

# Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Joint Local Access Forum (DLAF)

## Meeting Notes & Actions (from transcript)

**Tuesday 28 April 2026, 10:00–13:00 (closed 12:54)** <sup>1 2</sup>

**Format:** Hybrid (Dorset Council Offices, Committee Room 1 + Teams) <sup>3</sup>

**Chair:** Philip Hackett (PH) <sup>4</sup>

**Minutes taken by:** Claire Edwards <sup>5</sup>

[DLAF Meeting Recording 28.4.26](#)

## Attendees (as recorded in meeting)

**DLAF members present (incl. new introductions):** Philip Hackett (Chair), Janet Davis (Vice Chair), Nikki/“Nicola” Harper, Paul Tomlinson, Chris Slade, Chris Farr, Philip Colfox, Kevin Marshall, Rebecca Watkins, Gavin Edwards, Kevin Marshall. <sup>6</sup>

**Officers / appointees present:** Graham Stanley (DC Senior Ranger), Sue Phillips (Definitive Map Team – in place of Vanessa Penny), Philip Elias (BCP Senior PRoW Officer), Cllr Alex Brenton (DC). <sup>7</sup>

**Apologies / not present (noted during meeting):** Vanessa Penny (Definitive Map Manager) absent; Russell Goff not present; FWAG presenter did not attend (item 5 deferred). Mandy Willis <sup>8 9</sup>

## Action Log (Summary)

Ref	Action	Owner	Target/Notes
A1	Continue investigations into <b>A35/A31 Organford bridleway severance</b> ; bring options to work plan discussion	GS	Discuss further under Item 14 / next meeting <sup>10</sup>
A2	Escalate request to Minerals & Waste re <b>Binnegar Quarry</b> follow-up; seek councillor support	GS + AB	AB to apply pressure / GS to update DLAF <sup>11</sup>
A3	Provide update/feedback following internal DC briefing meeting (13th) re <b>Loders–Bradpole/Bridport route</b>	Route campaign group (Rebecca) /DC	Await outcomes; keep DLAF updated <sup>12</sup>

<b>A4</b>	Chase rescheduling of <b>Wessex Ridgeway / Great Chalk Way</b> meeting	PH / relevant contact	Previously cancelled; tentative 5 May date not suitable for PH <sup>13</sup>
<b>A5</b>	Ask GIS team about <b>Dorset Explorer symbology/colour accessibility</b> (colour blindness)	Sue Phillips / DC GIS	Report back to DLAF <sup>14</sup>
<b>A6</b>	Investigate prolonged/rolling <b>TROs</b> (e.g., Leigh cluster) and review process	GS (and/or DC Traffic Team)	Provide findings to DLAF <sup>15</sup>
<b>A7</b>	Cllr Brenton to table <b>Full Council question</b> re resourcing/statutory delay of <b>ROWIP</b> ; JD to help draft	AB + JD	Full Council in ~2 weeks; draft wording offline <sup>16</sup>
<b>A8</b>	Circulate James Stagg note on <b>coast path landslips &amp; funding</b> and raise via national channels	GS to circulate; JD to forward to Ramblers lead	Also explore Dorset Coast Forum/NE contacts <sup>17</sup>
<b>A9</b>	Clarify status of <b>ECP routing at Abbotsbury</b> (held up post-inquiry/SoS)	GS / JD	Seek update; report back <sup>18</sup>
<b>A10</b>	Progress enquiries on <b>Hodmoor common land</b> (access, fencing, grazing rights, responsibilities)	GS + NH + JD	Identify DC lead/route to take forward <sup>19</sup>
<b>A11</b>	Draft DLAF letter (JD + NH) to <b>SoS/NE</b> re stalled <b>Open Access mapping review</b> and next steps	JD + NH	Circulate draft to members for sign-off <sup>20</sup>
<b>A12</b>	DLAF <b>Work Plan</b> : members submit priorities; JD to compile and circulate draft between meetings	All → JD	Start immediately; do not wait until July meeting <sup>21</sup>
<b>A13</b>	Share/locate past DLAF work on <b>open access islands</b> and related powers/permissive routes	GS + PT	PT to send referenced extract; GS to dig out earlier paperwork <sup>22</sup>
<b>A14</b>	BCP: pursue enforcement/solution re <b>Chapel Lane gates</b> ; ensure gates not closed; progress legal creation/extinguishment plan	PE	Update at next DLAF <sup>23</sup>

A15	Explore political support for missing link on <b>Chideock–Bridport route</b> (possible s26 dedication) incl. ward councillors/Roland Tarr	AB (initial enquiry) + DLAF	Bring back to DLAF once intel gathered <sup>24</sup>
-----	---	-----------------------------	--

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome & introductions, apologies, declarations of interests

- Chair welcomed attendees; introductions included several **new members** and officers. <sup>25 26</sup>
- **Apologies** noted for Vanessa Penny; Sue Phillips attended to present Definitive Map update on her behalf. <sup>27</sup>
- No specific declarations of interest were minuted in the transcript. <sup>28</sup>

### 2. Public questions

- **No public questions** were raised. <sup>29</sup>

### 3. Minutes of last meeting, actions & matters arising

A35 Bridleway Organford (road severance A35/A31)

- GS reported **investigation work ongoing**, including reviewing historic documents supplied by PT; to be revisited later under work plan discussions. <sup>30</sup>

Binnegar Quarry

- GS continuing to **chase Minerals & Waste**; site visit completed with NH; no response yet. AB offered to assist in applying pressure. <sup>31</sup>

North Dorset Trailway (site visit feedback and progress)

- Group visit to Shillingstone Station described as positive.
- DC internal work underway to clarify DC’s position on progressing south/extension; further clarity expected by next meeting. <sup>32</sup>

Loders to Bridport/Bradpole route

- Campaign group continuing: wrote to Parish Council; raised safety and accessibility concerns; shared “state of play” document with Cllr Ireland via RG; awaiting feedback from internal DC stakeholder briefing (13th). <sup>33</sup>

- Note: missing link Tollerpocorum campaign focus currently on Loders–Bradpole).<sup>34</sup>

#### Wessex Ridgeway

- Meeting with Great Chalk Way team **cancelled and not satisfactorily rescheduled**; tentative date 5 May unsuitable for Chair.<sup>35</sup>

#### Definitive Statement query (gates/stiles recorded)

- Clarified: changes (e.g., gates/stiles) **cannot simply be added to the legal statement** without a formal legal event; details are recorded operationally but not automatically updated in the legal record.<sup>36</sup>

#### Public Inquiries

- Public inquiry date confirmed for **Mill Lane, Chideock: 11 August**, to be held at County Hall.<sup>37</sup>

#### Format of Dorset Council consultations

- AB raised ongoing issues with consultation platforms (difficulty responding as organisations). DC “Future Council” system changes expected to improve usability; issue has been flagged and remains under watch.<sup>38</sup>

### 4. Legal Record Team – Definitive Map & Statement

*(Presented by Sue Phillips on behalf of Vanessa Penny.)*<sup>39</sup>

#### Staffing / team update

- Long-serving officer left; replacement recruited internally (Rachel moving from admin into officer role), leaving an admin vacancy to recruit.<sup>40</sup>

#### Orders and activity

- **2 DMMOs confirmed** (Bradford Abbas footpath; restricted byway in Bincombe/Weymouth crossing parishes).<sup>41</sup>
- **6 confirmed Public Path Orders** across multiple locations (including Weymouth, Bridport, Shaftesbury, etc.).<sup>42</sup>

#### Charging changes (PPOs only)

- New/updated charges from **1 April**:
  - Highways Act PPO application processing charge: **£5,250** (+ £2,600 per additional path).<sup>43</sup>

- TCPA PPO charge: **£5,750** (+ £2,500 per additional path). <sup>44</sup>
- Annual uplift: +£250 (base) and +£100 (additional path) each 1 April; full review planned for 2030. <sup>45</sup>

#### Backlogs / pipeline (high level)

- DMMOs: **258 not started** (including **231 from British Horse Society**); 43 in progress; 2 with Planning Inspectorate; 31 queued for PINS submission (13 with Legal). <sup>46</sup>
- PPOs: 34 in progress; several awaiting works before confirmation/operation; 9 waiting to start; noted cases at Beaminster (Chantry Farm) to PINS via written reps. <sup>47</sup>

#### Discussion points

- Fees intended to cover costs; **no profit**; advertising costs significant and legally required. <sup>48</sup>
- Statutory process delays and objections require referral to PINS; Deregulation Act provisions discussed (not yet in force). <sup>49</sup>
- **Dorset Explorer**: digital layer reflects “working copy” updates; OS paper maps lag. <sup>50</sup>

#### Specific queries raised

- Accessibility: colour blindness issue with mapping colours—request to ask GIS team. <sup>51</sup>
- TROs query (repeated annual closures with no works) — to be investigated via Traffic Team. <sup>52</sup>

### 5. FWAG – England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO)

- **Deferred / in abeyance** due to presenter absence. <sup>53 54</sup>

### 6. Dorset Council Greenspace Management & Maintenance

*(Read out by Graham Stanley due to Russell Goff’s absence.)* <sup>55</sup>

#### Staffing

- Central team senior ranger post: filled then resigned due to personal circumstances; approval granted to recruit; estimated up to **6 months** to fill; interim workload absorbed by existing senior rangers and RG. <sup>56</sup>

## Programmes / priorities

- Secured further funding for **KCIII England Coast Path** improvements (Lyme Regis to Burton Bradstock); works expected to commence in coming months. <sup>57</sup>
- Portland works using locally quarried stone: upgrades, bridges, linking routes, inclusive access improvements. <sup>58</sup>
- **ROWIP**: consultation delayed; document not yet at required standard; remains a priority though resourcing pressures acknowledged. <sup>59</sup>

## Service stats since last meeting (jobs reported/resolved)

- Central: 352 reported / 537 resolved
- East: 169 reported / 157 resolved
- North: 280 reported / 495 resolved
- Purbeck: 199 reported / 187 resolved
- West: 322 reported / 411 resolved
- Total: 1,322 reported; 1,777 resolved (incl. older jobs). <sup>60</sup>

## North Dorset Trailway update (overview)

- Currently **~12 miles open** (Stalbridge area noted; route follows old Somerset & Dorset line, largely traffic-free multi-user).
- Extensions north and south depend on development/S106, crossings (A31/A354 referenced), road crossing assessment later in year, and landowner opposition. <sup>61</sup>
- Usage: 2025 average **125/day (~45.5k/year)**; 2026 to date **114/day** (likely similar annual). <sup>62</sup>

## Q&A highlights

- **Ash dieback**: DC has a policy; approach described as targeted removal and monitoring; landowner responsibility on PRow. <sup>63</sup>
- **ROWIP & Active Travel England rating**: query raised; GS to respond separately (not answered in meeting). <sup>64</sup>
- **ROWIP statutory delay/resourcing**: AB offered to raise question at Full Council; JD offered drafting help. <sup>65</sup>
- **Bridge with hole (Sturminster Newton toward Manston)**: GS stated signage/tape put up; replacement expected within months / before year end. <sup>66</sup>

- **PH - Portland has a large horse population who were using the vast majority of the footpaths 'as of right' and would continue to do so despite the 'No Horses/No Cycling going up on FP S3/6 which has been surface improved as it is part of the KCIII Coastpath. Riders are in the process of submitting a DMMO based on user evidence.**

## **7. BCP Council Greenspace Management & Maintenance**

*(Presented by Philip Elias)* <sup>67</sup>

### Staffing

- Rights of Way Officer (Kirsty Tyre) left; recruitment underway; interviews planned June; appointment hoped over summer. <sup>68</sup>

### Chapel Lane bridleway – Dampney's Estate barrier/gates

- Landowner installed gates without consultation; PE met operator/landowner (Eco operation).
- Proposed solution: create/improve **parallel off-road bridleway**, then pursue legal extinguishment of unsafe on-road bridleway; gates must remain open 24/7 until legal process complete; PE to re-engage as gates reportedly being closed at night. <sup>69</sup>

### Happy Bottom DMMO

- Application now **registered** with sufficient evidence; fourth in queue; estimated 2–3 years depending on staffing; creation order considered as fallback if DMMO fails (budget/compensation considerations noted). <sup>70</sup>

### Upton improvements (boundary area)

- Works completed to bridleway link: improved surfacing and fencing; AB provided wider context on adjacent DC junction/cycle improvements and benefits for safer walking/cycling links to Upton Country Park and onwards. <sup>71</sup>

## **8. Coast Path Landslips**

*(Graham Stanley read out James Stagg report.)* <sup>72</sup>

### Key incidents and responses (Winter 2025–26)

- **Charmouth:** significant fall; **~300m path lost**; closure **~21 days**; rollback negotiated with National Trust/tenant; DC cleared scrub; temporary fence installed; ongoing monitoring. <sup>73</sup>

- **St Gabriel’s Cottage/Golden Cap:** erosion noted; scrub clearance planned outside nesting season to enable rollback across NT open access land; monitoring agreed. <sup>74</sup>
- **Ferry Bridge (Weymouth):** consistent movement monitored with Freshwater Holiday Park; additional infrastructure installed. <sup>75</sup>
- **Clavell Tower:** reports of compromised/narrowed path (9 April); potential fence set-back delayed due to lack of improvement maintenance grants; stock issues until boundary agreed/funded. <sup>76</sup>
- **South Gwyle:** rollback/fencing negotiated enabling continued stock grazing; erosion accelerating. <sup>77</sup>

#### Funding concern

- Natural England / SWCP Association reported **no maintenance grant funding** available; concern raised for national trail standards and local authority capacity. <sup>78</sup>

#### Follow-up actions discussed

- AB to explore whether Dorset Coast Forum has relevant research/updates; JD to forward report to Ramblers national coast path lead. <sup>79</sup>

### 9. KC11 England Coast Path update

- Update was **covered within the James Stagg note** as “KCIII ECP establishment” work:
  - Establishment extended into 2027 for **Lyme Regis to Hive Beach**; aim to future-proof SWCP and improve accessibility. <sup>80</sup>
  - Negotiations ongoing re improvements **Kimmeridge to Worbarrow Cove** (rollback, bridges, steps, gates) pending grant confirmation. <sup>81</sup>
- Separate “KC111 ECP” item was not distinctly discussed in the transcript beyond this combined update. <sup>82</sup>

### 10. Hodmoor – inaccessible Common Land

- JD raised Hodmoor common land adjacent to North Dorset Trailway, perceived as difficult to access; asked what could be done. <sup>83</sup>
- Discussion highlighted complexity of common land:

- Grazing currently occurring; fencing erected; questions over legality/permissions and grazing rights (cattle rights recorded; sheep grazing observed).<sup>84</sup>
- Dorset Council described as having “protector/commoner” responsibilities on register; need to identify appropriate DC lead and clarify management/consents.<sup>85</sup>
- Estate stated gates not locked; potential stile access mentioned; but members noted public would not know access was possible.<sup>86</sup>

## 11. Member feedback from associated groups/meetings

- **Dorset National Landscape:** no meeting since last DLAF; nothing to report.<sup>87</sup>
- **Cranborne Chase National Landscape:** annual forum attended; praised access work and high-quality walking maps/routes (online and pocket-sized), supported by funding/volunteers.<sup>88</sup>
- **Local Nature Partnership:** LNP unable to accept NH as DLAF representative due to no space/position available.<sup>89</sup>

## 12. Ratification of responses made since last meeting

- **Hamworthy Fuel Depot** exclusion of access rights review: DLAF consensus that situation unchanged; **no response** submitted.<sup>90</sup>
- **Felling licence consultation (Armswell Farm Woodlands):** JD explained standard response approach—check PRow/access land impacts; remind Forestry Commission re permissions.<sup>91</sup>

## 13. Dorset Net Zero Living Programme

- Members reviewing links could not identify a clear DLAF role; general view to **not pursue**.<sup>92 93</sup>
- AB noted Dorset LEP dissolved; programme appears archived; may require DC clarification if revived.<sup>94</sup>

## 14. LAF Work Plan

- PT and PH emphasised guidance expectation for DLAF to be **proactive** with a work plan, not purely reactive.<sup>95 96</sup>

- Proposed themes discussed (examples raised):
- Preparation for **Open Access mapping review** (long-delayed) and DLAF stance/inputs. <sup>97</sup>
- Develop standard DLAF responses (e.g., tree planting consultations) and review severed routes information. <sup>98</sup>
- Consider Dorset-specific countryside infrastructure design guidance and RoW web page improvements. <sup>99</sup>
- **Open Access review:** members discussed historical delays and need for formal enquiry/pressure; JD and NH to draft letter for DLAF. <sup>100</sup>
- **Work plan process agreed:** JD to lead compilation; members to send suggested priorities; circulate draft **between meetings** (do not wait until July). <sup>101</sup>

## 15. Any Other Business

- **Chideock–Bridport missing link:** need for political support noted; suggestion that a s26 dedication may be appropriate; AB to speak informally with relevant ward councillors and/or Cllr Roland Tarr; bring back to DLAF. <sup>102</sup>
- **Good news – Upton Heath secured:** Dorset Wildlife Trust appeal raised £110k rapidly; BCP and DC reportedly contributed (AB stated £200k each) enabling purchase pre-auction; land to be managed by Dorset Wildlife Trust; access maintained. <sup>103</sup>
- **Next meeting: Tuesday 21 July, 10:00–13:00, Committee Room 1.** <sup>104</sup>
- Meeting closed at **12:54.** <sup>105</sup>

## Decisions / Agreements (captured)

- Item 5 (FWAG/EWCO) **deferred** due to absence. <sup>106 107</sup>
- DLAF to **develop proactive work plan** led by JD; member contributions requested. <sup>108</sup>
- DLAF to **write formally** (JD+NH) querying **Open Access mapping review** delays/next steps. <sup>109</sup>
- AB to raise **ROWIP resourcing/timeliness** at Full Council, with JD support on wording. <sup>110</sup>

## Appendix

- [DLAF Meeting Recording 28.4.26](#)
- SW Coast path slippages over winter 25/26

During the winter season 25/26, the Dorset coastline has endured one of the wettest winters on record. This has resulted in varying degrees of coastal landslip that has required either immediate action or consistent monitoring of the area due to the proximity of the coastal path.

### Charmouth (w16/78)

On the 12th of February, the Southwest Coast path in Charmouth (w16/78) had a significant coastal fall which resulted in a path closure due to safety concerns. The fall resulted in the loss of 300m of coastal path and a closure of circa 21 days.

From working in collaboration with the SWCP association, the National Trust and their tenant farmers, Dorset Council negotiated a rollback of the area enabling the reopening of this section within 21 days.

It was agreed with the National Trust and their tenants, that if we funded and provided materials for a temporary fenceline that we could 'rollback' the coastal path a further 10m from the coastal slip. Once negotiations were finalised, a Dorset Council team cleared a section of coppice enabling a safe route away from a critical area. Following this cleared section, the tenant farmer installed the new fenceline as agreed providing a safe distance away from the still active area.

Subsequently and due to the activity in the area, Dorset Council will continue to monitor the location with potential contingency plans in place.

### St Gabriels Cottage/ Golden Cap

Following this activity and from a recent site visit, it was evident that this area heading east on the coastline is eroding also. These areas include the St Gabriel's Cottage area heading towards Golden Cap and Golden Cap itself. While some of these slips do not immediately affect the coastal path, one section has been discussed with plans to clear a section of scrub outside of bird nesting season to enable a rollback on open access land owned by the National Trust. However, it was agreed that the National Trust and Dorset Council will continue to monitor the area with regular communication.

### Ferry Bridge, Weymouth

Other on-going issues continue around the Ferry Bridge, Weymouth, with consistent land movement. This area is regularly monitored by both Dorset Council and Freshwater

holiday park. More recently, additional infrastructure has been installed to improve accessibility and further mitigation measures have been put in place. Communications about contingency plans and alternative routes have been mooted, but nothing has been agreed in principle.

#### Clavell Tower

On the 9/4/26, we received reports that a section of coastal path has been compromised east of Clavell Tower resulting in narrowing of the path. While plans have been discussed in potentially moving the fenceline back to improve accessibility, the lack of access to improved maintenance grants has delayed any further developments. Unfortunately, the landowner is not presently able to keep stock in this field until a new field boundary is agreed and funded.

#### South Gwyle

From a survey conducted in the summer 2025, it was noted that a section of the coastal path was compromised near South Gwyle. Following this and as we entered the Autumn/Winter season, sections of the coastal path were lost to landslips. However, through collaboration with the SWCP association's funding and good working relationships with the landowner, Dorset Council were able to negotiate roll back of this section with new fencing. This also enabled the landowner to keep stock in their field again and keep a good working relationship them. Further to this, the landowner also acknowledges the rate of erosion in the area and has plans to roll back other sections of their field boundaries inland.

#### Funding Issues

Most recently, reports from Natural England and the SWCP association is that there is no funding available as part of their maintenance grants. This is a major concern considering how much eco-tourism the southwest coast path generates and how quickly Dorset is losing its coastline. The lack of funding will also be detrimental in supporting the standards of a national trail and maintaining public access. It is also well known that local authorities are unable to fund projects of this nature due to financial constraints.

#### KCIIIIECP establishment

One positive piece of news is that the King Charle III England Coastal Path establishment has been extended to the new financial 2026/27 for Lyme Regis to Hive beach. Surveys have been conducted and funding has already been applied for to Natural England. The goal for the establishment project is to future-proof the southwest coast path as well as improve accessibility for all. Improvement works include bridge replacements, surface improvements, gate replacement and creating a more user-



- Cside Statistics since last DLAF mtg (Nov 25)  
27/11/25 – 27/4/26

<b>Area</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Purbeck</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Reported</b>	352	169	280	199	322	1322
<b>Resolved</b>	537	157	495	187	401	1777

- DC Greenspace Service update

Following the successful recruitment of a Senior Ranger for the Central Team, an unforeseen change in personal circumstances has unfortunately resulted in her resignation. This has left the team without a senior management presence; however, approval has been granted to recruit to the vacant post. The recruitment process and required notice period for the successful candidate means it could be up to six months before the position is filled.

In the interim, additional responsibilities have been absorbed by the existing Senior Rangers, with Russ also acting as Senior Ranger for the Central area. This represents a significant increase in workload across the team. Despite these pressures, staff continue to prioritise the maintenance of frontline services.

During the current financial year, the service has secured significant funding to deliver further improvements to the King Charles III England Coast Path. These projects are due to commence in the coming months and will see substantial investment along the route from Lyme Regis to Burton Bradstock. In addition, important improvement works are underway on Portland, using stone quarried on the island. These works include path upgrades, new bridges and improved linking routes, which will provide inclusive access to the western side of the island for people of all abilities.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) continues to progress, led primarily by Giles and Russ. The document that was originally scheduled for consultation has not yet been completed to the standard they consider appropriate. As a highly strategic piece of work, it is essential that the RoWIP clearly articulates a strong long-term vision

and acts as a robust framework for delivering a more integrated, accessible and inclusive rights of way network for those who live in, and visit, Dorset.

We apologise for the delay to consultation and appreciate your understanding given the simultaneous delivery of frontline services and the need to manage staffing pressures. Please be assured that the RoWIP remains a priority and a key focus for the service. While the document itself is still in development, its principles and ethos are already embedded within the team's day-to-day work and continue to guide the delivery of a modern and inclusive network.