

Report for IWALC on Local Access Forum (LAF) meeting held 8th October 2025

Venue: National Landscapes Unit, Branstone Farm

Had to choose between attending this meeting and staying at the Meet the Funders event at the Riverside but pleased I attended the LAF meeting – lots to learn.

Minutes from last meeting agreed but some queries about how the concept of “QUIET LANES” is to be followed up (possibly with Cllr Clare Critchison) and why the lowest potential increase in walkers that the opening of King Charles 3 English Coastal Path (ECP) could bring was given rather than full potential range: 30-100,000. Also query about what this means – is it the number passing a given point or is it walkers spread across different sections of the ECP’s full length.

IWC ROW team leader gave a run through of footpaths which remain closed and how these areas are being addressed. Most closures are directly connected to exceptional levels of rainfall and some single rainfall events which have caused extreme erosion inland as well as the coastal problems we all know about. Funding in many coastal areas is coming from Natural England for the ECP, but some 106 monies are not coming in as they should so this holds up some path repair/reinstatement. Some paths will need to be rolled back from cliff edges and there is a need to be realistic about coastal erosion, not every coastal footpath can be saved. The ROW team is small and, like so much local authority work chronically underfunded, but working hard to keep on top of the footpath (bridleways and cycle paths) network across the Island.

There were questions about how to contact the team and whether there was a form which specifies exactly the information the team require if there is a problem. The best recourse at the moment is to use Fix My Street ([FixMyStreet](#)) where you are prompted to provide an exact location, include a picture if possible and describe (briefly) the nature of the problem and state level of urgency. Island Roads will transfer footpath reports to the ROW team.

Something I hadn’t heard before from the Ramblers’ rep was that there is a PARISH PATH WARDEN SCHEME. Each warden covers the paths (FPs, BrWys and Byways) of a parish walking them twice a year, the areas correspond to the 1952 parishes based on which the island's Definitive Map path numbering system was set up (sort of footpath postcode area) . The wardens report problems direct to IWC and wardens can also take some active intervention themselves to keep paths safe and clear (e.g. minor cutting back of brambles.) There is a Ramblers’ coordinator who is a conduit for communications to and from the wardens; currently this is Helen Jones (she is also Cyclewright's rep on the LAF). Ideally parish clerks should know who the local warden is; Helen’s email address will be provided to parish clerks via the IWALC County Officer. Helen will invite the wardens to introduce themselves to their local parish clerk and explain their activities.

Speakers on the IWC Transport plan were unable to attend but there was a reminder that all group representatives should encourage as wide a response to the Transport Plan 4 (

[Consultations on Island transport](#)) from their group / parish residents as possible as well as completing themselves. Consultation open until 24th November.

An alternative presentation was provided by NL team leader who effectively repeated the talk provided to the September IWALC Topic meeting. This raised the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) status to a bigger group and also highlighted need for greater networking and communications between groups working for the same/similar purposes.

Reports from Landowners, Ramblers, Cycle Wight and Equestrians all shared a common theme – that on shared paths there is a need for consideration of other users. This is amplified when it comes to shared use of roads. Equestrians are being driven off the roads (literally) and walkers are very vulnerable on narrow (in places single track) roads where the national speed limit (60mph) is in force. Urgent need to address this but also concerns about enforcement of reduced speed limits.

No date or venue was set for the next meeting but usually quarterly meetings so sometime early in 2026 is likely.

Cllr Peny Acton

9th October 2025