



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012  
**Title:** LAF Members' Report  
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### Twitter & Facebook (Neil Harris)

- 1 The National Trust Rangers in the Chilterns have launched new Twitter and Facebook accounts in order that visitors can communicate more widely with the staff that manage the Trust's countryside sites. Neil will give a demonstration.

**Recommendation:** Members to suggest ways in which the LAF or Rights of Way Teams might embrace this media.

### Disabled Access Work (Gavin Caspersz)

- 2 Following work with Gavin Caspersz, and with the consent and help of Neil Harris, gate improvements and ramps to replace steps across a sunken lane, have been completed. This has provided a choice of disabled accessible circular walks by mobility scooter around the site. In January 2012 Gavin achieved what will hopefully be the first of many more mobility scooter visits through to Bacombe Hill and it is hoped The Ridgeway will soon be mobility scooter accessible between Wendover and Chequers once work has been completed at the entrance to the Bacombe Hill reserve.

**Recommendation:** Members to note.

### Annual Report (John Elfes)

- 3 John Elfes has completed the Forum's Annual Report in the format produced by Natural England (see Appendix 4). It summarises the work and achievements of the LAF up to November 2011. Forums are bound by the statutory regulations to submit annual information to Natural England. This format aims to provide Natural England with a means through which it can measure success and budget for the year ahead.

**Recommendation:** Members to note

## **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Local Nature Partnership (Richard Pushman & David Briggs)**

- 4 Members attended a Local Nature Partnership workshop at Green Park, Aston Clinton on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012, in order to represent access issues in the formulation and shaping of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Local Nature Partnership, following a successful bid to Defra for funds to support the creation of a new LNP.
- 5 The workshop attempted to develop an integrated environmental vision to improve the natural environment at the landscape scale in a collaborative way that reflects wider social and economic benefits. Consultants are pulling together the findings of the workshop before a submission to Government for LNP status in spring 2012.

**Recommendation:** Members to note

### **Letter from Richard Benyon MP**

6. The Minister has written to the LAF (Appendix 5) regarding four issues that were outlined in April 2011.
  - (i) National Conference
  - (ii) Huddle – the virtual Forum
  - (iii) A memorandum of understanding between LAFs and Defra
  - (iv) A seat on the Rights of Way Review Committee.

**Recommendation:** Members to note and decide if a response is necessary.

### **Natural England – Local Support**

7. Jenny Hanwell has written to the LAF as she is unable to make today's meeting (Appendix 6). Local support is offered in a number of ways.

**Recommendation:** Members to note

### **Paths for Communities**

8. Defra has asked Natural England to develop a new grant scheme called 'Paths for Communities', funded through the rural development programme and offering £1m each year for two years, starting in 2012/13 (Appendix 7). The aim is to develop better local countryside path networks that contribute to the rural economy. Applications should be partnerships, so local Authorities alone will not be eligible to apply. Natural England has set up an email address for comments: [p4c@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:p4c@naturalengland.org.uk).

**Recommendation:** Members to suggest possible schemes and partnerships in Buckinghamshire.