



## 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.**