend our April meeting to both update us and agree how best we can assist.

Roy Denney Representative

NATIONAL FOREST ACCESS & RECREATION GROUP

Following a new structure being put in place at the Forest, Sam Lattaway is to Chair these meetings in future. An Access & Recreation Officer has been appointed to take some pressure off him

He informed us of the commercial management side of the NF and the tourism growth plan. This is becoming successful and generates valuable income for the NFC which has had its central government funding considerably reduced over the last year or so. It is also important because it strengthens the case for the provision of good access and recreational facilities. They are looking at providing more short access loops off the National Forest Way (NFW).

There was an update on the NFW and the rangers of whom there were now 25 covering every section of the Way carrying out much useful maintenance work over the summer months.

The next National Forest Festival event will be held on 6/7/8 July in 2018 - more information to come in due course.

The Forestry Commission representative was pleased to inform us that the present government had stated that the Commission woodlands would remain in public ownership; its future was safeguarded so its sites in the NF area would be safe for the foreseeable future and their present access arrangements secured. It would eventually be renamed Forestry England. This again is good news as the future of the Commission has been very uncertain at times in recent years.

Roy Denney Representative