

PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM



ANNUAL REPORT

2009/10



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1. Chairman's Foreword

Welcome to the 2009/10 annual report of the Plymouth Local Access Forum. Over the past 12 months we have held six meetings in the Plymouth City Council meeting rooms and have discussed and debated numerous topics concerning Public Rights of Way, Planning and Nature Conservation within the Plymouth City Council boundaries.

Our Members have been involved in consultations on Public Rights of Way, Coastal Access, Local Validation Lists and a Natural England Document entitled Inspiring People. A consultation on the draft Local Transport Plan 3 recently came to the Forum and we were pleased to be able to become involved in this important matter which will form a major part of our work programme over the next year.

We are again indebted to Officers of the Plymouth City Council Planning and Chief Executive's Departments for providing us with advice, access to planning applications and secretarial support.

Members have attended many training sessions to improve their knowledge on Definitive Map Modification Orders, Public Rights of Way in Plymouth and Public Access Legislation as well as the Chairs and Secretaries regional meeting.

We have been building on strong working relationships with the Rights of Way Officer, Nature Conservation Officer, Transport Planners and the Stepping Stones to Nature Project Co-ordinator. The Forum received interesting updates on the Access to Nature Grant, the Stepping Stones to Nature Project and the Ramblers 1988 Map.

I would like to thank the Rights of Way Officer for his continuing support and advice, also members who have given up their free time to work on the potential rights of way and planning working groups.

For 2010/11 we plan to expand our membership and hope to attract even more knowledgeable and enthusiastic members to the Forum.

Ray Fairchild

2. A Local Access Forum

A Local Access Forum is an independent advisory body set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. All highway and national parks authorities are required to have such a forum in place and their role is to provide strategic advice to prescribed bodies on how they can improve access to land for outdoor recreational use.

DEFRA has prescribed the following bodies to whom the forum may give advice to:

The local Authority (Plymouth City Council)
Natural England
The Forestry Commission
English Heritage
Sport England
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Conservation Boards
District Borough, Parish and Town Councils within its area

These bodies are known as section 94 bodies as they are prescribed by section 94 (4) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The purpose of providing advice to these bodies is to influence their decision making processes.

When a section 94 body receives advice from a Local Access Forum it is obliged, by statute, to consider that advice. This does not necessarily mean that the receiving body must follow the advice given but that they properly consider it. If that advice is not followed it is usual that justification for this be given.

2.1 The Role of Plymouth's Local Access Forum

The Plymouth Local Access Forum was established in 2006.

The role of Plymouth's Local Access Forum is to advise the Council on issues that involve people enjoying and using the outdoors. The members of the Forum will be people who can demonstrate knowledge or experience in this area. They might be people who like to walk or cycle around Plymouth or they might own land that people like to walk on. They might even be people whose job it is to help others enjoy themselves outside.

Although there may be different views on some subjects, the Forum will discuss these matters so that they can tell the Council what they think. The Forum's membership is varied so that their views are representative of all those who live in Plymouth. The views of the Forum will be very important to the Council when decisions are made.

The below list acts as a guide to the issues the Forum might talk about. However, this is only a guide and the Forum can talk about anything they think is relevant, such as:

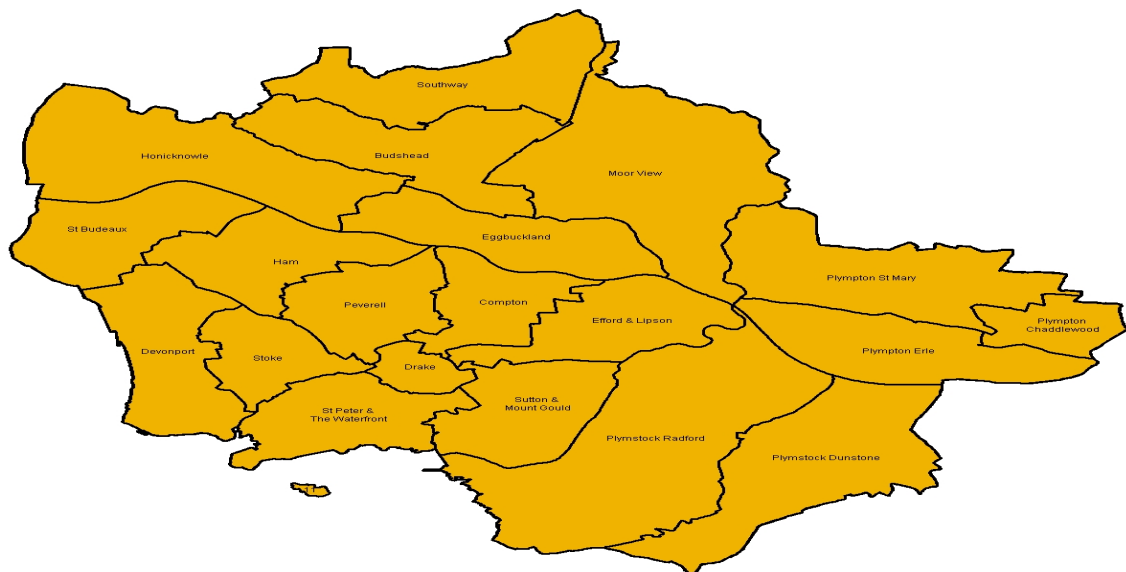
- helping the Council with, and giving opinion on Plymouth's rights of way improvement plan
- telling the Council and its partners what they think of recreation and access strategies
- advising the Council how local people might view access issues so they can be included in the national guidelines the Council has to stick to
- commenting on wider plans and strategies for landscape, recreation, transport, health, tourism and information
- telling the Council if the strategies and policies currently in place suit different types of users and whether they reflect the needs of local people and businesses
- telling the Council what they think of the way resources are used in providing ways for people to enjoy the outdoors
- telling the Council how to manage areas people use without harming agriculture and conservation areas or risking public safety
- discussing the way the Council handles public rights of way

In addition the forum may wish to:

- make representations to the Planning Inspectorate on any appeal
- look for ways to encourage landowners to make more areas available for the public to use
- promote the work of the forum and countryside issues to other people
- find new ways of getting money so we can make improvements
- comment on new large-scale developments so that peoples' use and enjoyment can be made better

The Local Access Forum is independent from the Council and it decides what issues they want to discuss and what they would like to advise the Council or other bodies about.

The map below shows the area covered by the Plymouth Local Access Forum.



3. Forum Membership

3.1 Members and Representation

The Plymouth Local Access Forum has been constituted so that it is balanced between three main interests, which are:

- Users of access land or public rights of way
- Owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by rights of way
- Other interests considered relevant to Plymouth

A fair representation of other interests relevant to Plymouth is encouraged. These interests include, but are not necessarily limited to, tourism, outdoor education, sport and recreational provision, disability awareness, local business interest, the military, health promotion and wildlife and cultural heritage. The Forum would like younger people, women, people with disabilities and those on low incomes to be better represented.

Membership is for a period of three years which is staggered to ensure fair appointment of members and to make sure there are always members on the Forum.

Guidance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) says that the Forum will be made up of between 10 and 22 members. The Plymouth Local Access Forum originally appointed 18 members but reserve the right to appoint more to ensure the balance of interests. Of these 18 original members three will be elected members of the Council (Councillors).

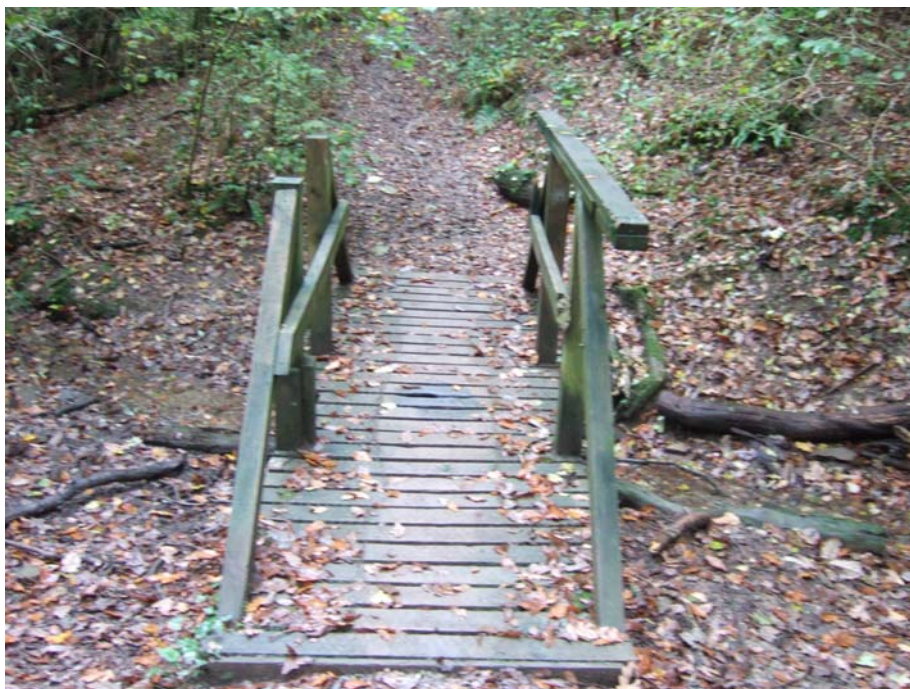
The Membership of the Plymouth Local Access Forum is:

Name	Membership	Group
Ray Fairchild	Chair	Access User
Ian Stewart	Vice-Chair	Access User
Peter Berrow	Member	Councillor
Thomas Browne	Member	Councillor
George Wheeler	Member	Councillor
John Emery	Member	Access User
Patricia Hitchins	Member	Access User
Keith Raymond Loze	Member	Access User
Barbara Mickley	Member	Access User
David Pawley	Member	Access User
John Skinner	Member	Access User
Rupert Goddard	Member	Other Interest
Beth Roberts	Member	Land Owner
Stephanie Rodgers	Member	Land Owner
Nick Attrill	Member	Other Interest

3.2 Observers and Advisers to the Forum

All meetings are public and anyone can attend if they wish but the Forum can specifically invite observers and advisers to attend and participate in meetings. The following representatives are those that have attended meetings in 2009/2010:

Robin Pearce	Public Rights of Way Officer, Plymouth City Council
Jeremy Sable	Nature Conservation Officer, Plymouth City Council
Dan Forster	Senior Transport Planner, Plymouth City Council
John Didymus	Head Teacher, Ridgeway School
Zoe Goss	Stepping Stones to Nature Project Coordinator Plymouth City Council



3.3 Secretariat

Plymouth City Council as the appointing authority provides the Plymouth Local Access Forum with a secretariat:

Mr Ross Johnston

Secretary to the Plymouth Local Access Forum

Democratic Support Unit

Corporate Support Department

Plymouth City Council

Plymouth PL1 2AA

Tel: 01752 307790

E-mail: laf@plymouth.gov.uk

3.4 Advertising for Members

Membership to the Forum will be representative of one or more fields of interest as defined below rather than any particular organisation of which they might also be a member:

- users of rights of way, or the new access right
- owners and occupiers of access land, or land over which local rights of way subsist
- in addition to this we will encourage fair representation of other interests considered to be relevant to Plymouth, these include tourism, outdoor education, sport and recreational provision, disability awareness, local business interest, the military, health promotion and wildlife and cultural heritage

Within these interests we would encourage better representation of younger people, woman, people with disabilities and those on low incomes. Representation in any category from at least one individual with experience of the needs of the disabled will be strongly encouraged.

Members shall be appointed to the Forum in accordance to the member selection criteria in Table A. The purpose of the Member selection process is designed to ensure a fair distribution of interests and ensure members have the knowledge and experience necessary to enable them to make an informed and constructive contribution to the work of the Forum.

Initially Members were appointed either a one, two or three year period after which they had to reapply to remain on the Forum competing against any new applicants. New Members are now appointed for a three year period. This was to ensure that membership was staggered and each year a third of members must reapply. In the event that a seat becomes vacant during the term of appointment the replacement member shall continue that same term of appointment.

Table A - membership selection criteria

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Skills	<p>Good communication and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Ability to work as part of a team.</p> <p>Ability to consider competing interests in a strategic manner to find agreed solutions.</p>	<p>Proven ability to network and liaise with wider interests.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Knowledge/appreciation of countryside issues with particular reference to Plymouth.</p> <p>Knowledge of the conflicting interactions between recreation, land management and conservation.</p>	<p>An understanding of administrative procedures in central or local government.</p> <p>An understanding of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p>
Experience	<p>Experience of using Public Rights of Way or access land for recreational purposes, or</p> <p>Experience of managing land over which public rights of way or access land subsists, or</p> <p>Experience of tourism, outdoor education, sport and recreational provision, disability awareness, local business interest, the military, health promotion or wildlife and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>Experience of public speaking.</p> <p>Experience of attending formal public meetings.</p>
Equal Opportunities	<p>A commitment to further equal opportunity issues in the work of the forum.</p>	<p>Knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.</p>
Other Requirements	<p>Willingness to commit to attending Local Access Forum meetings and training events for up to 3 years.</p> <p>A commitment to making the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation in ways, which address social, economic and environmental interests.</p>	

4. What has happened over the past year (2009 – 2010)

4.1. Chairman

Ray Fairchild was Chairman of the Plymouth Local Access Forum and Ian Stewart Vice-Chairman from March 2009 to February 2010.

At the Forum's meeting of 8 February 2010 it was resolved that Ray Fairchild be appointed Chair and Ian Stewart be appointed Vice Chair for the forthcoming year with the new term of office beginning on 29 March 2010.

4.2 Formal Meetings

Over the past year May 2009 – April 2010 there have been six formal meetings at the following dates:

- 1 June 2009
- 27 July 2009
- 5 October 2009
- 7 December 2009
- 8 February 2010
- 12 April 2010

Information about the agenda's and minutes from the Forum's meetings in 2009/10 can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/32e8ey4>.

4.3 Presentations and Reports

The Forum has received the following presentations over the past year:

- Access to Nature Grant presented by the Nature Conservation Officer
- The Local Transport Plan 3 by Senior Transport Planners
- Public Path Extinguishment Order by the Head Teacher, Ridgeway School
- Stepping Stones to Nature Project from the Stepping Stones to Nature Project Co-ordinator
- Ramblers 1988 Map

The Forum has received the following reports and papers over the past year:

- The Natural England Protected Landscapes Paper
- Natural England Report 'No Charge'
- Summary Report of the South West Local Access Forums

4.4 Consultation

The Forum responded to the following consultation requests over the past year:

- Inspiring People Document – Natural England
- Coastal Change Policy
- Path Furniture – DEFRA
- Coastal Access Report
- Local Validation Lists

4.5 Policy Development

Over the past year the Plymouth Local Access Forum had formally made comments and or submitted correspondence with the aim that it would be considered in the development of the following policies and plans:

- Local Area Agreements
- The Local Transport Plan
- A protocol to integrate the planning process and the Plymouth Local Access Forum

It was hoped that the consultation responses and additional comments and correspondence made would enable the Plymouth Local Access Forum to have an input into policy, plans or strategy development. The Forum as a result of looking at plans and strategies that they could have an input in developing resolved that the following plans should be reviewed in the next year and thus have been added to the work programme:

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- LDF Community Plan

4.6 Working Groups

The Plymouth Local Access Forum has created two working groups:

- Potential Rights of Way Working Group
- Planning Working Group



Over the past year the working groups have discussed the following issues:

- Ramblers' 1988 Maps- information identified had been integrated into the Council's GIS system for internal planning use.
- Ramblers Right of Way Map
- Works at the Radford Woods Local Nature Reserve

4.7 Training

The following training subjects and dates were made available for attendance by Plymouth Local Access Forum Members:

25th June 2009

Definitive Map Modification Orders
PRoW in Plymouth
Public Access Legislation

7th July 2009

Public Access Legislation
PRoW in Plymouth
Definitive Map Modification Orders

21st July 2009

PRoW in Plymouth
Definitive Map Modification Orders



5. Future Aspirations

Given the fact that it is often difficult to anticipate topics that may arise on the access agenda either locally or nationally and regarding Public Rights of Way it is believed that the following topics offer a quality insight into what the Plymouth Local Access Forum aim to cover over the coming year in 2010/11.

National Issues

Coastal Access
English Access Forum

Regional Issues

Local Transport Plan 3
The Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Definitive Map
Local issues around Open Spaces
Ramblers' 1988' maps



6. Financial Statement

The financial statements relates to the finance period of 1 April 2009 to 1 March 2010.

Members' expenses

Travel Allowance	-	£214.27
Childcare	-	£27.00
Total	-	£241.27

Meetings

Advertising	-	£0
Catering	-	£105.00
Total	-	£105.00

Total Expenditure for 2009/10 - £346.27

6.1 Members Expenses

Member	Travel (£)	Subsistence (£)	Childcare (£)
Ray Fairchild	163.32	0	0
Ian Stewart	0	0	0
Peter Berrow	0	0	0
Thomas Browne	0	0	0
George Wheeler	0	0	0
John Emery	0	0	0
Patricia Hitchens	0	0	0
Keith Raymond Loze	0	0	0
Barbara Mickley	0	0	0
David Pawley	0	0	0
John Skinner	0	0	0
Rupert Goddard	0	0	0
Beth Roberts	4	0	27
Stephanie Rodgers	0	0	0
Nick Atrill	8.70	0	0
C Mewton	0	0	0
LAF Secretary	38.25	0	0

Members' (Who's Who)

<p>Mr Emery</p> <p>John Emery is interested in Planning, transport, heritage and rights of way issues. Member of the Ramblers Association and Open Spaces Society. Writes a monthly article for the local parish magazine on community affairs.</p>
<p>Ms Mickley</p> <p>Mrs Mickley retired from her position as Secretary of the Radford and Hooe Lake Preservation Association in July 2009 after 11 years of dealing issues relating to Planning, Highways and Rights of Way. She is a keen walker dedicated to protecting local footpaths and open spaces. As well as a member of the LAF she is also a Tree Warden, a member of the Friends of Radford Park Arboretum, the RSPB and the National Trust who also has a keen interest in keeping aware of the Plymstock Transport Community Liaison Group meetings.</p>
<p>Mr Pawley</p> <p>A Plymothian, as a teenager attended Sutton High and R. Dockyard TC and was a member of Mayflower Sailing Club. Graduated and employed as an RAF Education Officer for 21 years followed by 14 as a senior lecturer in Management Science and Computing at CFE. Has now retired. A long time member of the Ramblers with a keen interest in seeing footpaths properly recorded in the City. An enthusiastic boat owner actively working to provide affordable moorings for locals. A member of the Plymouth LAF since its formation in 2006.</p>
<p>Mr Fairchild</p> <p>Mr Fairchild is a retired technical officer of the M.O.D. His interests include walking, the environment and gardening. As well as being Chair of the PLAF he is also a governor at Eggbuckland Community College.</p>
<p>Mr Loze</p> <p>Mr Loze is a local retired teacher with an interest in environmental education and use of the local environment. Since the year 2000 I have been coordinator of the cooperative way within Plymouth and responsible for annual programme of guided walks. Also involved in establishing five self guided walks within the city funded by the Cooperative Group.</p>
<p>Mr Skinner</p> <p>John Skinner has been a member of the Plymouth Local Access Forum since</p>

it was first set up in 2006. He is also a member of the Devon Countryside Access Forum. John is an experienced mountain and moorland walker, rambler and occasional cyclist. He is currently Access Officer for the Devon Area of the Ramblers' Association. For the Ramblers' Association he had extensive involvement with the preparatory work and mapping of access land for the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) in Devon in 2005. He now monitors closure of land under the CRoW Act and matters affecting public rights of way. Largely through self-education he has a good knowledge of the law relating to public rights of way. He firmly believes that the City of Plymouth should have a comprehensive and complete Definitive map of public rights of way within the City boundaries. In due course he expects to provide input to the emerging proposals for the introduction of a coastal footpath and coastal corridor. He is Chairman of the Dartmoor Rambling Club and a member of the Ramblers' Association, Dartmoor Preservation Association, the Open Spaces Society, the National Trust and the Youth Hostels Association. He has been retired for several years but spent his career with HM Land Registry.

Mr Stewart

Mr Stewart as a doctor with an interest in sports injuries (which includes exercise) he found himself doing many sports, including long distance walking and hence his involvement with the LAF. He would like to see as many open spaces as possible within the city and all linked by foot/cycle paths. There are already many footpaths available which need to be mapped and made available and accessible to the public, and some of these specifically for the disabled. As a LAF we should support and promote all healthy lifestyles and increase the public profile of the LAF.

Mr Goddard

Mr Goddard worked for Groundwork South West, a local environmental regeneration charity. He coordinated volunteering projects including Conservation volunteering and Horticultural Healing. Recent projects have included the upgrading of footpaths through Woodland Wood Local Nature Reserve. He has been working for Groundwork for 12 years, before which he worked as a countryside ranger. Throughout his career he has worked within the field of countryside management and predominately with volunteers. Outside of work he enjoys walking local footpaths, including the South West Coast Path. He is a keen explorer of local caves and mines and aswell as sitting on the LAF he is a member of Devon Cave Rescue Organisation.

Mrs Roberts

Mrs Roberts is currently a full time Mum of two young children, who has a passion for the Environment and community work. Her previous roles were as a Project Manager for Groundwork Trust and Community Development Worker in the Public Sector. She was responsible for the development of local

and National projects that aimed to encourage walking at all levels. I am a trained Walk Leader and have worked as a Volunteer for both the National Trust and Millfields Trust. She is a keen and active person, who enjoys walking and bee keeping on her family's farm in the North of Plymouth.

Mrs Hitchens

Mrs Hitchens is a long time resident of the Crownhill/Derriford Area. She has an interest in maintaining and defining open spaces and ancient footpaths in this fast changing area.

Mr Attrill

Mr Attrill is a Plymouthian who has worked for the Ordnance Survey for 38 years and is currently working in and around Plymouth. This allows him to visit many parts of the city and beyond. He walks a great deal for his work and leisure; latterly he is usually accompanied by his dog. He has worked in the archaeological side of the OS which has stimulated his interest in history and archaeology of which there is much in Plymouth. He reads extensively with interest in history, science fiction, and fantasy and he also enjoys films and music.

Cllr Berrow

An elected member of Plymouth City Council serving the Southway Ward. At the meeting of the City Council on 15 May 2010 was appointed to sit as a member on the Plymouth Local Access Forum.

Cllr Browne

An elected member of Plymouth City Council serving the Southway Ward. At the meeting of the City Council on 15 May 2009 was appointed to sit as a member on the Plymouth Local Access Forum.

Cllr Wheeler

George Wheeler has been a member of the LAF since it was first set up in 2006. He is an elected member of Plymouth City Council, representing St Budeaux ward. He is an experienced transport administrator, having served spells as chair of the transport committee before the executive/scrutiny system and as cabinet member for transport since. He is an advocate of the use of sustainable transport means, of which walking is an essential element. He is a keen Rambler, though usually outside of the city.

APPENDIX B**Summary of Members' Attendance at Forum Meetings**

Name	Membership	Attendance (maximum 6)
Ray Fairchild	Chair	6
Ian Stewart	Vice-Chair	6
Peter Berrow	Councillor	4
Thomas Browne	Councillor	6
George Wheeler	Councillor	6
John Emery	Member	6
Patricia Hitchens	Member	5
Keith Raymond Loze	Member	4
Barbara Mickley	Member	5
David Pawley	Member	4
John Skinner	Member	5
Rupert Goddard	Member	6
Beth Roberts*	Member	3
Stephanie Rodgers*	Member	2
N Attrill*	Member	4
C Mewton	Member	1

* Appointed mid-term