



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 17th July 2013
Title: LAF Members' Report
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HS2

- 1 The Buckinghamshire LAF working group met HS2 and their consultants at an access forum on the Draft Environmental Statement. Attending were John Elfes (Ramblers), David Briggs (CLA & NFU), Gavin Caspersz (Disabled Ramblers), Viv Lynch (British Horse Society) and John Coombe (Chiltern Society). The meeting discussed a number of issues following the publication of the Draft Environmental Statement and gave an opportunity for LAF members to provide additional advice and lobby for access improvements at a number of locations along the line. Issues were discussed and conclusions reached on the best course of action along the line between the Colne Valley and Brackley. Additional representatives attended from the Ramblers, Chiltern Society and Chilterns Conservation Board attended.
- 2 Alan Lambourne will be attended the Waddesden HS2 Community Forum display on 31st May 2013.
- 3 The Hybrid Bill process will follow in the autumn of 2013.

Conferences

- 4 David Briggs attended the South East LAF Conference on 21st May 2013 in London. The keynote speaker was Sarah Slade, National Access Advisor for the CLA, addressing the main themes from '*The Right Way Forward: The CLA's common Sense approach to accessing the countryside 2012*'. Other topics covered engagement with Local Nature Partnerships; the MOD's recreation & access strategy; promotion of cycling in the Chiltern's market towns, cycling provision in the New Forest and South Downs National Parks; and the development of Smartphone 'Apps' technology and mobile websites for countryside sites.

Turville Open Access

- 5 The Open Spaces Society has asked if one new kissing gate can be installed to aid walkers on open access land above Turville village. John Elfes wrote to the

Wormsley Estate and received a reply on 13th February 2013. Following this exchange of correspondence, the Estate have agreed to a new kissing gate on the open access land through the donate-a-gate scheme and this will be installed w/c 22nd July 2013.

Outer Aylesbury Ring Promoted route

- 6 The Aylesbury & District Ramblers launched their new 53 mile long distance path walk at Wendover Woods on Saturday 18th May 2013. There are 14 additional circular walk guides available from their website: www.aylesbury-ramblers.org.uk

Disabled Ramblers

- 7 Gavin Caspersz is now the Regional Representative for the National Disabled Ramblers, with a role to promote the Chilterns. A recent survey of access from Coombe Hill open access land to Wendover was undertaken on a scooter.

Natural England correspondence

- 8 Natural England wrote on 29th April 2013 to all English LAFs (Appendix 1). In summary, the letter announces a new key contact for LAFs, Kevin Haugh, and the continued support for Jonathan Clark in the role of the South East LAF Regional Coordinator, at least for this financial year. In addition, a new quarterly newsletter was published on 27th June 2013 (Appendix 2), which will provide opportunities to share good practice between LAFs, and advertise news/support from Natural England and Defra.
- 9 A new Annual Report form for LAFs, to summarise their activities and achievements, was published by Natural England and a copy is enclosed in Appendix 3. This needs to be completed by 30th September 2013 for the year to 31st March 2013. Please also see attached letter from Martin Shaw and a copy of the National LAF Annual Report, submitted to Defra, in Appendix 4 & 5.
- 10 A 'Plan of Engagement between Natural England, Defra and Local Access Forums' was issued by Natural England on 30th May 2013 and is enclosed in Appendix 6.

Dog Control Order

- 11 The Local Access Forum is a statutory consultee under the Dog Control Orders (Procedures) Regulations 2006, Section 3 (1) (c) (ii). Burnham Beeches are considering such an Order and will consult the Local Access Forum in due course.

National Trails

- 12 It has been outlined that National Trails will continue to be managed locally, but within a national framework of guidance and support provided through Natural England. Central government will be responsible for setting standards and investing in trail maintenance, while new 'Trail Partnerships' will take collective responsibility for local delivery. The Ridgeway and Thames Path Management Group is therefore set to broaden its membership with a new Development Officer appointed to set up the Trails Partnership. Natural England say they hope to build on existing funding through partnerships. The Chilterns Conservation Board and Cotwold Conservation Board now sit on the Management Group. See Appendix 7.

Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

- 13 The Growth and Infrastructure Bill received Royal Assent on 25th April 2013 and the Bill is now law. The Act includes changes to: 1) the registration process for Town or Village Greens, for example applications cannot be made if planning permission has already been granted on the land, if the land is designated for development in Local Plans or draft Local Plans; 2) how rights of way are dealt with in planning permission, for example, it will allow diversion applications to be made before planning permission is granted, putting them at the forefront of the planning process; 3) Highways Act 1980 s31(6) deposits – the Act will allow statutory declarations to also include protection against applications for Town or Village Greens and the renewal period will be extended from 10 to 20 years. An administration charge may also be made by the Local Authority for deposits. It is expected that this will be popular with landowners.

County Council Elections

- 14 These took place on took place on 2nd May 2013. The Conservatives retain overall control with 36 seats, UKIP 6, the Liberal Democrats 5, Labour 1 and Independents 1. Martin Tett remains Leader. It is hoped a county councillor will shortly be chosen to sit on the Local Access Forum by the Deputy Leader, Michael Appleyard. Additional membership from a Buckinghamshire District Council will also be sought.
- 15 Responsibility for rights of way is split across two cabinet areas. Lesley Clarke OBE is Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste & Procurement, covering Rights of Way Definitive Map (and Strategic Access); while Janet Blake is Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, covering the Rights of Way Operations Team.

Rights of Way Teams

- 16 There have been some changes in staff which are summarised on the Area Team Map enclosed in Appendix 8.

LAF dates for 2013

- 17 The next meeting is due to take place on 20th November 2013.