



# 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 3 NOVEMBER 2010, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.05 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.38 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr P Challis, Mr N Harris, Mr C Hurworth, Mrs V Lynch, Mr J Coombe and Mr Caspersz

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mr M Walker, Mr J Clark, Mr M Bailey, Ms H Beevers and Ms J Taylor

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from Richard Pushman, Brenda Jennings and Alan Lambourne.

The Chairman welcomed observers from Oxfordshire County Council, Chiltern Society and BHS.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2010 TO BE CONFIRMED**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2010 were confirmed subject to the following:

It was commented in relation to page 9, Item 4, Forestry Commission proposal to charge for horse ridings in its woods that charges had in fact been in place for a number of years.

Page 5, paragraph 16 – an error was raised in the meeting and it was asked that Public Footpath No 20 should be amended to No 29. This amendment was made but it has since been clarified that the original statement was correct and that it should read 'The path links Public Footpath No 20, Little Marlow with Footpath No 1 Marlow'.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING

Viv Lynch advised that she was no longer able to write a report on access to Wendover Woods. She informed the Forum that she had experienced difficulties contacting the Forestry Commission as her phone calls were not being returned. She said she would continue to try and contact them.

Neil Harris informed the Forum that the National Trust were going through a process of internal re-organisation.

#### 5. HS2 UPDATE

Mark Bailey, Natural Environment Team Manager provided an update on the work being undertaken by Planning and Environment Services and its partners.

The key points were as follows:

- The Council has appointed the Land Use Consultants (LUC) to undertake Landscape Character Assessment and HS2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessments. All of this work will provide a better understanding of potential impacts as a result of any development proposals (in this case HS2). The Council has also been undertaking its own baseline environmental and public access audits relating to high speed rail.
- Proposals for HS2 through Buckinghamshire will, without adequate crossings, have substantial negative impacts on the public rights of way network; affecting route connectivity, amenity and the public's quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Any of the three proposed routes will cut-off green, non-vehicular transport corridors between communities, their services and routes to school and work. The many trails promoted by the County Council and other organizations would be greatly affected, including the Ridgeway National Trail.
- Baseline access audits have been carried out on the 3 proposed routes, which looked at the network and the impact of the options on the Rights of Way network.
- The 3,300km network of public rights of way in Buckinghamshire is a considerable public and economic asset, an important part of the county highway infrastructure and a key element within the county's tourism sector.
- Maintaining a fully integrated network is essential to protect opportunities for the public to both safely enjoy the countryside for recreation and health; and for non-vehicular access to services and between communities.

Severance and impacts to the ROW network as a result of proposals for **HS2 Route 3 (preferred route)**

| Corridor                       | Footpath | Bridleway | Byway or Restricted byway | TOTAL      |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|------------|
| Directly severed               | 67       | 11        | 1                         | <b>79</b>  |
| Affected within 200m corridor  | 123      | 28        | 1                         | <b>152</b> |
| Affected within 500m corridor  | 250      | 40        | 3                         | <b>293</b> |
| Affected within 1000m corridor | 374      | 66        | 9                         | <b>449</b> |

- Officers would like to take the assessment further and put a cost against the impact and also consider how routes could be taken across the corridor.
- Land Use Consultants have been commissioned to undertake a landscape character assessment. This can assist in managing the change in the landscape and looking at landscape sensitivity to HS2 proposals.
- Looking at a 5 stage level of impact to include looking at the routes and infrastructure such as gantries (whether in tunnel/cutting, etc), also access routes, ventilation shafts and sheds, etc. The full assessment should be completed early next year.

David Briggs asked what the sensitivity to change was? Mark Bailey said that true 'sensitivity to change' can only be assessed in relation to the specific proposed impact. Thus, certain proposals or developments might have more or less impact than others and this will also vary in accordance to local landscape and features. Some landscapes and features are more able to hide or take a specific impact whilst others will be far more sensitive.

- The outputs of this work were discussed and were summarised as being:
  - To produce a landscape sensitivity judgement and map based on the current HS2 proposals;
  - To develop guidance to help inform and minimise the impacts of potential change; and
  - To be equipped with robust baseline of information that can help assess and also feed into the statutory requirements on HS2 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

The combined cost of the Landscape Character Assessments and HS2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessments is approximately £75k and this is being funded in partnership between Bucks CC and District partners.

Chris Hurworth said that the cost of the landscape and impact assessments compared to the cost of project was very reasonable. Mark Bailey said that high quality assessment are being undertaken by the Council but it is important that we do not duplicate work that falls strictly within the remit of HS2 Ltd to undertake. The work the County Council is doing will ensure that we are better informed about the possible impacts and that we can therefore fully 'test' HS2 Ltd proposals and findings. To date, all assessment work has looked at all three high speed rail route proposals, not just route 3.

Viv Lynch asked if, in relation to the Rights of Way network, whether there was a more detailed assessment. Mark Bailey advised that the Council is working directly with route data provided by HS2 Ltd. This information is GIS based but does not include structural engineering information. To ensure that the assessments are robust the Council requires route data to be provided by HS2 Ltd themselves. As yet there is no HS2 Ltd engineering detail beyond the route that could be incorporated into the access assessments.

David Briggs asked if any footpaths would be closed and asked how many extra kilometres would be required for any deviations? He said that this may mean that the LAF as a body strongly say they would vote to prioritise one route over another. Mark Bailey advised that the route would have a big impact on the network and the extent of impact is being assessed along with possible cost implications. Decisions will need to be made over priorities and Mark Bailey was also keen that his process also engaged with those communities and stakeholders directly impacted. He is keen that communities are consulted and are able to assist in helping to prioritise local needs for access.

Peter Challis asked how the impact could be mitigated balanced against the route not being built at all. The Officer said that the County Council stance is that it does not believe that the national business case for HS2 stacks up and that there is clearly little benefit for Buckinghamshire. However the Council are maintaining a 'twin track' approach to HS2. Whilst arguing against proposals the Council sees a need to ensure that it is fully aware and considering all the possible impacts and the potential cost implications if the route goes ahead. Mark Bailey pointed out the scenario with Kent and HS1. Kent was not fully prepared in terms of their understanding of the potential impacts and this is believed to be a key reason why the county was 'short changed' in the levels of mitigation it secured. There is clearly a fine line to tread between saying that the County does not support the concept but also being able to carry out the necessary background work that will allow us to understand the real impacts and local priorities.

## **6. COUNCIL BUDGET CUTS/SERVICE REDUCTIONS: IMPACTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY SERVICE**

Joanne Taylor outlined the current impact of the budget cuts, the freeze on recruitment and the affect on the Rights of Way teams and delivery of the service.

### **A. Rights of Way Structure and Staff**

1. As a result of two recent resignations Joanne advised that it had been necessary to re-organise both the Definitive Map Team, working out of Hampden Hall and the Rights of Way Operations Team, working out of Wycombe and Winslow Area Offices. The Officer discussed Appendix 1 which highlighted the new Rights of Way Group Structure.

2. Sue Burchell, Definitive Map Officer has left the County Council. Her duties and responsibilities will be shared between remaining Officers in the Definitive Map Team and Helen Beevers will be taking a more senior role.

3. James Mawson, Area Rights of Way Officer has left the Council. It has therefore been necessary to re-organise and reallocate the 4 current divisions of the County to 3. The Officer discussed Appendix 2 showing the redrawn Area Officer Map. It was commented that by re-allocating the divisions it had increased the mileage of the network from 500-1000 km for each Area Team, which was a large increase for Officers.

4. Due to the reduction in staff, the group's targets need to be reviewed, particularly the target to reduce the number of issues outstanding on the network by 8% annually and managing public expectations in terms of target times to resolve problems.

5. The team will work hard to reduce the backlog of maintenance issues, however due to a reduction in staff there has been steady build up of issues, something the Team has actively targeted over previous years. It is inevitable that the response to issues will become totally reactive and certain types of work only carried out after a problem has been reported.

6. The Definitive Map Team also has a steady build up of work following the departure of Sue Burchell.

7. Due to further cuts in the maintenance budget the Council will also need to review its current practice of offering 'free of charge' assistance to landowners when structures are repaired. Where a task is seen as being the responsibility of the landowner, the Council will require the owner to do it or will carry out the repair and

recover reasonable costs. This is likely to result in more enforcement work to ensure landowners carry out their duties.

8. It may further be necessary to reduce the number of contractor teams for this financial year. Due to budget shortfalls only urgent works, which pose a danger to the public will be carried out over the winter months.

9. The Group hope to continue with the donate-a-gate scheme.

Mike Walker advised that this was the current situation, but said that this may not be what happens next year as the outcome from the Comprehensive Spending Review is still awaited. The Group Manager said that the Planning & Environment Portfolio is to go through a restructure to achieve some savings. He said that there is likely to be further in-year financial difficulties and that contractors may need to be laid off for a few months. It was highlighted that the impact of the budget reductions will mean that the County Council will not be able to offer the same services as it did previously.

The Chairman commented that the supply of volunteers seems to be drying up and said that in the Ramblers Association volunteers are of a distinct age. Mike Walker said it would be interesting to hear from the voluntary sector.

John Coombe asked Officers if they still wanted to know about problems. Mike Walker said that the service did want to continue to have problems reported to them, but that expectations needed to be managed. Joanne Taylor advised that any problems reported would be prioritised. The Member then asked if an article could be included in the County magazine to highlight the issue. Joanne Taylor advised that currently she presents a monthly report on issues and how those issues are categorised.

Mark Bailey commented that the service is increasingly seen as a reactive service and asked what position the team would be in if foot and mouth happened again? He also highlighted that working with volunteers can be time consuming to co-ordinate and a job in itself. He also mentioned the issue of potential litigation and risks to the County Council should a member of the public get injured as a result of reported problems not being fixed.

An observer from the Chiltern Society commented that the lack of path maintenance was a concern. He said that without the programme many paths would become overgrown, which would be a false economy as it would be even more costly in years to come to re-open the paths. He asked about the funding arrangements with the Chiltern Society and Joanne Taylor advised that some monies had been set aside and that there was enough money to pay the Chiltern Society. She said that the difficulty may be in supplying materials. It was not of immediate concern, but she was not sure how budgets will impact on next year. It was highlighted that the Chiltern Society was struggling for work at present as the majority of work is for waymark posts which are completed fairly quickly. An issue with insurance prevented the Chiltern Society from carrying out chainsaw work as they faced the prospect of having to attend expensive courses.

A Chiltern Society observer also enquired that, if teams were laid off over the winter months, how long this would be for as no gate work would be completed? In response the Forum was advised that it was as yet unclear how long the gangs would have to be laid off. It was further commented that deliveries would also have to be considered as it would not be cost effective to have to instruct a team for a day just to arrange deliveries. It was enquired if a vehicle could be made available for use by volunteers? It was commented that the gangs would be put on other jobs and that they would be using the vehicles. Members were also advised that the budget would need to be looked at, as the Team may not be delivering gates if they did not come

under 'urgent works'. David Briggs said that most farmers are putting up gates several times a year and that some farmers may be amenable to do some more work.

Viv Lynch said the BHS had an annual meeting the following week and that she could enquire whether any members would be prepared to path clear. Although she raised concern about insurance and said that members did not have access to commercial equipment such as hedge trimmers. She was advised that volunteers may be covered by County Council insurance.

**Action: Joanne Taylor**

Viv Lynch enquired where members of the public stood with landowners regarding clearing a path. She was advised that it would be a judgement call whether a gate could be used safely, although it was highlighted that it remains the responsibility of the landowners.

Mike Walker advised Members that minor maintenance work did not impact greatly on staff time and that it was protecting the network which required more significant work and therefore time.

Chris Hurworth asked if Members with trailers or vans could be paid to deliver gates. It was advised that as well as insurance issues there may be other issues such as picking the gates up from the depots. It was commented that the depots have very strict access controls in place. This could however be explored.

**Action: Joanne Taylor**

The Chairman asked what volunteers were required to do and Mike Walker advised that there is a loss of control when using volunteers as volunteers are giving up their time for free and that they do jobs which they want to when it is convenient for them. Mike Walker said Members should discuss with their own areas and collectively as a LAF how they want to influence the County Council on the Big Society. The Chairman asked that Member consider what they and their representative organisations could do to help and that if this was not a viable option the LAF need to make it clear to the county council that volunteers would not be able to carry out the work if there were cuts.

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

### **A) Definitive Map Update**

#### 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). We are still awaiting a decision 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 A public inquiry was held into an Order to add two footpaths at Amersham College to the Definitive Map and Statement. The decision of the Inspector is awaited.
- 3 The Secretary of State directed us to make Orders upgrading to BOAT status routes at Little Missenden and Stowe/Lillingstone Dayrell. These Orders are in the process of being made.
- 4 The Secretary of State also directed us to make Orders for BOATs in Great Missenden and Wendover. These Orders are in the process of

being made.

- 5 The Secretary of State confirmed an Order to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement at Dunsmore, Ellesborough.
- 6 An Order to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement in Whitchurch is in the process of being made. An Order has been made for a Public Bridleway in High Wycombe and one objection has been received. The Order and objection will be sent to the Secretary of State for determination.
- 7 Applications for a claimed footpath in Shabbington, a claimed bridleway in Great and Little Hampden; and a downgrading of a bridleway to a footpath in Ashley Green have been rejected and the applicants have appealed against these decisions. Directions from the Secretary of State are awaited.
- 8 Applications for claimed rights of way are currently in progress: claimed footpaths in Fawley, High Wycombe, Lacey Green, and Marlow; claimed bridleways in Taplow, West Wycombe and Downley; and a claimed Restricted Byway in Gerrards Cross.

#### Village Green Applications

- 9 There are currently five village green applications in progress. Public Inquiries have been held for the applications at Pinewood Fields, Iver Heath and Daly Way, Aylesbury. A recommendation to accept or reject the applications from the Inspectors who held the inquiries is awaited.

David Briggs said that a couple of years ago there had been a rush of BOAT applications. The Officer advised that these applications were dated back to 2006 and that they are ongoing.

### **B) Rights of Way Operations Update**

- 10 Over the summer period extra surface clearance gangs were taken on from June to September 2010. Paths to be cleared were targeted, ensuring that only those, for example, on school routes or with recent complaints of surface growth were undertaken.
- 11 Structure maintenance works are on target but overall not as many structures were replaced or improved compared to last year.
- 12 'Walk Your Local Paths' – this has been well received and it is anticipated that 63 parishes will take part to survey the network. The response has been positive and over 110 extra jobs for the County Council has been generated. There is concern that due to finances the works would need to be targeted and expectations had been raised.

### **C. Strategic Access Update**

Creating new links

13. Until the financial situation improves, it is unlikely that any Highways Act 1980 s26 compulsory creation orders will be pursued unless funding can be sourced from outside the Council. These can be contentious and lead to a public inquiry and the Council can be liable to pay compensation in the event of a Creation Order being confirmed. One exception is the proposed new path through the Edmunds Road Industrial Estate in Lane

End, where the Parish Council has set-aside funding for compensation.

- 14 The new footpath link between Ivinghoe and the Grand Union Canal, is awaiting the finishing touches to the Highways element of the project before being officially launched. The second phase is unlikely to be realised as British Waterways does not own the connection to Seabrooke Lock (GR: 935, 172) and the canal tow path.
- 15 An upgrade to bridleway of Footpath No 72 Hughenden was being pursued at Four Ashes, High Wycombe with the view to taking horse riders off the busy Kingshill Road and providing a link into the existing bridleway network. However, the owner was too concerned this would invite motorbikes onto his land and so the upgrade cannot be pursued.
- 16 A new 1.5m wide path has been created linking Lane End Public Footpaths Nos. 8 and 10 using 230m of previously inaccessible highway verge on Fingest Lane, east of Fingest village.
- 17 Progress is being made with the new Watermead bridleway, north of Aylesbury.
- 18 A meeting has been convened to discuss issues around path links across the north of Aylesbury - between Berryfields, Quarrendon Leas and Weedon Hill.
- 19 The 'Transport for Buckinghamshire' online public consultation to decide the route between Haddenham and Thame for a new cycleway/bridleway has finished and resulted in 251 responses. 196 people (78%) were in favour of the 'Scotsgrove Mill' route. Unfortunately, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transportation has now decided he no longer wishes to pursue the upgrade. Val Letheren's letter in *Appendix 1* summarizes the issues Oxfordshire raised.

#### Strategic developments

- 20 Since reducing the Rights of Way Areas from 4 to 3, the Strategic Access Officer has taken on the role of replying to Rights of Way related planning applications for the county.
- 21 Proposals to widen Bridleway 30 Lacey Green have had to be shelved until the financial position improves or outside funding is available, as the necessary fencing and replacement hedge replanting proved to be prohibitively expensive.
- 22 The main strategic planning issues since July 2010 have been for two areas north of Aylesbury; a detailed application for 324 new houses at Berryfields and outline planning for new houses and schools further north west at Fleet Marston. Comments were made on the need for new bridleway links to provide sustainable transport links around and into Aylesbury and Waddesdon.
- 23 The Strategic Access Officer has taken on the role of Local Access Forum Co-ordinator for the South East Region, a position funded by Natural England until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. A South East LAF conference date has been organised and will be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February



2011. It is hoped 4 LAF Members from Buckinghamshire will attend.

The Officer said that this was to be held at the Friends Meeting House, London and John Elfes, Viv Lynch and David Briggs volunteered to attend.

#### Open Access

- 24 It has been decided to take forward the open access signing project following John Esslemont's survey. The Officer asked for feedback from LAF members on those sites chosen from the website and any sites which may require further promotion. John Coombe suggested that Langley Park be added.
- 25 Volunteer help to sign open access sites will be with 'Open Access' discs or clip frames outlining the mapped area and interesting features of chosen sites.

#### 'Simply Walk'

- 26 Despite the great success of 'Simply Walk', the scheme needs more funding in order to continue and has been looking at how this can be achieved. Fiona has requested an opportunity to present the case for funding Simply Walk from all parish councils, particularly those where 'Simply Walk' operates so successfully. To date she has presented to Downley, Stokenchurch, Chalfont St Giles, Chalfont St Peter and Princes Risborough. A donation of £500 has been made by Downley and a decision is awaited from the other parishes.
- 27 Walkers will be asked for voluntary donations via the newsletter. Walk leaders are not happy to collect donations on the walks and handling cash between so many walks and walk leaders would make this unfeasible
- 28 Bucks Sport has donated £2,500 from its 'Fit for Life' programme in exchange for setting up 5 new walks, aimed specifically at those who cannot walk more than 30 minutes. These walks have been set up in Marlow, Bedgrove, Walton Court, Burnham, Holmer Green and Great Missenden, alongside current walks in those areas.
- 29 Simply Walk organised a walk and picnic on August 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Amersham, with care providers and service users from 'Chesham Outreach', Chiltern & South Bucks Community Learning Disability Team and the 'Ridgeway Partnership' (Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust). Fiona and two volunteer leaders lead the walk, which was very well received.
- 30 New volunteer walk leaders will be trained and development of the scheme continues.

#### Donate-a-gate

- 31 The council is no longer able to match-fund public gate donations, due to budgetary constraints. In the New Year the amount of each donation will

be reviewed with a view to increasing the donation to £300 as there have been three 6% rises in metal gates since the project started in 2007.

- 32 There have been 14 new donors since the July 2010 Local Access Forum, taking the total to 195 donors. The project to remove 127 stiles along the Chiltern Way in Buckinghamshire continues, using funding from 'Gift Aid': the tax rebate from the government.

#### Parish Newsletter

- 33 The 5<sup>th</sup> 'Autumn' edition of the online Rights of Way Parish Council Newsletter will be available soon. 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. Members were asked that if they had any articles to forward to Jon Clark.

Chris Hurworth said that he had received notification of a BOAT application in July and asked if in the event that the application was successful a pre-emptive TRO would be made and asked why this was being done and if this was officer or committee led. The Member was informed that this was Member led and Neil Harris said that the National Trust was involved in the Kimble application. Chris said he did not see how this improved access to the Countryside for all.

Chris Hurworth enquired if there was any possibility of the Scots Mill project happening should a funding contribution be received. The Officer from Oxfordshire said that the issue was not about money and highlighted that it was a low level floodplain and that the nearby farmer was against the route. This route is not an option but other options may still be considered. Chris mentioned the possibility of a causeway and asked if the LAF still supported the scheme. The Chairman said that the LAF supported the route as far as it could in Buckinghamshire. Peter Challis said that Sustrans also supported the route.

John Elfes asked Peter Challis if Sustrans funding was affected by cuts. Peter advised that they still have some lottery funding but that this is dependant on match funding, School work is however taking a hit following the demise of Cycle England and Local Authorities do not have money.

## 8. LAF MEMBERS' REPORT

### **Buckinghamshire County Council – Comprehensive Spending Review**

1. Members were advised that The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review took place on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010

*[Addendum: Post Meeting Note provided by Richard Pushman*

*'The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review CSR, will not manifest itself in respect of local government until after we know what the final settlement of the rate support grant is. We know it will be reduced but the actual value will not be known until possibly later this month.*

*Cuts to the council's budget, in anticipation of the indicated government spending*

*cuts, have already been incorporated in the forward budgets. As you will know these will have a serious impact on some of the services associated with the Local Access Forums activities. I am unable to be more precise at this time'.]*

**Members noted the information**

### **The Big Debate**

2. John Elfes attended one of the meetings held in Chesham and said that Rights of Ways was one of the biggest single issues raised from the process.

3. The Chairman, The Chiltern Society and The Ramblers supported the Rights of Way service by attending the events.

**Members noted the information**

### **Coombe Hill Monument**

4. Neil Harris showed Members with photographs of the new 'Access for All' track from the Coombe Hill car park to the Monument. He said that a grant of £14k had been received from Natural England and the National Trust put in the remaining £6-7k. The new track will enable all year round access to the hill and monument. Neil Harris thanked Mark Bailey for his work on the Monument.

**Members noted the information**

### **The 2012 Olympics**

5. Peter Challis said that there are a number of walking and cycling improvements being made to paths in Buckinghamshire. He said that he hoped these would be a lasting legacy after the Olympics.

Joanne Taylor said that it was hoped that some maintenance on the Thames Path could be funded by Olympic monies, however it was also proposed that the Thames Path be closed and a diversion put in place just before the games and for the duration of the event.

**Members noted the information**

### **Bourne End to Wooburn Green walking and cycling route**

6. Peter Challis said that negotiations are still ongoing regarding the opening of a walking and cycling route along the disused railway line from Bourne End to Wooburn Green.

**Members noted the information**

### **Grand Union Canal – Wendover Arm**

7. Gavin Caspersz tested this route on his on mobility scooters for disabled users between Wendover and Halton Village and reported the following:

The route was really nice and safe. There were signs at the start with a recommendation regarding suitability for disabled and/or scooter users. He said there could be more information within the existing structure to ensure users were safer and to stop them from getting stuck.

Mr Briggs highlighted that the needs of those with children and pushchairs would be similar to those experienced by disabled and scooter users and said that whilst Colne

Valley is fairly well signed, other routes require more information. Mike Walker said that work is being undertaken on an interactive map. He said that technically the map is possible but that it is a cost issue. He said that currently some routes are promoted for disabled use, but that, to date, it has proved difficult to bring information on different routes together.

Mr Caspersz said that he was on a learning curve and that he had only recently heard of the definitive map. He said that he had been informed by Simply Walk that they did not have walks for disabled users but that they could suggest some routes. Jon Clark advised that the website has information on routes and that he would be happy to discuss further. He also said that there had been 6 gates specifically for disabled routes and he needed new locations for these. The Officer also said that he would need to speak to the Simply Walk group regarding finding a suitable route.

### **Chiltern Society Verges Project**

8. A Member of the Chiltern Society undertook a report on 21 priority Rights of Way crossings and linear connections needing improvements in the Chilterns. The outcomes were considered in Appendix 1.

**Members noted the information**

### **Chiltern Way Extension**

9. The Chiltern Way is a circular walking route of around 125 miles and there are now 3 optional extensions taking the route to around 172 miles.

**Members noted the information**

### **Chiltern Conservation Board Annual Forum**

10. Neil Harris will be attending on behalf of the National Trust, David Briggs said he would attend and John Elfes would confirm his attendance.

**Members noted the information**

### **Review of the England Access Forum**

11. The Chairman advised that he responded as previously minuted. He said that there is nothing wrong with present structure if it was allowed to work. Jon Clark asked if he could have a copy of the response - **Action: John Elfes**

**Members noted the information**

### **LAF 2009/10 Annual Review**

12. The Review was published on the County Council website in August 2010.  
[http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/row/local\\_access\\_forum.page](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/row/local_access_forum.page)

**Members noted the information**

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

13. John Coombe asked whether expenses would be paid for out of County journeys. Mike Walker advised that if Members attend an event as part of the Forum they would be paid.

**Members noted the information**

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

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

The next meeting is to be held on 9 March 2011, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**Chairman**