**Medway Local Access Forum**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 4.00pm**

**Virtual TEAMS meeting**

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| Item | Main Meeting | Action |
| 1 | Simon Curry ChairAnnmarie Behn (AB) Paths and Promotions Manager (MC)Karen Beer (KB) NFUIan Gray (IG) User representative (CCG)Peter Garrett (PG) Greenspace and Access Manager(MC)Adam Taylor (AT) Rivers & Paths Manager (MC)David Palmer (DP) Public Health (MC)Graham Jenkinson (GJ) RamblersDarren Taylor (DT) Cycling representativeSue Saunders (SS) BHS ( vice chair)Chris Morris (CM) Medway Town Footpath GroupEmilia Ayms (EA) Greenspace development Officer (MC)Ben Sweeney (BS) Ranscombe Farm Reserve Manager |  |
|  | Welcome to guests, members and officers SC welcomed everyone to the November meeting. Introductions were made around the table. |  |
| 2 | ApologiesArthur Waters (disability representative),  |  |
| 3 | Minutes of last meeting (September 2021)There were no minutes of the last meeting as it was cancelled. |  |
| 4 | **Horsted Valley update (EA)**Emilia illustrated the exciting improvements that have been made in the Horsted Valley. The slides of the presentation are attached as part of the minutes.**Ranscombe Farm Update (BS)**BS gave a fascinating presentation on Ranscombe Farm, including its arable plants, farming methods, cattle grazing, conservation, changes over the years, new access improvements including an event area, car parking issues, visitor numbers (est. 130,000 per annum), wildlife changes, i.e., increase in butterflies because of the open space and plant species. |  |

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| 5 | Round the Table( RTT) Medway Ramblers - GJGJ said that all ramblers’ walks had now re-opened. GJ mentioned that they had been consulted on the Cuxton Winery but did not object as they felt that the winery building would sit discretely in the landscape.  |  |
| 6 | **(RTT) Cuxton countryside Group - IG**IG advised that the CCG had received £4k in sponsorship from the CO-OP to replace stiles with kissing gates.IG also advised that the group were focussing on the Cuxton Winery proposal from an AONB perspective. |  |
| 7 | **(RTT) National Farmers Union - KB**KB advised that she had circulated the HIF consultation to her members and had received responses that she would pass on to AB to send to the relevant team.KB reported that there were major issues on the Isle of Grain with hare coursers who were shooting not just hares, but other wildlife like badgers, rabbits and even lambs.KB advised that they had a library of rural photos from over the last 100 years that needed a home. SC advised that the Medway Archive Centre may be interested. Contact details below:Email: malsc@medway.gov.uk Phone: 01634 332 714  | **KB****AB****KB** |
| 8 | **(RTT) British Horse society - SS**SS advised that residents of Nashenden were looking at installing horse step overs in a bid to reduce motorbike intrusion. PG advised that he is also involved with this.AB advised that she has spoken to RSPB about a permissive bridleway at Cliffe Pools, but the RSPB had advised this cannot happen now as they are having to employ security guards to stop the influx of illegal intruders onto the site .  |  |
| 9 | **Reports from Officers (RFO) – AB**AB advised that the Capability Funding had been received which would allow the creation of an asset register for PROW. This would allow prioritisation for works and also allow more accurate mapping on the public facing mapping system.AB advised that the money would also hopefully fund the creation of a Community Trail in Rochester, taking in the local greenspaces and some of the heritage. This project is in its inception stage at the moment with the route having been decided but yet to be digitised.GJ asked for the link to the public facing mapping at Medway.The link is below:<https://maps.medway.gov.uk/webmaplayersext/map.aspx> | **AB****GJ** |
| 10 | **RFO – AT**AT advised that the ECP was nearing completion in the Medway area and illustrated some of the work that has recently been undertaken in this respect. The slides are attached as part of the minutes.SC and PG both thanked Adam for his hard work and dedication with this major project that will bring two national trails to Medway. |  |
| 11 | **RFO – DP**DP spoke about his recent research mission to Hackney and all of the ideas he had returned with. He spoke about education of the people in Medway of what is out there for them in respect to walking and cycling for health and how the LAF could help.SC suggested that a small group is formed to look at this. He will speak to AB in the new year to progress. It was also suggested that this group could look at the social media aspect of the LAF and how the PROW face book page could be utilised to help raise the profile of the LAF | **SC, DP****AB, PG** |
| qa12 | **RFO – DT**DT reported that monies from the Active Travel Fund is being spent on new shared walking and cycling lanes at Four Elms Hill.The design is currently being tweaked following with the build expected to start early next year.The Capability Fund bid has now come in and will be used to employ an officer and a consultant looking at cycling and walking infrastructure. |  |
| 13 | **LAF Website**SC reported that the website is not working to attract interest in the work that the LAF do, and work needs to be done to look at how we can boost the siteSC and AB would like regular information from the members about what they do, to put on the LAF website. IG offered to write the first piece about the work of the CCG.AB reported that the Medway LAF website is one of the more informative pages of LAF groups in the UK and suggested it would be good if each member could write 30-50 words about themselves and the group they represent to attach to the members page on the LAF website. | **IG****ALL****ALL** |
|  | **Any other Business**It was agreed to change the quarterly meeting day from a Thursday to a Tuesday.AB encouraged the members to take part in the second consultation for the HIF which she had sent out earlier that day to everyone.SC advised that the Friends of Groups have been busy planting new trees and setting up new groups. CM advised via email that MTFG is doing well. Membership is slightly down at the moment but hopefully will increase next year. The volunteer group that helps with the PROW network still number four but have done a remarkable amount of much appreciated work this year.SS suggested a rural crime PC could come and talk to the LAF sometime, to explain what they are doing with regard to this issue which affects everyone. **The next meeting is on Tuesday 1 March 2022 with a venue or virtual meeting to be decided, but with a preference to meeting in person.**SC thanked all for attending and wished them a happy, healthy festive season and new year. |  |