

Local Access Forum Conference 2012 Report

The following points were made:-

- Natural England are spearheading with Defra to move forward with the aspiration to have cross country links.
- Andy Mackintosh, Natural England is Team Leader.
- Government proposes to simplify rules and responsibilities which is out for consultation. Groups are urged to respond **ACTION**
- Will result in an enabling not a lead role.
- Need to improve LAF's by [a] Memoranda of understanding[b]A seat on the ROW Review Committee.
- LAF hand book needs to be updated to include 'Huddle'
- Look at content of the CAP 2012 document.
- Look at Natural England white paper.
- Natural Environment White paper
- Countryside and ROW Review this year. which will include Farming, Nature Reserves, Fisheries' Animal welfare, Village Greens, CAP, Planning, Footpaths and paths for Communities. Members felt Forestry did'nt get a mention?
- Does there need an England Forum
- I attended 2x breakout sessions [a]ROWIPs/LTPs concern that reorganisation/reduction in funding has resulted in some Counties/Councils splitting up ROW teams; need to make sure they were embedded in the Local Transport Plans; Maintenance problems; Investigate Ancient ROW. Encourage partnership with Highways Maintenance e.g. tarmac scalplings could be used for repairs to ROW's.

[b] Green Infrastructure/Localism; Loss of staff and volunteers, Insurance problems, possible funding from CAP, conflicts with usage e.g. Cycles/Horses.

- Need for input into Neighbourhood Plans.
- Be aware of Stewardship, set aside schemes etc.restricted access onto Nature Reserves.
- Must work with Land Owners.
- Implications of new high speed Railway on existing ROW.
- NEW FUNDING Paths for Communities £2m over 2yrs Natural England to administer, local groups to bid, criteria on website in April MARTIN SHAW officer Natural England.
- Various points were raised in the plenary sessions including :-
 1. Defra and Natural England should join up.
 2. Unitary Councils better at ROW, LTP, Road safety at crossings.
 3. Input from the new LEP's
 4. LAF's need to advertise their meeting dates
 5. Need to invite CPRE along to meetings when discussing consultations.
 6. Need to meet with the Chief Planning Officer once a year.

Cllr. Madge Shineton