



### Particular Interests relevant to this meeting

On Item 7, John Hall is speaking as an officer of Coventry City Council.

## **4. Minutes from meeting on 5 March and matters arising**

### Accuracy

- The minutes were approved as written.

### Matters Arising

- Page 2 – Item 6.  
Michael Orlik explained that Cyril Bean had been concerned about the lack of segregation between the pedestrians and buses. They had met with senior engineers. The problem is the inflexibility of the bus companies and Coventry City Council's approach to approach to the demands of the bus companies. Current practice is not to segregate traffic and pedestrians – this is supposed to make the traffic drive more slowly.
- Page 3 – Item 7  
Replies had been received from Defra, and also James Plaskitt MP who had provided a letter from the minister.
- Page 4 – Item 8  
A reply had been received from Kate Nash, WCC Community Safety.
- Page 5 – Item 9  
The definition of an invalid carriage was read out from the legislation – an invalid carriage is then specifically excluded from the relevant sections Road Traffic Act and the Road Traffic Regulation Act. Copies of extracts from the legislation are available on request from the Secretary.
- Page 5 – Item 10  
Andrew Savage took this opportunity to comment that he wishes to draw on the similarities between County Highways and the Countryside Access Team. It is a question of identifying the priorities.

The Chair said that the Forum would like to see him as often as possible – he will always be very welcome.

- Page 5 – Item 10  
Transport Theme Group – Martin Fry agreed to find out what is happening about this consultative group. It appears to have disappeared since LTP2 was published.  
Action: Martin Fry to find out what has happened Transport Theme Group

## **5. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

## **6. A Coventry Way Association**

The speaker had been unable to attend and so this item was deferred until a future meeting.

## 7. Annual Reports from the Appointing Authorities

### Solihull

David Keaney presented a brief report on behalf of Solihull MBC.

Joe Carroll asked for more information about the boardwalk project which had been mentioned. David Keaney responded that this was done in response to a Parish Council request. It crosses marshy land near the church and is difficult to use for around 8 months out of every year. An existing boardwalk was extended by 150 metres and stiles were replaced with kissing gates. It has also been fenced to keep the cattle off.

### Coventry

John Hall presented a brief report on behalf of Coventry City Council.

He also mentioned that he had located 19 ring binders of evidence and research compiled by a consultant in the past.

He commented that his obstruction and maintenance work is carried out on paths known to be public but not necessarily on the Definitive Map.

He mentioned a website – walkit.com – which is an urban route-planner. The website developers would like to include Coventry as well but John will need to check the data before it goes live.

Bob Tinley asked for clarification over the £40k budget quoted by John. John Hall replied that this was the budget available for him to spend and staffing costs were covered elsewhere.

Claire Sangster asked whether the walkit.com website would be accessible from Coventry Station, or on the move. John Hall replied that routes would have to be planned before travelling.

A question was asked about Access Land and John Hall replied that there was no Access Land in Coventry. However, they still need to have copies of the maps showing that is the case.

Mike Murray of Coventry City Council mentioned some work with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to secure an 'Access to Nature' grant for the Sowe Valley. They achieved £211,000 over three years. WWT will be leading the project.

### Warwickshire

Martin Fry presented a brief report on behalf of Warwickshire County Council.

Ken Stepney explained about one of his Modification Order applications which was investigated by WCC who made a byway order. This was overturned in the High Court and a Restricted Byway Order was made. He asked whether this is likely to happen with other applications he has made.

Martin Fry explained that the case had been investigated and a byway order made and subsequently confirmed by an Inspector following a Public Inquiry. The High Court quashed the order on appeal so the route remains recorded as a bridleway. A further

order must be made and it may well go to another Public Inquiry and could even have another High Court Challenge.

There were no costs to WCC because the High Court challenge was lodged against the Planning Inspectorate.

The way in which applications are dealt with has not changed.

Steven Wallsgrove asked when the Warwick district digitised rights of way data would be made available. Martin Fry replied that the Definitive Map would not be republished until the whole County was complete, but digitised data may be made available to the District and Borough Councils sooner.

## 8. Letter from Mr Lewis

A letter written to the LAF by a member of the public had been circulated prior to the meeting.

A discussion was held and the following points were noted;

- There was sympathy for the length of time that applicants have to wait, and it would be good if frivolous cases could be eliminated. However, there is no easy way to determine if a case is frivolous.
- Some Counties do prioritise cases based on a scoring system, but many still have enormous queues.  
Action: Martin Fry agreed to investigate the prioritisation/scoring systems used by other authorities.
- The LAF is unable to help regarding the List of Streets.
- Clarification of the legal status of routes on the List of Streets would require primary legislation.  
Action: Response to Mr Lewis to be drafted by the Chair or Vice-Chair and sent out by the Secretary.

## 9. WCC Statement of Intent

A draft document had been circulated to Forum members in advance of the meeting.

### Question A

The following points were noted in respect of Item P09d – the proactive development of a programme of surface improvements for access to school routes.

- ◆ The Countryside Access Team does get involved in improvements to these routes where it is asked – other improvements are also made, not just surfacing.
- ◆ The Council could be doing more to be proactive.
- ◆ This could draw in additional funding.
- ◆ This should only be done where there is demand – this needs researching.
- ◆ There would be an impact on the Countryside Access Team if officers had to be taken away from other work.
- ◆ This could be built into the County's three year rolling programme of works. Andrew Savage offered to investigate this.
- ◆ Item N05d (current work) covers the reactive schemes.

Following discussions, the Forum accepted the offer from Andrew Savage to investigate the potential of including schemes in a 3 year rolling programme.

The following points were noted in respect of Item N03a – establishing safer crossings of roads, railways etc.

- ◆ There is greater volume of traffic and the vehicles themselves are tending to get heavier.
- ◆ Busy roads and rail crossings act as a barrier to the countryside
- ◆ This should be carried out where possible.
- ◆ It is difficult to engage Network Rail on this issue.
- ◆ The Highways Agency scheme to get rid of difficult trunk road crossings seems to have fallen through.
- ◆ Such schemes could take up a lot of officer time with very few results.
- ◆ It's a national problem.

Following discussions, the Forum decided that this should not be prioritised.

The Forum did not identify any items in Sections A or B which should be slowed or stopped.

#### Question B

The Forum agreed that the items in Section D should be postponed indefinitely.

#### The List of Recognised Promoted Routes

The Forum asked that the wording 'no waymarking permitted' be changed to make it clear that all routes will be waymarked by WCC as public rights of way, but that route-specific discs will not be permitted.

### **10. WCC proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Policy**

Martin Fry explained that there are a number of Unclassified Roads, Byways and Bridleways where there are existing TROs. WCC is receiving requests for new TROs as well as reviews of existing ones.

Following the publication of a recent TRO (to replace and vary one already in place) objections were received and the Countryside Access Team were advised by WCC Legal to develop a policy to cover this and similar instances.

Martin asked the Forum whether they would like a separate meeting to consider the proposed policy.

It was agreed that a separate meeting be organised in advance of the next LAF meeting. All LAF members to be invited.

### **11. Items for Information**

#### Dogs poster

- Copies of a recent poster aimed at dog owners was circulated.

### **12. LAF Annual Report**

The draft Annual report was accepted, subject to the correction of two typos.

### **13. Any Other Business**

#### Kissing Gates

Joe Carroll urged the appointing authorities to use larger kissing gates that allow wheelchairs to pass through. 'Get it right first time'.

Mike Murray commented that there is still a problem with illegal motorbike use, and the smaller kissing gates help to resolve this.

Joe Carroll replied that he understood the dilemma, but wanted his request for large kissing gates put on record.

#### Communication from the Ramblers' Association (RA)

Steven Wallsgrove read out a letter he had received from a member of the public (via the RA head office) asking for two points to be put to the Ramblers' representative on the Warwickshire LAF.

It was pointed out that the RA does not have members who represent organisations, but the Forum did consider the two points.

The Forum agreed that the first report (too many cars on the Arbury Hall drive) was a private matter.

The Forum agreed that the second report (a blocked/disappeared right of way crossing the Arbury Hall drive) should be passed on to WCC. Steven Wallsgrove commented that this section of path formed part of the Centenary Way.

#### Coventry by Design Forum

Bob Tinley attended this meeting on behalf of the Forum. The meeting was considering the next 20 years of development in Coventry. It is an ambitious plan and they appear to be making the right noises. It includes regeneration and refurbishment and aims to put pedestrians first, then cyclists, then public transport, then private transport last of all. However, it doesn't appear to be something the Forum needs to get involved with as the main thrust is the regeneration element.

#### Local Development Frameworks

Local authorities have been instructed to build more housing. This involved large consultation and Claire Sangster suggested the LAF should be looking at them and commenting where they involve the path network.

One of these would be expected from each Warwickshire district as well as Coventry and Solihull.

Action: Secretary to find out about each plan and the consultation timescale with a view to the LAF considering them.

### **14. Date and venues for meetings**

The next meetings will be;

- ◆ 17 September in Solihull – venue to be confirmed
- ◆ 26 November in Coventry – venue to be confirmed

**15. Draft agenda for the September meeting**

Items for the September meeting include

- ◆ Access to Inland Waterways – postponed from this meeting

Items for the November meeting include

- ◆ A Coventry Way Association – postponed from this meeting

Possible agenda items for future meetings include;

- Tim Stevens in relation to NERC Act and vehicular access to the countryside

**The meeting closed at 9.45pm**

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Chair of the Forum