



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

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Title: LAF Members' Report
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LAF Correspondence

- 1 The LAF Chairman and members from the Ramblers, Open Spaces Society and British Horse Society, met Janet Blake, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Rights of Way maintenance and Sean Rooney the contract manager in the Senior Management Team. The meeting was arranged following the Chairman's correspondence with Janet Blake and her reply of 26th November 2013 (Appendix 3). Notes of the meeting are summarised in Appendix 4.
- 2 The Chairman wrote a response to the draft Chilterns Conservation Board Management Plan (Appendix 5) a document which outlines their strategy for the next 5 years.
- 3 The chairman completed the Bucks LAF Annual report to Defra for 2012/13 (Appendix 6). This year's report, for 2013/14, will be due earlier, on 30th June 2014.

Open Access

- 4 A parcel of common land called Pinner Green (HP5 1UL) has been fenced off by a local landowner in Latimer, near Chenies. The map in Appendix 7 outlines the extent of the fencing in bold red. Consultation with the county council's land charges section indicates Green Lane is a restricted public highway and is gated at both ends, with a prohibition of motor vehicles other than for access. The fence remains unlawful unless it has consent under section 38 of the Commons Act 2006. No one has a legal duty to take action, but the county council has powers to enforcement. A site visit revealed the permissive footpath, running across the common and starting opposite the end of Footpath LAT6/7, is impeded by an earth mound. If the public wish to claim this as a public footpath then a definitive map modification order needs to be made.

Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails

- 5 Natural England have agreed to provide a grant of 75% towards the management and promotional costs for national trails, with a condition that management arrangements are reviewed and a new membership is created with a broader range of partners. Martin Fry has been recruited as the new National Trails Delivery Officer for one year to develop new trails partnerships and draw up delivery frameworks. It has been agreed informally to manage the Ridgeway

and Thames Path separately, but this has not been resolved. The new arrangements were expected to be in place for 1st April 2014, but process is behind schedule.

- 6 The Chilterns Conservation Board set up a Ridgeway working group in June 2013 to assess the needs of the trail and identify some tasks to feed into the new trails partnership and management arrangements. The group surveyed the Chiltern's Ridgeway, assessing its condition and other issues: signage to local attractions and settlements is limited; information and interpretation is limited; hedges and vegetation obscure views; more scenic alternative routes could be investigated; and there are some poor surfaces. This work will feed into the development plan for the Ridgeway.

Cycling

- 7 Cycle Chilterns has just launched their new independent website, which was previously hosted on the CTC website (www.cyclechilterns.co.uk). This gives the project officer, Sara Randal, control of content, which includes a monthly Cycle Chilterns e-newsletter (<http://eepurl.com/MX1cP>). Sara's post is being funded by a £900,000 grant from the Department for Transport to increase cycling participation and cycling visitor numbers to the Chilterns. The programme runs to March 2015 with the hope of further funding after that date. A highlight will be a visit by the Tour of Britain to the Chilterns in September 2014. Much has already been achieved, including children's cycle training, an electric bike network in Henley, led bike rides, a children's off-road track at Aston Hill and a popular portable cycle track taken to regional events such as county shows.
- 8 A new cycle route is being proposed between Bourne End and Wooburn, utilizing the disused railway line (see map in Appendix 8). A new route here would allow cyclists and horse riders to avoid the busy road and connect their onward journeys on quieter local roads. Negotiations are ongoing between Sustrans and the landowner to agree compensation if a new public route is created. There is a proven need for new non-vehicular access between the two settlements, so it may be possible to use compulsory powers under s.26 Highways Act 1980, but that would require an Order, including a report and decision at the Rights of Way Committee. The LAFs views on the proposal are sought.

Natural England correspondence

- 9 LAF News Issue 3, the quarterly newsletter for (and by) Local Access Forums is attached in Appendix 9. It provides opportunities to share good practice, advertise news and highlight support from Natural England and Defra.
- 10 The Chairman completed the Buckinghamshire LAF's Annual Report for 2012/13 in December 2013 (Appendix 10). The 2013/14 returns deadline has been brought forward to 30th June 2014, ready for the regional (31st July 2014) and national LAF reports (30th September 2014) later in the year.

Conferences

- 11 The Chilterns Conservation Board Annual Access Conference will be held this year on 19th June 2014. Venue TBC.
- 12 The South East Local Access Forum Conference will be held this year on Tuesday 20th May 2014, 10.30am to 3.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ. Speakers will include Steve Jenkinson on the management of dogs of the countryside, Dr Phil Wadey from the BHS on work toward the proposed 2026 rights of way claims deadline and Mark Weston on sharing multi user routes with horse riders.

LAF dates for 2014

14 The dates for next year's meetings are 2nd July 2014 and 5th November 2014.