



**Minutes of the LAF: 13 April 2023 at 4pm  
(held at IW Community Club, Park Road, Cowes)**

**In attendance:**

Cllr Paul Fuller (Chairman)  
Darrel Clarke (IWC, acting LAF secretary)  
Mike Slater (IW Rambles Association)  
Tricia Merrifield (IW Bridleways Group)  
Alec Lawson (Cycle Wight)  
John Heather (NFU)  
Helena Hewston (IWALC)  
John Hobart (Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Council)  
Graham Biss (Gift to Nature) (Guest Speaker)  
Will Ainslie (People Powered) (Guest Speaker)  
Michael Taylor (Whippingham Parish Council)  
Penny Acton (Gurnard Parish Council)  
Carole Pierce (Guest)  
Mark Earp (Guest)

**Apologies:**

John Brownscombe (IWC, England Coast Path Officer)  
John Truswell (Natural England)  
Chloe Walker-Panse (Natural England)  
Richard Grogan (AONB)  
Helen Slade (Open Spaces Society)  
Cllr Rodney Downer

**Declaration of Interest:**

None

**Minutes of previous meeting (1 December 2022):**

Approved

## **Agenda Items:**

### **LCWIPs (Will Ainslie – People Powered)**

LCWIPs (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans) relate to utility routes rather than leisure routes. It is a strategic document outlining proposals. It does not contain detailed analysis or engineering/design detail. Central government has indicated that Local Authorities that have a Plan are much more likely to be awarded grant funding. The majority of Local Authorities publish one Plan for their whole area. On the Island a different approach has been adopted whereby IWC has provided grants to Town and Parish Councils to prepare their own Plans (50% match funded). People Powered have prepared Plans for Cowes, Northwood and Gurnard and for Bembridge. Plans have also been published for Newport/Ryde and for East Cowes. The next proposed Plan is for the Bay area. Prior to a Plan being published, consultation is undertaken whereby the public can note problems, opportunities and requirements. A draft Plan is then produced for consideration before a final Plan is published. WA then proceeded to show the Plan for Cowes, Northwood and Gurnard on PowerPoint.

### **West Wight Greenway (Graham Biss)**

At the outset a number of key principles were adopted: 1. To work with landowners and to ensure route is compatible with current land use (and with regard to sections of the old railway track bed no longer being practicable for the route); 2. Work with users to ensure the route meets their needs as a leisure route; 3. The route is end to end (Newport to Freshwater). These principles still remain but due to negotiation still being required with a landowner at the eastern end, a stages approach is now to be adopted. The first stage (phase 1) will be from Freshwater Bay to Wellow. Agreement in principle has been reached with landowners and work is underway with a view to securing legal agreements, planning permission and SSSI assent (where necessary). This phase can be delivered fairly quickly and hopefully within 12 months. Ending at Wellow has the benefit of being able to connect to the wider rights of way network and quiet lanes/roads. Alongside the development of Phase 1, discussion/negotiation will continue on the remainder of the route.

### **Questions:**

Is there a connection at Gunville end. J Hobart answered that a path has been provided as part of new housing at Alvington Manor View. This was confirmed by GB and DC.

Will this connect to the Gunville Greenway? DC answered that discussion has taken place with the regeneration team regarding junction improvements and the Taylor Road scheme with a view to a safe connection being made.

PA said – it is very important that a safe connection is made and the West Wight Greenway shouldn't simply end without a safe link into Newport (crossing Gunville Road).

## **England Coast Path/Coast Path (Darrel Clarke)**

### IW Coastal Path

1. Significant erosion this winter has seen the closure of sections of the existing Coastal Path with alternate diversions in place where needed.
  - a. Those locations where the loss of the path is easily resolved by moving fences with the landowners permission have either been resolved or will soon be resolved.
  - b. More difficult areas such as the area of Appley Steps, Luccombe Tea Gardens and Brighstone Holiday Centre will take longer to finalise
  - c. Movement also occurring at Priory Woods and the Landslip which may result in closures if this continues.

### England Coast Path

1. There are no significant developments since the LAF December meeting however ongoing dialogue is continuing. Further to the update at the LAF meeting on 1st December 2022, NE continue to correspond and consult with potentially affected land owners on Length 1 East Cowes to Wootton Bridge. NE are actively seeking site visit meetings, the first of which is scheduled for mid-May 2023. NE thank the LAF for their patience whilst ECP options are explored in this challenging and complex Length on the IOW. Should there be any questions arising do please forward to John Truswell.
2. There will be two Modification Reports to realign the route for the ECP in IOW3 at Appley Steps and Luccombe Chine due to the loss of the original route. These will be subject to publication with eight weeks allowed for the receipt of representations and for owners/occupiers who are directly affected also being able to object if they believe that the proposal does not provide for an appropriate balance between their rights and those of the public.
3. Work for the first year of establishment works on IOW 4 (Binnel Bay to Chilton Chine) and IOW 5 (Chilton Chine to Colwell Bay) was completed by financial year end and has seen an investment in 22/23 of around

£190K in improvements on these stretches. More works on signage and some remaining path furniture improvements are planned in 23/24 with a target of formal opening of the new National Trail on these stretches currently set for the autumn. There are a number of new sections of the path which the landowners have allowed permissive use of in advance of the formal opening so they can be enjoyed now (Binnel Bay/Old Park/Charles Wood area, alongside Blythe Shute, Blackgang and on the new link path at T16 Totland which has allowed us to reopen the coastal path in that area, currently part of a Variation Report and consultation by Natural England [*relates to item agenda 4 – DC had maps available for members and guests to view – variation report can be viewed [here](#)* [variation report](#)]) We are also having to deal with loss of the route on these stretches through the ‘roll back’ process with a particularly complex consideration at Brighstone Holiday Centre due to the unexpected quick loss of the recently delivered permissive route.

4. Brambles Chine (IOW 6)– demolition of slipway complete and new steps should now be in place re opening Public Footpath F13. The cost of the steps is being covered by a grant from Linstone Chine Management Committee and the demolition and licencing costs have been covered by Natural England as preparation for the ECP using this route in the future.
5. IOW 8 & IOW 9 (Thorness Bay to Medina Road Cowes) we are awaiting on Sec of State approval for these stretches which we believe is imminent and will be commencing works on these two stretches during 23/24.
6. Work continues to prepare for more routes to be approved and to address the changes to alignment caused by coastal erosion including the use of the ‘roll back’ mechanism on approved sections of the new National Trail

#### Shadow National Trail Partnership

1. We are looking to establish a Shadow National Trail Partnership in advance of the formal opening of IOW 4 & IOW 5 to allow us to work through what will be needed once the National Trail is up and running. We have approached some key stakeholder organisations to invite to be part of this and will be circulating draft terms of reference and scoping for dates for our first meeting this spring. The LAF has been asked if it wishes to have a named representative on the National Trail Partnership. John B will be overseeing this alongside his work to establish the ECP.

#### Questions/Queries

PF requested a copy of terms of reference when available.

PF requested a candidate for the LAF rep.

MS said this could be somebody from the IWRA.

J Heather said it needs to be someone independent.

DC said that this could be difficult as each LAF member has their own interest. PF agreed and said he would speak to JB about himself being the LAF rep on the Partnership.

**ACTION:** PF to contact John Brownscombe

## **Rights of Way Update (Darrel Clarke)**

### Closures:

**Byways:** Delayed the reopening of the Byways to vehicles until the end of this month due to the very wet March and the continuing unsettled weather in the last week or so.

**Alum Bay Steps:** The closure of Alum Bay steps was unfortunate timescale wise, but purchase order with a contractor has been raised and they should be repaired and reopened by the end of this month.

**Gurnard:** Recent closure of the coastal path at Gurnard due to a collapsed bridge. It is hoped that the installation of a longer bridge will enable reopening.

**Luccombe:** The coastal path closure at Luccombe due to the significant landslip at Christmas means currently diverting the public inland over fields owned by the National Trust. This is causing some residents at Luccombe Village concern and the situation is currently being reviewed.

**Path re-opening:** On a positive note, both Brambles Chine beach access and the coastal path at Bembridge have recently been reopened.

### AONB DEFRA Grant:

ROW would like to pass on its thanks to the AONB team who provided ROW with an opportunity through the DEFRA access grant to complete some very worthwhile schemes at the beginning of the year, when thankfully the weather was dry. This included surfacing works at Dark Lane Carisbrooke, Godshill Park Farm to Freemantle Gate, Binnel Bay beach access and a new bridleway bridge at the Donkey Sanctuary.

### Budget:

RoW have been provided with a capital budget of approximately £100k for 2023/24 and will also be receiving s106 funding for specific projects and paths. Currently putting together its schemes and projects list for the coming year.

This will include a scheme to improve access into the northern end of Parkhurst Forest. As well as upgrading footpath CB5 across fields and through the forest to Mark's Corner to bridleway status, surfacing works will take place in the forest with the support of the Forestry Commission and with SSSI assent. Conditions in the winter are awful so this work will be an improvement for all users. It will be similar to what was achieved in America Woods a year or so ago.

### Shrubbery (Public Footpath N66)

Just secured a legal agreement with English Heritage to change footpath N66 known as The Shrubbery at Carisbrooke Castle to a bridleway. This was instigated by Tricia and the IWBG.

Questions:

MS re CB5 - can access at Whitehouse Road end be improved. Can J Heather provide landownership details.

**ACTION:** J Heather said he would look into this.

MS re CB5 – how much will it cost. DC said 30k has been allocated.

### **IW Bridleways Group (Tricia Merrifield)**

TM thanked RoW for securing N66 The Shrubbery as a bridleway and for its proposal in respect of CB5. IWBG working with NT on improving access at Dunsbury. IWBG providing two bridle gates here and one for Totland. They propose investigating whether G11 can be changed to bridleway and have asked ROW to consider. DC advised that it has been looked at by RoW Maintenance Officer and there are concerns re width – DC needs to look for himself.

Questions

Re G11 J Hobart voiced the need for G11 to be available for riding but explained that it is narrow and additional width is needed.

**ACTION:** PF requested that J Hobart, MS and TM liaise with a view to investigating this further.

### **CycleWight (Alec Lawson)**

Cyclewight is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. There will be rides, demonstrations and promotions at Merstone Old Station on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April (10am to 3pm). All welcome. Programme and Information see <http://www.cyclewight.org.uk/> Thank you to Natural Enterprise for making the

venue available and to Peddlars Café, Wight Cycle Hire, TAV Cycles, Beryl Bikes and KEERT and others for assistance.

Ryde to Yarmouth corridor – regarding Fairlee Road walking and cycling as part of this corridor letter has been written to IWC Cllr for the Fairlee area and copied to PF on 8 December 2022 and previously on 3 September 2021, but no response.

Island Roads have carried out improvements to cycle track in the Blackwater area. Tarmacking has occurred in places but a very wet, muddy and constantly flooded area remains (behind the Toyota garage). Cyclewight is in contact with the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods regarding this and await a response. Can any assistance from the LAF or RoW be provided in resolving this long outstanding issue? PF said that if AL doesn't get a satisfactory response from the Assistant Director then to let him know. DC said that he would contact the Assistant Director as in the past the flooding has been resolved by Island Road by contacting the owner of the adjacent fields who have done something on their land which has resolved the problem for a number of months.

**ACTION:** DC to contact Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods

The 2023 Wayfarers Randonnée is on Sunday 30 April.  
<https://www.cycleisland.co.uk/>

### **IW Ramblers Association (Mike Slater)**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> May they are holding their 250 donate a gate ceremony and celebrities will be attending. They are holding walks as part of the Walking Festival – 4 stretches of the Walk the Wight route which will also act a as inspection for the event. They are working on the Gaps and Links project and MS will present further detail of this at the next LAF.

**ACTION:** Include Gaps and Link presentation on next agenda

### **IW 4x4**

No update

### **Landowner (John Heather NFU)**

Concerns being voiced re sheep worrying and J Heather requested that all LAF stakeholders reinforce the need to keep dogs on a lead and to advise on the serious harm that can be caused. PF asked if J Heather could provide an information sheet or similar to be circulated?

**ACTION:** John Heather to provide information to be circulated

Concerns re the beaver introduction project by HIWWT – damage to land and rights of way. J Heather asked DC what RoW's view is. DC explained RoW do have concerns and these have been voiced both to the steering group and to line management. Similar concerns raised by Highways CMT re the cycle track. DC is concerned that there is not an IWC position statement on the proposal and that Council Members should be briefed and a decision made. PF agreed.

**ACTION:** PF to approach Cllrs Bacon and Jordan (as relevant cabinet members)

### **IWALC (Helena Hewston)**

No update. WA asked HW to raise the profile of LCWIPS with IWALC including the possibility of cluster working.

### **Any Other Business**

Discission regarding number of LAF's per year. It was resolved that there should be three, all in person. If additional meetings are required, then these could be held by ZOOM/Teams to discuss specific matters e.g. England Coast Path.

### **Date of next meeting**

**Thursday 14 September 2023 at 4pm (venue to be confirmed)**