



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2011 AT 10.00 AM
MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

AGENDA

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Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2011, IN COMT BOARD ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.07 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.13 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr N Harris, Mr C Hurworth, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mrs V Lynch, Mr R Pushman, Ms D Bird, Mr J Coombe and Mr Caspersz

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr M Walker, Mr J Clark, Mr S Kidd and Ms J Taylor

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr H Hancock and Ms A Clayton

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Challis and Helen Beevers.

Glyn Thomas, Community Impact Bucks was welcomed to the Forum.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 09 MARCH 2011 TO BE CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2011 were confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Mr Briggs enquired if any feedback had been received in relation to his letter regarding the Natural England Countryside Code review. Mr Clark advised that no feedback had been received.

The Chairman enquired if there had been any response regarding Chawley Manor Farm. Mr Clark advised that a meeting had been held with Natural England and the agent for the landowner, on 28th June 2011. The agent had said that he was intending to start up a new shooting syndicate and that the money had been passed over for

commencement this year. Natural England heard the evidence. They will now go away to consider the evidence further and then make a decision. Mr Clark said Natural England were mindful of the 5 representations made stressing the opinion that the restrictions were over stated.

5. LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIPS

Members had received the report of Sandy Kidd, County Archaeologist, Acting Historic and Natural Environment Team Leader on Local Nature Partnerships.

Mr Kidd advised that the establishment of Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) has been proposed in the Governments Natural Environment White Paper and that LAFs are identified as one of the possible members of an LNP. Mr Kidd advised that discussions were ongoing regarding the possible submission of a bid for a Bucks and Milton Keynes LNP.

Mr Kidd talked Members through the Briefing paper and made the following comments:

- LNPs will work at a high/strategic level
- Members were invited to note the timeline on page 13 of the agenda.
- The aim is to have a LNP covering every part of the Country.
- LAFs have a legal status and the officer suggested the possibility of a LAF representative sitting on the LNP.

The Chairman asked what the LAF could contribute to the LNP. Mr Kidd said that it was currently in the early stages but should the bid for transitional funding be successful a key element would be to define the scope and develop a business plan. Mr Hurworth commented that according to the vision of LNPs listed on page 11 the LAF need to be involved as the points apply to LAFs and LAFs should have an input.

Mr Harris asked if the LAF would be merged into the new partnership or remain separate. Mr Kidd said he would not want to have more groups than present due to the current economic climate.

Mr Lambourne said that the suggested membership includes Parish Councils and asked if they would be contacted individually or through BALC. Mr Kidd advised that the detail is still to be filled out but that they would probably contact the parent organisation.

Mr Briggs asked who would be putting in the application. In response Mr Kidd said that it was likely to be the County Council but on a partnership basis and that he hoped that LAF would be happy to have its name included on the bid.

Following discussion the Chairman confirmed that the LAF would like to be involved.

Mr Kidd said that the terms of the application need to be clarified. He has noted that he has reported to the Forum and that the LAF is happy to be engaged in the consultation process.

6. HS2

Members had received the report of the Strategic Access Officer. Members were asked to consider the Forum's response to the HS2 consultation.

The following comments were made by various Members during discussion:

- The consultation questions are loaded.
- Those involved such as the Council may be in a different position but the Local Access Forum should be neutral. Maybe there is a role for the LAF to highlight areas for mitigation. If the LAF does not take a cautious position it is likely that no-one in Bucks will be able to participate in any constructive mitigation work.
- Should the LAF stick to Rights of Way (RoW) and Access or should it comment on the effect on the network? Even if the LAF sticks to RoW and access should the LAF comment on the actual route?
- There is a question in the consultation whether we agree with High Speed Rail (HSR). What is the Forum's view?
- It is not only the County Council that objects to HS2, there are other counties also opposing. The route should be of concern in terms of the need to cut through the countryside and particularly the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Buckinghamshire, instead of using existing routes.
- The route and project will require considerable funding.
- The response from the LAF should be strong.
- The Chilterns' Conservation Board (CCB) is against the proposed route and the LAF should consider supporting the principle taken by the CCB on the route.
- Connectivity of current lines is more important than building a new route.
- Massive expenditure is required on infrastructure in the UK which will require massive investment.
- The LAF should not be considering the economics of the project. The LAF should restrict comments to issues within its remit.
- The British Horse Society (BHS) is not taking a stance either way on HS2 and the point around working with the engineers regarding future mitigation is important.
- The designers seem to be receptive to suggestions at the moment. They might not be so once the route is approved.
- The LAF does not have to express a view on the route. It can just avoid commenting on that question.
- The point of a consultation is whether a project should proceed or not. The LAF needs to express a view one way or the other. Mitigation comes afterwards should the project be agreed.
- The National Trust does not feel that the business case has been proved and there is also the issue of the various National Trust properties affected on route.
- It is not the Forum's business to say whether high speed rail is good or bad, or if the economic case stacks up. The Forum should be considering the effect of the route on rights of way and access.
- The LAF could mention in its response that, should the route go ahead, it will need extensive discussions and that the LAF would like to influence any decisions at the relevant time.

The LAF took a vote on whether they were opposed to the route or not. There was a majority vote in favour of opposing the route (6-4).

Members then continued the discussion on HS2 and made the following comments:

- HS2 has not provided an environmental impact assessment.

- HS2 has said that it will produce an Environmental Impact Assessment to inform the debate on the Hybrid Bill. It will probably therefore be formalised after the decision in December 2011.
- Any objection from the LAF could be based on the fact that there is no Environmental Impact Assessment.
- It is important that the LAF thinks of a method of working with engineers to communicate information regarding rights of way and access affected and areas for mitigation.
- There is a long way to go in the process and there is time later to discuss the finer detail of mitigation.
- If the LAF objects to the route the response could highlight that the route is directly severing 66 public rights of way in Buckinghamshire alone.

The Chairman agreed that he would draft a response to the consultation and circulate to Members for their comments.

Action: Chairman

7. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

Members had received the Rights of Way Group report.

The Chairman invited questions on the Definitive Map Update.

Mr Hurworth asked where the Village Green was in Bryants Bottom, Great Missenden. Mr Clark said he would email Mr Hurworth the details. The Chairman enquired if there were any rights of way severed by the part of the former railway, Quinton application and Mr Clark advised that there was and that Officers had responded.

Ms Taylor took Members through the Rights of Way Operations Update and provided the following updates:

The new power tools purchased for the contracted Ringway Jacobs work teams have cost approximately £5k against a previous cost of £1500 each month to hire.

The first cut on the annual strimming list was delayed due to equipment failure and will be completed shortly. Second cuts will be carried out as necessary.

The Chairman then invited questions.

Mr Lambourne said that a few years ago Members discussed a Rights of Way Improvement Plan and asked what has happened to it. Mr Clark advised that some of the timelines had slipped due to a variety of factors including a reduction in staffing. Ms Taylor commented that the County Council is still looking to improve access and a capital injection of £100K would help in this regard. The Chairman commented that there is a requirement to have a plan but there is not a requirement for it to be implemented. Mr Walker advised that much of the work carried out by Mr Clark is to protect against development and highlighted that the RoW Team has halved since the plan was agreed. Mr Clark suggested the item be discussed at the next meeting of the LAF.

Action: Mr Clark

Mr Clark then took Members through the Strategic Access developments and provided the following updates:

Mr Steven Adams, the new Cabinet Member for Environment has been invited to the next meeting of the LAF on 2 November 2011.

Mr Clark advised that there had been an increased footfall on 'Simply Walk' and commented that the report says that donations from individual walkers was £865 but this had now increased to £1300.

8. LAF MEMBERS REPORT

Members had received the LAF Members' Report.

The following updates were provided:

England Access Forum

The Chairman invited Members to respond to the letter received from the Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries. The letter contained four points and Members made the following comments:

A virtual Forum

- This is intended to replace the England Access Forum and, as such, there is no longer a direct route to government.

A seat on the Rights of Way Review Committee

- The Chairman of the England Access Forum should have a permanent seat on this Committee.
- The Committee should also have an MP as Chairman
- LAFs are independent bodies and Members commented that they did not want to become an arm of the government. It was highlighted that they are also independent to Local Councils.

Ivinghoe Disabled Access

Mr Caspersz commented that the 14 new disabled accessible gates for mobility scooters at Ivinghoe Beacon were welcome, but the Council should be looking to advertise these walks and access routes more widely. Mr Clark suggested that this could be discussed further at the next meeting of the LAF.

Action: Mr Clark

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no Any Other Business.

10. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is to be held on 2 November 2011, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

Chairman



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 6

Date: 2nd November 2011

Title: Local Nature Partnerships

Author: Andy McVeigh, Ecologist, Natural & Historic Environment Team

Contact Officer: Katy MacDonald (01296 383603)

The establishment of Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) has been proposed following publication of the Government's Natural Environment White Paper and Local Access Forums are identified as one of the possible members of an LNP. A successful bid has been made to Defra for capacity building funds to support creation of a new Partnership that encompasses Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Development activities to take this work forward are currently being scheduled for the period November 2011 – May 2012, and shall culminate in a submission to Government for LNP status in spring 2012. Topics to be addressed as part of the development phase include:

- Bring together a range of organisations interested in forming a LNP and develop common agreement about the way forward. Identify opportunities and priority outcomes using an ecosystems approach and define the linked benefits for local communities and businesses. Work collaboratively with a range of relevant stakeholders across sectors.
- Develop a new integrated environmental vision, or expand an existing one across the partnership for improving the natural environment in a collaborative way that reflects its wider social and economic benefits, and the need to manage this in a more integrated, landscape-scale way.
- Expand the membership of the partnership to reflect a more integrated, outcome focused and landscape scale approach to delivering action that improves the natural environment.
- Propose ways to diversify the financial support currently provided to the partnership, putting it on a more broad-based and sustainable footing, by reflecting the wider benefits which a healthy natural environment has for social and economic priorities.

An update will be provided.

Recommendation: Members to consider comments and support.



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

Report

AGENDA ITEM 7

Date: 2nd November 2011
Title: Project update and Chilterns State of the Environment report
Author: Annette Venters, Chilterns Conservation Board.
Contact Officer: Katy MacDonald (01296 383603)

Annette will give an update on recent access projects within the AONB, including results from the Chiltern's Cycleway user survey and 'Access for All' initiatives.

When the Chilterns Conservation Board published a new management plan for the AONB in 2008 it undertook to produce annually a report on the environmental condition of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This has taken place since 2009. A broad range of indicators has been established to monitor changes in landscape and biodiversity, historic environment, understanding and enjoyment. Advice is sought from the Forum on issues and challenges in the future, which will inform the access elements of the Chiltern's State of the Environment report.

Whilst some indicators are easily quantified, such as area of land with statutory or voluntary open access, or number of health walks participants, it is harder to gauge quality of access and to identify access trends and issues for the future. This is often gleaned anecdotally by speaking to people involved with countryside access.

Recommendation: Members to consider observations and suggestions on the key access trends and issues in the Chilterns.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

Report

AGENDA ITEM 8

Date: 2nd November 2011
Title: Proposed circular route around Aylesbury
Author: Roy Johnson, Aylesbury & District Ramblers
Contact Officer: Katy MacDonald (01296 383603)

Roy will present his proposals for a new long distance path creating a new promoted walk around Aylesbury.

There are currently two routes around the town: the Aylesbury Ring, which is a long distance path, and the Round Aylesbury Walk, which is much shorter. This year the Ramblers have surveyed the Aylesbury Ring for the County Council.

Roy's proposal is for a longer path than the Aylesbury Ring which visits and holds the higher ground surrounding it, an 'Outer Aylesbury Ring', perhaps called the Vale of Aylesbury Circle. The route would be about 50-55 miles long, mostly in Buckinghamshire, extending west of Waddesdon and east of Wendover, all on Public Rights of Way and, in part, using some existing long distance paths.

Roy is surveying an outline route over the next 2 months, before taking his proposal back to the Aylesbury & District Ramblers' Committee for further scrutiny.

Recommendation: Members to consider advice, support, thoughts and questions.



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

Report

AGENDA ITEM 9

Date: 2nd November 2011
Title: Rights of Way Team update
Author: Helen Beevers, Joanne Taylor and Jonathan Clark
Contact Officer: Katy MacDonald (01296 383603)

A Definitive Map Update (Helen Beevers)

Rights of Way Applications

- 1 A public inquiry will be held 8 November 2011 into an Order to add public footpaths at Deangarden Wood, High Wycombe to the Definitive Map.
- 2 The Order to upgrade Public Bridleways Nos. 40 and 40A Great and Little Kimble and No. 62 Ellesborough to Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) was confirmed by the Inspector with modifications. Objections to the proposed modifications were received and a third public inquiry will be held 5 January 2012.
- 3 The Secretary of State directed us to make Orders for BOATs in Stowe/Lillingstone Dayrell, Great Missenden/Wendover and Little Missenden. All the Orders, apart from two in Little Missenden, have been made and advertised. Objections to the Orders have been received and the matter will be referred to the Secretary of State. The remaining two Orders in Little Missenden are soon to be advertised.
- 4 An Order is being made to add a Public Footpath to the Definitive Map and Statement in Lacey Green. One Order will soon be advertised in High Wycombe. In addition, Orders have been made to add routes to the Definitive Map and Statement in Marlow, Whitchurch, and Great and Little Hampden. Objections to these Orders have been received, so will be determined by the Secretary of State. The application for claimed footpaths at Fawley Court has been rejected.
- 5 An application for the extinguishment of a public footpath in Whitchurch was rejected by the Rights of Way Committee and the applicant appealed against the decision. We are awaiting direction from the Secretary of State.
- 6 Applications for claimed rights of way are currently in progress include: claimed footpaths in High Wycombe, Stowe, Aston Clinton, Lower Winchendon, Wendover and Halton, Princes Risborough, Iver, Westbury, Penn and Beaconsfield; claimed bridleways in Taplow, West Wycombe and Downley; and claimed Restricted Byway in Gerrards Cross.

- 7 An application for a Special School Extinguishment Order (Beachborough School, Westbury) has been accepted by the Rights of Way Committee. An Order is in progress.

Village Green Applications

- 8 There are currently four village green applications in progress: land at Lower Road, Gerrards Cross; land at the Field, Bryants Bottom in Great Missenden; for land at the Fields and the Clump, Iver; and land at Hampden Hill, Beaconsfield. The application to register part of the former railway line, Quainton as village green has been rejected by the Rights of Way Committee.

B Rights of Way Operations Update (Joanne Taylor)

- 9 The mowing season started in May 2011 and the first cut was completed by the end of July 2011, despite having two major machinery break downs. Whilst we have not quite achieved second cuts on all those paths identified on the schedule, we have carried out, in total, clearance on 263 kilometres of path. We will also continue to carry out clearance if we receive a complaint, at least until the end of October 2011, or until overgrowth completely dies back.
- 10 A summary of the maintenance carried out between 1st April 2011 and the 15th October 2011 is attached to the report Appendix 1. We completed the first of the 2.5% network surveys in May 2011 (second due in November 2011) and the condition of the network, using the nationally recognised methodology for path surveying (Best Value Performance Indicator - BVPI 178), shows that the number of paths rated 'easy to use' are at 83.6%, with 96% of structures (stiles/gates/steps/bridges) rated 'easy to use'. The total number of known issues currently outstanding on the network is 1,064; a slight increase from the beginning of the year, due in part to the re-deployment of the works teams from structure repairs to summer path clearance. Additionally, we have in the last few months received several very large batches of reports (over 200) from one prolific complainant, which has increased the south teams work load accordingly. Reassuringly, a large proportion of these relate to minor issues which will be relatively easy to resolve.
- 11 BVPI 178 is adopted by a number of Highway Authorities to assess the general condition of their rights of way networks, using a recognised methodology; the condition survey is carried out in the months of November and May each year and 2.5% of the overall length of the network is checked in each of those months (5% annually). Basically, it is a very good indication of the condition of the network and typically Buckinghamshire usually achieves above 80% of the network as 'Easy to Use'. Whilst it is not an absolute requirement on authorities to carry out the survey, it is probably the easiest and simplest method of actually checking and 'bench marking' the condition of the network against other authorities, and will be a good 'early warning' indicator of a deterioration in network condition. We would normally carry out the 5% survey in-house, but due to the reduction in the number of staff over the last few years we are finding this difficult to fit in with more critical work. This dilemma was addressed by the Chiltern Society and a local member of the Ramblers' Association (Aylesbury Walking Group) and they were asked if there were any volunteers willing to participate in the November 2011 survey. Take-up was very good with a total of 12 volunteers coming forward, who will be given an area to survey with some basic instructions on the methodology. Hopefully the results will be roughly consistent with previous survey results, and we will give feedback on this at future meetings. Volunteers from the LAF would be most welcome.
- 12 We launched a new reporting system in February 2011 which is an on-line form together with a map layer that enables the public to easily find and mark the position of their issue. Whilst the number of issues currently logged is quite low, we envisage the public will find this method most convenient, and eventually the most popular, for logging problems with the County Council.

- 13 Some of the more significant improvement works for this season have included:
- Byway No. 1 in Longwick-cum-Ilmer: improvements to a 100 metre section next to the Phoenix Trail, originally reported by Peter Challis. Very large potholes were repaired, planings laid and a new wearing course installed.
 - Footpath No. 10 Soulbury: improvements were made across a marshy area, including new gates and two new board walks.
 - Footpath No. 59 in Chepping Wycombe: improvements have been made to a 50 metres section of the well-used path - a route that Thames Valley Police wished to close using a Gating Order. However, through negotiation and discussion, including a report submitted to the Joint Neighbourhood Action Group, we were successful in persuading the parties concerned that a series of improvements, including a tarmac surface and overgrowth clearance would help reduce anti-social behaviour and negate the need for gates across the route.

C Strategic Access Update (Jonathan Clark)

- 14 The Planning Environment & Development Service is in a 3-month consultation period, where the Service is proposed to be merged with Transportation for Buckinghamshire to form a new 'Place Service'. It is stated by Neil Gibson, Strategic Director for Communities and Built Environment, that savings are needed to meet the overall budget challenge faced by the County Council. Jobs are being re-evaluated, with some roles being deleted. The ROW Service will be affected. The number of Area Officers is proposed to be reduced from 4 to 2, and the Maintenance function, (Joanne Taylor's Team), is proposed to be moved across to the private company Ringway Jacobs, who currently manage the Transportation contract.
- 15 A total of 70 planning applications have been commented upon by the Strategic Access Officer since 6th July 2011, distributed between authorities as follows:
- | | | |
|---|------------------------|----|
| • | Aylesbury Vale | 30 |
| • | Wycombe | 11 |
| • | South Bucks | 9 |
| • | Chiltern | 9 |
| • | Buckinghamshire County | 11 |
- 16 A strategic overview of the County Council's 'restoration principles' were submitted earlier in the year to the County Planners with regard to 6 minerals and waste sites. Subsequent negotiations with have resulted in the site's owner, WRG, putting forward a raft of new bridleways and footpaths across their site, which will connect with the surrounding network when the landfill is restored. This will not be for a number of years, but the proposals will be secured, in perpetuity, by planning consent.
- 17 Attempts are being made to secure a s.106 contribution to the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust towards the conservation and management of Quarrendon Leas, and to BCC for a proposed leisure route (a new dedicated bridleway) connecting east-west between Berryfields and Weedon Hill developments to the north of Aylesbury. The overall vision is to create a bridleway across the whole of the north of Aylesbury and eventually a bridleway around the whole circumference of the town. Capital is needed for a new £80K bridge in Watermead, crossing the River Thames, on land owned by the Parish Council, and advice from the forum in sought in this regard.
- 18 Following work by the Strategic Access Officer and Gavin Caspersz, Neil Harris has agreed to some gate improvements on routes into Coombe Hill, which provides better mobility scooter access into and out of the site. A quote has been obtained to ramp the Ridgeway National Trail across a sunken lane that leads into the adjoining land to enable mobility scooter access between Wendover and Coombe Hill.

Donate-a-gate

- 19 There have been 8 new donors since the July 2011 Local Access Forum, funding 11 new gates, and taking the total to 223 donors. A launch of the 17 new gates at Ivinghoe Beacon, being part funded with 5 gates from a Dunstable Walking Group and celebrating new disabled access to public rights of way and open access land, will take place on Saturday 5th November at 10am in the main car park, with members present from The Disabled Ramblers.
- 20 The partnership project with The Chiltern Society to remove 127 stiles along the Chiltern Way continues using the donate-a-gate Gift Aid donations. Only two stiles now remain from Penn to Chenies, a distance of approximately 21 kilometres. A further 81 stiles remain to be removed or replaced throughout Buckinghamshire.

Parish Newsletter

- 21 The 6th edition of the online Rights of Way Parish Council Newsletter became available on the website in early September 2011. Articles included submissions from Definitive Map, Maintenance and Natural, Historic and Environment Teams. The next edition will be produced between December 2011 and January 2012 and articles from LAF Members would be most welcome.

D 'Simply Walk' (Fiona Broadbent)

- 22 The new walks programme leaflet (Oct 2011 - end March 2012) is available on the website and gives information on all walks in the county. The full-colour programme is currently funded and produced by Reactivate Bucks: http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/bcc/row/simply_walk.page?
- 23 Additional funding for Simply Walk has been received from walkers' donations, currently standing at £1356, but only £115 has been received since 1st July 2011. Additional funding has been requested from South Bucks District Council and the NHS.
- 24 New Walks started since the July 2011 LAF meeting include:
 - Castlefield - Wycombe July 20th (weekly walk);
 - Iver Village July 27th (monthly walk); and
 - Buggy walks in Burnham, Iver and Chesham.
- 25 The latest quarterly figures for July, August and September 2011 (not all data for September has been entered), includes:-
 - Total walkers 1,268
 - Total footfall 7,081
 - New volunteer leaders trained 14
 - Buggy walk leaders trained 11

Recommendation: Members to consider advice, comments, feedback and questions.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Rights of Way Maintenance carried out between 1st April 2011 and 20th October 2011, planning consultations, 2.5% May 2011 survey and 'issues outstanding'

All Clearance	Clearance Jobs resolved/Km	564/263km
Bridges	Installed or repaired	27
Finger or signposts	Installed or repaired	60
Fly Tipping	Fly Tipping - removed	10
Gates	Gate repaired or installed	56
Intimidating animals	Intimidation - resolved	16
Intimidating signs	Misleading Sign - removed	5
Alignment Issue	Path Off Line - resolved	16
Obstructions resolved	Barrier - fencing, wall or other	67
Obstructions resolved	Electric fence	13
Obstructions removed	Fallen Tree	50
Obstructions resolved	Ploughing and cropping	38
Other	Delivery of materials	21
Other	Miscellaneous issues resolved	29
Stile	Installed or repaired	75
Stile	Stile To Gap	10
Stile	Stile To KG	35
Stile	Stile To PG	27
Terrain	Path Erosion - resolved	4
Terrain	Bank Steps	9
Terrain	Path Surface problem resolved	57
Way-mark post	Installed/Repaired	44
Planning applications assessed		128
Volunteer hours	Ramblers and Chiltern Society	No Returns
Improvements	To aid mobility access	110
2.5% Survey results	Paths rated easy to use	83.6%
2.5% Survey results	Structures rated easy to use	96%
2.5% Survey results	Routes with roadside signs	98%
Number on database	No. of Job Sheets issued	1351
Number on database	Average time to solve report	44 days
Number on database	Issues outstanding 31/03/10	1019
Number on database	Issues outstanding 31/03/11	907
Number on database	Issues outstanding 15/10/11	1064
Estimated number of miles per recorded issue		1.93



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

Report

AGENDA ITEM 10

Date: 2nd November 2011
Title: LAF Members' Report
Author: Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access
Contact Officer: Katy MacDonald (01296 383603)

Disabled Access Work (Gavin Caspersz)

1. Surveys of new routes have been undertaken in Hodgemoor Woods, Coombe Hill and Bacombe Warren Farm. An additional circular route has been surveyed, as far as is possible, from Rowsham to Wingrave and contact will be made with the landowner.
2. A special news report for *ITV's Anglia Tonight* Program featured Gavin and the Disabled Ramblers at Dunstable Downs. Gavin hopes also hopes to try out 'geocaching' from Dunstable Downs visitor centre and other locations in the region.

Recommendation: Members to note.

Chilterns Conservation Board Annual Forum (John Elfes)

3. Members of the Forum are invited to attend the Annual Forum on Friday 11th November 2011, 9.45am to 1pm, at Amersham & Chiltern Rugby Club, Ash Grove, Weedon Lane, Amersham, HP6 5QU. It is a chance to hear of work to conserve and promote the Chilterns, have your say about any access issues and discuss the Board's future priorities. Cheryl Gillan MP has been invited to speak.

Recommendation: Members to organize representation from the Forum.

On-line Forum – 'Huddle' (John Elfes)

4. Natural England are proposing to introduce an on-line Forum called 'Huddle', through which Local Access Forums across the country will be able to communicate, share ideas, be alerted to consultations and communicate with Natural England and Defra. The idea behind the system is that at least 3 members from each forum will sign up, with one member being a 'Huddle Champion'. The project stems from positive responses to Richard Benyon's letter with regard to an on-line forum which, in part, replaces for the England Access Forum. See Huddle flier in Appendix 1.

Recommendation: Members to choose a Huddle Champion.

Annual Report (John Elfes)

- 5 Natural England have produced an Annual Report Pro-forma to help Local Access Forums summarise their achievements throughout the year. The aim is also to help Natural England and Defra efficiently collate information from around the country. LAFs are bound by the statutory regulations to submit annual information to Natural England. It is proposed to use the year to 30th November 2011 for the reporting end date. This does not coincide with the Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Reports, which are to 1st April, but NE felt it important to get consistency. The report can run alongside the existing Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report or replace it. Please see Appendix 2.

Recommendation: Members to organise drafting an annual report to 30th November 2011.



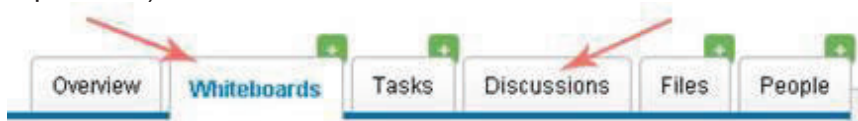
What can Huddle do for you?

The User Friendly Network site for Local Access Forums

Direct Contact with the Defra Minister Richard Benyon – the Minister has committed to hosting discussion events through Huddle so you can put your questions directly to him.

Links with other Forums – you can invite specific LAFs to join your discussion or see a whiteboard (this is a notice board where you can post links to interesting articles or information). This means you have a wider network than just your Region. Coastal LAFs can make links, Urban or Upland LAFs can establish their own groups to share similar issues. The possibilities are endless.

Advice - use the Discussion or Whiteboard Tabs to pose questions. Your answer may come from DEFRA, Natural England, a local authority or another LAF. Use the People Tab to find an expert to ask (each person who is registered on Huddle has a 'profile' in which they can let others know their skills and experience).



Collaborative working – use the File Tab to work on a document together, get the support of other LAFs to hone your work. Want to make a joint response with several LAFs then use the File Tab to work together.

Mentoring – need a bit of extra support with a tricky response, ask a LAF who has dealt with a similar issue to support you.

Keep up to date with new advice, guidance, legislation – use the Whiteboard Tab to post any information which you feel would be relevant and share it with other LAFs

Create an online central library - Upload your documents and presentations to the File Tab and create a central library of specialised information.

Access to information – save time by not reinventing the wheel – where you have a problem or situation, you can search for documents and read how other people have tackled a similar issue. Providing you with the opportunity to search, read, adapt and apply the knowledge to your own situation.

Check what's new – Check out the 'What's new' section for the latest discussions and file updates. We will be setting protocols to ensure that you only get alerted to things that may interest you so you shouldn't get unwanted automated emails.

Convenient – reduce your travelling needs as you can do all these amazing things from the comfort of your own home.

Reviewed and improved – Natural England will be monitoring its use and we have put together a small group of people including LAF members, Regional Coordinators and internal staff to listen to your feedback and make sure that it fulfils your needs.

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Report Proforma	
* Reporting year	
* Name of LAF	
* Name of LAF secretary	

Review of Current reporting year	
Were you successful in meeting the achievements set out in your Annual Report or LAF work programme? Please provide supporting information.	
* How many Open Access Restriction cases have you been informed about/involved with?	

*** Give up to three examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:**

Give up to three examples where you have encountered difficulties; explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate this issue:

Do you have any issues with recruitment of members from particular interest groups? Does this hinder your work in any way?

Comments from appointing authority

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Forward Look

What are your priorities for next year (list up to 3)

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***What support/training will you need to be able to deliver these priorities?**

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Do you perceive any barriers to delivering your priorities?

Any other comments