

South Downs

Local Access Forum

AGM

26 July 2017, 10.30am, at the South Downs Centre, Midhurst

Members Present (9): Bob Damper BD, Edward Seymour ES, Glynn Jones GJ, Neville Harrison NH, Nick Taylor NT, Richard Johnson RJ, Roger Mullenger RM (Chair), Russell Cleaver RC, Val Bateman VB,

Apologies: Andy Hannaford AH, Annie Brown AB, Doug Jones DJ, John Vannuffel JV, Robert Whitcombe RW, Simon James SJ, Sue Dunkley SD, Susan Thompson ST.

SDNPA Officers In attendance (4): Andrew Lee AL – SDNPA Director of Countryside & Policy Management, Andy Gattiker AG - SDW National Trail Lead, Nigel James NJ – Countryside & Policy Manager, Trevor Beattie

Apologies: Allison Thorpe AT – SDNPA Access & Recreation Lead

Minute Taker: Sara Osman SO, Support Services Co-ordinator, SDNPA

Guest Speakers: Veronica Craddock – SDNPA Infrastructure and Environment Strategy Lead

Observers (3): Aileen Wood (HLAF); Tricia Butcher (WSLAF); Andy Beattie (SDNPA)

A. Welcome and Minutes

1. Welcome

RM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were accepted from Allison Thorpe, Andy Hannaford, Annie Brown, Doug Jones, John Vannuffel, Robert Whitcombe, Simon James, Sue Dunkley and Susan Thompson. RM welcome two new members to the SDLAF. Edward Seymour represents a land agent in Lewes and his work includes managing Glyndebourne estate and land for Eastbourne Borough Council. Nick Taylor has a background in geography and is a farmer and campsite manager at his family farm near Lewes.

2. Appointment of Chair & Vice Chair

NJ thanked RM for his work over the last year and for offering to stand for another year. There were no further candidates for the position of Chair. GJ nominated RM as Chair and BD seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favour and RM was appointed Char for until April 2018 AGM. No vote was taken for Vice Chair and it was agreed that this position would be appointed at the next SDLAF meeting in November. NJ asked for anyone interested in the position of Vice Chair to contact Allison Thorpe.

ACTION 1: SO to put Appointment of Vice Chair on next meeting agenda

3. Terms of Reference

Two changes were proposed:

1. To change wording under section on 'Administration' (page 3) to allow members of the public to speak without giving 2 days' notice.
2. To extend remit of the SDLAF, outlined under 'Reference Area' (page 2), to include impacting areas immediately adjacent to the Park boundary

There were no objections to either proposal and it was agreed that RM and NJ would amend text and circulate it for approval at the next meeting.

ACTION 2: RM & NJ to circulate rewording for ToR for approval at next meeting.

4. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were accepted as accurate. All actions were completed except for the following:

- **ACTION 2:** AT to follow up conditions on Stocks Lane on the Meon Valley Trail with HCC highways and report back to SDLAF. **Outcome:** This has been followed up a couple of times but needs further follow up. AG reported that HCC highways responded that it is not a priority and too expensive to do the work needed. It was agreed that something needs to be done on this section of the SDW and AG will continue to press this issue.
- **ACTION 4: SDLAF** to prepare response to the England Coast Path consultation later in the year. **Outcome:** to be followed up later in year
- **ACTION 11: SDLAF members** to feed back any comments on the SDNPA Cycling and Walking Strategy to Alister Linton-Crook. **Outcome:** completed. Issues reported were that there was limited representation for disabled access and horse riding. The response from the SDNPA was that it focussed on Government targets, but those issue would be included in some of the detailed content.

B. Key Topics for Discussion

5. A) National Trail update & Feedback from Logical Framework workshop for National Trails (Andy Gattiker)

The Logical Framework workshop included representatives from all 15 National Trails (NTs) and Defra, who discussed what form the group should take going forward. AG outlined key issues brought up at the workshop ([Problem and Objective Tree](#)), the most pressing of this was funding uncertainties. Opportunities were identified from the issues and it was agreed that there needs to be more opportunities for NTs to raise funds and be less reliant on core funding. They have had discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund and a National Trails body fits the objectives of their resilience fund.

The various options for taking a National Trails body were summarised in a draft [discussion paper](#), with a [shorter paper](#) produced in July 2017 outlining options after discussions with HLF. AG asked for SDLAF members to email him with any comments by 1 September. He will feedback to the national group and a steer from the SDLAF will be taken into account.

SDLAF members briefly discussed whether it was easier for NTs to seek funding separately or as a group and the importance of ensuring funding was equally spread across Trails and not focussed solely on larger Trails. It was noted that the SDW is in a strong position being an entire trail in one National Park Authority, but it was more complex for other NTs. AG believed it was important to work in partnership with the other NTs but members urged that the National Trail Partnership identify and discuss any risks as well as benefits.

ACTION 3: ALL to submit comments on National Trails Framework papers to access@southdowns.gov.uk by 1 September

B) Feedback on MOD meeting (Andy Gattiker/ Roger Mullenger)

RM reported back from MOD liaison meetings he had attended, where he did not receive conclusive answers to his questions relating to the SDW near Winchester. The SDW route is still resisted by MOD.

SDLAF members asked if the meetings discussed the use of red flags and commented that some were left up all the time and not taken down when there was no military activity. RM asked members to let him know of any specific examples where flags are not taken down and he will take these to the next liaison meeting.

ACTION 4: ALL to feedback information to RM regarding locations where red flags are not taken down on MOD land.

6. Meon Valley Trail and other trail information and economic value of trail (Roger Mullenger)

RM proposed that the SDLAF produce guides to key routes in the SDNP which identify easy access points to trails and points of interest en-route and whether information for the public could be improved. A more up to date leaflet for the MVT had since been printed which covered some of the points. RJ offered to review leaflets for correct public transport info. TB pointed out that the SDNPA produce many walking leaflets that cover the points raised, which are available to the public online and in print. It was agreed that SDNPA leaflets should go through SDLAF for comment and local knowledge before being printed, and that E-copies should be sent to LAF members for comment as SDLAF meetings are too infrequent. It was also noted that the SDLAF may be able to help ensure leaflets are stocked in local amenities along key routes (in pubs, cafes and shops etc.). AG highlighted the way facilities along the SDW are clearly depicted in the A-Z SDW booklet as a good example.

ACTION 5: NJ to discuss with SDNPA Comms team re SDLAF members reviewing walks leaflets by sending them e-copies.

7. LAF members input into future work/projects (Roger Mullenger)

RM asked if there were other projects that members think the LAF should be working on going forward. Other LAFs have working parties looking at Lists of Streets etc. NJ reported that the SDNPA would like the SDLAF to have a programme of work which should be set annually at the AGM. Suggestions included:

- looking at evidence of use of key access route and impact on wider communities – how many people use routes, where do they spend money, what do they use (walk/ cycle/ horse etc.) e.g. Meon Valley Trail or other major routes;
- Biosphere in Brighton – who accesses it? Who doesn't use it? How can more people be encouraged to use it?

ACTION 6: All to feedback suggestions for future working groups and focus for SDLAF work to RM

C. Updates

8. Auditing Lists of Streets + feedback from HCAF mtg. (Roger Mullenger)

In the last year, Brighton have audited their Lists of Streets and converted approx. 400 alleys and other-use paths onto their definitive map. ESCC are working on a similar project, WSCC are considering this work whilst HCAF are scoping the project. Some paths are small tracks or roads which are currently in use by the public but are not listed as RoW. They are often not obvious on a map, so can invoke some argument from landowners and other users. RM will continue to work with HCAF to identify routes to be included as RoWs to ensure they are recorded properly and it is obvious to users that they can use them legally. He asked if any members wanted to link with other Access Forums to promote this work.

ACTION 7: Any member wishing to work with other LAFs on RoW and auditing Lists of Streets to notify RM

9. Chairs Update including update from Permissive paths group (Roger Mullenger)

RM thanked all members who walked the paths to audit them. This work identified that 21 landowners have permissive paths which are considered to be of highest value through their land, and many of whom do not have estate plans in place. RM circulated a draft letter to these landowners and asked members for comments. NH asked for letters to be more tailored to each landowner where there are specific issues. ES agreed the more specific the letter could be the more helpful it would be to landowners or agents who are responsible for large plots of land with many footpaths.

The permissive paths audit found that nearly all paths were not well signed, if at all, and no one had responsibility for signing them. Some paths were also not well maintained. AL pointed out this was responsibility of Natural England to enforce and landowners are being paid to maintain paths as part of their Stewardship funding [£45 per 100m*]. It was agreed that the role of the SDLAF job is to identify issues and ask landowners and Natural England to do the work they are paid to do. This information will feed into work being done by SDNPA to identify management of paths in any schemes coming out of work for subsidies to farmers/ landowners after Brexit.

ACTION 8: RM and NJ to tailor permissive paths letters to landowners based on feedback from SDLAF

ACTION 9: RM to re-send spreadsheet with Permissive Paths Audit to SDLAF members to see the details

ACTION 10: AG and NJ to organise the sending of letters to landowners.

* Post meeting note.

10. Defra and Natural England business - SDLAF report to Defra (Roger Mullenger)

RM pointed out that Huddle contains presentations from the National Conference. There was nothing else to report.

11. Reports from other LAFS (Roger Mullenger)

WSLAF: Items they discussed at last meeting (AGM) included: WSCC walking and cycling strategy & ROWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan). A draft consultation on WSCC ROWIP is expected by end of August. They are setting up sub groups similar to SDLAF on permissive paths. They also discussed what happens to financial incentives for landowners to create new rights of way post Brexit and aim to create a working group to discuss this.

HRAF: At their last meeting they had presentations about 'access for everyone' and 'access to country estates' and how to encourage young people to get into farming. They are working on a walking and cycling strategy and an equestrian strategy will be looked at a future date. There is a Coastal Access subgroup meeting on 11 Aug. on Portsmouth coastal access.

12. SDNPA update (Nigel James)

Nigel James:

- **Update from Restructure** – AG role has changed to 'National Trails and Rights of Way Lead' and his remit is wider than just SDW National Trail. Key SDNPA Access team comprises: NJ, AT, AG plus Ben Bessant (SDW Ranger) and Alister Linton-Crook (Cycling Project Officer), together with rangers doing work on ground.
- **Cycling & Walking strategy** – one of 8 strategies SDNPA is developing to enable it to prioritise work. This strategy went to the SDNPA Performance & Resources committee last week where SDNPA Members asked for more clarity on some points before it goes to NPA. VB raised the issue that equestrians were not specifically catered for in the strategy. NJ responded that the reason is that walking and cycling is where Government focus is, and that the strategy does identify multi-use paths.
- **Public Path Orders** –
 - New, internal process have been set up for managing these when they come in to record comments and feedback.
 - Fittleworth extinguishment order: The SDNPA was the only objector to this and the order was confirmed despite our objection but it will be going to a public enquiry. NJ asked for views from the SDLAF members and suggested the group set up a working group to discuss and feed back to SDNPA on this at next meeting. VB, RM, RC & NH agreed to set up working group and to feed back to AT by end September.
- **ACTION11:** AT to send info about Fittleworth extinguishment order enquiry when back from leave.
- **ACTION12:** VB, RM, RC & NH to set up working group to look at Fittleworth extinguishment order. RM to coordinate.
- **Incorporating SDNPA Shared Identity on SDW signage:** NJ & AG are looking at ensuring Shared Identity is on signage by end April 2018. AG will bring mock ups to SDLAF and share with partners in ESCC, WSCC and HCC.

ANDREW LEE:

- **South Downs Trust:** This has now been set up and will support the aims of the SDNPA Management Plan. It is early days and is a long term project that will generate funds to support various projects, which could include access projects
- **Downland Update:**
 - A committee review of a report about the management of Brighton downland stated that it did not reflect the quality of information submitted by various bodies and did not give a clear vision for future management of its downland;
 - Eastbourne has asked for advice on how to do a Whole Estate Plan for the Eastbourne Downland.
- **SDNPA Local Plan:** This NPA approved this to go out for final consultation in September and for pre-submission to the Planning Inspector for soundness of the Plan. There will be further workshops as part of the local consultation in West Sussex, East Sussex and Hants in October. AL asked that SDLAF members look at the Plan and feedback as part of consultation

National Park Gateway Signs (Veronica Craddock):

Veronica Craddock updated SDLAF members on [SDNPA Entry Signs](#). This is part of a wider project working with communities on signage and using the Shared Identity. The aim is to have signs up in early 2018. Initial phase to focus on 20 key entry points and focus on places that do not add to road signage clutter. A question was raised about whether it been discussed that signs could be added to existing structures rather than adding new signage. VC responded that the SDNPA was working with Clanfield Parish Council on such an issue and have been working closely with Highways Authorities. It was asked why it had taken so long to get signage to the Park, and the response was that the SDNPA have consulted widely and decided it was important to build a brand image with the Shared Identity first before putting up signs to ensure it was done right the first time.

Forthcoming SDLAF Meeting Dates: 30 November 2017

ACTION LIST – SDLAF 26 July 20167:

- **ACTION 1:** SO to put Appointment of Vice Chair on next meeting agenda *(Item 2)*
- **ACTION 2:** RM & NJ to circulate rewording for ToR for approval at next meeting. *(Item 3)*
- **ACTION 3:** ALL to submit comments on National Trails Framework papers to access@southdowns.gov.uk by 1 September *(Item 5a)*
- **ACTION 4:** ALL to feedback information to RM regarding locations where red flags are not taken down on MOD land. *(Item 5b)*
- **ACTION 5:** NJ to discuss with SDNPA Comms team re SDLAF members reviewing walks leaflets by sending them e-copies. *(Item 6)*
- **ACTION 6:** All to feedback suggestions for future working groups and focus for SDLAF work to RM *(Item 7)*
- **ACTION 7:** Any member wishing to work with other LAFs on RoW and auditing Lists of Streets to notify RM *(Item 8)*
- **ACTION 8:** RM and NJ to tailor permissive paths letters to landowners based on feedback from SDLAF *(Item 9)*
- **ACTION 9:** RM to re-send spreadsheet with Permissive Paths Audit to SDLAF members to see the details *(Item 9)*
- **ACTION 10:** AG and NJ to organise the sending of letters to landowners. *(Item 9)*
- **ACTION 11:** AT to send info about Fittleworth extinguishment order enquiry when back from leave. *(Item 12)*
- **ACTION 12:** VB, RM, RC & NH to set up working group to look at Fittleworth extinguishment order *(Item 12)*. RM to coordinate.