

Hertfordshire Local Access Forum

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11



www.hertslaf.org.uk

This is the eighth annual report of the Hertfordshire Local Access Forum and contains details of the work and the advice given, in the period 2010-2011¹.

Introduction

On the 15th June 2011 the HertsLAF held its 30th public meeting; I have been the Chair since the first LAF meeting and continue to be supported by Roger Thomas as Vice Chair. I have attended all 30 meetings and was pleased and proud to have been elected at this meeting as Chair and with Roger as Vice Chair for a further 3 years.

Our 29th meeting held on 10th March 2011 welcomed Mark Weston from the British Horse Society and this popular event saw the largest number of members of the public ever to attend a HertsLAF meeting. The lively and informative session has assisted HertsLAF members to further ensure that the interests of horse riders in Herts are understood and supported.

The Woodland Trust continues to develop the Heartwood forest in the St Albans area and this has been a standing item on the LAF agenda, with members keen to secure and promote good access.

Over the past 12 months the financial constraints on council spending have continued to bite, and the LAF has maintained a keen interest in supporting officers and staff, in prioritising the work to be carried out and monitoring the effects of changes in spending on services, such as grass / hedge cutting and the affect this may have on access.

LAF members continue to attend informal meetings 4 times a year, including a winter and summer field trip and use these events to see first-hand where access improvements could be made and what issues should be taken into account when responding to consultations.

We are looking forward to the next 12 months, to meeting the challenges of the changes to the regional and national organisation of LAFs and to the Olympics, which will be coming to Herts.

Liddy Lawrence, Chair

¹ This report fulfils the requirements of the "Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2007" and guidance set out in "Guidance on Local Access Forums" from DEFRA dated February 2007

Who are the Members of the Forum?



Liddy Lawrence (Chair)	Needs of elderly and minority groups, walking and cycling
Roger Thomas (Vice Chair)	Estate management
Diana Collingridge	Estate management
Tony Ferrari	Cycling and Motorised users
Cllr Rosemary Gilligan	District Councillor, representing the Herts LGA
Debbie Hougie	Countryside recreation education, walking
Norman Jones	Walkers, non car owners and public transport.
Lynn Myland	Land owner, horse-rider
Cllr Bill Storey	County Councillor, Chilterns AONB
Robert Bolt	Transport, walker, PC experience, U3A.
Tim Regan*	Tree warden and ex-tree surgeon, ex-RA, walker, cyclist, public transport & user

**resigned in June 2011*

There are still some vacancies for representatives in the following fields: cyclists, land managers, horse-riders and disabled access needs. The forum is always happy to talk to anyone interested and with the view to join the LAF. For more information how what the position involve and on how to apply, please log on to: <http://www.hertslaf.org.uk/news.htm>).

What has the Local Access Forum been doing?



The Forum has been consulted and considered advising on the following topics during the year:

Project/Subject	Status
<i>RoWIP, Gating orders</i>	Ongoing review of RoWIP areas & advising HCC on priority schemes
<i>Heartwood Forest, Sandridge</i>	Ongoing since Summer 2008, liaising with WT
<i>Local Transport Plan</i>	ongoing
<i>Bricketwood Common (fencing & grazing)</i>	January 2011
<i>Chorleywood Common (fencing & grazing)</i>	June 2011
<i>Alban Way</i>	Spring 2011, Corresponding with Minister Mr R Benyon
<i>Coastal access plans</i>	Ongoing interest in this national issue
<i>Natural Environment White paper</i>	June 2011, consultation to respond to
<i>Aldenham Country Park</i>	From early 2011, outsourcing management of park
<i>RoW Policies/Prioritisation/Good Practice Guide</i>	Autumn/Winter 2010/11
<i>Access in future developments</i>	Keeping informed of new planning regime incl. S106 & CIL
<i>St Albans Access Group</i>	Cross user group liaison, incl. walking/riding/cycling

LAF Sub-Committees



Members of the LAF have divided into smaller Sub-Committees to be able to carry on projects. Currently these are the Sub Committees and their projects:

Safer Road Crossings:	Norman Jones, Debbie Hougie, Lynn Myland
School Award Competition:	Debbie Hougie, Diana Collingridge, Roger Thomas
Safer Routes to School:	Debbie Hougie, Diana Collingridge
LAF Website:	Norman Jones, Lynn Myland

Meetings and Attendance



Four Public Meetings took place:

- **15th Sept 2010** - Room B154, College Campus Lane, UH, Hatfield
- **6th Dec 2010** - Room B154, College Campus Lane, UH, Hatfield
- **10th March 2011** - Room B154, College Campus Lane, UH, Hatfield
- **15th June 2011** - Room B154, College Campus Lane, UH, Hatfield

Agendas were circulated to all county libraries and Parish Councils as well as frequently updated list of interested parties, and on the pages of HertsLAF website. Press releases have been published in local papers with the help of the press office in County Hall. The number of members of the public attending is an average of 10 per meeting with an all time record of 24 at the March meeting, where Mr Weston director of access welfare and safety of BHS gave a presentation. Communications from general public is growing, indicating increasing interest and awareness of LAF work. Forum members have been attending meetings or sending apologies when unable to attend. Richard Cuthbert (Head of Rights of Way) and Bob Fenton (Countryside Access Team leader) have been providing technical support to the LAF. One of them or both has been attending each meeting and work with the LAF to develop work programmes, events, etc.

Over the year there have also been two informal meetings attended by LAF members:

- **1st November 2010** – where the members focused on the cancelled conference and the way ahead;
- **11th May 2011** –where members discussed subjects of future public meetings and the role & involvement of members in consultations and formal replies.

Informal meetings take place in-between Public meetings.

Training and Outside Events



Date	Event/Training	Attendee/s
March 2011	East of England LAF Conference	L Lawrence, N Jones, R Thomas
03.03.2011	Chiltern AONB Access Conference	Norman Jones
Autumn 2010	EoE LAF Chair meeting	R Thomas, D Hougie
Autumn	Eastern Region meeting (LAF)	R Thomas, N Jones
Summer 2008	Heartwood Forest, Sandridge	L Myland
	St Albans Access Group	L Myland
--	Grazing	Lynn Myland
--	Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)	Debbie Hougie
Nov 2010	LTP Consultation	N Jones, R Bolt
Sept 2010	Green Infrastructure Briefing	N Jones, D Collinridge
--	The Friends of Chorleywood Common	Lynn Myland
Feb 2011	Green Infrastructure meeting, Epping Forest	N Jones, R Thomas, R Bolt, D Collinridge
Summer 2010	Rail Freight meeting	Lynn Myland
Jan 2011	Vibrant Rural Communities, CDA Herts	N Jones
Winter 2011	Friends of Aldenham Country Park (Big Society)	D Hougie

LAF Events



Twice a year LAF members have Field Trips where they have the opportunity to survey areas of relevance to current issues.

Field Trips:

- **7th February 2011** – this year LAF Members visited. Ver Valley Walk, nr Redbourn. Following the presentation at the December Public Meeting from the chairman of the Ver Valley Society, the LAF went to visit part of the open walk and see first-hand the river, the challenges encountered by the Society and experiencing first hand biodiversity and access issues.



LAF members at the ford where the river Ver crosses Redbourn.

- The Summer Field trip this year took place in September 2011 and took place at Ellenbrook Fields. More detail in next year report.

Cost of the Forum



The Forum is a voluntary body, with members giving up their time for free. Hertfordshire County Council, as Appointing Authority, also contributes officers' time and pays for any costs for administering the LAF using money allocated for the 'fulfillment of duties arising from the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000'.

In 2009/10 the costs of running the LAF came to: £7,145.16. The breakdown is as follows:

Reason	Costs (£)
<i>Meetings - venues, refreshments</i>	<i>£384.34 + 560 (conference venue)</i>
<i>Training</i>	<i>£100.00</i>
<i>Transport</i>	<i>£181.35</i>
<i>Administration & Various</i>	<i>£5,919.47</i>

In addition, costs such as postage and some stationery have been absorbed by the RoW Service at HCC.

What's in store for the coming year?



Dates for the next **Public Meetings**:

- *Thursday 1st December 2011*
- *Wednesday 29th February 2012*
- *Thursday 14th June 2012*
- *Wednesday 12th September 2012*

All meetings are still being held at College Campus Lane, UH, Hatfield. The venue is providing accessible location both by car and public transport. Due to increasing costs for the catering in-house and cuts in budget, the members voted on an ad-hoc menu provided by local supermarkets and order teas/coffees from the catering department. Savings have been made.

LAF Website & Twitter



The LAF website: www.hertslaf.org.uk continue to be regularly updated and used as a source of information by members and public alike.

@HertsLAF the name under which LAF broadcasts on Twitter is still going. We are always looking for contribution of articles and magazines from which to take inspiration to create a 140 character phrase for each working day of the months. Do you have some news, walks or anything to do with access to the countryside in Hertfordshire and its enjoyment, please send them to administrator@hertslaf.org.uk. Our followers have also increase and we now count 114. If you are still unsure on what Twitter is all about feel free to contact the administrator or check <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter> . Should you want to open a Twitter account, go to our website (www.hertslaf.org.uk), click on the 'How to open a Twitter account' guide which is down-loadable from there and start tweeting.

Our contacts:

LAF Secretary/Administrator: Ms Anna Mangini

Tel: 07778 241768

Email: administrator@hertslaf.org.uk

LAF website: www.hertslaf.org.uk

Twitter: @HertsLAF

Alternatively you can write to:

Hertfordshire LAF Secretary, c/o Rights of Way Service, CHN103, Environment Department, Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN

If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact the Local Access Forum via the above links or go to the '**Contact Us**' page on our website. Alternatively, if you wish to contact any of the members, and do not have access to the internet, please write to the address above: