



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 7 JULY 2010 AT 10.00 AM  
MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

### **AGENDA**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence/changes in Membership</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 March 2010 to be confirmed</b>	<b>1 - 10</b>
<b>4 Matters Arising</b>	
<b>5 Buckinghamshire Landscape Integrated System &amp; High Speed Two (HS2)</b> Report by Mark Bailey, Natural Environment Team Leader	<b>11 - 12</b>
<b>6 Rights of Way Group Report</b> Report by Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Officer	<b>13 - 18</b>
<b>7 Great Gap, Ivinghoe</b> Report by Jackie Wesley, Area Co-ordinator, Locality Services, Buckinghamshire County Council (presentation after 11.30am)	<b>19 - 20</b>
<b>8 LAF Members' Report</b>	<b>21 - 32</b>
<b>9 Any Other Business</b>	
<b>10 Date of Next and Future Meetings</b> The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 3 November 2010, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.	





# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM*

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 2010, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.05 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.45 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr C Hurworth, Mrs V Lynch, Mrs B Jennings and Mr J Coombe

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mr M Walker, Mr J Clark, Mr L Stevens, Ms S Burchell and Ms J Taylor

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Mr P Harris

#### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

**That Mr J M Elfes be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.**

#### **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

##### **RESOLVED**

**That Mr D Briggs be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.**

#### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from Gavin Caspersz, Peter Challis and Alan Lambourne.

Members were advised that Ed Tampkin had resigned as a Member for disabled access as he had moved to Wales. The Chairman asked the Forum to pass on its gratitude to Ed for all the significant work he undertook. The Forum was advised that Gavin Caspersz, who had been recommended by Annette Weiss from the Chilterns

AONB, had been offered membership of the Forum representing to represent disabled users.

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2009 TO BE CONFIRMED**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2009 were confirmed.

#### **6. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

#### **7. HADDENHAM TO THAME CYCLE ROUTE**

Lee Stevens, Transport for Buckinghamshire, Cycling Team Leader attended the meeting to outline proposals for a cycle route between Haddenham and Thame.

The Officer advised that in July 2008 Buckinghamshire County Council commissioned a feasibility study to look at options into the provision of a community path for cyclists, pedestrians and horseriders between Haddenham and Thame. Three possible route options were subsequently identified.

Members were informed that the County Council also received a petition in favour of a route being developed with approximately 1500 signatures and that the Cabinet Member for Transport agreed that determination of a preferred route be explored further. Of the original three suggested routes one route has not been progressed further. The two remaining options are:

1. via Scotsgrove Mill
2. via Tythrop

Informal consultation on the remaining route options has been undertaken and residents are now being asked to indicate their preference through a formal public consultation. The Officer showed Members how to access the consultation on the County Council website and talked Members through the individual routes. Members were informed that the consultation was temporarily suspended as amendments following a public meeting were being made but that this would be back on-line shortly. The Officer invited comments from the Local Access Forum on the routes.

Members enquired about the response to date and were advised that landowners had expressed concerns regarding issues over flooding and livestock. There had been much public support for a connection between the two towns and it was for this reason that this was being explored.

A Member asked what cyclists thought of the route options. In response the Officer said that feedback had suggested that the route options would be more appealing to cyclists currently put-off by the busy traffic on the A418. However due to cost factors there is no plan to upgrade the surface of the route. Members commented that the fact that the surface was not going to be immediately upgraded, should not be a reason not to proceed and highlighted that over time grants for this purpose may be available.

**The LAF endorsed the project in principle.**

## **8. PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE - TRANSFORMATION**

As part of the Council's 'Transformation' programme, the Planning, Environment and Development Service restructured its management posts. There is no longer a Rights of Way Group and the former post of 'Rights of Way and Access Group Manager' has been deleted and is encompassed within a wider remit of 'Environment Group Manager'. Mike Walker has been appointed to this post which encompasses Rights of Way, Natural Environment, Historic Environment (Archaeology), Gypsy & Traveller Services, Sustainability and Country Parks.

The Strategic Access Team Leader and Assistant posts have been deleted. Jonathan Clark's role as Strategic Access Officer will now fall within the Natural Environment Team, headed by Mark Bailey. Fiona Broadbent will continue to run the 'Simply Walk' initiative but within Sue Burchell's Definitive Map Team. Sue will be reducing her hours to work 3 days per week from April. The Maintenance & Enforcement Team remains the same but will now be called the Rights of Way Operations Team. The post of Maintenance and Enforcement Team Leader remains, albeit retitled as Rights of Way Operations Team leader, but the contracts of two temporary posts terminate this month and will not be renewed.

In February 2010 the Council determined that the budget available to the Rights of Way Service would be reduced by £68,000. A three year, £100,000 capital investment programme also comes to an end this month. It was commented that other Counties were also restructuring as savings needed to be made.

The Chairman commented that he was pleased that Mike Walker had been appointed as Environment Group Manager and was responsible for Rights of Way.

A Member expressed concern that the budget cuts would permanently damage the footpaths and bridleways in Buckinghamshire. John Coombe, Chiltern Society raised concerns about the way some maintenance work was allocated. In response it was highlighted that the Council must adhere to strict health and safety procedures and that when an order was raised, it was necessary to carry out a risk assessment. It was also highlighted that the Council's contractors are now not able to commence works unless they have first checked with all statutory agencies that there are no utilities present. This limited the potential for further works to be undertaken by volunteers.

The Officers were asked which Cabinet Member was responsible for the Service. In response the Forum was advised that Mark Bailey's team reported to two different Cabinet Members and Mike Walkers team reported to three.

## **9. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT**

### **1. Definitive Map Update**

#### **Rights of Way Applications**

Following the public inquiry into an Order to upgrade Public Bridleways Nos. 40 and 40A Great and Little Kimble and No. 62 Ellesborough to Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT), the Secretary of State's decision is awaited.

A reply from the Secretary of State about the direction to make Orders upgrading to BOAT status routes at Little Missenden and Stowe/Lillingstone Dayrell is still awaited. Officers wrote to DEFRA as it was considered that the applications were not duly made, asking that the decisions be reassessed with this in mind.

The outcome of the Trail Riders' Fellowship appeals against the County Council's rejection of applications for BOATs in Great Missenden is still awaited.

Orders have been made for public footpaths in Amersham and Ellesborough and objections have been received.

Applications for a claimed footpath in Shabbington and a claimed bridleway in Great and Little Hampden have been rejected and the applicants have appealed against these decisions. Officers are in correspondence with DEFRA regarding this issue.

The application for a claimed bridleway in High Wycombe has been agreed and an order will be made.

### **Village Green Applications**

Village greens have been registered at: Burton's Wood, Little Chalfont; Windmill Hill, Princes Risborough; Candlemas Lane, Beaconsfield (landowner voluntary registration).

The following village green applications are in progress – Amersham; Daly Way, Aylesbury; Bloomfield Cottages, Pinewood Fields, Iver Heath; Station Road, Marsh Gibbon; and Coppice Farm Road, Tylers Green.

Barn Meadow and Bellingdon were rejected as they did not meet the criteria required.

### **New paths and achievements**

The problems with Ickford Public Footpath No. 12 have finally been resolved by diversion of the route after 30 years. The Parish Council put in an application to divert the route into fields at the back of houses and the recreation ground. The Inspector confirmed the route.

A new network of bridleway at Denham Golf Club has been added to the Definitive Map and two new public footpaths have been added to the map in Wexham and Lillingstone Lovell.

Viv Lynch requested a copy of the Definitive Map and advised she would publicise the new bridleway.

**Action: Officer**

A Member enquired when the new Rights of Way would appear on Ordnance Survey Maps and it was advised that this was likely to be on the next revision, although it was not known when the OS might undertake this.

Following negotiations regarding the diversion of Taplow 21 away from a house, it became possible to create a new route for the Beeches Way onto a more attractive route through woodland.

A Member enquired about the status of Beaconsfield 4 and Hughenden 54. The Officer advised that Beaconsfield 4 is in progress and there is a query currently with

the applicants. In relation to Hughenden 54, the school applied to extinguish the route on the grounds of school safety. However, the Secretary of State said it was not a valid order as a reasonable alternative route should have been made. This order has been remade. The objection period is due to end shortly and it will then be sent to the Secretary of State.

A proposed bridleway dedication by Watermead Parish Council will create a new link between the Weedon Hill development and the Watermead estate. It forms part of the Council's vision to have a circular bridleway all around Aylesbury. The Eastern Arc proposals may present an additional opportunity for a link between Weedon Hill and Berton.

## **2.Maintenance Update**

Positive responses have been received from Parish Councils towards the 'Walk Your Local Paths' initiative. To date 30 parishes have responded positively and requested survey forms.

The rights of way best value performance indicators (BVPI 178) is no longer a government requirement, but the Council continues to survey twice a year to benchmark our performance against other authorities. Results for Buckinghamshire are the best ever this year and, based on a 5% survey of the network, results indicated:

86.5% of the network was found to be 'easy to use' and 98% of structures on those routes were 'easy to use'.

There are currently fewer than 1000 outstanding 'issues' awaiting action on the Council's database which Officers are working to reduce. However, this compares favourably with the figure two years ago when the number of issues outstanding was 2800.

### Structures

250 structures have been improved to aid mobility access, including 47 gates installed this year through the 'donate a gate' scheme.

### Surfacing

Over half a kilometre of public paths have been surfaced and repaired.

### Partnership Working

Path maintenance continues through the Chiltern Society Path Maintenance Volunteers and over 900 volunteer hours carried out on path surveys by the Ramblers' Association.

### Planning Applications

Over 170 planning applications assessed by officers - comments provided to District Councils where appropriate.

### Transport for Buckinghamshire

From 1 April 2009 the County Council appointed a new Highways Contractor, Ringway-Jacobs and a new alliance called Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) was formed. The Rights of Way Group is not part of TfB, but does draw services from this organisation through the daily works teams and for surfacing jobs. Within the first few months of the contract there was a reduction in output. In the clearance season, May to September 2009, there appeared to be 12% fewer tasks carried out compared to the same period in 2008. Officers will be working with TfB to improve output and reduce the cost of the gangs they are providing.

A Member enquired what the annual spend with Ringway Jacobs was and was

advised that this was between £200k-£300k. The Officer informed the Forum that the Rights of Way Group had £300k available to spend and additional capital on top. However, the budget will be reduced next year to £250k and the Group will lose the additional capital budget.

Officers were asked if the Council would still be able to match fund the 'donate-a-gate' scheme. An Officer said that whilst the scheme had been successful and was highly valued by the Council, the reduction in next year's budget would mean that this may have to be reviewed.

### **3.Strategic Access Update**

#### **a.Creating new links**

The Forum was shown pictures and maps of a number of the following routes to facilitate discussions.

Consultation is ongoing regarding Lacey Green Bridleway 30, with a view to using s.26 Highways Act 1980 to undertake a compulsory creation of a greater width for this route as it is currently only around 1.5m wide. After negotiations, the landowner refused to move fencing to provide a usable width for horse riders. The proposal for a compulsory creation has support from local riders and Lacey Green Parish Council.

Officers have again met with Paul Newman Homes regarding a pending planning application on land at Valley Farm, Soulbury to be submitted in late March 2010 to Aylesbury Vale District Council. Agreement is concluding to provide all the new access Officers requested. Should the planning application be approved by AVDC it will create new links as part of the Leighton Buzzard Green Wheel with 'spokes' out to Milton Keynes and potentially into Wing.

Following discussions with The National Grid's Land & Development Team regarding dedication of a short section of bridleway on its land near Caps Wood, Denham, it has indicated that it is not prepared to do so. Although the land is owned by National Grid, it is answerable to shareholders and no employee or director is able to give third party rights over the land. The Council is considering making an order under s.26 Highways Act 1980 to compulsorily create the route.

Discussions with the Great Hampden Estate, initiated by The Council and Naphill Riding Club are on-going. The Estate is happy to allow permissive horse riding on selected routes to complement the existing Rights of Way network for walkers and horse riders, but wish to omit permission for cyclists. Viv Lynch said that she would be happy to help with any publicity.

Officers are investigating a possible extension to the Lord Parmoor permissive path into Lane End village to create a new connection from the village into Moor Wood and the surrounding path network.

#### **b. Strategic developments**

After negotiation between officers and the consultants for Chiltern Railways, five diversion applications have been submitted to close 'at-grade' crossings as part of the 'Evergreen 3' project proposals, which aim to increase line speeds between London and Birmingham. As a result of negotiations three new bridges are proposed at the Gerrards Cross, Chepping Wycombe and West Wycombe.

High Speed Rail (HS2) is to be discussed in greater detail at the July 2010 meeting. Members were advised that Buckinghamshire County Council's Strategic Planning Team has been asked to provide a briefing on landscape, environment and heritage impacts (including rights of way and access) to the EiP (Examination in Public)



Inspector, who is currently making a judgement on AVDC's Core Strategy. The briefing will inform the inspector whether HS2 has a material impact on the Aylesbury Growth Arc options. The Chairman highlighted that the Ramblers Association had identified the Rights of Way affected.

#### **c. Open Access**

A successful Access Management Grant scheme application to Natural England was submitted by The Chilterns' Conservation Board to install 6 new interpretation boards on Naphill Common.

#### **d. Simply Walk**

Simply Walk currently has 49 walks throughout Buckinghamshire, attracting over 500 walkers each week. The walks are led by trained volunteers and are free.

Fiona Broadbent has now trained 3 PCSO's as walk leaders in Marlow and hopes to spread the same idea into other areas.

#### **e. Donate-a-gate**

There have been 16 new donors since the last meeting taking the total to 168.

#### **f. Parish newsletter**

The third edition of the Parish Council newsletter became available online at the beginning of March. Alan Lambourne, on behalf of Westcott Parish Council, and Richard Skym, on behalf of Waddesden Parish Council, have offered to write articles for the May 2010 edition of the Parish Newsletter on their 'Walk your Local Paths' events.

A Member enquired about the process for 'stopping-up' a road. In response an Officer said that this is dealt with by the Magistrates Courts and that certain rights may be retained. It was highlighted that the Transportation Service lead on this area and that the Parish Council must agree to any proposed changes.

**Action: An Officer agreed to look into the specific circumstances in Latimer in more detail.**

### **10. LAF MEMBERS' REPORT**

#### **1. Membership**

Gavin Caspersz has agreed to represent disabled users, replacing Ed Tamkin who has resigned. At the July 2010 meeting Gavin will give a short introduction to his background in accessing the countryside on a mobility vehicle.

David Briggs, Alan Lambourne, Richard Pushman and Brenda Jennings have agreed to continue to be members of the Forum.

**Members NOTED the information**

#### **2. Sustrans update**

Negotiations are underway with the landowner of the Bourne End to Wooburn Green disused railway line with a view to purchasing a section to create a cycling link.

Volunteers have surveyed National Route 50 with a view to signing this section from Winslow to Aylesbury.

**Members NOTED the information**

#### **3. Slough LAF correspondence**

Members discussed the correspondence received from Slough LAF. In response an

Officer offered to draw up a list of priority routes for consideration and the Chairman agreed to respond to the letter dated 17 November 2009.

**Action: Chairman/Officer**

#### **4. South East LAF members meetings**

John Elfes advised that the main business discussed at the meeting was the Forestry Commission's proposal to charge for horse riding in its woods. A working group has been set up and Viv Lynch was nominated to sit on this group. The Chairman highlighted that Viv is also Chairman of Milton Keynes LAF and should have received an invite to this meeting.

Viv Lynch advised that due to the distance of the meetings she will continue to be involved with the working group electronically. At the last meeting it was proposed that each LAF look at one forest within their area and to complete a survey on the usage. Viv will be undertaking this survey and obtaining feedback from users at Wendover Woods. She highlighted that presently the British Horse Society (BHS) are busy responding to High Speed 2 (HS2)

**Members NOTED the information and agreed that the Forestry Commission proposal and HS2 be discussed at the next meeting of the LAF**

#### **5. Conference for LAF members**

John Coombe and Viv Lynch updated Members on the meeting held on 16th March 2010 in central London. Viv Lynch commented that the meeting highlighted that LAFs should be consulted regarding major developments which did not appear to be happening and that LAFs are not statutory bodies but statutory advisory bodies. Members attending the meeting discussed a proposal to recommend to Natural England changing the status of LAFs to a statutory body.

An Officer advised that in principle LAFs should be considering major developments and that the LAF would have the opportunity to comment on the proposed HS2 route options. The Officer highlighted that due to tight timeframes for consultations it is not always possible to discuss at a LAF meeting.

**Members NOTED the information**

#### **6. LAF Annual Review**

Members considered articles for this year's annual review. The Chairman agreed to provide a report and invited Members to contribute. David Briggs Viv Lynch agreed to provide articles. John Coombe and Chris Hurworth said they would also try to provide an article. The Officer asked if articles could be forwarded to him by 23 April 2010.

**Members agreed a way forward**

#### **7 Chiltern District Council toilet closures**

A Member advised that Chiltern District Council proposes to close the toilets they manage unless parish councils are willing to take them over. The Member raised concern that this could reduce accessibility for some users in the countryside. John Coombe agreed to draft a letter to Chiltern District Council and the Chairman agreed to sign the letter on behalf of the LAF.

**Action: John Coombe**

#### **8. Chesham 'Walkers are Welcome' initiative**

In March 2010 the Chesham Environment Group achieved 'Walkers are Welcome' accreditation for Chesham. (Details of the scheme can be found in the December 2009 minutes.)

**Members NOTED the information**

#### **9. Countryside 2010 - 29<sup>th</sup> May to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

'COUNTRYSIDE 2010' is a campaign funded by the Rural Development Programme for England and supported by SEEDA and Tourism South East. Members were advised that there is an event directory going live in March with details available at [www.countryside2010.org.uk](http://www.countryside2010.org.uk).

Members were invited to register events. John Coombe advised that the Chiltern Society is participating and the Chairman agreed to check whether the Ramblers' Association had any suitable events to include in the directory. Members were advised to contact the Officer if they had any events to include.

**Members NOTED the information**

#### **10. Forestry Commission proposal to charge for horse riding in its woods**

A summary of Viv Lynch's comments to the Forestry Commission's proposals were outline in Appendix 2 and a summary of Alan Marlow's meeting with the Forestry Commission outlined in Appendix 3. (See also Item 4). Members agreed to discuss the issue at the July 2010 LAF meeting.

**Action: Viv Lynch to undertake a survey of usage in Wendover Woods.**

#### **11. Open access survey**

The Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Ramblers' Association has undertaken the first half of a survey of open access land in Buckinghamshire. A sample of findings was outlined in Appendix 4. The main issue appeared to be around signing. The Chairman enquired if there were resources to address the signing issue. The Officer informed the Forum that he would like to meet with the Chiltern Society to consider this. The Chairman commented that there may be some ramblers who could help with signage.

**Members NOTED the information and the Officer agreed to revive the meeting with the Chiltern Society regarding signage.**

### **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Future agenda items were discussed and it was highlighted by an attending Oxfordshire County Council officer, that findings from the Haddenham to Thame Community Path consultation needed to be discussed jointly with Oxfordshire and that the item should be brought back to a future LAF meeting.

An Officer raised the ongoing problems with the public crossing land grazed by cattle and sheep on public rights of ways and showed two draft signs that might be appropriate to fix on gates and stiles. It was agreed to raise as a future agenda item.

**Action: Officer add to future agenda**

**12. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting is to be held on Wednesday 7 July 2010, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury. The following meeting will be at 10am, on 3 November 2010, also in Mezzanine Room 1.

**Chairman**



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Title:**

1. **Buckinghamshire Integrated Landscape System.**
2. **HS2: the proposed high speed railway through Buckinghamshire.**

**Author:** Mark Bailey, Natural Environment Team Leader.

**Contact Officer:** Katy MacDonald (01296 383604)

1. Mark Bailey, Natural Environment Team Leader, will provide a presentation introducing the Forum to the Buckinghamshire Integrated Landscape System (BLIS). BLIS is a new spatial resource based on a number of Geographical Information System (GIS) datasets containing a number of landscape and environment components which collectively provide data that meets national guidelines, policy and best practice. BLIS will be used principally by strategic planners, transport officers, and land managers to enable informed decision-making about land use/land management change as well as ensuring the protection of the character of Buckinghamshire's landscape. Information gained from the system can also contribute towards good design and improved quality of life through informing provision of cultural and green infrastructure.
2. Mark Bailey will also update the Forum on proposals for High Speed Rail (HS2) and show how BLIS is being used by the County Council to undertake a Baseline Environmental Assessment for each of the three proposed rail routes within Buckinghamshire.

**Recommendation:** Members to consider comments.





## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Title:** Rights of Way Group Update

**Author:** Jonathan Clark Strategic Access.

**Contact Officer:** Katy MacDonald (01296 383604)

### A. Definitive Map update (Sue Burchell)

#### Rights of Way Applications

1. A public inquiry was held in August 2009 into an Order to upgrade **Public Bridleways Nos. 40 and 40A Great and Little Kimble and No. 62 Ellesborough** to Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT). A decision is still awaited and, following further representations about the alignment of the route, the Inspector has called a second inquiry, to deal with issues of alignment only. This has been arranged for 19 October 2010.
2. The Secretary of State directed the Council to make Orders upgrading to BOAT status routes at **Little Missenden and Stowe/Lillingstone Dayrell**. The Council wrote to Defra as it considered that the applications were not duly made, asking that the decisions be reassessed with this in mind. A reply from the Secretary of State was received in April 2010, stating that the decisions could not be rescinded and that the Orders should be made as directed.
3. The Secretary of State has also directed the Council to make Orders for BOATs in **Great Missenden and Wendover**.
4. Orders have been made for public footpaths in **Amersham and Ellesborough** and objections have been received. A public inquiry into the Amersham routes is to be held on 29 September 2010. The Ellesborough route is being dealt with by written representations and a decision from the Secretary of State is awaited.
5. Applications for a claimed footpath in **Shabbington** and a claimed bridleway in **Great and Little Hampden** have been rejected and the applicants have appealed against these decisions. Directions from the Secretary of State are awaited.
6. Applications for claimed rights of way are currently in progress: claimed footpaths in **Fawley, High Wycombe, Lacey Green, Marlow and Whitchurch**; claimed bridleways in **High Wycombe, West Wycombe and Downley**; downgrading of a

bridleway to a footpath in **Ashley Green**; claimed restricted byway in **Gerrards Cross**; claimed BOATs in **Iver**.

### **Village Green Applications**

7. There are currently six village green applications in progress – **Daly Way, Aylesbury; Pinewood Fields, Iver Heath; Station Road, Marsh Gibbon; Coppice Farm Road, Tylers Green; part of the former railway line, Quainton; and Lower Road, Gerrards Cross**.
8. A public inquiry was held into the **Marsh Gibbon** case in June 2010 and the Inspector's recommendation is awaited. A public inquiry into the **Daly Way** case has been arranged for 5 to 7 October 2010.

### **New paths and achievements**

9. Creation Agreements have been completed for Public Footpaths at **Church Farm, Haddenham, and Great Gap, Ivinghoe**.

### **B. Rights of Way Operations update (Jonathan Clark)**

10. The Operations team has outsourced half of the summer mowing contract to Aylesbury-based firm, Richard Ashford Ltd. There are 4 gangs (2 in the south and 2 in the north) working until the end of August 2010. In addition, an 'Atasia' ride-on brushcutter has been hired, to complement the two tractor mowers used by Ringway Jacobs.
11. To work more efficiently, it has been decided to merge the north and south Rights of Way Liaison Group meetings. Many of the agenda items were similar, so it was thought a better use of resources to combine the two meetings. There was general agreement to this plan.
12. The Operations Team is developing its programme of surfacing works to be carried out during the summer. One recent scheme on the Thames Path in Dorney also saw the installation of coir logs to repair the eroded banks, in partnership with the National Trails Team.
13. Since the last meeting an additional 9 Parish Councils have responded positively to the 'Walk Your Local Paths' initiative and requested survey forms. This makes a total of 44 Parishes signed-up for the project. The aim is to get more people interested in walking and, at the same time, surveying paths in their parish to provide us with up-to-date information in order that maintenance or improvements on paths can be identified and local people can become more familiar with their network.
14. Despite the P3 scheme coming to an end, Area Office staff in Wycombe and Winslow will continue to work in partnership with Parish Councils wherever possible. If positive value for money can be obtained using local workers or volunteers then funding may be available. The Team has also been discussing possible new ways of working if budget cuts are realised.

### **C. Strategic Access Update (Jonathan Clark)**



### **Creating new links**

15. Jackie Wesley will outline at the meeting the new footpath link between Ivinghoe and the Grand Union Canal. BBC local news has expressed an interest in covering the opening of the route which will take place in mid-September.
16. A new permissive path has been negotiated with landowners to the east of the A404 Marlow bypass. The path links Public Footpath No 20, Little Marlow with Footpath No. 1, Marlow and the Thames Path National Trail. The land is owned by Harleyford Holdings Ltd and Messrs A. & R. Mash.
17. A meeting has been held with local horse riders in Ashenden and Nether Winchenden to identify possible links with existing bridleways in the area.
18. Correspondence continues with the Highways Agency to secure use of a strip of land next to the M40, Junction 1, to provide a walking, cycling and horse riding link between Southlands Road and Field Road, Denham.
19. A meeting was held with representatives from Edlesborough Parish Council, a local cycling group and landowners along Footpath No 3 Edlesborough to negotiate a possible new bridleway or permissive cycling track. Officers are working with Jackie Wesley, the Area Co-ordinator in the Locality Services Team in order to resolve their issues. Negotiations are ongoing.

### **Strategic developments**

20. Officers from the Operations and Strategic Access Teams attended a Parish Clerks Forum at the Winslow Centre in April 2010, in conjunction with Transport for Buckinghamshire, to outline the work undertaken in rights of way and how parishes can work more effectively with the Rights of Way Teams.
21. AVDC's Green Spaces Team Manager, Lesley Davies, planned a workshop to look at possible Green Infrastructure opportunities for developer contributions in the northern, eastern and south eastern Aylesbury growth areas. Improvements listed in the 'Grand Union Triangle' – Aylesbury to Marsworth, Marsworth to Wendover and back to Aylesbury - form the basis of the Rights of Way improvements. This meeting was postponed pending announcements about the growth arc options.
22. The online Haddenham to Thame bridleway consultation, undertaken by Lee Stevens in the Cycling Team, resulted in 251 responses, 196 of which (78%) were in favour of the Scotsgrove Mill route. If Oxfordshire County Council is agreeable to the creation of such a route, an informal consultation will be undertaken by the Definitive Map Team for the route in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.
23. The Chilterns Cycleway was launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at the Bridgewater Monument, Ashridge.
24. A meeting was held with Transport for Buckinghamshire and the Cycling Team to discuss how rights of way improvements could contribute to the Wycombe Transport Strategy. Projects suggested include the Bourne End to Wycombe disused railway line; improvements to High Wycombe Bridleway No. 67 linking with Daws Hill; Birdcage Walk widening; improvements and upgrade to High Wycombe No. 27 (De La Rue site); developer funding at the Glory Mill site; and surfacing and

drainage work on Chepping Wycombe Bridleway No 4 through Kings Wood at Totteridge.

### **Open Access**

25. On behalf of the Ramblers' Association John Esslemont has completed his survey of all 157 areas of access land in the county (except some very small commons). The main finding illustrated the lack of on-site signing to let the public know when they were entering open access land. The results were available in Appendix 5 of the March 2010 minutes.

### **Simply Walk (Fiona Broadbent)**

26. Simply Walk now has 52 walks throughout Buckinghamshire, attracting over 500 walkers each week. The walks are led by trained volunteers and are free. Simply Walk is invaluable for community spirit, bringing people together, tackling isolation and providing a healthy and fun way for people to make new friends in their own neighbourhood.
27. Simply Walk and Community Police Officers have joined forces to start another new walk in Waddesdon, following the success of a similar walk in Hambleden. In partnership with PCSO Sarah Turner from Marlow, a second walk was set up with PCSO Antony Hurd, in Waddesdon on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010. Anyone wishing to take part should phone Fiona Broadbent on 01494 465367.
28. One of the first tasks for Wycombe's new Conservative MP, Steve Baker, was to launch the 'Walk Wycombe' event on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010; a scheme aimed at encouraging residents of Wycombe to leave their cars at home and walk more often. Simply Walk had a stand in the Eden Centre, supported by many Simply Walk volunteers, who led a walk featuring a new pocket-sized map. High Wycombe Town Mayor, Julie Pritchard and Val Letheren, Cabinet member for Transport, were also present to support the launch. Pocket maps are available from Tanveer Ghani on 01296 387119.
29. Despite the great success of Simply Walk, affording numerous benefits to the health and well-being of residents though out Buckinghamshire, the scheme needs more funding in order to continue and is currently looking at how this can be achieved. One idea being considered is to request voluntary donations from participants. Funding is currently provided by Buckinghamshire County Council, District Councils, Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust and Bucks Sport. Fiona Broadbent, Health Walks Coordinator (01494 475367 [fbroadbent@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:fbroadbent@buckscc.gov.uk)) would welcome ideas for any additional sources of funding.

### **Donate-a-gate**

30. There have been 14 new donors since the March 2010 Local Access Forum, taking the total to 182. A two-page spread on 'Donate-a-Gate' and the 200<sup>th</sup> gate was published in the summer edition of the Chiltern Society's magazine, 'Chiltern News', Issue 196, pages 12 & 13. 'Gift Aid' gates – funded by money received as a tax rebate – are now being ear-marked for the target of replacing or removing 127 stiles on the Chiltern Way through Buckinghamshire.

### **Parish newsletter**

31. The fourth edition of the online Rights of Way Parish Council Newsletter will be available next week. The distribution list includes Local Access Forum members, Buckinghamshire Parish Councils, The Chiltern Society, Ramblers' Association, County Councillors, Local Area Co-ordinators and other individuals on request.
32. Alan Lambourne, on behalf of Westcott Parish Council and the Local Access Forum, has written an article on his Parish Council's 'Walk your Local Paths' event.





## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2010

**Title:** New Footpath Link at Great Gap, Ivinghoe

**Author:** Jackie Wesley, Area Co-ordinator: Great Brickhill, Wing & Ivinghoe local community area

**Contact Officer:** Katy MacDonald (01296 383604)

1. Providing a new footpath link from Ivinghoe village to the hamlet of Great Gap and onwards to the Grand Union Canal (Aylesbury Arm) was one of the two schemes taken forward by the Great Brickhill, Wing & Ivinghoe Local Area Forum. The aim was to provide a walking link, from the busy B488 road, for residents in Great Gap to access safely the local amenities in Ivinghoe without using a car.
2. The council was able to create a new legally defined footpath by Agreement with the owners of the land. A new bridge has been constructed over the Whistle Brook, fencing erected to separate the path from surrounding farmland and a short link provided on the highway verge to connect with the pavement network of Ivinghoe village. It is proposed to have a launch event during the first week of September.
3. The second phase of this work will be to secure the final 200 metres to the canal towpath. This will create a flat, 6km circular walk suitable for all users, including those in mobility scooters. It will also assist local businesses by enabling canal users and other visitors to walk to amenities in Ivinghoe.
4. This was a partnership project between Buckinghamshire County Council's Locality Services with support and resources from the Rights of Way Team, Ivinghoe Parish Council, County Councillor Avril Davies, Aylesbury Vale District Council's 'Community Chest' and the Big Lottery fund.
5. A launch is due in September 2010 and the BBC Local News expressed an interest in covering the event.

**Recommendation:** Members to consider comments.





**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

## *Report*

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**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010  
**Title:** LAF Members' Report  
**Author:** Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access  
**Contact Officer:** Katy MacDondald (01296 383604)

### **Transformation**

1. An officer will outline the new structure of the Environment Group.

**Recommendation:** Members to note.

### **Membership**

2. Gavin Caspersz, the new member for disabled users, will give a short introduction to his background and accessing the countryside on a mobility vehicle. Gavin has a disability scooter that he can split apart, without tools, in less than one minute and which is light enough to be carried over stiles by one person.

**Recommendation:** Members to note.

### **Community Impact Bucks**

3. An officer of Community Impact Bucks (previously Bucks Community Action that merged with other organizations) has been invited to sit on the Forum. Their expertise in sourcing outside funding for Rights of Way and Green Infrastructure projects would be good for the Forum. Michael Hunt, Head of Rural & Community Projects, advised that their Trustees are reviewing partnership and forum commitments in the autumn and so will come back to us then.

**Recommendation:** Members to note.

### **Forestry Commission proposal to charge for horse riding in its woods (John Elfes)**

4. Alan Marlow (Chairman, Hampshire Countryside Access Forum and South East Regional LAF representative) and Mark Weston (BHS) met with the Forestry

Commission (FC) at Beaconsfield in December 2009 to discuss reports that charges are to be introduced for horse riding in FC woodlands. Viv Lynch wrote to object. The meeting was held in order to question this proposal and raise the profile of LAFs within the Forestry Commission's consultation process. The model run by the Hodgemoor Riding Association in Hodgemoor Woods, Buckinghamshire, was discussed. In this scheme it is compulsory for riders to purchase membership of the Hodgemoor Riding Club to gain permission to ride in the FC wood, following damage to soils attributed to horse riders in the SSSI a number of years ago.

5. Alan Marlow, has established a LAF working group within the SE Region to try to make some progress towards resolving the issue of equestrian access to Forestry Commission land. The working group met for the first time in March 2010. A major conclusion reached by the group was that it was essential to be able to take specific proposals forward to the FC, rather than persisting with a general campaign of asking for better access. They decided to request each LAF in the region contribute by identifying one case in its territory where it believes access (particularly equestrian access) could be significantly improved.
6. Viv Lynch, has offered write a report on access to Wendover Woods. It is hoped members' will support her proposals. The access plan specification is in Appendix 1 and the deadline is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

**Recommendation: Members support Viv's proposals.**

#### **England Access Forum**

7. The Chairman attended the most recent England Access Forum and will give an update. In addition, Duncan Graham, Chairman of Cumbria and England Access Forums, wrote to LAF Chairs in March 2010 (Appendix 2). He describes a general agreement within the Forum that national representation was needed, but there was a lack of support from Natural England. Also, a letter from Duncan Graham and Rob Cooke, Director Environmental Advice & Analysis, Natural England, (Appendix 3) is addressed to all Local Access Forums. It summarises the review underway into the future of the England Access Forum. A reply is required by the end of September 2010.

**Recommendation: Members to note, offer support and arrange a reply to Natural England.**

#### **LAF Annual Review (all)**

8. A draft has been prepared for review by the Chairman.

**Recommendation: Members to submit articles.**

#### **Hertfordshire Local Access Forum Conference.**

9. The second 'Herts LAF Conference' takes place in London Colney on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2010. An invitation has been received (see Appendix's 4A and 4B).

**Recommendation: Members to consider sending a representative.**



### Forestry Commission access – specification for LAF activity

There has been much discussion over the last two or three years with regard to the lack of consistency in the approach of different Forestry Commission areas to the provision and management of access to the national woodland estate. Their approach ranges from exemplar to deplorable, the latter is exemplified by what appears as a prejudice against horse riders contrasting with a laissez-faire attitude towards pedestrians and cyclists in the South East of Britain.

A web-search for “Forestry Commission Access Policy” reveals a varied local approach but no apparent national policy. Several LAFs have raised this issue at the regional level with a view to escalating it to the England Access Forum in order to bring pressure on Government to give clearer direction on this issue to the Forestry Commission. However discussions with the Forestry Commission in the South East have suggested that they are open to positive suggestions (rather than criticism) and the SE LAF Working Group would like to make the following proposal to test their real commitment to listening.

Each LAF is requested to set up a Forestry Commission Access Group, ideally representing all potential user classifications.

[NB. It is recognised that the proposal below might be too extensive for some LAFs to undertake. If this is the case then a partial submission would be welcome, addressing as much of the specification as can be achieved]

Each LAF group should choose one FC woodland in their area that it believes should be able to provide significantly better public access than currently available (perhaps a woodland that currently has no public access at all). The group is asked to produce an ‘Ideal Access Plan’ to satisfy the aspirations of pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and disabled visitors. They should also consider opportunities for carriage drivers if appropriate. The FC has told us that one of the major hurdles to widening access is the fact that many of their woodlands are leasehold only. With that in mind the area chosen should be FC owned unless you know that the freeholder will be kindly disposed to your suggestions (e.g. the National Trust).

All FC owned sites should have been dedicated as “Access Land” under the CRoW Act 2000 thereby granting a “Freedom to Roam” across the sites. It follows that no new pedestrian rights need be considered but there may be a need to consider protection of some of these pedestrian rights from interference or disturbance by other uses.

All aspects of access should be considered, including:-

- 1 / Statutory and permitted access within the site itself.
- 2 / Existing facilities within the site which are not currently accessible to the public but which would be of value for non-damaging recreational use (eg Forestry service roads/tracks)
- 3 / Any useful contributions that additional cross-site access could make to the wider RoW network

4 / Parking needs on the site including

- Vehicles adapted to carry wheelchairs
- Bicycles on roof racks
- Motor caravans
- Horse boxes
- The need to discourage occupation by travellers.

5 / The provision of or need for any other facilities

Please provide a map of the site and a summary of your proposals in a form that could be presented to Forestry Commission management.

If the proposals include new works, an estimate of the cost should be provided, together with suggestions as to how this money could be found.

There should be a presumption that any new rights to use routes will be for permitted use initially so that an assessment of the real problems arising can be made before committing to the long term adoption of these routes or dedication of new public rights.

GJ, ATM, March 2010.

## England Access Forum

Parkburn  
Colby  
Appleby  
Cumbria  
CA16 6BD

Email [duncan.graham01@virginmedia.com](mailto:duncan.graham01@virginmedia.com)

29<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Dear Fellow LAF Chair,

In the light of the responses received from LAFs since my letter to you on 8<sup>th</sup> February, the LAF representatives of the England Access Forum met on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March in London to consider how best to proceed in the light of the strongly expressed view that an England Access Forum is needed and should be enabled to continue to speak for LAFs at a national level and to champion the cause of access more widely. The paper which was considered is available on request.

In the light of the very considerable difficulties presented by being reliant on Natural England for support it was resolved that

- Every effort must be made to ensure that EAF is able to continue and widen its work on behalf of the LAFs which it represents
- Continuing with Natural England on the present basis was no longer an option
- There was a need to discuss with the Minister alternative sources of support and funding.
- That discussions should centre on DEFRA providing or facilitating a means of ensuring that EAF is free to advise and contribute as LAFs and regions see fit
- That the period between now and the forthcoming election be used for discussions with all three main parties. Warm support for the continuation of EAF has been received from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties. A letter was sent some time ago to the Minister requesting a meeting.

Natural England has since informed us that they intend to carry out unilaterally a review of EAF. I have pointed out that it was agreed at the outset that this review would be done jointly. Furthermore it would have to be carried out acknowledging fully the difficulties which have prevented EAF from functioning effectively for over a year now. I am pleased to say that Natural England has accepted that a review should be a joint one, specifically recognising that EAF cannot continue on the existing basis and that while

preserving links with Natural England will need a broader support and funding mechanism. A joint letter will be sent in due course to LAF Secretaries and sufficient consultation time will be allowed for every LAF to meet and respond.

As a timely illustration of the need to consider the way forward in the light of effectively a 'lost year' there was on the Agenda in London a considerable list of important topics which LAFs and regions have submitted to EAF for discussion with Natural England. These are really the very things to which we should be directing all our time, talents, experience and energies.

We resolved that without prejudicing the outcome of our discussions about adequate support for EAF, we should request a meeting with Natural England in May to discuss these and any other items which you request. The list at present is:

1. Ensuring that planning procedures are updated to embrace LAFs where appropriate
2. Lack of balance within in NE over environment and access
3. Meeting with Sustrans – rural tarmac and apparent exclusion of horse riders
4. Undergrazing and Access
5. Progress from NE on undertaking to raise gating orders with government
6. Forestry commission –  
Claims that no new access routes can be developed on its land  
Access to forestry commission (and Woodland Trust) land
7. 4x4 and motorized vehicle issues
8. Replacing BVPI 178 system with greater safeguards for ROWIPs
9. A more holistic approach to policy to encompass all non-motorised users
10. Fencing of open Access Land
11. Tree Planting and Section 16 of the CROW Act

I hope that there will be positive news in the next few months as we continue to explore a workable and lasting solution for the Forum. Personally, I have been privileged to meet many of you in recent months and have been enormously impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm I have seen. Access is fundamental to so many agendas from recreation to health and diversity and yet it is somehow a "Cinderella" service for which all too often LAFs are the main and sometimes the only advocates. The evidence is that we do individually and collectively "make a difference", but there is much more to do.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Duncan Graham  
Chair of Cumbria LAF and EAF

Duncan Graham CBE  
Chairman - England Access Forum



Dear LAF Chair,

**Review of the England Access Forum:**

You will be aware from recent correspondence that Natural England and the England Access Forum are currently discussing future working arrangements. This is timely since it also corresponds to the decision taken at our formative meeting in May 2008, where we agreed to review progress after two years. We are now seeking your views as the Statutory Access Forums.

We recognise the good links between Natural England and LAFs which are developing regionally and which we wish to continue to support.

In seeking your LAF's views we would be particularly interested in comments on

- The links between EAF and the LAFs through the regional coordinators.
- The effectiveness of the links between LAFs and Natural England at a national level through EAF.
- The added value that a national body representing LAFs can bring.
- The options for EAF's development.

The wealth of experience and knowledge resident within England's 81 Local Access Forums is invaluable and we believe that the England Access Forum has a key role to play representing the LAFs at the national level to Government, Natural England and other national bodies. We wish to see the EAF properly resourced, and your responses will help us assess what is needed.

Please do let us have your LAF's views and also any other comments you might wish to make. We would welcome your views by the end of September 2010 please to Andrew Mackintosh ([Andrew.Mackintosh@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Andrew.Mackintosh@naturalengland.org.uk)), the Natural England secretary to EAF.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Graham".

Duncan Graham CBE  
Chairman of England Access Forum

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Cooke".

Rob Cooke  
Director Environmental Advice and Analysis  
Natural England



## 2nd Herts LAF Conference

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to inform you that the Hertfordshire Local Access Forum (HertsLAF) is preparing its 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on the **9<sup>th</sup> October 2010** in London Colney.

This year the focus is '**Improving Local Access for the Future**' and we would particularly like to invite:

- delegates from Town and Parish Councils, those with a personal interest as well as those directly involved in local access in their parish;
- representatives from schools, especially those involved in school transport plans or access to/from schools;
- representatives from other key stakeholder organisations across the county with an interest in the subject.

As with the previous conference, attendance will be free and there will be 4 workshops with opportunities for you to bring your experience and discuss solutions with colleagues and other participants. One of the planned workshops' subject is open for delegates to suggest. Therefore we would like to hear what your 'burning' issues are and the subject in most demand will form the topic for a workshop. Any suggestions to reach Ms Anna Mangini, via email at [anna@hertslaf.org.uk](mailto:anna@hertslaf.org.uk) or via mail: Ms Anna Mangini, LAF Administrator, c/o RoW, County Hall, Pegs Lane, CHN103, Hertford SG13 8DN by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May or to register your interest/reserve a place.

Further details and application form will be sent out next month.

Kind Regards

Anna Mangini  
LAF Administrator  
[administrator@hertslaf.org.uk](mailto:administrator@hertslaf.org.uk)  
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## Hertfordshire Local Access Forum



Conference 9<sup>th</sup> October 2010

### Workshops

#### **A Working with Schools:**

Journeys to schools can make a significant contribution look at traffic congestion in total in local area & villages.

This workshop will be led by Herts CC officers and deal with ways of helping deal with these issues. These may include finding safe routes to school, reducing the carbon footprint of the school run, helping keep children fit, school travel plans and eco schools.

#### **B Structure & Easy Access**

Structures such as gates and other barriers on rights of way can be necessary obstructions to the network in the agricultural and urban landscape but they also have the effect of reducing or preventing access for some people with non-standard bikes and mobility difficulties. How do you balance the need for the structure against the right of public access?

#### **C Finding solutions to Rights of Way issues**

There will always be problems with RoW access:

- How can they be resolved
- Learning from each other's solutions
- Who do you go to for help and advice
- Are there any short-cuts
- Indeed is there a solution to be found

This is an opportunity to discuss problems you are currently facing or share solutions you have found.

#### **D Protecting & Improving existing access**

It isn't just about keeping the existing network open. How do we protect and improve the current Rights of Way and public access land network for the benefit of all classes of users. Proposed building developments are seen by many as a blight but they also bring opportunities. How do we get the best results from these cases? How to get new RoW added (i.e. where routes are being used informally or would bridge a missing link).

