

LAF members are appointed by the County Council and represent a balanced mixture of land managers and users, not specifically representing any particular bodies. They are volunteers willing to pool their knowledge and enthusiasm to increase the opportunities for responsible use of the countryside.



How is this relevant to you?

The last twenty years have seen major changes in the lives of people in this country, with an ever more mobile population and an increasing concentration of employment in the South. Cambridgeshire has particular problems with road congestion, affordable housing, and a rising population placing demands on local services. The Government, Local Authorities and developers have all put forward plans to try to address these issues.

As a major arable and horticultural area, changes in agricultural policies, including those for farm subsidies and the influence of the global market, may also alter the Cambridgeshire landscape.

With all these pressures it is easy for access to the countryside and other open spaces to become a secondary issue, and opportunities to improve access and enhance the quality of life could be lost.

If you work for a County or District Council, or an organisation such as English Nature, English Heritage, The Countryside Agency or The Forestry Commission please be aware that as a statutory body Cambs LAF should be consulted on any major developments that may affect public access. This will include not only the potential loss of access from development, but also when new areas for recreation are being considered.

If you work for a developer please note that we welcome direct contact. In all instances, the knowledge of members in areas such as riding, walking, disabled access, land management, off-road driving and conservation will allow constructive comments and recommendations to be passed to you at an early stage in the process.

If you have a personal interest, or represent an interest group, we will be pleased to hear from you about your concerns. Our meetings are open to the public. We are able to ask various bodies and companies to send a representative to a Forum meeting, or to supply further details, so that members can produce an informed decision on how problems may be resolved.



We do not comment on individual issues that would normally be within the remit of Council departments, but we are able to draw issues of a more general nature to the attention of Council officers, and we regularly monitor the work of the County Council's countryside services team.



What particular issues have we been working on?

The Cambs LAF was set up during the public consultation on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which has led to the creation of "Open Access" areas across the country.

In Cambridgeshire, the open access provisions refer to registered Common Land, there being no areas of moor, heath or down land.

The Act does not give people the "right to roam" wherever they want to, and there are restrictions on the activities that can be carried out.



The Cambs LAF supports the reinstatement of “Lost Highways” of particular value as access routes, before the Government deadline in 2026.

We have monitored and contributed to the Local Transport Policy, and been closely involved in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

We aim to ensure that the results of public consultations are used when the priorities for future Council spending on access and other issues are decided.

We have attended public consultations and received presentations on housing and transport network developments across the County, particularly around Cambridge and the M11 corridor.

We will continue to ensure that planners and authorities give firm commitments to the provision of open space and countryside access for all.

Members have used their expertise to provide comments on Government consultations and Council legislation, highlighting issues concerning disabled access, walking, riding, canoeing, use of farmland and off-road driving.



Where can you find out more?

Our website, <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/forum/> has details of our previous meetings, and the location of future meetings and the next agenda.

The Forum meets every two months, on either a Tuesday or Thursday evening, moving the venue around the County. Additional meetings are also held by groups to cover sub-sections of the work programme e.g. planning, or rights of way.

If you would like further details about items we have covered in meetings, or if you would like to bring the Forum’s attention to a particular subject, please contact the Secretary,

Mrs Gail Stoehr
Tel: 01954 210241
Email: office@lgs-services.co.uk
30 West Drive
Highfields Caldecote
Cambridge CB3 7NY.

If you wish to attend a meeting without raising an issue you are very welcome to attend without notifying us.



CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM



The Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum (Cambs LAF) is one of a network of groups across England and Wales. It has been set up at the instigation of the Government in recognition of the value of open spaces and rights of way as places for recreation and relaxation.

