



Minutes & Information
Zoom - Thursday 14 January 21

Present at the meeting

Forum Members:

Alex Lawson – Cycling, **Cllr Paul Fuller** - Elected by IWC

Mike Slater – Ramblers, **Mick Lyons** – IWALC, **Penny Edwards** – LAF / Carriage driving,
Charly Fullilove – General user

Others & Observers:

Jennine Gardiner-IWC PROW - LAF Secretary, **Darrel Clarke** – IWC Rights of Way Manager,
Jon Boileau Goad – Niton & Whitwell P/C, **Cindy Bentley** – CLA, **Helena Hewston** IWALC, **Steve Cowley** – Shalfleet PC, **Ross Edmunds** – Shift-It, **Cllr Steve Hastings** – IWC, **Robin Mair** – Forestry England, **Petronella Natrass** – BHS, **Nigel Phillips** – Chillerton & Gatcombe PC, **Helen Slade** – Open Spaces Society, **Cllr Venetia Verey** – Arreton PC, **Dina Jung** – Bus Users, **Michael Valenzia** - CLA

Apologies

Steve Darch - 4x4, **John Heather** – NFU, **Mark Earp**, **Claire Hector** - Arc Biodiversity & Climate | Artecology Ltd | The Common Space, **John Truswell** – Natural England Coast Path Lead Advisor, **Jan Brooks** - Observer / Isle of Access,

- **Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meeting** - Agreed
- **Declarations of interest** – Not done

Updates to tasks / matters arising from meeting 3 September 2020

We did not have the time to review the September action points

2. Coast Path (ECP): Written update from John Truswell John.Truswell@naturalengland.org.uk the England Coast Path Lead Advisor for the East Cowes to Wootton section:

Both Chloe Walker-Panse Chloe.Walker-Panse@naturalengland.org.uk (Chloe took over from John Taylor) and I have existing commitments so won't be joining your meeting this week my apologies. However please find below updates for the Isle of Wight.

Chloe leads on the lengths IOW 2 to 10 which as you know have been published. I lead on length IOW 1 east Cowes to Wootton Bridge

IoW 2-10 update:

- Due to Covid restrictions we are no longer able to carry out site visits on the island for the time being. We continue to work closely with the Isle of Wight Council Rights of Way team and hope to have our comments on the representations and objections sent to Defra/PINs by spring 2021. We're not able to confirm how long it will take Defra to approve our proposals after that, as the Planning Inspectors will need to organise site visits for the objection sites as they are likely to have been affected by the lockdown restrictions. Once we have an idea of timescales moving forward, we will update the LAF.
- There have been a number of coastal path/land slips just before Christmas and we are engaging with the landowners and the Council to come to a solution for these areas.
- The IOW council have recruited a full time project manager to deliver the infrastructure for the ECP. John Brownscombe will be starting on 3rd February.

IoW 1 Update:

- Alignment between East Cowes and Wootton Bridge has a number of complex areas that need careful thought and consideration before a final decision is made and we write out to landowners and other stakeholders such as the IOW LAF for their thoughts
- Discussions are ongoing with land owners on IOW 1 – some discussions and consultations are delayed due to Covid restrictions and key discussions that once finalised will potentially 'unlock' a more seaward alignment through this length
- Discussions are ongoing at a senior level within Natural England and English Heritage regarding alignment options through the Osborne House Registered Park and Garden. Ordinarily a Registered P & G under the legislation 'excepted', that is the ECP is not allowed to pass through there. Sometimes this can be resolved and very detailed discussions are taking place to tease out the issues to find a solution
- Some consultation is taking place via WebEx or MS Teams, although not the same as an actual site visit which in some places still need to occur nevertheless are still constructive and helpful
- We continue to work closely with the Isle of Wight Council Rights of Way team
- National restrictions dependant, I hope to be informing you of our alignment decisions in March/April 2021 for any observations and comments
- Thereafter I am hoping to publish IOW 1 late summer/autumn 2021
- Bear in mind this is an iterative process, feedback and consultation, including any erosion, other land management or nature sensitivity issues can impact on our timescales
- Alongside this, we are continuing our work on the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Chloe and I are more than happy to attend in person to one of your meetings once restrictions allow and do please send me details of your next meeting so I can put it into my diary.

Can I ask that any questions arising from your meeting regarding the ECP you bring to my attention to respond to. I am also more than happy for any individuals to contact myself or Chloe directly.

Question from meeting: **Re road walking and road crossings.** On the current coastal path (designed in the 1970 when traffic was less than it is now) there is a lot of road walking and crossing points, no warning signs or road markings this makes some parts of the trail extremely dangerous.

Answer: Under the new ECP there will not be any road walking without pavements and all road walking / crossings will have been assessed by the road safety officer and any works or lining and signing agreed before the route is signed off.

3. Hedge Flailing / Cutting - Mick Lyons, IWALC vice-chair and representative on LAF

Report on flail cutting of hedges by Island Roads, verge cutting and the consequences for biodiversity on the Isle of Wight.

A number of IW local Councils have raised concerns about the use of flail cutting on hedges and the schedule for verge cutting used by Island Roads.

In order to benefit wildlife and keep biodiversity, it is recommended that flail cutting of hedges only takes place in late winter or very early spring to maximise the food resources over winter for hedgerow birds and other animals. Flail cutting can also damage young trees and the replacement of mature trees in the countryside is then compromised.

Some councils have also reported that verge cutting is carried out at inappropriate times of the year resulting in a decline in wild flowers. In view of the AONB and the Isle of Wight Biosphere Reserve which the Council supports, IWALC would like to ask what instructions/guidance is given to Island Roads on flail cutting and verge cutting and how this is monitored within the Island Roads contract, with particular regard to biodiversity.

In addition to Mick's report above, Richard Grogan wanted to make the LAF aware that following a public meeting and consultation with the parish and town councils, the AONB in partnership with Island Roads and IWALC have produced the following:

Natures Highways:

<https://www.peppercreative.net/wightaonb.org.uk/uploads/natures%20highway%20strategy%20mar%202020.pdf>

Island Map:

<https://www.peppercreative.net/wightaonb.org.uk/uploads/island%20map%20digital%20file.pdf>

5 Types of Verge:

<https://www.peppercreative.net/wightaonb.org.uk/uploads/verge%20type%20digital%20file.pdf>

AONB Website: <https://www.wightaonb.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/publications/> for the above publications plus much more.

Richard has said the AONB team are working with Gatcombe and Chillerton and Shorwell parish councils on pilot projects looking at how the management schemes are helping biodiversity on our roadside verges. We are keen to share these findings with other TPCs if they wish to talk to Island Roads about verge management in their area.

The IWAONB spent three years submitting the IW Biosphere application and as a result we gained the status in June 2019.

Venetia Verey from Arreton P/C advised that the Red Squirrel trail runs through the parish of Arreton and parishioners are concerned about the flail cutting.

As its name suggests the trail is a natural wildlife corridor with its own micro-environment. At a parish meeting they were told that the timber from the flailed trees had been left to block the flow of the Eastern Yar river with a consequence that the bank had eroded back into the path of the cycletrack. There is a need for “proper” hedges to be replanted along field boundaries, and not just brambles along the “Rights of Way”! We need maintenance guidance please.

Are there any government standards or guidelines for hedge cutting along rights of way?

Locals felt without agreed standards this issue will only happen again and again until the contractors have guidelines. This flail cutting happened weeks ago at the end of November at a time when the hedges were full of berries.

In December CPRE on their main twitter web site posted information about hedge cutting protocols, also “hedgerow partnership”, the “Tree Council’s Tree campaign, and hedgerow action plans. Additionally, there are several pages of information at <http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/index.php?page=20>

Question: Can the IWC have a hedge group?

Answer: Bring this to the attention of the **Environment & Sustainability Forum:** contact Sustainability@iow.gov.uk as they already have Reforestation, forestry strategy and grants, carbon offsetting via forests; Road verge rewilding and Hedgerows as discussion topic for the coming year.

Reply from the IWC Highways Contract Team: As part of the Highways PFI contract Island Roads are required to cut the first metre of rural verges twice per year unless the verge is designated as a SSSI verge which the first metre is cut once per year. The SSSI verges are subject to a 5 year assent granted by Natural England and the cutting frequency/timing for those SSSI verges is specified by the assent. At verge road junctions the full width of the verge is cut at least 4 times per year for visibility and road safety purposes. It is essential the first metre of verges are maintained for road safety purposes, maintaining road width and visibility for road users.

The cutting resource is supplied by a supply chain partner Idverde and is a fixed resource of one tractor flail, the cutting programme is scheduled in the growing season between March to November each year. Due to the fixed resource verges cannot be cut at the same time and some verges will be cut at the height of the growing season. Some rural Parish Councils Gatcombe, Chillerton and Shorwell have requested alternate cutting arrangements such as just one cut undertaken in February due to the type of wild flower growth in their parish, this was successful in 2020 and the same approach will be taken in 2021. With the fixed resource it is not possible to

accommodate all requests of cutting arrangements and timings however Island Roads will consider what can be achieved with the resource especially in rural locations that benefit biodiversity. Island Roads and Idverde supervisors undertake quality audits during the cutting programme season. Cutting only the first metre of the verge does promote biodiversity for the remaining part of the verge during the growing season, and in certain locations cutting the first metre of the verge assists the biodiversity for the part of the verge.

ACTION: Policy should be created for guidelines and standards for hedge cutting for both Island Roads, Rights of Way and IWC contractors – **Cllr Steve Hastings to take this forward**

4. Problems at Parkhurst

The November / December County Watch Police Newsletter had the following article: We have recently received a report of rat poison and slug pellets mixed with grain being left on the paths which lead into the forest at Marks Corner. We have also had reports of broken glass being deliberately left to cause injury to animals. Some of the pellets have been ingested by dogs causing immense pain and suffering to them.

This obviously causes a hazard to people using the area as well as wildlife and domestic animals. The person responsible for this will potentially commit offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

At the present time, enquiries are ongoing, and a member of the public is assisting us with our investigation.

If you live in the area or if you are able to provide any information to police regarding who may be responsible for this, then please call 101 and quote reference: 44200441569. Please ensure that you remain vigilant and report any further suspicious incidents to us.

5. E-Scooters – Written update from Celine from Beryl e-scooters:

The Council has commissioned an eScooter trial on the island as part of a national Department for Transport initiative to run 12-month trials across the country. Beryl have been selected as the operator for the trial and we are working in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council, Island Roads and the local police to ensure the success of the trial.

The Beryl eScooter Share scheme is based on geo-fenced parking areas (a virtual geographic boundary around an area by means of GPS), which we call Beryl Bays. You can find the Beryl Bays in our Beryl App and on the ground marked up with green tape on the four corners of the bay. This makes it easy to find an eScooter and a place to park it at the end of your ride. This parking bay based approach means that the scheme is better managed and controlled and will not see eScooter littering the footway. If users don't park in a Beryl Bay they are charged an additional fee and our operations team will collect the eScooter and move it to the nearest bay.

I am reaching out to you now to let you know that we have agreed on locations in Ryde, Cowes and East Cowes. Those locations are cited on Council land and have been reviewed and approved by the Isle of Wight Council, an Island Roads Safety Engineer and the Hampshire Constabulary. There are also a few locations on private land, i.e. at the ferry terminals which were agreed with the private landowners.

Here is the link for the Beryl Bay locations on the island:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1oELk4WPCEPA2-F38aeZoNpURQDqtjVKT&ll=50.73705670014113%2C-1.2498891147672597&z=13>

We're really excited to be bringing eScooters to the Isle of Wight. We'd be pleased to hear from you and consider how we can work together to make this scheme a success.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions please let me know. You can find more information about the scheme at <https://beryl.cc/bikeshare/isle-of-wight>

Question: Road Safety Education need to be improved by the IWC

Answer: Road Safety education is provided by the Fire Service

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Fire-and-Rescue-Service/Road-Safety/Driver-Training>

From 1st April 2021 the responsibility for Road Safety education will return to the council, but as yet we are unsure what department or who will head up this work.

Question: Who will be involved with assessing the success of the e-scooter trial:

Answer: Wendy Perera IWC (Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Strategy Officer) will task the Highways Contract Management Team and the contractor A-To-There Ltd with the assessment.

ACTION: Invite Beryl to the next LAF meeting - **Jennine**

6. Future of the LAF

Hybrid Meeting: The Zoom meeting attracted many observers, this provided a more inclusive option, and it was agreed that even in the future when we can resume physical meetings there will be the option of a hybrid meeting with people being able to join via zoom / teams.

New chairpersons: Cllr Paul Fuller & Vice Chair Cllr Steve Hastings were voted in

Raising the LAF Public Profile & Active Member Involvement: If the LAF is to be successful it must raise its public profile and actively engage with & bring topics to the attention of the public. It is not for the Secretary to do this for the members, but the members need to step up and take ownership.

As a reminder the LAF is an independent advisory body - but operating on a statutory basis – it is not a function of the Isle of Wight Council (the IWC merely provides a secretary and reasonable administrative support/advice).

The purpose of the Isle of Wight Local Access Forum shall be to advise the relevant section 94 bodies as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and as to such other matters as may be prescribed. Advice formally given by a Local Access Forum is required to fall within the following categories

(a) improvement of public access (whether on foot or by horse, cycle, canoe, mechanically propelled vehicle or any other lawful means) to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area;

(b) public access to land in the area for any other lawful purpose (whether on foot, horse, cycle, canoe or by any means other than by mechanically propelled vehicle);

(c) public access to land in the area by means of a mechanically propelled vehicle for any other lawful purpose, but only insofar as the access relates to byways open to all traffic (BOAT).

Section 94 bodies

The appointing authority (the local highway authority)

Any Secretary of State (in effect, any Government department and their executive agencies)

Natural England

The Forestry Commission

English Heritage

Sport England

Any statutory conservation board covering an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (created under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act Section 86)

Any parish or town council

These bodies are obliged to have regard to advice given by Local Access Forums but are not obliged to follow it.

ACTION: Small working party of members to consider how to raise the profile of the LAF such as website, newsletter facebook page etc. – **Paul Fuller, Mick Lyons, Steve Hastings, Alec Lawson & Charlie Fullilove to take this forward**

7. Updates

IWC Rights of Way – Darrel Clarke

- **ECP New member of staff** – John Brownscombe will join the IWC Rights of Way team full time to implement the Island part of the ECP. He will handle a budget of around 1.3million to provide the enhanced / improved route.
- **Gunville Greenway** – New section has been created from Sainsburys to Carisbrooke Church, just the formal signage needs to be done.
- **Compton** – Works done to the path between the beach and car park
- **Alverstone Bridge** –Upgraded to accommodate equestrians, path / cycle track between Newport and Sandown fully multi use
- **Covid Lockdown** – unlike the first lockdown the PROW maintenance team are continuing to work.

Cycle Wight www.cyclewight.org.uk: Alec Lawson **IW CYCLE FORUM**

1. COWES TOWN COUNCIL met in November to discuss cycling in Cowes High Street, an issue for many years. A report setting out the social and environmental case to permit cycling was submitted by Councillor Neil Oliver. The council agreed permit cycling for an 18 month trial period. Post meeting Cyclewight contacted Councillor Lora Peacey Wilcox and offered to fund a professional consultant to assess traffic & engineering issues.
2. As reported in the press £235K has been allocated to the IWC to improve cycling networks, part of the Access Fund. Initiatives underway include Key Worker Cycle Schemes.
3. Cycle Track Maintenance. Standards are part of the contract between IWC and Island Roads. Cyclewight is not satisfied with track maintenance and has asked the IWC for more information. We are not satisfied with the answers and have asked for the date of the next inspection so that we can make our own informed assessment.
4. Cyclewight wants to push for the Medina Greenway to be extended from Island Harbour to East Cowes as a multi-use path for commuting as well as leisure use. We plan to contact local councillors and the MP and would ask for support from the LAF and its members.

LINKS

<https://www.cowestowncouncil.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Minutes-Extraordinary-Town-Council-Meeting-26-November-2020.pdf>

<https://onthewight.com/isle-of-wight-council-to-get-235600-to-improve-cycling-networks/>

<http://www.cyclewight.org.uk/>

<http://www.cyclewight.org.uk/lcwip.html>

<http://www.cyclewight.org.uk/files/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf>

<http://www.cyclewight.org.uk/files/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf>

<https://www.widenmypath.com/>

IW 4X4 Club – No update

Bridleway Group – Petronella from the British Horse Society reminded the group about inclusion of equestrians within shared use routes and the need for suitable surfacing, as the trend is for local authorities to focus on walking and cycling and exclude equestrians.

Landowner – [NFU](#) & [CLA](#)

Increase in visitors: There has been a large increase in visitors to the countryside which is good for public health but can be a problem when the public is within a working environment (e.g. farmyards and fields), but the CLA / NFU and their members are keen to play a positive role to assist the public in the countryside.

Prosperous rural economy: A lot has been going on to assist and promote rural businesses. [IW Rural awards](#), lobbying government regarding hospitality and rural businesses

Help with funding signage – Can IWC fund signage to help landowners sign the PROW and to stop unintentional trespass? Darrel advised the IWC only has to meet its statutory obligations (signs where the path leaves the highway and way markers where someone unfamiliar might get lost). But landowners can install their own signage as long as it is helpful and not deterring lawful users of the paths.

[IW Ramblers](#)

ECP – Ramblers are actively reviewing the route and putting in a detailed submission, they have made 31 representation to the ECP and had a telephone conference with the new ECP team members.

Reduction in IWC PROW Budget - Concerned about the reduction to £60,000 for the annual Rights of Way budget. Darrel reported that this was the original proposal but has heard that the budget papers due to be published soon will provide for an increased amount, possibly £100k.

Parish Path Reps: They have continued checking paths and helping with the Rights of Way path surveys.

Planning Applications: Ramblers have a member who is checking the [weekly planning listing](#) and making comments on applications if there is an impact to any public rights of way.

Public Rights of Way at Sandown / Shanklin Golf Club – a question had been submitted to the LAF, as it was in respect of public footpaths this had been directed to the IW Ramblers for their thoughts and observations:

Q . Rights of Way across Shanklin Sandown Golf Course (Lake & Blackpan Common)
During the lockdown I took advantage of the ban on sports to enjoy this without any golfers. The signage when entering the course states, you should keep to marked routes, however the following paths are not, SS32, SS33, SS34a(part) & SS53. When using SS32 last week I had a conversation with a golf course employee who said though there were no objections to using it during the golf course closure, some paths had been closed several years ago including the one I was on & it would be unwise due to health & safety issues to use when the course was open. I checked the definitive map along with the amendments & as far as I can see all rights of way across the area are still in place. Can you confirm this as I feel the golf club are directing you to use the paths, they want you to use.

A. I assume that the golf course was set up over an area of common heathland. It therefore inherited a dense network of public footpaths with rights that still exist. Neither the golf course or their employees can stop the general public exercising these rights. We believe that in one or two places golf course features like a green have been positioned over a public path. This has resulted in minor path diversions off the definitive line. This is quite a common occurrence along public paths around the Island. If no significant practical access restriction results, the ROW department have not attempted to correct the situation. The Ramblers recognise that this would not be the best use of limited Council resources.

About four years ago the ramblers cooperated with the golf course to provide way marks to show 'A Main' north-south route across the course. This does not imply that any other public paths are closed. In theory a path rationalisation/diversion project could be undertaken to provide useful well marked and surfaced paths that are compatible with a golf course. But how high a priority should we give to this?

Dimond Races what will the impact be in respect of the existing PROW network?

<https://www.diamondraces.com/>

ACTION: Update required for next meeting - **Cllr Steve Hastings**

Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) - They have had their AGM recently and their new chairperson is Cllr Diana Conyers, the IWALC is active within lots of different local groups and with the MP.

Forestry Commission: The FC is still in communications with ECP regarding Burntwood

2021 Meetings 4pm Thursdays @ to be advised
