



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JULY 2013, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.50 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr J Coombe, Mr Caspersz and Mr G Thomas

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark, Ms J Taylor and Mrs C Hudson

GUESTS PRESENT

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Neil Harris, Peter Challis, Chris Hurworth, Viv Lynch, Richard Pushman and Lesley Clarke OBE.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2013, TO BE CONFIRMED

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2013 were confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

Members had received the Rights of Way Group Report.

Claire Hudson took Members through the Definitive Map Update.

The following updates were provided:

- The Order made on 18 June 2013 regarding the application in Taplow to record the route from River Road to Amerden Lane as Public

Bridleway was referred to the Secretary of State for determination. However it has been returned stating that there was a flaw in the plan submitted. The application will now need to be re-advertised. All Parish Councils involved have been written to advising them of the situation. The old objections are not valid and objections will need to be made again.

- The Lower Winchendon application which was accepted by the Rights of Way Committee at its January meeting is at risk of challenge by the landowner. The issue will be presented to the Committee again in due course and the Committee will be asked to consider a rescindment under a point of law.
- An Order regarding Lane End was made. It will need to be referred to the Secretary of State as an objection was received.
- The application to divert Footpath No 7 was made by network rail.
- 52 objections were received in relation to an application to extinguish Footpath No 14. The recommendation to the Committee will be for the Order to be abandoned.
- Point 45 on the report should read Hughenden not Great Missenden
- The applicants of the land at Coppice Farm Road, Tylers Green, Penn now own the land

The Chairman commented that the law regarding Village Green applications was in the process of being changed. Clare Hudson advised that it would mean that a Village Green application could not be applied for if a planning application had been applied for.

The Chairman asked if the Forum could know the reasons why the applications under points 14 and 16 were rejected by the Committee. Clare advised that this was an Officer Recommendation. Members were informed that the Rights of Way papers were publicly available to view on the BCC website should Members wish to see the detailed information

Jon Clark then took Members through the Strategic Access Update.

A Member enquired if all the path diversions, extinguishments, etc., for HS2 would have to go through the same process as presently. Jon Clark advised that they would not as there would be provisions within the Hybrid Bill.

Jon Clark updated members on HS2. He said he was looking at longer diversions, further away from the line and that this work was progressing. Jon asked if all Members of the Forum wished to be consulted or just the HS2 working group on these proposed changes. The Chairman asked that all Members be consulted. Jon said that he would make up some draft maps and send them to Members.

Glyn Thomas advised that an application had been submitted to fund a new bridge and public access on land owned by Watermead Parish Council and that it was with Natural England to adjudicate. It was highlighted that the funding was from Natural England's 'Paths for Communities' fund. Jon advised that Watermead Parish Council was willing to dedicate the land for a bridleway.

Members had received a Summary of Maintenance Carried Out (Appendix 1 of the report) and a Maintenance Update was tabled (attached to the minutes).

A Member enquired about the terms of the Ringway Jacobs contract and whether everything had to be procured through the Ringway Jacobs contract or if smaller or

more specialist jobs could be carried out by other contractors. Joanne Taylor advised that everything has to be procured through the Ringway Jacobs contract.

The Chairman said the Forum should consider whether they thought the TUPE staff transfer was a good idea or not and what the effect if any would be on Rights of Way. Glyn said that he was concerned about who would be monitoring Ringway Jacobs. He said that Officers had expertise but that if they were TUPE'd to Ringway Jacobs they would not be in a position to be able to criticise or highlight any concerns they may have. The Chairman said that the Forum needed real assurances about the protection of Rights of Way and said that the Forum may need to lobby the Cabinet Member for Transport.

Alan Lambourne said that the County Council has a statutory duty to maintain the Rights of Ways and that they can contract this work out but asked how the County Council would ensure that the works were carried out to its satisfaction.

Following the discussions it was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Cabinet Member for Transport (who had responsibility for Ringway Jacobs) and the Cabinet Member for Environment (who had responsibility for Rights of Ways), highlighting concerns and seeking reassurances. It was also suggested that the issue of Parish path contractors be raised and to ask why Ringway Jacobs would not allow Parish Contractors to undertake rights of way work due to Health and Safety concerns. It was highlighted that Ringway Jacobs was the County Councils contractor and that if the County Council wanted to devolve services Ringway Jacobs should comply. Members did not feel that it was in the public interest to prevent Parish Contractors from undertaking the work and Members expressed deep concern that there needed to be a shield put up between the County Council and Ringway Jacobs.

Action: John Elfes

David Briggs enquired why the Chiltern Society volunteering hours had decreased. The Chairman commented that it may be an issue with the recording of the hours. Joanne advised that it was an interim figure and suggested that this be re-looked at next time.

Glyn Thomas queried the number of job sheets which appeared to have decreased from 1792 to 1631, but highlighted that the number of issues had increased from 799 in 2012 to 1150 in 2013. Joanne advised that the backlog of issues had increased and said that this was due to various issues such as the weather and staffing issues.

6. LAF MEMBERS REPORT

Members had received the LAF Members' report.

The Chairman advised that he had submitted a response to the Draft Environmental Statement on behalf of the LAF and that this would be circulated to Members (attached to minutes).

Alan Lambourne confirmed he attended the Waddesdon HS2 Community Forum meeting on 31 May 2013.

David Briggs, Glyn Thomas and Viv Lynch all attended the South East LAF Conference. David advised that a key theme of the conference was that it is sometimes difficult to maintain and manage open access if the landowner is doing something else on the land and that it is sometimes difficult for landowners to do the right thing. Glyn commented that it was highlighted at the Conference that the MOD did not insure land and that this is one of the reasons access to the land is restricted. Both David and Glyn commented that they felt the Conference was well organised

and interesting.

Gavin Caspersz advised that he is now a Regional Representative for the National Disabled Ramblers, with a role to promote the Chilterns. Gavin provided the following update:

- The Disabled Ramblers is a national organisation
- It is open to the public to participate
- There are 52 visits a year held
- Gavin is trying to get the organisation de-centralised so that there can be localised groups and that this idea has been accepted
- De-centralisation has started
- Gavin is a volunteer for Bucks and The Chilterns
- Bucks has got Stoke Mandeville Hospital and hosted the Paralympic Games
- He would like disabled rambling in the Chilterns to be promoted for tourism
- It may help to promote and publicise how well Bucks is doing in this area
- Gavin has been working with Jon Clark to create a list of routes, with the aim to publicise them on the website.
- The scheme improves upon the Simply Walk and 'Miles without Stiles' schemes where local people can get involved and just turn up without prior booking
- Some routes have been finalised and the focus is now on advertising them. This could also help to promote the LAF
- Gavin has identified, tested and graded 10 routes
- 50% are nearly ready to be classified as accessible routes

Members noted the Natural England correspondence and Glyn Thomas commented that Kevin Haugh had been very helpful with the application he had made for Watermead.

Jon Clark advised the LAF was a statutory consultee for Dog Control Orders. He said that Burnham Beeches were considering making an order and asked if Members would like them to attend a LAF meeting to discuss the issues. Members agreed that he should be invited to the November 2013 meeting of the Forum.

Action: Jon Clark

Jon advised that there had been some changes in staff and that he would circulate the Area Team Map to Members.

Action: Jon Clark

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no AOB

8. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the next meeting date as Wednesday 20th November 2013, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

Chairman