

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

Feedback forms were produced and circulated to the delegates of both LAF conferences and the results from them are as follows:

Total Delegate Numbers: Bristol = 58
Total Delegate Numbers: Durham = 53
Total Delegate Numbers = 111

Total Delegate Numbers: Bristol (-NE/Defra staff) = 44
Total Delegate Numbers: Durham (-NE/Defra staff) = 46
Total Delegate Numbers (-NE/Defra staff) = 90

Total Number of LAFs represented at conferences = 61
Total Percentage of LAFs represented at conferences = 72%

Number of feedback forms received from delegates: Bristol = 28
Percentage of delegates (-NE/Defra staff) submitted form: Bristol = 64%
Number of feedback forms received from delegates: Durham = 31
Percentage of delegates (-NE/Defra staff) submitted form: Durham = 67%
Total Number of feedback forms received from delegates = 59
Total Percentage of delegates (-NE/Defra staff) submitted form = 66%

Did content meet objectives: Bristol = 100% Yes
Did content meet objectives: Durham = 89% Yes, 11% No
Did content meet objectives: Total = 94% Yes, 6% No

Which session did delegates find most useful: Bristol?

19% = Rail Crossings
16% = LEPs/LNPs
14% = Access for All
14% = Land Managers
11% = Deregulation Bill
8% = Dogs
8% = Lottery Funding
5% = Paths in Crisis
5% = Other

Which session did delegates find most useful: Durham?

23% = LEPs/LNPs
17% = LAF Effectiveness
17% = Rail Crossings
11% = All Sessions
11% = Deregulation Bill
9% = Paths in Crisis
3% = Dogs
3% = Access for All
3% = PRoW & Farmland
3% = Other

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

Which session did delegates find least useful: Bristol?

23% = Deregulation Bill
 19% = Rail Crossings
 15% = Land Managers
 12% = LAF Effectiveness
 12% = None
 4% = Access for All
 4% = Dogs
 4% = LEPs/LNPs
 4% = Lottery Funding
 4% = Other

Which session did delegates find least useful: Durham?

27% = Deregulation Bill
 15% = All were useful
 12% = LAF Effectiveness
 12% = LEPs/LNPs
 8% = Access for All
 8% = Dogs
 8% = PRoW and Farmland
 4% = Lottery Funding
 4% = Paths in Crisis
 4% = Rail Crossings

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were the delegates with:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
The Conference organisation / logistics	49%	44%	7%		
Deregulation Bill	16%	44%	28%	12%	
Access for All	38%	42%	4%	8%	8%
Dogs	33%	33%	20%	13%	
LEPs/LNPs	41%	41%	16%	3%	
Lottery Workshop	25%	75%			
Lottery Talk	11%	70%	15%	4%	
Paths in crisis	29%	59%	13%		
Land Managers	35%	35%	27%	4%	
PRoW & Farmland	21%	48%	21%	10%	
LAF Effectiveness	32%	40%	20%	8%	

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

Rail Crossings	37%	48%	13%	2%	
Plenary	29%	45%	26%		

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

Delegate Feedback and Comments

<p>I'm pleased that NE have managed to run a national LAF conference this year. Splitting the conference into 2 was presumably done for financial reasons but was still effective</p>
<p>Certainly the workshop sessions were useful in discovering how other LAFs operate and what they actually get involved with. Perhaps the start could be earlier? 10 instead of 10.45? Always there is the need for discussion to learn more about the subject - not sure this is easy? I think Huddle has failed and I would suggest this type of meeting would be useful twice a year</p>
<p>Durham's council chamber not a good room for workshops - too inflexible. Workshop leads should direct some of the discussion at the end towards practical ideas or action points</p>
<p>A lost opportunity to present 2 case histories of best practice/exemplars. Everyone needs encouragement and to head home at the end of the conference feeling motivated</p>
<p>Would be useful to have the PowerPoint on paper on the day to make notes on</p>
<p>As a hearing aid user I found the loop system very helpful if speakers used the microphone which was the case most of the time. If you can remind speakers to do this and provide this facility again next time.</p>
<p>More time to speak with other delegates and NE folk etc. The day was hurried with busy sessions and not much free time to discuss with others about their situation etc. Lunch could have been extended by 30 minutes to accommodate this. The Ramblers presenter spoke far too fast!</p>
<p>More accurate titles for presentations. Inadequate toilet facilities (only two toilets for 58 attendees) All workshops should be available both mornings and afternoons to avoid clashes.</p>
<p>Consider whether speakers could pre-circulate key points or background to their talks to allow more time for discussion/questions</p>
<p>I would have appreciated examples of good practice and an overview of the progress being made by LAFs in these difficult times</p>
<p>V interesting day. Glad to have the chance to come. Programme packed but enough time given to all. Lots of interesting and committed people from LAFs. Good to hear lots of opinions and active discussions</p>
<p>The only issue with the venue at Bristol was the toilet facilities. The venue itself was well located and easy to find. Other than that I felt that the timings and topics covered were excellent. It was also good to meet other colleagues and LAF members from around the Country.</p>
<p>Need to organise a structured framework for LAFs. We have strong LAFs, we are getting to the stage of having strong regional LAFs. We need to have a national group formed by Chairs and vice-Chairs of regional groups. How can this be organised?</p>
<p>The Rail Crossings and PRoW presentation was very good and the presenter's willingness and ability to participate in other parts of the proceedings was commendable. Paths in Crisis/Ramblers was informative to an extent, as well as 'entertaining' – certainly good for the after lunch slot – even it many found it very difficult to keep up with the speed of the presentation! In other words the quality of speakers is important. Darren Ward was very good – knowledgeable, excellent manner and engaged. Anastasia needs to tailor her presentation to the event i.e. make it shorter and slow down if necessary. Jonathan Tweney's presentation and manner were less impressive.</p>
<p>Interesting as an officer of an AA to hear what other LAFs are concerned about - to see common themes and also hear what is different in some areas</p>
<p>A greater variety of topics as per the Sheffield conference last year would have been welcome</p>
<p>Unable to hear many of the questions. Roving mics needed</p>
<p>In questions, they touched on Public Inquiries. The Points system in the book Rights of Way Restoring the Record was mentioned. However, it was thought that First Edition OS maps should have been included for points. This points system needs to be adopted for Inspectors, so that everyone knows what evidence is needed at a P.I. At the moment it is a lottery! This should be on next year's agenda.</p>
<p>The completion of the recording of under and unrecorded routes since higher rights users have no</p>

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

comprehensive rights of way network unlike walkers
Comparison between England and Scotland in relation to access and between UK and EU
Very smoothly run, with the right degree of formality and friendliness!
The workshops were just discussions. There was no active participation in a proper workshop sense.
Sensible splitting north south conferences
Hold event with less transport disruption
Having a southern event much better than 1 single conference
Good range
The content of " Paths in Crisis " was useful but the presentation was poor . The speaker from The Ramblers is obviously passionate but her delivery was far too rushed ; speaking at a more measured pace allows the spoken words to sink in .
We need coordinated national strategy on feedback
Like the idea of 1 national conference but appreciate the cost
Wifi needed
Quality of evidence definitions
Thought sessions too time restricted and did not allow enough detail. Fewer longer sessions would be better. Liked Q&A session directly after each session
(hard to read) ensure discussion notes explained (I think). Talks with greater bite and ... (can't read). Issues rather than overviews.
Good short speakers
Good venue, good speakers
LAF conferences very valuable - keep up the support. Useful to have more than 1 rep from LAFs to spread messages and creative thinking
<p>1. Venue this year was far superior - Sheffield was frankly pretty awful (hard to see or hear presentations in main room).</p> <p>2. Both seemed to me to share same faults in planning/presentation of the first sessions. In both cases, conference opened with a subject which was technically significant but not likely to make for an entertaining/lively/inspiring start to the day. Better perhaps to start with a less significant, maybe shorter, pipe-opener to engage the audience, before getting stuck in to the meatier bit. Moreover, in both cases this was not helped by use made of PowerPoint....</p> <p>These comments do not relate solely to LAF conferences and NE, but to other conferences I have attended and other organisations. PowerPoint is NOT a suitable medium for presenting detailed information: lots of data at Sheffield, paragraphs of govt papers at Durham, simply do not come across visually. The big weakness of PowerPoint is that speakers tend to simply copy material they already possess, rather than creating presentations, and do not take time and trouble to assess what the audience can actually make of it. They assume that, because they can read the detail, the audience can too. For example: in the prehistoric days when I used OHPs and 35mm slides I would, whenever possible, set the equipment up in advance, go to the back of the hall, see how legible/intelligible it was, and junk anything that wasn't up to scratch. OK, one can't always do exactly that - but one can get some idea of what can be read without binoculars. What's more, any presentation, whatever the technology, needs designing for clarity - which often means simplifying and reducing the detail on offer. PowerPoint is fine as a means of setting up headings, or showing the equivalent of transparencies (I would go so far as to say that nobody should be allowed near PowerPoint until he/she has served an</p>

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

apprenticeship in the older technologies!). The Access workshop showed a much better use of the medium than the session on De-regulation.

Sorry to bang on like that - but it is something I find very frustrating, and you did ask for feedback....!

Having said all which - yes, it was a pretty good conference, I enjoyed it, and I was sorry I had to bail out early.

If outside organisations are giving presentations they should come prepared with relevant examples.

Difficult to hear especially questions

As a workshop facilitator who needed to bring things for the workshop that weren't suitable for carrying by train the lack of any parking availability did make this tricky, though the location next to the train station is otherwise great!

I understand that automated processes and systems used to administrate events are useful in some ways but they are a little inflexible in others, unable to adapt readily to anything other than standard – this is an issue I've found with NE processes in the past in other areas so I recognised when standardised admin that was not relevant for me was kicking in! Not a huge issue, just a niggle, the odd irrelevant email or inflexible booking system might be more of a problem when communicating with people who aren't familiar with those type of administrative processes and could create misunderstanding maybe?

Event well-organised and interesting.

Great not to have death by feedback in final plenary. Suggestion for presentation at 2015 conf - on disused railway and mineral lines in route network all from extent, access, ownership, maintenance

No email contact details provided - permission could have been sought. Bob Anderson's session produced good ideas but needed to be better co-ordinated

It was a very interesting day and I would like to thank all the speakers for their informative talks.

I thought it was rather telling that when Martin Shaw asked for a show of hands from people who were following the progress of the Deregulation Bill, about 65% of attendees raised their hands. However, when asked who approved of the measures, the number dropped to one or two people.

This was significant, not necessarily because there is anything wrong with the measures in the Bill. But, because LAF members obviously have reservations about how they work in practice to benefit the public.

I found the whole day to be useful. It was well organised and in a good venue. There was time to meet with other delegates which is beneficial.

It's good to know that there are a few very committed people (Workshop 1 (disabled access) and Workshop 5 (dogs) who have taken initiatives themselves with excellent results but I struggle to see that many LAF members would have the time and take the trouble to start these sorts of activities themselves. Thence I feel that their activities are very worthy but unlikely to be replicated elsewhere. Perhaps others will feel inspired. I would like to see more 'mainstream' presentations in future where I feel they would be more relevant to LAF everyday activities

I would have appreciated an email in the week before the Conference just to confirm it was all going ahead – I was a bit worried I might get to Durham and find it wasn't!

Speakers could be encouraged to focus at least part of their presentations on the "so what?". In Talk 1 there didn't seem to be any – nothing for us to do, nothing for us to say. It was presented as a fait accompli achieved by a very small consensus.

Great to hear from other LAF members and related organisations. Hope there is another conference next year!

Thank you.

The venue was excellent and catering good (though I would have liked half of the bread/rolls to have been brown or wholemeal). Just half an hour for lunch was a bit rushed, but acceptable as this allowed for a much needed tea break in the afternoon!

Location continues to be a problem, with the Pennines dividing the northern half of the country and proving an obstacle to finding a venue to suit the majority of LAFs in the North. An east/west split (rather than north/south)

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

doesn't work either because of the distances involved. Sorry – this is an unhelpful comment! Sheffield has been suggested on more than one occasion by NW chairs. I think chairs all over the country have not quite taken on board the need for a free venue and that these are very hard to find, let alone in a central location.

Overall a very good day – and well chaired!

As an officer of an appointing authority I found it very interesting to listen to LAF members from around the country. I don't know how representative of their LAFs these individuals were, but it was clear that many have a less than satisfactory relationship with their appointing authority and in some cases a lack of confidence/trust in the rights of way officers and their ability to act professionally. It was also interesting to see that whilst LAFs are themselves supposed to function on the basis of consensus between a range of interests, many present seemed unable to recognise that the same principle applied to the Stakeholder Working Group and their proposals, which have fed into the Deregulation Bill. It is those principles of consensus which are enabling some of the special interest amendments to be resisted!

One point that I have noted in Durham is that whilst I believe the relationship between the LAF and the Rights of Way Team here is a good one, there have been difficulties in getting the LAF to be recognised and accepted by the wider Authority. One reason for that, I believe, is that the LAF is often seen as being the Rights of Way Team's organisation/initiative/problem. It is important for the Rights of Way Officers to sometimes distance themselves from the LAF; that can be difficult if the Rights of Way Officer is also the LAF Secretary, but the message needs to be reinforced that the LAF is independent, and has a role far wider than just rights of way.

There is clearly a very vocal element within LAFs keen to see some form of national 'representative' body for LAFs. I am unclear how that would work, and what it might achieve. From what I saw at the Conference, I am not sure how representative such a body might really be of the LAF memberships as a whole. If the intention, as seemed to be suggested, is to be a lobbying group to influence Government policy then there are already mechanisms by which the various interest groups can do this; the Stakeholder Working Group, the Rights of Way Review Committee etc. What are the specific LAF issues that would not be raised within those mechanisms? Unless there are matters which are unique to LAFs and need to be raised at a national level, what would a 'National LAF' be for?

A good and easy-to-get-to venue. The PA system was a bonus for hearing contributions from the floor.

There was no good news for people who are giving their time and money to trying to save our rights of way before the cut-off date. The only good thing was meeting fellow workers and listening to their comments and problems.

Only one person thought the de-regulation bill was a good idea. This Bill is a serious blow for us all, a landowner's charter, and no consultation with the LAF. It should have been on last year's agenda – why are we only being told of it now? Jonathan Tweney took a very high attitude about it and badly answered questions – saying in reply to one "it's all been decided". For instance, does Natural England realise the consequences of allowing gates to be put on Byways? It will change the whole Ordnance Survey Map. At the moment a Byway is an ancient highway without any limitations. You look at a map and know it is a clear passage into the Countryside. This is so important for the less abled. A gate is an obstruction and is dangerous – and usually falls into disrepair within 12 months. 90% of gates cannot be opened easily from on top of a horse, and certainly not for a carriage driver. How do you open and shut one with a carriage? Farmers have managed for centuries because the law is strict – they are protected highways. This Bill throws all our heritage away – they will be no more than bridleways. It is against DEFRA guidelines on limitations, and all the Disability Acts. All this has been decided by Quango's who have not consulted "grass root" users. No wonder we are all depressed! I would be glad if you put this comment to whoever is in charge of this Bill – again no information is available about that! I was very cross about attending the "Access for all" presentation – it was not access for all at all. Just adding a disabled trail. It meant I could not attend the Lottery funding, so I hope the literature will be sent to us. Local Nature Partnerships was interesting because it was new. A pity no hand-outs were there.

There is no comprehensive rights of way network for higher rights users and the cut off is fast approaching . Community paths is a very expensive and bureaucratic method of getting dedicated. The legal power (hard to read) get LA/users/landowners to dedicate. What is NE going to do to help get LAs to process DMMOs while they are cutting staff?

Good discussions

PA system needed improvement - hard to hear at the back

LAF National Conferences 2013-14, Bristol/Durham – Statistics & Feedback

A short comfort break between workshop session 2 and the presentation would have been good as the afternoon session was 3 hours long. A good useful mix of workshops and presentations. The presentation slots allowed more time for the questions which was appreciated. Although there were fewer workshops than previously there was a range of subjects. I know LAF members who attended the workshops found them useful and interesting.

More literature

Thanks to NE for organising - well chaired

Chairman kept to time, good. Rush at lunch time. Excellent venue

More interactive workshops to discuss matters over wider common topics

Would like feedback via Huddle

After the closing date for applications, the agenda disappeared from the website and I was not able to print off a copy. It would be helpful if it could stay there until the day of the conference.

While all the talks and workshops were interesting and well presented, I have difficulty in relating the relevance of some of it to our only statutory function of giving advice to local authorities and anyone else who asks for it.

Keep up the good work

Chair was strong and careful to keep to time - v good

Appreciate conference organisation in difficult financial times. Different viewpoints in plenary session - how LAFs can work smarter in difficult times to (can't read) to make a difference.

Venue location not easy for drivers. A little disorganised re arrival and catering. Single national conference much better. NE need to budget if they want LAFs to work.

A useful seminar well planned and run

Thanks

The day was enjoyable, we need more networking on the best way to recruit members and a real debate as to the purpose of LAFs

Appreciated the opportunity to network with other delegates and speakers

One LAF member who attended mentioned that he had not opted to attend the dogs workshop as he had already attended the Dartmoor workshop.