

## EXMOOR LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting of the Exmoor Local Access Forum held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 6:30pm at SW Lakes Trust Wimbleball Lake Meeting Room.

### PRESENT

Philip Park (Chairman)	Howard West	Richard Partington
Alison Kent (ViceChair)	John Harvey	Robert Billson
Chris Binnie	Kevin Snewing	Robin Milton
Colin Blackburn	Martin Ryall	Ueli Zellweger
Frances Bridger	Neil Osmond	

### EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Sue Applegate (Public Rights of Way & Access Officer)

Ceri Rapsey (Rights of Way Support Officer)

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Mike Wilson-Smith, Sarah Milne and Dan Barnett (Access & Recreation Manager).
- 2. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND INTRODUCTIONS:** The Forum welcomed six new members namely, Frances Bridger, Howard West, John Harvey, Mike Wilson-Smith, Robert Billson and Sarah Milne.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Mr P Park declared that his position as Estate Director at Lee Abbey. Mr P Park declared that in his position as Estate Director at Lee Abbey, he represented the Lee Abbey Board of Trustees in their view that the South West Coast Path which already ran through the grounds of Lee Abbey should not be re-routed to the north of the estate grounds as part of the creation of the England Coast Path.
- 4. (1) MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were agreed and signed as a correct record.  
**(2) MATTERS ARISING:**
  - **ACTION:**
  - Robin Milton to pass a case study paper on Access in Scotland to the Forum Secretary for circulation.
- 5. Meet the Community / Public Question Time:** No members of the public were present.
- 6. Terms of Reference:** The Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved and will be reviewed in October 2018 (or earlier following the Partnership Plan

Review).

- 7. Site Visit:** Luke Hoather (Lead Instructor, SW Lakes Trust) provided an informative and interesting tour of the facilities at Wimbleball Lake. The site visit was useful for developing an understanding of the different recreational activities that groups and individuals can get involved in. The Forum members agreed that Wimbleball Lake is a great asset for Exmoor and needs to be recognised as such in the Partnership Plan. However, it is recognised that it is not the most accessible site for visitors to get to. The members discussed access available around the lake and the presence of permitted access. The Forum would be interested in looking for better and improved access routes however the members understood there are several different landowners involved.  
**ACTION:** Sue Applegate to write a letter of thanks to Luke Hoather for providing the site visit, to request a copy of the current Wimbleball Lake management plan for circulation and to offer the expertise of the LAF to act as a sounding board for future plans regarding access. Sue Applegate to write a letter to the Park Authority to encourage partnership working regarding improving access around the lake.
- 8. Consultations:** Thank you to Forum members for responding to the four consultations that were circulated. Members stated it was really useful to be copied into other members email responses, to understand the different viewpoints. **ACTION:** Ceri Rapsey to circulate Wydon proposals to new members.
- 9. State of the Park Review / ENPA Partnership Plan Review:** The draft paper had many references to moorland, members would like to see other habitat types covered in the same way. Members emphasised that the Sandford Principle needs to be given higher priority in the Partnership Plan balanced carefully with access improvements. The Forum agreed to form a working group to feed into the Partnership Plan consultation over the next twelve months. Forum members to form the working group are Alison Kent, Colin Blackburn and Frances Bridger.
- 10. Coastal Access:** Sue Applegate provided the Forum with an update on the implementation of the Coastal Access Act (England Coast Path) by Natural England on the Minehead to Combe Martin stretch of the coast. Natural England are aiming to produce the draft report for public consultation by February 2017. The public consultation will be an opportunity for the Forum members to discuss the proposals put forward by Natural England and agree a response. The Forum agreed it would be best to discuss these at a specific Coastal Access meeting in February/ March 2017 and to combine this with a site visit if appropriate. **ACTION:** Ceri Rapsey to circulate the Coastal Access presentation and circulate possible meeting dates when Natural England have

finalised the public consultation dates. Sue Applegate to contact Natural England to enquiry about public access during the consultation.

- 11. Brief report from the IPROW Annual Conference (Derby):** Ceri Rapsey stated that the conference was well attended and discussed a variety of subjects from the Implementation of Deregulation Act, New Somerset County Council Rights of Way Interactive Map, benefits of using proportional TRO's, horses and bridle gates, Natural England's report on self-closing gates.
- 12. Strategic Overview of Priority B2 Maintain High Quality Rights of Way, Services and Facilities to enable people to explore and experience the special qualities of the National Park.**
  - **(1) Advice from the Exmoor Local Access Forum to Exmoor National Park Authority on Permitted Higher Access Proposals on Land Owned by ENPA.** It was proposed by Chris Binnie and seconded by Richard Partington that the Local Access Forum approve the Higher Access paper, and this was carried by a majority. **ACTION:** Sue Applegate to write to Exmoor National Park Authority (Chairman & Chief Executive) with the paper and request action.
  - **(2) Undertake targeted improvements with rights of way furniture and surface improvements and possible establishment of new routes by agreement with landowners** (the Forum's advice is sought particularly in relation to the development of detailed surface guidance). **ACTION:** Dan Barnett to organise a meeting with the newly formed working group involving Colin Blackburn, Richard Partington and Kevin Snewing.
  - **(3) Development of simple recreation management plans for popular visitor locations where problems exist.** Thank you for feedback on Tarr Steps management plan, some actions have already been implemented. The next management plan to be developed will be for Lanacre.
  - **(4) The Forum are invited to be involved with 'Outdoor Recreation Opportunities on Exmoor – Public Consultation'.** **ACTION:** Dan Barnett to share notes from the Coleridge Way Business workshop.
- 13. 2026 Deadline for Claiming Rights of Way based on pre 1949 evidence – The Position on Exmoor:** Alison Kent highlighted to the Forum that the 2026 deadline is approaching and to consider the role the Exmoor LAF should take. Alison Kent suggested three options; i)do nothing, ii) offer support and encouragement to local user groups wishing to research lost paths or iii) see if Exmoor National Park Authority would like to support volunteers wishing to research lost paths through the Get Involved volunteering programme. Members favoured the third option, John Harvey, Alison Kent and Robert Billson offered to assist with training. **ACTION:** Sue Applegate to write to the Exmoor National Park Authority to express the Forum's concerns and suggest that a volunteer project to look at this is formed under the Get Involved project.

**14. Rights of Way Work Update:** Ceri Rapsey presented updates on rights of way improvements, field service updates, completed major works and future projects.

**15. Date of next meeting and agenda items:** Potential meeting dates for April/ May 2017 will be circulated to Forum members. **ACTION:** Ceri Rapsey to circulate dates and select meeting location.

- Colin Blackburn suggested Luxborough Village Hall for the next meeting.
- Alison Kent suggested a site visit to a shoot may be interesting to look at the access considerations.

**16. Any Other Business of Urgency:**

- Robert Billson asked if Drones could be added to the next agenda. Forum Secretary to establish Exmoor National Park Authority position on drones.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chairman