



**KCAF Meeting – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Meeting venue: **Microsoft Teams**

Meeting started at **2:00pm**

<b>Attendees:</b>		
Jeremy Boxall	JBox	Chair
Hazel Walters	HW	KCC - Highways
Sarah Barker	SB	Kent Association of Local Councils
Robert Peel	RP	User representative – Walkers
Steve Neville	SN	User group – Cycling
Anne Rillie	AR	User representative – Equestrian
Charles Tassell	CT	Land Management Representative – CLA
<b>Advisor</b>		
Graham Rusling	GR	KCC - PROW
William Barfoot	WB	KCC - PROW
Jenny Bowen	JBo	Natural England
<b>Minutes</b>		
Serena Mitchell-Burns SMB KCC - PROW		
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Anne Beecham	AB	Other Interest Representative – Tourism
Richard Dickenson	RD	User representative – Motorised vehicles
Theresa Trussell	TT	User representative – Multiuser
Chris Jelly	CJ	Other Interest Representative – Dog Walking
David Brazier	DB	KCC – Member
Amanda Corp	AC	Land Management Representative - NFU
Pauline Harmer	PH	KCC - Highways

<b>Approval of minutes from Previous Meeting</b>
Minutes approved for meeting on Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
<b>Matters Arising Not on the Agenda</b>
None

#### Actions from Previous Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022

1. JBox to approach Health Walks Co-ordinator – **JBox advised this is Ongoing**
2. AB to approach CPRE network representative – **JBox advised no communication from Anne following discussion on matter. This is ongoing**
3. Forum to respond to any further consultations on this subject following the response to the Glover review – **Jbox advised this is ongoing.**
4. GR to make further enquiries with Kent Highways as to the length of UUCRs in Kent – **GR advised this is ongoing**

GR to invite a member of the Kent Highways Road Safety Team to a future meeting – **GR advised this is Ongoing as it trying to locate correct contact in KCC Highways Road Safety team. HW advised that Vicky Harvey, road Safety Team Leader would be the best initial contact.**

5. Forum Members to respond by e-mail to GR on prioritisation and network hierarchy – **JBox advised this is ongoing.**

GR to invite a member of the Kent Highways Active Travel Team to attend a future meeting – **GR advised that KCC Highways Active Travel Team have been invited and will be attending December 2022 KCAF meeting.**

#### New Actions

**ACTION 1.** GR to locate and advise on contact details for Maidstone group who may be able to advise and assist regarding Disabled Access and Health & Wellbeing.

**ACTION 2.** GR & JBox to look at KCAF length of tenure

**ACTION 3.** WB to provide statistics by email to SN regarding incoming and outstanding DMMOs and backlog figures.

**ACTION 4.** GR to speak to Alison Hews, KCC Compliance Officer regarding the licencing options KCC have to access the full range of options available on One Network (Roadworks.org).

**ACTION 5.** SB to raise One Network (Roadworks.org) licencing issue at annual meeting between KALC and KCC Highways.

#### Membership

JBox has contacted local health walks coordinator with knowledge / experience of disabled access needs but has so far had no response and confirms that there is still a need to find a contact to discuss disabled access needs and health & wellbeing.

GR advised on a Maidstone based voluntary organisation who deal with health & wellbeing, health walks, etc and may be able to suggest a relevant contact to approach. GR will locate the contact information of the group and circulate to KCAF members. – **ACTION 1**  
[Involve Kent – [www.involvekent.org.uk](http://www.involvekent.org.uk)]

GR advised that it may be time to look at the current length of tenures for KCAF, JBox agreed with this suggestion. **ACTION 2**

### **Development Sites**

#### **Lower Thames Crossing –**

Richard Dickenson had emailed points in regard to the LTC update.

There was a minor consultation in May 2022 to which RD responded on behalf of KCAF in support of the improvements to the additional public rights of way, which include proposals for many new equestrian routes south of the river. On the positive side there are also proposals to mitigate the LTC works with the purchase of land as compensation areas away from the LTC corridor which will create new wildlife habitats, however it is unclear if there will be public access to these new areas of land.

On the negative side LTC are proposing a speed reduction on the M2, J1-J2, to 50mph to offset the extra nitrogen generated by the extra traffic at the LTC. RD has advised LTC the emphasis put on traffic levels on major routes does not take account of narrow rural roads where there is already a 50/60mph speed limit and where there is a danger to non-motorised road users discouraging access by them.

AR commented on the provision by LTC of new areas of land to mitigate the increased nitrogen. The British Horse Society has requested access to some of these areas of land but have had no response to the request.

GR advised that KCC PROW and the Kent Downs AONB have also been in discussions regarding access to the LTC purchased areas of land.

JBox asks if KCC have any figure on monitoring the increase / decrease of road use with the increase in fuel costs, et. HW suggested that Neil Edwards may have this data and she will look into this.

#### **M2 : Junction 5 -**

JBox asks GR for an update on the M2-J5 improvement works.

GR advised that plans to replace the existing bridge over the M2 motorway along with equestrian links are still in development.

AR asks GR for an update on the proposed crossing over the A249, GR advised that he currently has no updates on this.

### **Definitive Map and Statement – DMMO Backlogs**

WB provided a PowerPoint presentation and verbal explanation and insight into the PROW Definition Team's processing of DMMOs (Definitive Map Modification Orders) and the related backlog of cases. WB explained that the deadline to register Common Land / Village Greens by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 has significantly increased the number of DMMOs received, despite Governments intention to repeal the cut off date. WB highlighted the expected timescales to clear the backlogs based on previous, current, and future predicted trends and based on the number of PROW Officers available to process the orders.

WB advised that based on the business model predictions the proposal for the most efficient use of resources available will be to process on a 2 user based applications to every 1 historic based application. This will have a positive effect by mitigating the degrading of

contemporary user evidence and would be a more effective use of the available resources. It may prove to be an amendment to policy that has a broad consensus with stakeholders.

WB concluded by asking Forum for their feelings, suggestions, and opinions on the future intention of processing on a 2 (used based) to 1 (historic based) application basis.

GR added to this by advising that the projections are our best estimate, they are likely to vary.

SN asks GR and WB if there was any reason by higher rights could not be prioritised for processing. WB responded by advising that a significant number of applications already do relate to higher rights and it would be hard to prioritise these cases.

GR advised that currently applications are processed strictly in order of date received, unless:

- the route claimed is affected by development where planning consent is likely to be forthcoming,
- there is a clear public benefit in line with the PROW Improvement Plan, or ,
- applications can be grouped together.

AR commented on the speculation on whether the number of applications will increase and said that as researchers for the BHS are producing a better quality of application they should therefore be quicker and easier to resolve and process.

AR asked what the Secretary of State penalties are for not processing DMMOs applications within the 1-year guidance, and GR advised that the Secretary of State may direct that an application is determined within a defined period by the authority if it has failed to determine an application within 12 months of receipt. Failure to determine a case within the timescale set out in a direction would he believed initially lead to a Local Government Ombudsman complaint and then potentially to a Judicial Review.

RP commented that the whole situation is very unsatisfactory and disappointing and that the Government has reneged on its initial commitments. He believes that looking at current figures from the view of the Kent Ramblers the number of new DMMO applications submitted will be moderate. However he also felt that the National 'Don't Lose Your Way' initiative is likely to increase the number of applications.

SN asked WB about the PROW online records of DMMO applications, and in conclusion asked WB to provide statistics regarding incoming and outstanding DMMOs and backlog figures. **ACTION 3**

CT acknowledged the frustration of landowners regarding the backlog of DMMO applications and being asked for user evidence from years ago, as memories may degrade over time and this information then becomes less clear on applications.

SB asked GR and WB if they have any information and updates they would like to provide for the KALC news for Parish Council, and also advised that KALC are hoping to have Roger Gough attend their AGM later this year.

## England Coastal Path

JBo provided an update from Natural England in relation to the England Coastal Path in Kent. Updates were provided on individual stretches of the ECP as follows –

**Woolwich to Isle of Grain** – Fully open.

**Grain to Kingsferry Bridge** – Awaiting Secretary of State reports.

**Kingsferry Bridge – Whitstable** Awaiting a number of reports, hoping to open in October 2022. [[Access commenced 26 October 2022](#)]

**Otterham Creek to Kingsferry Bridge** – There is a gap remaining unopened on the path and is awaiting completion.

**Whitstable to Ramsgate** – This section of the ECP has been approved for some time but was held up by the requirement to provide a fence at the golf course. There is now a planning application in progress with a decision due in late September, and with the work then commencing through the winter the intention is to open this section in Spring 2023.

**Isle of Sheppey** – There has been a recent approval from DEFRA, which addresses 2 out of the 3 reports with objections. There remains one objection that the Secretary of State has not yet approved. Natural England hope to open the whole Island at the same time as this would provide positive publicity for the project.

JBox asked JBo is there has been any data gathered about the economic impact of the ECP from the open sections of the path?

JBo advised that there are monitors out on the path gathering data, and that there was a baseline study completed a number of years ago which will be followed up by further studies on use and economic benefits of the ECP.

JBo said she will send this information to JBox.

RP commented that the ECP is a wonderful concept and in general is delivering on the high expectations of the project. However, the access issues on the Isle of Sheppey do detract from the general benefits of the path. RP requested that KCC, Natural England, the Environmental Agency and the landowners should look further at access on the Sheppey section of the ECP and specifically the long section on the south of the island. A link to Eastchurch would allow this section to be broken up into more manageable walks.

JBo showed the Forum a map of the Isle of Sheppey ECP and talked through the problems encountered and the intentions to resolve these to fully open the whole of the ECP.

## Any Other Business

RD's email in his absence from the meeting raised an AOB item regarding access to the One Network (Roadworks.org) website. The National Street Gazetteer (List of Streets information) layer of the map is now restricted to commercial license holders only. RD asked if KCAF members could be included under the KCC Highways licence to be able to continue to use the website with all of the map layers available.

HW advised GR that Alison Hews, KCC Highways Compliance Officer would be the best person to contact in regard to KCC's licences for the One Network (Roadworks.org) website.

**ACTION 4**

AR asks that as well as future KCAF meeting plans to look at electrically assisted cycles and motorised vehicles could the forum also look at active travel and horse riders?

SB advised that in regard to access to one Network (Roadworks.org) as the Parish Councils do use the website extensively she will liaise with KCC Highways on the licensing and use of the website.

**ACTION 5**

**Next Meeting**

Date: **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Time: **2pm – 4pm**

Location: **MS Teams**