

**MINUTES OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING
5 FEBRUARY 2025**

HELD AT THE COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, WORCESTER

Attendees

Lyndon Bracewell (LB)	Cycling Interest
Gordon Bunker (GB)	Motorised use of minor highways and byways interest
John Cuthbertson (JC)	Social inclusion interest
Julian Grubb (JG)	Waterways Interest
Peter Hughes (PH)	Business Interest
John Jeffrey (JJ)	Parish Interest
Tony Kerbey (TK)	Secretary
Rowena Lloyd (RL)	Representing Worcestershire County Council PRoW
Bobbie Matulja (BM)	Chair
Linda Robinson (LR)	Councillor Interest (Southern District Councils)
San Starkey (SS)	Youth Interest
Glynn Thomas (GT)	Walking Interest

Preliminaries – The secretary covered fire alarms, trip hazards, facilities and recording.

Mike Everitt - The Chair asked the LAF to remember the long-term contribution of Mike Everitt. His passion for walking and creative engagement with all consultations made him an ideal LAF member and he will be sorely missed. An 'in-memoriam' card was passed amongst members for signature, and the Chair covered details of the memorial service.

ITEMS

1. Apologies

Georgina Britten-Long (GBL)	Landowner Interest
Stephen Glazzard (SG)	Motorised use of minor highways and byways interest
Robin Drew (RD)	Councillor Interest (Northern District Councils)

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chair asked members to declare any personal or business interest in the agenda items. **None declared.**

3. Confirmation of Minutes.

The Chair asked members to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting 10 July 2024 – **carried.**

4. Actions.

No outstanding actions related to the last full meeting

5. Matters Arising

- **LAF response to Evesham LCWIP 25 Sep 2024.** The Chair received an acknowledgement that the LAF's points will be passed on to the consultant.
- **LAF response to Redditch LCWIP 24 Oct 2024.** The Chair highlighted equestrian user concerns and was informed that they would be taken into account.
- **Wyre Forest LCWIP.** The Chair informed the meeting that she was unable to respond due to the tight respond timeline and other commitments.

The Chair asked RL about LCWIP progress. The Chair asked for Tina McLaughlin's team to be added to 'Topics for Future Meetings' to provide a general update on progress (see Item 10).

- **MH Trust Parliamentary Bill issues outstanding.** The Chair wrote the initial LAF Response in July 2024 and subsequently received confidential copies of the access-related sections (4 & 5) which included several amendments, necessitating a second response in November 2024. Susan Satchell (MHT) explained that much of the bill merely consolidated powers that had existed for the past 29 years and there were no new provisions. The final bill contained several additional changes making it very difficult to keep track of the key issues. The Chair mentioned that concerns were raised by multiple stakeholders, many of which, did not seem to have been considered in the final draft. Consequently, the Chair has invited Susan Satchell to the next LAF sub-group in Q2 2025 (date TBC) to explain the consultation process and how the draft bill had changed in response to consultation submissions.

JC and PH informed the meeting that the final draft of the bill had been put to parliament and could be accessed via the parliamentary website. There followed a discussion about the mechanism for comment/amendment at this stage.

GB informed the meeting that the date for final petitions was 6 February 2025. He read from the MHT site which claimed no new powers were included in the bill to affect access and that the trust was working to resolve misinformation about the bill.

Action – With the agreement of the members present, the Chair agreed to submit the essence of the LAF comments to the parliamentary website before 17:00, 6 February 2025.

- **Update from the WBL Greenway Project (Tom Fisher)** – In Herefordshire, the project has been concentrating on developing a shared use project for the one mile of track bed between Bromyard and the Linton industrial estate. The idea is to have a miniature railway running alongside the Greenway. In Worcestershire we are part of the Active Travel Group and have secured an agreement with the Council that a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP) will be developed for the connecting routes between Worcestershire towns. This could include the Greenway and others such as the Two Shires Greenway. This LCWIP will be developed once the individual town LCWIPS have been completed.

The Chair asked for discussion on the subsequent, inter-connecting LCWIP (to link Worcestershire towns) to be added to future topics. See Item 10. LB explained that there was significant appetite for the interconnecting LCWIP which would benefit rural population areas. LR concurred with LB and reiterated the importance to rural communities and the need for an active travel link to the proposed Worcester Parkway new town.

6. Speakers - No External Speakers

7. Public Rights of Way Team Report

Report presented by RL. Questions were taken covering:

- **PH – Target inspection times and % success indicators** - RL explained that path reports have different inspection times commensurate with their priority. The inspection target is at 80% rather 100% to reflect a reasonable chance of success at a high delivery level.
- **GT - assistance with work needed to lift closures.** RL noted the offer. Each site is different and much of the work is beyond the scope of volunteer groups.
- **LB – Asked about scheduling a LAF sub-group meeting with the ROWiP consultation stages.** TK reiterated that the authority had promised an extraordinary, supported sub-group dedicated to tackle the ROWiP consultation. Date to be determined to fit the ROWiP schedule.
- **LR – Planning/order monitoring failures and construction of buildings on PRow.** The example discussed was initially a TCPA diversion which had failed because the buildings were substantially complete before the order was confirmed. Thus, the TCPA could not be used to complete the diversion. WCC finished the diversion using the Highways Act and all costs were met by the developer.
- **JC – Improvement of the paths associated with Kepax Bridge.** Discussed

8. Feedback from the Active Travel Stakeholder Working Group – Summarised feedback was provided to members at Appendix 2 to the agenda. There was nothing to add.

9. Items for Noting

- **Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework Announced in 2024.** Consultation is complete but results not yet published. One of the propose 'Golden Rules', will ensure Public Benefit by securing and improving public access to good quality green space and nature. [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK](#)

10. Topics for Future Meetings

- De-Regulation Act and impact on PRow.
- LCWIP Progress Update
- Malvern Hills Trust (Susan Satchell to cover the Parliamentary Bill).

- Infrastructure projects Team (LCWIP) Progress and Inter-connecting LCWIP proposal.
- BHS Gates Trial Results. **BM** to seek an update.
- NT 8 Hills Regional Park Project.
- Quarry Restoration Projects including access.

11. Any Other Business

GT - He would be standing down from any official positions with the Worcestershire Ramblers and asked if that would affect his standing as the LAF Walking Interests representative. The Chair explained that official representation of an external body is not necessary for membership and he could stay on as a member if he wished.

12. Date of Next Meeting

In accordance with the rolling programme, the next meetings are proposed for:

- LAF Main Meeting – July 2025 date TBC.
- Extraordinary RoWIP Sub-group –date TBC (dependent on RoWIP development schedule).
- Sub-group May 2025 – date TBC.