

## Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Report Proforma

* Reporting year	July 2010- June 2011
* Name of LAF	HertsLAF
* Name of LAF secretary	Anna Mangini

### Review of Current reporting year

**Were you successful in meeting the achievements set out in your Annual Report or LAF work programme? Please provide supporting information.**

- Advising HCC to prioritise a delayed bridleway dedication on HCC land, which gave the impetus needed to conclude the legal paperwork and open the route, providing important links to an open access land area;
- A414 Colney Heath 'longabout' - HertsLAF comments on lack of crossing provision of busy dual carriageway led highways to include traffic lights & horse crossings in their proposals;
- HertsLAF member directly involved in negotiations with landowners on a NCN and bridle route extension through Herts, trying an alternative approach to get progress;
- Woodland Trust's new Heartwood Forest - HertsLAF comments taken up by Access Officer to gain bridleway routes across the site;
- Ellenbrook Country Park development - HertsLAF desires integrated into s106 negotiations with landowners;
- Commons fencing & grazing – to ensure all users are considered in proposals on fencing and that good access is maintained. As a result two commons (Bricketwood and Chorleywood) have launched a consultation;
- Development of LDF by 10 District Councils. LAF comments have been sent to those consultations received.

**\* How many Open Access Restriction cases have you been informed about/involved with?**

None

**\* Give up to three examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:**

HertsLAF have a very good relationship with the Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Service and the officers there who provide technical advice at and between meetings, as well as overseeing the secretariat and recruitment issues. HertsLAF advice has made an obvious difference to the following cases:

- Strategic Rail Freight Interchange development - HertsLAF objections to planning proposal and comments on access mitigation integrated with local authority objections;
- Alban Way management plan review - HertsLAF comments on providing for horse access taken up by HCC officers in their response to district council management plan review. MP & Minister involved to ask questions of district council approach;
- HertsLAF comments on commons grazing proposals led Rights of Way officers to query fencing permissions and local councils to review their approach.

**Give up to three examples where you have encountered difficulties; explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate this issue:**

- The planned 2<sup>nd</sup> HertsLAF Access Conference unfortunately had to be cancelled (due to lack of bookings). This was aimed at parish Councillors and Clerks and other key stakeholders. It may have been a result of the current economic climate or people's altered priorities for what they spend their time on. It was planned to focus on: Working with schools, Structures & Easy Access, Finding solutions to Rights of Way issues and Protecting and improving existing access.
- Recruitment difficulties – see below.

**Do you have any issues with recruitment of members from particular interest groups? Does this hinder your work in any way?**

- There are currently vacancies for representatives in the following fields: land managers, horse-riders and disabled access needs. The forum is running a recruitment campaign and is hoping it will attract interest to recruit new members;
- Members agreed to write to Lafarge, Sustrans and Hatfield House Estate to ask for a representative to fill the vacancies of Land Owners/Land Managers and cyclists. A Disabled Association representative will also be pursued;
- we have written to Herts BHS for Equestrian member;
- Members of the LAF and officers are following up leads and contacts to try to address this area.

## Comments from appointing authority

The Rights of Way Service has a good relationship with the members of the LAF and work closely with the secretary. HertsLAF advice has helped to make an obvious difference to the following cases:

- Strategic Rail Freight Interchange development - HertsLAF objections to planning proposal and comments on access mitigation integrated with local authority objections;
- Alban Way management plan review - HertsLAF comments on providing for horse access taken up by HCC officers in the response to the district council management plan review.
- HertsLAF comments on commons grazing proposals led Rights of Way officers to query fencing permissions and local councils to review their approach.
- First-hand farming knowledge from LAF members has helped develop our understanding of what farmers will and won't be interested in for access improvement proposals.
- The range of user group desires represented has helped to keep very good lines of communication open between officers and those groups.

## Forward Look

### What are your priorities for next year (list up to 3)

- HertsLAF have a very good relationship with the Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Service and the officers there who provide technical advice at and between meetings, as well as overseeing the secretariat and recruitment issues, this is a priority to maintain;
- Funding for secretarial support and associated costs is committed, however funding for project work and sub groups is now going to be far more difficult to find and will need to be high priority to be successful;
- To work with HCC Rights of Way Department in implementing as many Improvements from the "Rights of Way Improvement Plan" especially routes that cater for all non-motorised vulnerable road users thereby providing best value.

### \*What support/training will you need to be able to deliver these priorities?

- Maintaining access to fenced Commons for all user groups
- Exert influence on LDF (LDFs) locally and maintaining awareness and influence on the new CIL process to ensure good access is achieved.

**Do you perceive any barriers to delivering your priorities?**

- Training - some training or conference on planning changes e.g. moving from the 106 Agreements to Community Infrastructure Levy which devolves the control from HCC to the 10 Districts. How to better influence this change and how can LAFs exert a strategic influence to ensure a real difference is made to the quality of access in Hertfordshire.

**Any other comments**