

Brighton & Hove Local Access Forum Meeting Minutes 30/04/2026

Attendees:

Luke Burstow (LB) *Chair*

Dave Brookshaw (DB)

Liz Symes (LS)

Ali Polowski (AP)

Andrew Coleman (AC)

Pete Hodd (PH)

Chantelle Hoppé (CH) – BHCC Rights of Way Officer (*minutes*)

Apologies:

David Taylor (DT)

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting (29/01/26)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed

Actions Update:

- DB – undercliff flooding – is there any update on this? **CH not heard from Seafront Team – will chase again**
- Toads Hole Valley Planning – link was sent for comments. DB sent the comments from the first application but it the treatment of the roundabouts looks to be different. **CH to look for plans and share**
- DB – date of final meeting on 29th Oct – can this be changed as can't make it. CH to circulate **new meeting date (22nd Oct)**
- LB – on the discussion with James Tulley from SDNPA LAF. Since our meeting he has become Chair of the SDNPA LAF. Chris Todd is vice chair (interested in Green and Transport issues). There was a meeting of the Chairs of B7H, West Sussex, East Sussex, Hampshire and SDNPA LAFs. Discussion on the new Mayoral system and what that might mean. Hampshire taking a 'bottom up' approach – committees formed and consultations happening. Sussex seems to have gone the other way – with consultants making the decisions. The opportunity to engage seems limited. There is a willingness to engage as a collective of LAFs – but need to find out who to approach. AC – seen a publication recently with the one employee of the new Mayoral Authority – now a legal entity. This paper said the new authority had limited legal responsibility – more about promoting growth. This might give opportunity to influence their policy (environmental, biodiversity, climate issues). They have a strategic role on transport. **AC to try and find the name of the person from the article.** LB – there will be a political element with parties putting candidates up – an opportunity to engage there potentially. Its important that the sussex-wide political leadership has one point of contact for the various LAFs in the region.

2. Discussion Items (Standing items)

City Downland Estate Plan (CDEP) (DB):

DB / CH – various points of interest at the meeting:

- DB brought up the importance of field margins and margin paths – will keep a watching brief on this
- South Downs Riding School (off Warren Rd) – presentation on new low density (25) housing estate to be built. CH – the buildings will be on the north side of the track only. Have asked that the whole of the footpath to Dartmouth Close is upgraded as part of the works. There will be planting to screen the development. PH concerned about the visibility of the site on brow of hill. CH – the style they are going for is very farm building / rural buildings – so they look a bit like barns / farm yard, with buildings at different angles and the materials used. The application isn't on the Planning Portal as yet for comment. Once its up it would be useful if members commented on the access issue and improving the path to Dartmouth Close.
- National Trust presentation on the legacy of the Changing the Chalk project
- Communication strategy for the farmed estate. James Woodward introduced this. CH mentioned the urban fringe bus walks. There is going to be a workshop on this topic on 3rd June
- After the meeting emails went backwards and forwards from the Downland Alliance (made up of 30 green space groups) – unhappy with the level of engagement of the DAP members in the management of green spaces / farm plans / countryside stewardship agreement etc. CH James Woodward and managers were going to meet to discuss this feedback and a way forward with the DAP. DB can't make the meeting on 3rd June so will send some notes from the LAF. LB please circulate to the LAF members for comment before sending.

Actions:

DB to circulate comments on the communication strategy for the downland estate (by 22nd May) – to be sent to James Woodward / DAP for the meeting on 3rd June

Transport Partnership (PH):

PH has decided to step down from the Transport Partnership – difficulty in accessing any of the papers, can't be heard at the meetings (a few people hog the air space)

CH – spoke to Juliet Theobald. In terms of access to the papers – this is to do with the council IT system – CH can circulate the papers to anyone from the LAF who wants to attend. They are going to have fewer presentations at the meetings so there is more time for discussion

PH – lack of access to the papers really does have an impact on the number of stakeholders who can input to the agenda. This as well as some people dominating the meeting makes it a very frustrating experience. Someone else may be better placed to represent the LAF at these meetings.

DB – would love for someone else to take it on (DB represented the LAF at this meeting for many years). It is a really important group to be represented on – Transport and Travel Partnership.. Maybe someone else from the Ramblers? PH – though there is a wide membership of 800 – it is very hard to get anyone involved on the activist side – who is interested in attending meetings. DB Will step in for the short term.

LB – need to decide if attending the meetings is useful – can the group be heard or adequately represented. It may be just as / more effective for the LAF to respond to the minutes of the meetings once they come out? Perhaps DB attend the next meeting and see if anything has changed. Then at the July meeting we can make a decision?

Actions

DB attend the next Transport and Travel Partnership meeting – feedback on how it went. Make a decision on how to proceed at the July LAF meeting (ie continue to attend the meetings in person or provide LAF Feedback to the minutes of the meeting).

3. Reports

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

Main Points of Interest:

- Coldean footpath – trialling the use of root protection cell-web to see if helps stop erosion / gullyng
- Bus Walks – the posters are made, paths mapped on Komoot (free navigation App). Now working on the web page with Delphine Jacq (Walking Officer) – with links to bus website and Komoot. Launch planned for middle of June. The Rangers will lead a couple of the walks for the public.
- Transport Team – dropped kerbs / junction and crossing improvements – improved access to green spaces within the city.
- £106k of SDNPA CIL money confirmed for the Ditchling Road project (accessible bus stops and improving rights of way crossings)
- BHCC Section 106 money to improve the crossing over Coldean Lane and Varley Halls. This will be linked to the public footpath B63 – the legal route (now in disrepair) rather than the desire line (crossing the road here not so safe).

DB – Transport Dept crossing improvements. A while ago there was a stakeholder discussion on the crossing at Drove Rd / Falmer Rd. This came to nothing as could not get agreement / compromise on what was achievable. LB – according to the highways engineer there are a lot of services on the verge that affect alignment and what is pragmatic to do. DB even if we can't make it bike or horse friendly – can't it be made a pedestrian crossing. CH the difficulty is that it is a bridleway – so more stakeholders involved than just walkers. AP – without considerably widening the road don't see the space for a central refuge and wouldn't want to have a horse in the middle of the road waiting. I would wait until the road was clear. Agree with Dave that any crossing is better than no crossing. PH – think it does need to be a proper crossing – pelican (doesn't need to be an island). LB – think it needs to be a 30mph speed limit for a pelican. It's a shame the group talked it out of anything happening. Make it a 30mph zone if it isn't already.

AC – bus walks – would it be possible to add Pete Wests' boundary walk? People could do sections of it (A to B walks) and use the bus. CH – could definitely look at adding that. PH – Ramblers are far more likely to do the bus walks than the boundary walk as it goes too close to the A27. Another good linear route would be Saltdean to Woodingdean and onto Falmer.

Actions:

- ***CH to talk to Transport Team about the Drove Rd / Falmer Rd crossing – possible signage / pelican / look at speed limit***
- ***CH to add Brighton & Hove Boundary walk to bus walks as one of the future routes***

Maintenance & Management

Gate Repairs	1
Gate Replacements	3
Stile Replacement / Repair	4
Waymark installation	2
Vegetation Clearance (from public requests)	1
Surface Improvements	2
Obstruction	4
General Enquiries	8

Summary of works :

- Coldean Footpath surfacing FP B91 – to the footbridge into Stanmer
- Coldean – two sets of steps up to 39 Acres access land – access gates on a very steep bank. Steps installed – trying to get the contractor to come back to install hand rails as the steps are very steep

Up-coming projects:

- Saltdean Vale – flood mitigation. Looking to install a ‘table’ junction to stop water from Coombe Vale flowing into Saltdean Vale and contributing to the flooding. (Still waiting on the BW diversion application that will divert water from the other end)
- £100k of SDNPA CIL money for surfacing of missing links on the Stanmer bridleway loop

DB – Saltdean Vale Flooding – concerned that a lot of the water comes from BW B3 and further up. Need to see where the water is coming from. CH – the owner of the land at the junction of BW B3 and B4 did an experiment over the winter to see where the water was coming from – the majority from BW B3 (that he is hoping to divert), some from Coombe Vale and very little from further up BW B4 (towards the football club). He sent his report to the BHCC flood engineer who was satisfied with the results. It is very hard to do any mitigation works on the current surface of BW B3 because the camber is towards the houses (As DB pointed out – attempts at drainage gullies get blocked up with silt). If the landowner is successful in their application to divert this will take away a lot of the water run off (the current path would be planted up and the new path would contour down to BW B4 with drainage pits included). Need to wait and see what happens with this – pointless spending money on resurfacing BW B3 if it is possibly going to be diverted.

DB has the farmer and horse field owner been consulted on the proposed diversion. CH – the landowner has talked to them. As I said, the application hasn’t been submitted as yet. Once it is there will be a 6 week consultation period in which any objections can be raised.

LB – from what has been discussed it seems that the works at Coombe Vale / Saltdean Vale are part of the solution in a bigger picture. It will no doubt help and wont be detrimental in future actions further up the valley. It sounds like a good thing.

Actions:

- ***CH to send DB the diagram of the ‘Table Junction’ Coombe Vale / Saltdean Vale***

Legal Rights of Way Work

- Longridge Avenue DMMO – finally had some feedback from the Planning Inspectorate that they are now considering the application. CH Will keep the group posted
- Hangleton Link path DMMO application is in and is currently being evaluated by Legal
- The Application to divert BW B3 at the norther end from the farmer is in
- The application to divert BW B3 at the southern end – still waiting
- Path dispute FP B82 – farmer placed cattle feeders on the route of the path and asserted that the path had been diverted historically. Legal have found no evidence of a past diversion order. Had a site visit with Legal

on 15th April. Took a pragmatic approach – the alleged diversion is not suitable as it is very steep and puts walkers in the middle of a cattle field. Though the feeders are on the line of the path legally, in practice there is plenty of spreading room. There is a safe route around the edge of the field to get to the stile – to avoid cattle. Watching brief on this one.

DB – the gate at the top of this path where it goes into East Sussex is terrible and needs replacing. CH – many of the gates on Pickershill farm are being replaced as part of the new tenancy – including this one.

AC – how wide will the margin be? CH the normal margin is 3m to allow for passing space and for machinery to get in to cut it.

AC – is it open or are there hedges? Ch – no it's open with a fence on one side and a new fence would be installed to keep users separate from stock.

AC – will squeezing a bridleway in here cause more erosion and contribute to flooding we were discussing further down? CH – no this section is flat / on a plateau area. The steep section of path is further south.

DB – not happy about the idea of it being fenced on both sides. CH – to be fair it was historically fenced on both sides before for ¾ of the path. The farmer is only putting the diversion application in so that it can be fenced for lambing. There will be the opportunity to comment on the application once it goes through the advertising process.

LB – on the path dispute – this sounds like a pragmatic approach

4. Missing Links / Lost Ways / Unrecorded Paths (CH)

Covered in the previous agenda items (Longridge Avenue and Hangleton Link path)

5. Any Other Business

LS – Sheepcote – the gate into the golf course has a huge gully – very difficult to navigate on a scooter. The golf course had also put rubble sacks just the other side of the gate

AP – Bridle gate on the Falmer Rd path where go into New Market Plantation – handle is missing.

AP – was hoping David Taylor may be her. There are 3 path fanning from New Market Plantation – new fencing going in – would like to know the plan for the gates here. Will keep an eye on developments here.

AC – saw an article from Cllr Jacob Taylor asking for views about what could be done on the seafront – part of the seafront development board. DB went to a meeting in January with Lord Bassam about seafront development – but haven't heard anything since. DB can't find any mention of the group on council website. But this might be an avenue to pursue accessibility to the sea - given that this was unsuccessful when the new groyne field development was progressed. DB – can CH find out who to contact on the Seafront Development Board?

DB – thanked everybody for their patience and praised the amount of topics covered – thank you to everyone

LB – would be great to get some new members so if anyone meets someone interested then pass on the details

Actions

- **CH to investigate surfacing at Sheepcote / East Brighton Golf course. LS to send photos**
- **CH – get handle replaced on Falmer Rd path gate (Newmarket plantation)**
- **CH – look into who to contact on the Seafront Development Board**

Date of Meetings 2026: (Thursdays 6-8pm)

30th April

30th July

22nd October