

Northumberland National Park & County Joint Local Access Forum

JLAF Communication Plan 2018 - 2019

All JLAF members are expected to contribute to delivery of the JLAF Communication Plan

Introduction

JLAF activity conducted in isolation from those that it will impact is unlikely to deliver any benefit.

JLAF should pay great attention to managing relationships and communicating with those who have an interest in access and rights of way and can influence outcome.

The importance of communicating effectively with those outside JLAF is clear as it will:-

- *Improve the quality and strength of the forum's relationship with s94(4) bodies (especially the appointing authorities)*
- *Encourage s94(4) bodies and others to actively seek forum advice*
- *Improve liaison and understanding with, and between, local interests involved with access and pen air recreation*
- *Promote an understanding of access issues and benefits to the wider public.*

Communication with the media, who have significant influence over public opinion, is key to ensuring favourable coverage of JLAF activities and goals.

Once the message has been agreed and communicated to the audience, it is important to go through a process of evaluating communications for their effectiveness.

The Communications Plan should be taken in conjunction with the JLAF Activity Plan for the period indicated on the Activity Plan (May 2018 – April 2019).

Our Audience

To communicate effectively JLAF needs to prioritise its efforts and tailor messages to meet the needs of its audience.

The audience for JLAF communications are all those affected by and capable of influencing the access network and include:-

- Section 94(4) bodies
- The DEFRA departmental or lead Minister and their specialist adviser
- Local MPs
- Representative organisations from the relevant sectors
- Parish councils and the wider public sector
- Private sector organisations and individuals who have a current or potential future vested interest in the access network.
- Members of the public.

Different audience segments can perceive the same project and proposals in quite different ways depending on their vested interests, their particular priorities at the time and their experiences of the organisation or people leading the work.

The concerns and objectives of the various audience segments are frequently in conflict

Our Message

Whilst JLAF is independent from the appointing authorities it is their responsibility to ensure the forum conducts its business within its statutory remit and with regard to the Defra Guidance. All external communication should, therefore, be developed with assistance from the appointing authorities Communication/ Press team and all media queries may be directed via them for follow up as required.

All JLAF communication relates to our objectives and activity taken to deliver these as identified in either the JLAF Activity Plan (formerly JLAF Action Plan) or formal meetings.

The key themes for 2018 - 2019 are:

- JLAF recruitment including observer members
- ROWIP review
- JLAF engagement with the Sill Activity Plan
- JLAF representation at key meetings
- Access and Business
- Community involvement
- New and improved shared access
- Provision of statutory and non- statutory advice
- Responding to consultations
- Information provision

The specific communication related to these themes will be identified by the Objective Working Groups and endorsed by the Communication Plan sub-group.

See Annex A – Communication Activity Planner for more detail.

External Communications Process

The purpose is to agree the process for simple but effective methods to communicate the work of the JLAF via the most appropriate methods.

It is proposed there should be a mixture of more traditional communication methods (e.g. newspaper articles, press releases) as well as digital communication channels (e.g. website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) using methods including blogs and tweets.

It is hoped that as many JLAF members as possible will become involved with communications going forward.

Proposed External Communication Process

Communications with the Press – press release

1. Set up a bespoke JLAF press release template with logos
2. Chair of JLAF and NNPA support staff gather information, aided by other LAF members.
3. Information is sent to NNPA's Head of Communications and external PR support agency and a formal press release is compiled.
4. Press release is then signed off by JLAF chair, Head of Communications at NNPA and Northumberland County Council JLAF representative.
5. Press release distributed by NNPA Head of Communications and external PR agency.

Digital Activity

1. Chair of JLAF and NNPA support staff gather information, with input encouraged from other JLAF members.
2. NNPA's Digital Officer will process this information through correct channels and work in partnership with Northumberland County Council's digital team.

Other – individual articles

1. Article is drafted by JLAF member in conjunction with JLAF Chairman, with information relating to purpose of article.
2. Article sent to NNPA Head of Communications for professional advice and returned to the author/Chairman to be signed-off.
3. NNPA Head of Communications, in conjunction with external PR support agency, will then agree best method of distribution e.g. newspaper or magazine, website, snippets for blog etc.

Evaluating communications

The JLAF Communication Plan is a standing item on JLAF agenda.

Communication Activity Planner as 3 January 2019

Theme	Message(s)	Audience(s)	Objective	Format	Timing
Community Involvement	Importance of local people getting involved with their rights of way	General public	To raise awareness of the need for local people to engage with RoW work	Letter to Hexham Courant	Ongoing
Provision of statutory and non-statutory advice/ new and improved shared access	Opportunity provided by Brexit to create new safe off-road access and improve existing network	MPs and MEPs General public	Put forward ideas for post Brexit Agricultural support scheme that encompassed access	JLAF Access Vision Letter to MPs and MEPs Letter to Courant Response to Defra consultations	
JLAF representation and engagement	Introduction to JLAF and what we do and how we can enhance your activity	Key organisation and decision makers	To raise awareness of JLAF and our activity	Updated JLAF leaflet	January 2018 and ongoing
Access and Business	Importance of RoW to business/role of JLAF	Tourism businesses		Representation at Tourism Fairs Hexham/Alnwick	March 2019
Information provision	Introduction to JLAF, access opportunities, getting out and about and Countryside Code	General public, esp. in urban areas, farming community.	To raise awareness of JLAF and countryside access. To encourage local people to get involved with their local network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at County Show Information on JLAF Website 	May 2019
Information provision	How you can help to improve your local access opportunities by volunteering	Residents of Northumberland	To encourage and enable more people to get involved in looking after their local PROW	Information on JLAF website	
Position Statements (PS)	Statement of JLAF positioning on current topics	Internal External e.g. public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteering Shared Paths Influencing Dog Owner behaviour Update existing PS 	Information on JLAF website	During 2019