

National LAF Conferences 2013 – 14

Presentation: Access - The Land Manager's Perspective

Sarah Slade, National Access Adviser, Country Land and Business Association

Summary

We are all land managers – householders with gardens, landowners, farmers, businesses.

Most businesses aren't open to the public in the way farms are. For example, where a public right of way goes through a farmyard, cows may be running, tractors turning, and high value buildings with equipment stored. Dogs are a particular problem as often off-lead.

Access needs to take account of land use and business needs. For example, small changes such as small scale diversions to avoid farm yards that do not distort the network can bring benefits to both users and the farm business through improved safety and enjoyment of the route.

The Ramblers object to 10% of diversions/extinguishments.

CLA supportive of LAFs and landowner representation on LAFs.

CLA supportive of the strong role LAFs have as mediator at a local level.

The CLA view is that local solutions to local problems is the preferred way and considers that since the 1949 Act the balance has slipped one way to favour the user rather than the landowner. The Act allowed for diversions etc. but routes are now regarded as more immutable. Wholesale modernisation is not practical.

Question and Answers

Q: Delegate asked if CLA could share their good practice and case studies on their website and suggested the CLA should work with younger people such as schools, scouts and similar organisations to raise awareness of responsibilities towards land managers who care for our landscapes.

A: This was sometimes difficult in terms of the curriculum and the CLA was narrowly resourced. Getting messages across, for example different rules for dogs, was difficult. It was agreed many people were unaware of basic information.