



Minutes of the JLAF Meeting

Thursday 20 April 2023, 2.00pm to 4.30pm at The Bird in Bush, Elsdon

*(which followed a site visit to Hepple Whitefield (by kind permission of Sir Walter Riddell)
which had taken place earlier that day)*

Present:

Alex MacLennan (Chair)	Helen Hindson
Moray Allan (Vice Chair)	Diane Holmes
Ian Glendinning (Vice Chair)	Cllr Nick Morphet
Liz Bray	Sarah Radcliffe
Vic Brown	Sue Rogers
Marie Fallon (NNPA Authority Member)	Rob Aubrook (observer member)
Fiona Gough (NNPA Authority Member)	

In Attendance:

Chris France (Hepple Parish Council)	Jayne Longlands (NNPA)
Neil Dawson (NCC)	Jen Shaw (NNPA)

The Chair summarised on a successful and enjoyable visit to Hepple Whitefield held earlier that day with good stakeholder relationships having been built. Key features of the visit had included; a guided walk, discussions about DMMO of the Sandstone Way, opportunities to develop and diversify the site, a visit to the gin distillery and conversations about sustainability.

The Chair thanked Sir Walter Riddell, Mary Gough, and other staff for their time in showing the JLAF Group around the site. Ian Glendinning was thanked for his work in liaising with Sir Walter Riddell to arrange the visit.

Chris France, Hepple Parish Council Chair, was welcomed to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence:

Received from; Philip Cotton, Ted Liddle, Violet Rook, Jeff Wild, Helen Lamb (NCC), Lorna Lazzari (NNPA) and Duncan Wise (NNPA).

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

2. Questions from Members of the Public *questions previously submitted by members of public*



None received.

- 3. Declarations of Interest:** *In accordance with Paragraph 6:8 of Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002, revised February 2007, members are asked to declare any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial and/or financial interests in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting and shall disclose the nature of those interests to the meeting.*

None.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 26th January 2023

The draft Minutes of the JLAF Meeting held on Thursday 26th January 2023, as circulated, were signed as a true and correct record.

5. Matters Arising and updates from previous meetings

(a) Public Transport in Northumberland: MAD Point 122

Liz Bray said that she would be doing some further research on the logistics of getting around Northumberland without a car.

(b) NCWB Remit and Horse Riding: MAD Point 129

Cllr Nick Morphet noted that the proposal to extend the NCWB's remit to include horse riding, would be added to the agenda for the next NCWB Meeting taking place the following week. Consideration should be given as to how this fitted in with Visit Northumberland; Sue Rogers said that Cambridgeshire County Council were progressive within this area of work.

(c) Women's Safety in the Countryside: MAD Point 132

The Chair reported that Northumbria Police were conducting some research on women's safety in the countryside. Cllr Nick Morphet added that this item was also included on the next NCWB agenda. It was suggested that an awareness leaflet may be available via NCC.

(d) Funding for the access route from Bellingham to Boe Rigg: MAD Point 140

Marie Fallon and Rob Aubrook had met to discuss the DRT and it was noted that this would need to be followed up on.



(e) Williams Cleugh Meeting on 12th May: MAD Point 141

The Chair encouraged all members to attend this event which was being hosted by Graham Gill OBE and held on Friday 12th May at Kielder. Those wishing to attend should reply to Jayne by 2nd May 2023.

6. JLAF Task and Finish Groups

(a) Access to Water

Vic Brown summarised on the draft position statement for access to water, stating that mention of both responsible and sustainable access had been added to the draft statement.

A full discussion ensued about what should be included within this document, its main purpose being to signpost people to where they needed to go, and it was **AGREED** that any additions to the Draft Position Statement be emailed directly to Vic Brown. The updated document would then be considered and ratified at the next JLAF Meeting.

ALL
JL

(b) Communications

It was reported that JLAF stands would be present at Northumberland County Show on Saturday 27th May, and also at both Bellingham Show on Saturday 26th August and Wooler Show on Monday 28th August. Two new JLAF Feather Flags had been ordered, and they would be displayed at all three events.

It was **AGREED** that: -

- (i) The JLAF Webpage would be updated to state that the Rights of Way Review would be coming soon; a QR code would be included if this was viable. JL
- (ii) The JLAF Webpage would be updated with a message encouraging people to “Come and see us at the County Show”. JL
- (iii) The 2022 Show questionnaire would be recycled for use in 2023 but themed towards the Rights of Way work; with Liz Bray to help Jayne with this. JL/LB
- (iv) The draft walks touring map was thought to be too expensive to progress further at this stage. JL



(c) Community Action and Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Neil Dawson said he would be meeting with Tim Fish to take the ROWIP forward; it was **AGREED** that Liz Bray would join Neil and Tim to progress this item. LB/ND

The Chair thanked Liz Bray for her hard work.

(d) Climate Change

Ian Glendinning introduced the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) report he had prepared. The Chair then thanked Ian for his work on climate change matters.

It was **AGREED** that if members had any comments or suggestions on the EIP they should send them through to either Ian or Jayne. ALL

7. Doddington North Moor

Sue Rogers updated the group on developments at Doddington North Moor. A site meeting had taken place the previous day and it was observed that people were using the bridleway, however waymarked posts were required to keep people on the appropriate route.

The Chair reminded the group that it was NCC's role to inform landowners about any arising legalities, with landowner engagement being the Rights of Way Officers' responsibility. However, it was appreciated that the NCC team were under pressure.

It was **AGREED** that a visit to Doddington North Moor may be arranged in 2024. AMcL

8. Protecting Slaley Forest

Ted Liddle had prepared a position statement with regards to protecting Slaley Forest and Neil Dawson updated the meeting on the background to Ted's report.

The Chair stated that various bodies would be attending the County Show on 27th May including the Police who would be informing the public about the protection of Slaley Forest.

It was **AGREED** that: -

- (a) Ted would talk to Neil about this paper, prior to any further developments taking place. TL/ND
- (b) If members encountered any issues with relation to 4x4 vehicles illegally entering ALL



Northumberland forests, then they should dial 101 and report this.

9. Borderline Greenway, Alnwick

Ted Liddle had prepared a draft letter of support to the Borderline Greenway team, which provided an update and overview of their excellent progress. It was **AGREED** that Jayne would send this document to David Wilson on behalf of JLAF.

JL

10. JLAF Updates from Appointing Authorities and Others

(a) Northumberland County Council

Neil Dawson updated on his report which had been circulated earlier that day.

The Chair said he had previously spoken to Tony Gates informally; there were funding concerns surrounding access and, once new financial budgets were in place, we could revisit joint discussions. He added that an awareness of JLAF was understood and appreciated by NNPA.

Sue Rogers queried whether we needed more Councillors on board; Cllr Nick Morphet noted that he had asked for ROWIP to be included on the NCWB meeting agenda. Nick confirmed he would appreciate further assistance.

(b) Forestry England

The Chair's FE report had been previously circulated; Alex said that the Drakestone Walk was now open, with Thrunton Wood to be opened to the public in the summer.

(c) Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA)

Lorna Lazzari's NNPA report had been previously circulated.

The restricted byway between Wooler and Kirknewton (as part of St Cuthberts Way) was not open for horses at the present time, and it was agreed that Jen Shaw would follow this up with Lorna Lazzari (this was time critical as Charlotte Ditchburn would soon be leaving her current post).

JS/LL

(d) Agriculture Bill, FiPL and ELMS

Jen Shaw said that additional funding had been received to extend the FiPL project for a further year. A more strategic approach was now being pursued, looking far and wide for projects and extending the current remit further.



The Chair congratulated the FiPL processes, in particular with relation to the DRT project from Falstone to Bellingham (for which discussions were currently progressing behind the scenes).

Jen Shaw noted that Access ELMS were still awaited from DEFRA.

(e) Northumberland Coast AONB

Vic Brown reported that footpaths around Longhoughton had been discussed at the previous Northumberland Coast AONB meeting; further information would follow as part of the minutes.

**(f) North Pennines AONB Access and Recreation Group
and
Pennine National Trails Northern Working Group**

The Minutes of the North Pennines AONB Partnership Access and Recreation Working Group and Pennine National Trails Northern Working Group Meeting held on 24th March 2023 had previously been circulated to the group.

It was **AGREED** that any issues on these papers should be sent through to Ted Liddle directly.

ALL

11. Items for Information Only

None

12. Any Other Business

(a) Hepple Whitefield: Proposed Diversion

It was noted that there was a correct legal process to be followed with regards to this matter, and it was not for the JLAF to do.

13. Date, Time, and Venues of Next Meetings

(a) Friday 12 May 2023 at Williams Cleugh, Kielder

It was **AGREED** that Jayne would co-ordinate transport from Hexham and Bellingham for this visit.

JL



(b) Thursday 20 July 2023 at West Chevington

Diane Holmes suggested Hauxley Wildlife Centre as a meeting venue for the 20th July meeting.

The Chair said that future JLAF meetings needed to be spread throughout the County, with a particular focus in the Southeast.

Cllr Nick Morphet reported that Ted Liddle had been invited to talk about the Southeast Coal Roads at the next NCWB; it was **AGREED** that Ted be asked to run this past Diane Holmes prior to this, as she walked these roads daily.

TL

(c) Other future meetings

- (i) Tuesday 17 October 2023 in Rothbury or Virtual (to be confirmed)
- (ii) Summer 2024 in the Southeast corner.
- (iii) Sue Rogers suggested that Lord Joicey’s estate at Etal would be a good place to visit. She added that he would also be a good person to have on the JLAF.

(d) Chris France’s Feedback

When asked for his feedback on JLAF and the meeting, Chris France reminded the JLAF to always consider the local community in all discussions and aim to get them on board. This comment was duly noted.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 4.30pm.

Signed:

Date: