



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 10.00 AM
MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

AGENDA

Agenda Item	Page No
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Declarations of Interest	
3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2014, to be confirmed	3 - 8
4 Matters Arising	
5 Dog Control Orders: an access management tool for Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve Martin Hartup	
6 Rights of Way Group report Claire Hudson, Definitive Map Team Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Advisor Joanne Taylor, Operations Team Leader	9 - 16
7 LAF Members report	17 - 32
8 Any Other Business	
9 Date of Next and Future Meetings The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 18 th March 2015, 10am, Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks.	

Future meeting dates
Wednesday 1 July
Wednesday 4 November



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.00 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr J Elfes, in the Chair

Mr N Harris, Mr C Hurworth, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr J Coombe, Mr Caspersz, Ms J Blake and Ms N Glover

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark and Mrs H Francis

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from David Briggs, Peter Challis, Viv Lynch, Lesley Clarke OBE and Richard Pushman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2014, TO BE CONFIRMED

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 March 2014 were confirmed subsequent to the following amendment:

Item 7 – Rights of Way Report

Clarification to be added that Footpath No 27 is in High Wycombe.

4. MATTERS ARISING

A copy of the draft letter to County Councillor Ruth Vigor-Hedderly detailing concerns about the crossing on the A413 Watermead to Buckingham Park was circulated for approval.

The Forum agreed the letter reflects the views of the members subsequent to the following amendment;

'Dear Sirs' to be amended to 'Dear Councillor Vigor-Hedderly'

5. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

Members had received the Rights of Way Group Report.

Helen Francis took Members through the Definitive Map Applications, during which the following updates were noted:

- Items 1 & 2 - Great Missenden, Great Missenden & Wendover
Further instruction is awaited from the Secretary of State following objections to the two remaining BOAT orders.
- Item 7 – Westbury (Route 1)
Application is being sent to the Rights of Way Committee
- Item 8 – Westbury (Route 3)
Application is being sent to the Rights of Way Committee
- Item 10 – Iver
Application has been postponed until the September Rights of Way meeting.

Alan Lambourne referred to item 38, Westcott Footpath Creation and said he was not aware that the decision had been made that the Landowner has decided not to dedicate. The 10m stretch of land which joins two footpaths is advertised as the Outer Aylesbury Ring Road. During a recent meeting, the agent advised there had been a problem with ascertaining the owners of the land, but they were happy to go ahead with the creation of the footpath. Hazel Rackman, Rights of Way Definitive Map Officer is to be contacted for clarification.

Action: Helen Francis

Jonathan Clark took Members through the Strategic Access Update, highlighting the following key points:

Item 45

This year is likely to see an increase in the numbers of applications with the increasing development pressure in the county. A total of 174 planning applications related to Rights of Way were received last year to 31st March 2014 and around 200 applications are expected this year. The process provides an opportunity to improve rights of way through developer funding.

Item 46

The petitioning process for HS2 is about to commence.

Item 47

The County Council's petition includes only a short, general paragraph about ROW. A meeting is taking place shortly to discuss the remaining issues. Most of the crossings requested have been provided with the exception of a crossing near Twyford which may be lost due to other's lobbying. The upgrading of routes from footpaths to bridleway to improve strategic links has been highlighted as one of the main items missing from the Environmental Statement.

Item 48

The start date for the East West Rail (EWR) Project is March 2019. The County Council is part of the body supporting the partnership.

Items 49/50

Meetings have taken place with Network Rail to discuss the possible transfer of 26 'at grade' crossings to nearby existing bridges or underpass crossings in order to improve safety. These are located in Buckinghamshire between Aylesbury, Bletchley

and Bicester. Discussions will also take place about the 16 crossings on the Princes Risborough/Aylesbury line.

John Elfes is attending a stakeholder meeting on the afternoon of the 2 July, during which the input from the Ramblers will be given. There is a general feeling of openness at the meetings and the LAF view will be taken on-board. The Definitive Map Team will be involved in the discussions. A new member of staff has been recruited to process orders received. The EWR diversion orders processed by the definitive map team will be funded by EWR and officer time spent on this work can be off-set against the County Council's overall contribution to the project.

Item 52

Local Area Forums (LAFs) could potentially be another source of funding for ROW projects. Each LAF has a set of priorities, outlined within Local Area Plans, some of which include improving rights of way. Haddenham Walking Group successfully bid for £10,000 from the Local Priorities Budget to replace 28 stiles on the Wychert Way. The £10,000 was matched-funded through monies raised at various events held in the community.

During the update, the following questions were asked:

Janet Blake referred to the start date of March 2019 for the EWR Project and asked if the revised date is correct. The original start date was December 2017 with a 15 month period of contingency to allow for any unforeseen circumstances. Jonathan Clark said that the start date of March 2019 had been confirmed by Patrick O'Sullivan, East West Rail Project Manager but this can be checked.

Action: Jonathan Clark

Jonathan Clark took Members through the Rights of Way Operations Update, highlighting the following key points:

- Item 53 - 1 April 2012 is to be amended to April 2013.
- Item 54 - the ROW team currently has vacancies of 1.4 FTE for Assistant Rights of Way Officers. Half of this vacancy is due an Assistant ROW Officer not returning from maternity leave.
- Item 60 - 22 parishes have signed up to the Clearance Fund scheme.

During the update, the following questions were asked:

Alan Lambourne referred to the Parish Council Clearance Fund and asked if this has been added under the proposal for the devolvement of services from Transport for Bucks (TfB). Helen Francis said that this has been proposed but Joanne Taylor, Operations Team Manager can be contacted for an update.

Action: Helen Francis/Joanne Taylor

The Chairman reported that at a recent ROW Liaison Group meeting, concern was expressed that if a parish has not signed up to the Clearance Fund and does not have scheduled annual clearance, they would be left without services.

Alan Lambourne said that the idea is to cluster parishes to carry out the necessary work.

Neil Harris explained that the Clearance Fund only applies to footways and hedges not to footpaths. The view is that parishes would use their own contractor. The formation of clusters is unclear in terms of whether this would be with neighbouring parishes and what would happen if parishes did not cluster.

The Chairman said there has been an enormous increase in the number of volunteer hours provided by the Chilterns Society. Clearly the system is beginning to rely more on volunteer efforts. Why do the figures not include the number of volunteer hours from Ramblers? Helen Francis advised that the figures do not include volunteer hours from the Ramblers as this data had not been received.

Janet Blake agreed that the system is relying more on volunteer efforts and said this will increase over the next year. In terms of highways safety and path clearance, the minimum amount that has to be carried out legislatively is a one metre strip of pruning and clearance which also applies to areas around signage. Further problems could also arise if the Government decides to put a cap on Parish Council precepts.

The Chairman said that volunteers should not be depended on entirely.

Janet Blake referred to the Stewkley Community Enterprise Agency model which is quite innovative as it is a social enterprise and non-profit making. Launched in November 2012, it manages low level maintenance activities such as grass cutting of designated Bucks CC highway verges, weed spraying of gutters and the trimming of vegetation obstructing pavements and footpaths within Stewkley village and under a contract with Buckinghamshire County Council.

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=27941>

Chris Hurworth asked if a letter of appreciation could be sent to volunteers in recognition of the work they have done. This will be taken back to Joanne Taylor.

Action: Jonathan Clark

Alan Lambourne said it should be noted that the number of outstanding issues has increased again – a rise over 25% in three months. Jonathan Clark explained that a large amount of work went into reducing the back log of outstanding items a few years ago. The figures will be monitored to see if the increase is due to a trend.

6. LAF MEMBERS REPORT

Jonathan Clark took Members through the LAF Member's report, highlighting the following key points:

Open Access

The background to the case at Pinner Green is a parcel of common land being fenced off along the west side of Blackwell Hall Lane, Latimer. There has been a legal requirement to obtain Secretary of State consent to carry out fencing that prevents or impedes access on common land since 1925.

The question of who is the enforcement authority has been raised. New legislation that came into effect in 2008 advised anyone could take enforcement action. A letter has been sent to Chiltern District Council as they owned the land when the fence was put up.

Transport for Buckinghamshire's Local Area Technician initially said that the barbed wire next to the highway is dangerous. The Area Technician has subsequently advised that they do not think that the fence is on the highway and therefore, will not be taking action.

There is legislation in the Commons Act to remove the fence. Alternatively the case could be taken to enforcement level (County Court) to ask for the fence to be removed. In the meantime, contact will be made with Chiltern District Council to seek more information.

Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails

A new strategy is being formulated. The Ridgeway delivery framework is being developed by consultants from the Kent Downs AONB. The expected date of publication of the final report is the end of July 2014. A copy of the framework can be circulated to Committee Members when available.

Action: Jonathan Clark

Cycling

Discussions are ongoing between Sustrans and the landowner along the Bourne End to Wooburn disused railway line to agree compensation for the creation of a new bridleway. A period of 21 days has to be given to him to respond. There is funding in place to implement the new cycle route and a meeting has taken place with Wycombe District Council to discuss the strategic aims. If an agreement cannot be reached with the owner a report will be going to an extra ordinary meeting of the Rights of Way Committee on the 10 September 2014 seeking authority to use compulsory powers under s.26 Highways Act 1980. Any Committee members wishing to attend the meeting are welcome. The landowner would be able to seek compensation for having the bridleway on his land.

Conferences

Gavin Casperez reported that he attended the Chilterns Conservation Board Annual Access Conference on the 19 June 2014. There seemed to be a tremendous thrust to open up the Chilterns to disabled tourists and to have access for all. Disabled people do not want to be treated differently and have special areas. They want the basic barriers such as stiles and steps removed to enable access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs in order that the areas might be more inclusive for them to join family members. There is a lot of good work taking place around disabled tourism in terms of suitable accommodation and public transport such as taxis and trains. It is hoped that the results will be seen shortly.

Gavin explained that he is involved in the provision of a selection of accessible pathways for wheelchair users, scooters and buggies. A number of areas have been chosen and efforts have been concentrated on publicity.

A programme of disabled rambler events for July, August and September has been launched which are family inclusive. An invitation has been sent to the National Disabled Ramblers. The success of the events will be reported back to the Forum.

Action: Gavin Caspersz

Work has also been taking place on the removal of gates on footpaths between the villages of Wingrave and Rowsham. The target date to complete the footpath is the 30 August 2014; however there is still some work to be done and any expert advice or help from volunteers would be greatly appreciated.

Netta Glover asked how much funding is required needed for the footpath. Gavin explained that local volunteers have carried out some of the work, while the gate and sleeper bridge works have already been funded by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Netta suggested contacting Deborah Martin, Wingrave/Rowsham Parish Council to advertise for help on Wingrave e-postie.

The Chilterns Society will be contacted to discuss the possibility of the provision of volunteers to help complete the footpath.

Action: Jonathan Clark

The Chairman reported that he attended the South East Local Access Forum Conference on 20 May 2014. There were various interesting presentations from a number of people and organisations including the British Horse Foundation.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Coombe referred to the new legislation about Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour and asked how BCC sees this being applied.

Helen Francis explained that guidance has not been received as yet but can be brought to a future meeting of the LAF.

Action: Helen Francis

The National Trust

Neil Harris reported the following;

- The National Trust has appointed a new Chairman, Tim Parker, who takes up his new role on the 8th November.
- There has been a slight change in focus of the Trust. The key focus is now around land and nature in terms of getting land and wildlife in top possible condition. This links in with what the public would like to see.
- The National Trust currently has 5 million members. Membership numbers are still important in terms of funding.
- Management plans are being re-written
- Discussions are taking place about improvements to signage to National Trust areas in the first 50 yards from car parks. One example is Coombe Hill, which can be very difficult to find. There needs to be brown tourist signs to indicate that some of the best views of Bucks are from Coombe Hill.

8. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 5 November 2014, 10am, Mezzanine 2, County Hall. Aylesbury.

Chairman



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 5th November 2014

Title: Rights of Way Team update

Authors: Claire Hudson, Jonathan Clark and Joanne Taylor

Contact Officer: Sharon Griffin (01296 383691)

A. DEFINITIVE MAP UPDATE (CLAIRE HUDSON)

Resources Appraisal

Definitive Map investigations are statutory duties for the Council, funded through Place Service revenue budgets. Costs associated with Public Path Orders are, for the most part, recovered from applicants.

The Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to appraise LAF Members of the outstanding Definitive Map caseload undertaken by the Definitive Map Team and provide an update for matters previously considered by the Rights of Way Committee.

DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY COMMITTEE / ORDERS MADE

A. MATTERS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED BY COMMITTEE

1. **Great Missenden** – upgrading of Public Bridleways Nos. 52 and 55 (part) to Public Byways Open to All Traffic. The application was rejected by the Committee on 14 July 2006. The applicant appealed the decision and the Council was directed by the Secretary of State to make an Order for Byway status. An Order was made and advertised. Objections to the Order were received and the matter was referred back to the Secretary of State for determination. The County Council did not support the confirmation of the Orders. Public Inquiry held; Orders subsequently confirmed with modifications which were advertised between 15 January and 12 February 2014. **Written representations were requested in relation to the objections to the modifications. We await further instruction from the Secretary of State.**
2. **Great Missenden/Wendover** – upgrading Public Bridleways No. 1 Great Missenden and Nos. 45 and 61 Wendover to Public Byways Open to All Traffic. The application was rejected by the Committee on 14 July 2006. The applicant appealed the decision and the Council was directed by the Secretary of State to make an Order for Byway status. An Order was made and advertised. Objections to the Order were received and the matter referred back to the Secretary of State for

determination. The County Council did not support the confirmation of the Orders. Public Inquiry held; Orders subsequently confirmed with modifications (including bridleway 45 Wendover being excluded) which were advertised between 15 January and 12 February 2014. **Written representations were requested in relation to the objections to the modifications. We await further instruction from the Secretary of State.**

3. **Taplow** – application to record the route from River Road to Amerden Lane as Public Bridleway. The application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2011. An Order was subsequently made on 18 June 2012; objections received and Order referred to Secretary of State but it was deemed to be flawed. A new Order was made and advertised. Objections to the Order have been received and the matter has been referred to the Secretary of State for determination. **A public inquiry was held on 27 August 2014; the Order was subsequently confirmed with modifications which didn't need further advertisement.**
4. **High Wycombe** – application to record the route from Burnham Close to Whitelands Road, High Wycombe as Public Footpath. This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2013. An Order was made on 15th April 2013. Objections have been received and the matter has been referred to the Secretary of State for determination. **A public inquiry was held on 1 October 2014; we await the decision from the Secretary of State.**
5. **Lower Winchendon** – application to record the route from Public Footpath No 10b to Public Footpath No. 3, Cuddington as Public Footpath. This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2014. **An Order has been made and advertised. Objections have been received therefore the matter will now be referred to the Secretary of State for determination.**
6. **Radnage** – drafting error of Public Bridleway No. 3. Committee are requested to decide whether on the balance of probabilities, whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest that bridleway 3 is shown incorrectly on the Definitive Map and should be modified so that it continues along an enclosed track to the County Boundary with Oxfordshire. **Order was confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
7. **Westbury (Route 1)** – application to record the route from Footpath No 14, Westbury (at the Oxfordshire county boundary) to Public Footpath No 11, Westbury as Public Footpath. The route is 90% in Oxfordshire. Discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to their entering into an Agency Agreement with us in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable us to undertake investigations on their behalf. **This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 9 July 2014. An Order will be made imminently.**
8. **Westbury (Route 2)** – application to record the route from the junctions of Footpath No 303, Mixbury, Oxfordshire to Fulwell Road, Westbury as Public Bridleway. Discussions were held with Oxfordshire County Council with a view to their entering into an Agency Agreement with us in accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable us to undertake investigations on their behalf. **This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 9 July 2014. An Order will be made imminently.**

B. DEFINITIVE MAP APPLICATIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED AND REPORTED TO COMMITTEE.

9. **Iver** – application to record various routes across The Fields and The Clump, Iver as Public Footpaths. **Matter being investigated and will be presented to Committee in the near future.**
10. **Chepping Wycombe** – application to record the route from Elmshott Close to King's Wood as Public Footpath. **Committee determined to accept the application during its meeting of 15 October 2014. An Order to be made.**
11. **Bledlow** – application to record the route from Footpath No 49 to Bridleway No 55 as public footpath. **Investigation not started.**
12. **Edgcott** – application to record Lawn House Lane as a Public Footpath to Public Footpath 11 Edgcott. **Investigation not started.**
13. **Iver** – application to record route from Grange Way to Colne Orchard as a Public Footpath. **Investigation not started.**
14. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 14 to public bridleway status based on historical evidence. **Investigation not started.**
15. **Bledlow** – application to investigate the alignment of Public Footpath 52. **Investigation not started.**

C. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

16. **Ashley Green** – Application to divert Footpath No 2B Ashley Green. **Following relevant objections to informal consultation, decision taken not to proceed with application. CASE CLOSED.**
17. **Aylesbury** – Application to extinguish Footpath No 7(part) and Footpath 8 (part). Objections have been received to the Order. Referred to the Secretary of State for determination. **Case determined by Written Representations; Order not confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
18. **Coleshill** – Application to divert Footpath No 11(F) part. Order made and no objection received. **Landowner works awaiting completion and then Order will be confirmed.**
19. **Dinton with Ford and Upton** – Application to divert Footpath 15. **Order to be made and advertised.**
20. **Gawcott with Lenborough** – Diversion of Footpath No. 12. **Order Confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
21. **Great Marlow** – Application to divert Footpath No. 21 and Bridleway No. 52. **Order made and objections received during the formal objection period. Meetings to be held with objectors.**
22. **Great and Little Kimble** – Application to divert Footpath 29. **With Legal Services to make Order.**
23. **High Wycombe** – Application to extinguish Footpath No. 27. Wycombe District Council planning matter. Order made and confirmed by WDC. **Awaiting developer works.**
24. **Marsworth** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council and no objections received. **Awaiting landowner works and then Order will be confirmed.**

25. **Medmenham** – Application to divert Footpath No. 15. **Order made and in the formal objection period.**
26. **Oakley** – Application to divert Footpath No. 9. **With Legal Services to make Order.**
27. **Oakley** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. **Matter to be started.**
28. **Pitchcott** – Application to divert Footpath No 4 (part). Order made and objections received. **Secretary of State confirmed Order following a Public Hearing. Order certified. CASE CLOSED.**
29. **Quinton** – Application to divert Bridleway No 21. **Awaiting completion of works before Order can be confirmed.**
30. **Steeple Claydon** – Application to divert Footpath No 6. **Order Made. ON HOLD until further notice.**
31. **Stokenchurch** – Application to divert Footpath No. 28. **Informal consultation being conducted.**
32. **Swanbourne** – Application to divert Footpath No. 12. **With Legal Services to make Order.**
33. **Winslow** – Application to extinguish Footpath No 5. Order made and no objections received. **Awaiting landowner works ahead of confirmation.**
34. **Wooburn** – Proposed Bridleway Creation Order along former railway. Matter was determined by Committee on 15 October, and an **Order will soon be made and open to formal consultation.**

D. PUBLIC PATH CREATION AGREEMENTS

35. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (BCC Land). **Creation Agreement completed – awaiting works on the ground.**
36. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (ERC Land). **Awaiting go ahead from ERC to proceed.**

E. VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATIONS

37. **Iver** – land at The Fields and The Clump. **The application was refused on the basis of estoppel. CASE CLOSED.**
38. **Hughenden** – land at The Field, Bryants Bottom. Application advertised and objections received. **A Public Inquiry held 4 – 6 August 2014. Committee to make a decision on this case during the next Committee meeting.**
39. **Beaconsfield** – voluntary registration of the land at Hampden Hill. **Awaiting ownership confirmation from Town Council.**
40. **High Wycombe** – land at Meadow Close, Wycombe Marsh. **The application is currently being investigated.**
41. **Wooburn** – land off Cherwell Road, Bourne End. **Waiting investigation.**

For further information please contact: Claire Hudson 01296 383425

B. STRATEGIC ACCESS UPDATE (JONATHAN CLARK)

42. The HS2 parliamentary petitioning process has commenced and the Select Committee has just heard evidence for cases in Warwickshire. A total of 1,925 representations are available to view online. Dates for the Select Committee hearings relating to Buckinghamshire are not yet available. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cmhs2/petitions/petcontents.htm>
43. Details of the remaining rights of way issues in the county have been tabulated and sent to HS2 and a further meeting is to be arranged to try and resolve these points. Since the last meeting a bridge has been removed at Twyford, under what is known as 'additional provisions', but the nearby path diversions were considered adequate.
44. The East West Rail Project aims to re-establish rail passenger services between Oxford, Bletchley and Bicester, then south to Aylesbury, introducing a new station at Winslow. Services are planned to start in March 2019. It means that sustainable transport access will be available from Milton Keynes, Bicester and Oxford for visitors to access stations in Buckinghamshire.
49. Three stakeholder meetings with Network Rail have taken place since July 2014 to discuss each crossing and the Ramblers, landowners, parish councils and county councillors have been involved. John Elfes has already fed back concerns regarding reducing the length of diversions; including footway links alongside carriageways; and avoiding bridleway links alongside the rail corridor. There are further stakeholder meetings to which the LAF chairman is invited on 12th Nov 2014 and 17th Dec 2014 at Network Rail's office in Milton Keynes. There are also a series of public presentations taking place in the affected areas.
50. We have also been approached to look at 16 crossings on the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury branch line, which borders the Chiltern's AONB boundary, and all rights of way crossings on this line are therefore being assessed. This is also part of the East West Rail project with the aim of increasing passenger services and using the route for freight (of around 18 trains per day) during HS2's construction. An assessment is being made by Network Rail to double the tracks to 2 lines.
51. The Rights of Way committee met on 15th October 2014 and voted to approve the compulsory bridleway creation order made under section 26 Highways Act 1980. This is the first link from Bourne End to Wooburn along the former railway line that will eventually continue to High Wycombe, and Sustrans have been commissioned to investigate feasibility for this next stage.
49. There have been 5 new Donate-a-Gate since July 2014 taking the number to 305 donors. A series of articles will appear in the next edition of Chiltern News celebrating the scheme's 8th year, 300th donor, 400th gate and £100, 000 of private investment into the Chiltern's walking network.

C. RIGHTS OF WAY OPERATIONS UPDATE (JOANNE TAYLOR)

50. A 'Summary of Works' will be tabled at the meeting to outline the work carried out by the Rights of Way Operations Team between 1st April 2012 and 31st October 2014.
51. The rights of way operations team is pleased to have recruited a new Assistant Rights of Way Officer, Miss Sophie David. Sophie started in September 2014 and is on a temporary contract until 31st March 2015. Regrettably there are still two other vacant posts, one for a part time Assistant Officer, but more problematic there is also a vacancy in the north of the county for the Area Rights of Way Officer.
52. Since updating the group in July Transport for Buckinghamshire has commenced a further re-organisation/re-structure and once again, this has prevented recruitment for these two posts. The

current re-structure proposals are advocating a further reduction in staff by one, which would reduce the team to five posts.

53. A mid-year review of capital funding projects by the county council resulted in the removal of £100,000 of emergency capital budget from rights of way operations. This has meant that the team has been unable to carry out any works that were identified as urgent on path surfaces and bridge structures. Discussions are underway to attempt to reinstate the funding, at least in part.

54. At the last Local Access Forum meeting members were updated on the results of the 2013 BVPI 178 (under 'ease of use' of the network). Please see paragraph 55 below.

55. BVPI 2013 – Survey Results 5% figure May/November 2013

80% Paths Easy to use Expected Target 2013 76 – 84%

96% Signs on Roadside Expected Target 2013 94 – 98%

92% Structures Easy to use Expected Target 2013 90 – 95%

56. The Rights of Way Operations Business Plan for this financial year (2014-2015) has Key Performance Indicators outlined below; the current performance is indicated alongside.

Title	Lower	Expected	Interim Results Sept 14
Footpaths etc. easy to use by members of public	65%	70%	57%
Structures on rights of way easy to use according to BVPI 178 criteria	80%	88%	84%
Number of structures removed/alterd to improve mobility/accessibility	50	70	81
Public RoW signposted in accordance with CA 1968 s27	80%	88%	93%
% of enforcement issues resolved within matrix targets	40%	50%	70%
Volunteering Hours for Place reporting	0		812

- 57 Members of the Forum will recall that a Parish Paths Clearance Fund has been made available by the county council to enable parish councils to benefit from being able to undertake and manage path clearance work over the summer. The money was in the form of a grant to parish councils wishing to employ their own contractors to undertake the work. Over 20 parishes have taken part in the scheme and this amounted to 80 kilometres of clearance in those parishes. Additionally, the operations team carried out summer clearance in a number of other parishes, which added up to a further 120 kilometres of clearance, bringing the total 2014 summer clearance to 200 kilometres. In previous years, summer clearance was undertaken on 330 kilometres of path, but, as the Forum will recall, the ROW operations budget received a significant cut from 2014 that necessitated a reduction in maintenance that could be carried out.
- 58 A project is underway to develop further functions to those parishes wishing to take on additional tasks. It looks likely that over 50 parishes could be taking part in summer clearance in 2015. Along with path clearance, the parishes could also be responsible for the duty of a highway authority under section 130 Highways Act 1980 to 'assert and protect' the public's use of the rights of way network and this is currently being reviewed by legal services.



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 5th November 2014

Title: LAF Members' Report

Author: Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access

Contact Officer: Sharon Griffin (01296 383691)

Membership

- 1 Peter Challis' membership has been discontinued and cycling interests are now represented by Sara Randle. Sara is Senior Development Officer for the Cycle Chilterns Project, employed by CTC, the national cycling charity, and is based at the Chilterns Conservation Board office in Chinnor.

Open Access

- 2 A parcel of common land called Pinner Green (HP5 1UL) has been fenced off along the west side of Blackwell Hall Lane, Latimer. Appendix 1 outlines the extent of the common land in pink and fencing in bold red. Pinner Green was part of the Ley Hill Common exemption order. The land was exempt from registration under the Commons Registration Act 1965 because it was regulated by schemes under the Commons Act 1899. Section 38 of the 2006 Act as well as applying to all land registered as common under the 1965 Commons Registration Act also covered land subject to a scheme of management under the Metropolitan Commons Act 1866 or the Commons Act 1899.
- 3 There has been a legal requirement to obtain Secretary of State consent to carry out fencing or other works that prevent or impede access on common land since 1925 (Law of Property Act section 194). This requirement was a response to pressure from the Commons Preservation Society (now the Open Spaces Society) to prevent the continuing loss of common land through inclosure and extinguishment of common rights. This was strengthened by section 38 Commons Act 2006. In 1966 the land was owned by Amersham Rural District Council which is now Chiltern District Council.
- 4 We contacted Chiltern district council on 13th June 2014 to seek removal of the fencing on their land, erected by a neighbouring local landowner. After some chasing we received a response on 10th October 2014, stating Chiltern district council do not intend to take any action. The neighbour has responded stating the fence was erected to prevent fly tipping and Chiltern district council have historic records indicating this taking place in this area (though they didn't state it

- was on this specific piece of land). Their stated legal opinion is that because pedestrian access is available from the other side of the common, the fencing doesn't actually stop people taking access to the land for open access and is therefore not unlawful.
- 5 While the county council has not sought legal advice on the matter to date, the fencing appears to remain unlawful because it prevents access from the road and should have been legitimised by consent under section 38 of the Commons Act 2006.
 - 6 It has been suggested that Chiltern district council or the neighbour are made to remove the fence and install 200 metres of obstacles (bollards or large stone) to prevent vehicular access, as works exempt from requiring permission from the Secretary of State as stated under the Commons Act 2006 section 43 and PINS Common Land Guidance sheet 1c. Alternatively, the fencing should receive Secretary of State permission.
 - 7 The Local Access Forum's advice is sought.

Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails

- 8 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. Each trail is to be managed by a Trail Partnership forming a group of partners that take responsibility for achieving a revised set of quality standards.
- 9 Following a consultation process earlier in the year, managed through the Chilterns Conservation Board, consultants recommended management of the Thames Path and Ridgeway be split into two. The inaugural meeting of the Ridgeway Shadow Partnership took place on 3rd November 2014 at Streatley, Oxfordshire. A similar process is being followed for the Thames Path, where a final Delivery Framework needs to be agreed by the existing National Trails management Group in early January 2015.

Disabled Access

Gavin has been active promoting and reviewing disabled access since the last meeting, including:

- work on the Wingrave to Rowsham route and a possible Local Area Forum funding application;
- disabled rambles – Ashridge / Ivinghoe Beacon & Wendover / Chequers; and
- route testing at Penn Wood, near Amersham.

Joint LAF Chairs meeting

A useful meeting was held on 24th September 2014 with Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LAF chairman, attended by Gavin Caspersz in John Elfes' absence. Much joint working was identified including site visits, cross-boundary issues (Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal and the Jubilee River walking and cycling network) and LAF working groups to develop cross boundary links. A further meeting is planned for the new year: TBC.

Conferences

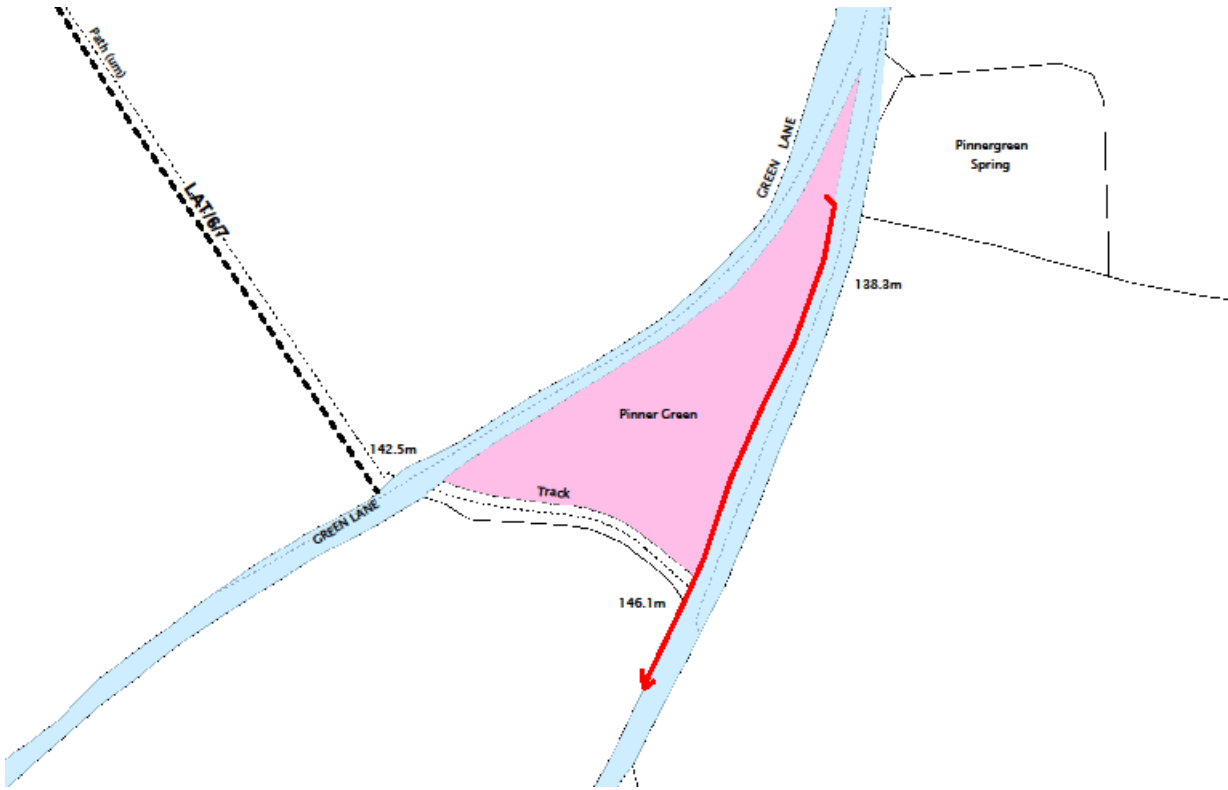
- 10 The Annual Chiltern's Forum will be held this year on Friday 7th November 2014, 9.30am at Kings Church, Raans Rd, Amersham, HP6 6LX. This annual event provides an opportunity to hear the latest about the work of the Chiltern's Conservation Board and discuss current issues, such as new housing, HS2, river conservation, tourism and cycling. There is an optional afternoon walk is planned to hear about the River Chess conservation.
- 11 A member of the Local Access Forum is invited to the first Bucks and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership conference, a joint event to be held with the Bucks Rural Affairs Group (BRAG) at Quainton Memorial Hall on 14th November 2014 (lunch provided). The Local Access Forum and Natural Environment Partnership share objectives in promoting greater access to enjoy the natural environment, so it would be good to open up channels of communication. The invitation is summarised in Appendix 2.
- 12 A South East LAF chair's meeting is likely to be held in late January 2015. Date and venue in London to be confirmed.
- 13 The National LAF conference is likely to be held again this year, hosted by Natural England in Late February 2015. Date and venue to be confirmed.
- 14 The South East Local Access Forum Conference will be held next year on Tuesday 19th May 2014 at the Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ. Speakers to be arranged.

Correspondence

- 15 The chairman wrote to Ruth Vigor-Hedderly on 2nd July 2015 regarding section 106 money the county council holds for a crossing of the A413 between Watermead and Buckingham Park (see Appendix 3). We are awaiting a reply.
- 16 The chairman wrote to Ruth Vigor-Hedderly on 29th July 2015 regarding concerns over the Ringway Jacobs contract (see Appendix 4). We are awaiting a reply.
- 17 The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report for 2013/14 was submitted to Natural England on 30th June 2014 and a copy is enclosed in Appendix 5.

LAF dates for 2014

- 1 The dates of the meetings in 2015 are;
Wednesday 18th March
Wednesday 1st July
Wednesday 4th Nov





The BRAG, NEP and Clay Vales LEADER invite you to attend the

Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group & Natural Environment Partnership Joint Conference 2014

14th November 2014 – 9.30 to 1pm

Buffet lunch at 1pm (£10 per person)

Quinton Memorial Hall

Station Road, Quinton, Bucks (HP22 4BW)



An opportunity for the rural and environmental community to gather, network and debate the challenges and priorities for rural areas and the natural environment.

Chaired by the NEP and BRAG's Chairman, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher.

- Launch of the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership, who will set out their challenges and priorities
- Find out what's happening in the BRAG, and how its strategy can help you and your organisation
- Hear about the rural grants of up to £50,000 available in your area
- Key note presentations from the Chiltern Rangers on volunteering and the community interest company experience, and from the NFU on the challenges and opportunities for farming in Buckinghamshire
- Find out more about the successes and challenges of rural planning, the health benefits of nature and the top issues for biodiversity in Bucks and Milton Keynes
- Westminster guest speaker (to be confirmed) giving a national overview
- In-depth discussion and debate on the top environmental and rural priorities our MPs and local groups should be focusing on - we need **your** opinions!

Registration from 9 a.m., conference from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Book your place (including lunch) for only £10 by using the booking form overleaf.

We look forward to seeing you there!





Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group and Bucks & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership Joint Conference

November 14th 2014

Booking form

Name	
Organisation (if any)	
Position	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	

Cheque enclosed [] Invoice/receipt required [] PayPal []

Purchase order no: (this is necessary if an invoice is required)

If you would prefer payment through PayPal, please use the following link:
<http://www.chilternsaonb.org/Products/24/20/NEP-conference-fee.html>

Delegate fee: **£10.00** – Cheques should be made payable to ‘The Chilterns Conservation Board’. Payment will secure your booking. The fee will remain payable should you cancel with less than 24 hours’ notice.

Tea/coffee and lunch provided. If you have any special dietary, access or other requirements, please let us know using the box below.

Please return your completed form by Friday 7th November latest. A map and joining instructions will be sent along with confirmation of your booking.

By e-mail to: dwebb@chilternsaonb.org

By post to: Chilterns Conservation Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon, OX39 4HA

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

2nd July 2014

County Councillor Ruth Vigor-Hedderly

The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is the statutory advisory body on all matters relating to access to the countryside

Dear County Councillor Vigor-Hedderly

Section 106 funded crossing of the A413 Watermead to Buckingham Park

The Local Access Forum would like to raise the issue of a safe crossing of the A413 on the eastern side of the Buckingham Park development, Aylesbury. This has been discussed at forum meetings on 20th November 2013 and 19th March 2014.

It is understood Buckinghamshire county council are holding £80, 000, secured as part of a section 106 Agreement, in order to install a Pegasus crossing on the A413. This was part of a wider plan to link Buckingham Park with Watermead along a new bridleway. However, this is not now possible following Watermead parish council, deciding at their meeting on 16th January 2014, they no longer wanted to create new access on land within their control. County Councillor Netta Glover, a member of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and in whose Ward this lies, is aware of the issues.

Having said that, and in the knowledge a new bridleway is not now possible to connect the two communities together directly, we would request that you consider retaining the section 106 money, subject to meeting the terms of the Agreement, in order to construct a crossing suitable for walkers and cyclists. This will ensure the existing bridleway through Buckingham Park does not become a dead end at the A413, and pedestrians/cyclists can safely cross the road and connect south along the highway verge to link with the footways at the traffic light crossroads of Prince Rupert Drive, Buckingham Road and Watermead Road.

Yours Sincerely,

John Elfes,
Chairman, Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum
143, White Hill, Chesham, HP5 1AT

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is the statutory advisory body on all matters relating to Access to the Countryside

County Councillor Ruth Vigor-Hedderly
Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire

29th July 2014

Dear Councillor,

We understand that a review is under way of the contract between Bucks County Council and Ringway Jacobs, which covers a range of services including those in which we have a special interest. Our main concern is the Rights of Way network, and in a letter to Councillor Blake, before the contract was let, we outlined our concerns about the contract as we understood it.

We posed the following principal questions on the transfer of the Rights of Way Group:

- **What safeguards does the contract give on maintaining expertise?**
- **What safeguards are there on maintaining standards?**
- **How does the contract ensure that the Council's statutory duties are honoured?**

It is now clear that there are no safeguards on these issues at all. The continuing failure to staff the transferred Rights of Way group fully, and the reduction in the already inadequate budget, can only dilute expertise and reduce standards, and make it highly unlikely that the Council's statutory duties will or can be honoured.

To prevent further deterioration, and to enable you to address these issues more easily, we urge you to consider the immediate withdrawal of the Rights of Way group from the contract and re-forming it within the Council's structure. This would have the further benefit of flexibility and cross-working with the retained staff in the Definitive Map team.

The Local Access Forum urges that these issues be properly taken into account in any review of the contract and that you ensure that expertise is maintained, that standards do not slip further, and that the council's statutory duties are indeed honoured.

Yours Sincerely,

John Elfes,
Chairman, Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum
143, White Hill, Chesham, BUCKS HP5 1AT.

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

Name of LAF: Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum

Name of LAF Chair: John Elfes

Name of LAF Secretary: Jonathan Clark

Number of LAF members: 14

Number of LAF vacancies: 1

1 - Involvement and Representation

What interests does your current membership cover? Ramblers, British Horse Society, Trail Riders Fellowship, NFU, CLA, Parish Councils, Heritage, CTC, Sustrans, county council member, National Trust

What skills, sectors, interest groups, experience are missing? More landowning and farming representation

Describe any difficulties you had recruiting members from particular sectors: None

2 - Operation of LAF

What procedures (e.g. expense claims, new applications, monitoring of Huddle etc) do you follow that help you work effectively? Are these effective? Expenses are re-imbursed by the county council; we have 4 members monitoring Huddle intermitently; and communication between meetings is through email. On larger consultations, such as HS2, sub-groups are formed to discuss issues between LAF meetings.

How do you ensure that your members are able to work as a team? The chairman normally ensures a balanced debate and summaries the position of each party to ensure all opinions are represented.

In what ways do you reach consensus? Discussions and debates usually indicate the LAF's opinion on various matters. If it appears to be a split there is a vote through a show of hands.

How do you ensure proper conduct and/or resolve any conflicts? Debates and meetings are tightly chaired and the membership are not inclined to conflict.

Give up to 3 examples of where you have encountered operational difficulties (e.g. lack of resources); explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate such issues:

1 - Some meetings have had a low turnout and several members have missed more than 3 meetings in a row, which breaks the LAF attendance criteria. The secretary is to review membership during this financial year and replace members that show lack of commitment.

2 - Further difficulties in getting our advice given proper consideration by the county council - but see Chairman's comment below.

3 -

3 - Partnership and Progress

Do you work well with the access authority? If not, why not? The working relations with the secretary and LAF officer are good

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

Do you work well with your planning authorities? If not, why not? We don't have a system in place to respond to planning applications as there is not enough volunteer time or expertise.

Have you established a clear role for the LAF in the local area? The profile of the LAF is relatively low in the county, but there are good relations in some quarters, such as the Chilterns AONB and with neighbouring LAFs. The awareness of the forum's consultative role within the county and district council is generally low.

Main or notable achievements?

Influencing the outcome of HS2's draft and final environmental statements and therefore helping to protect access along 63 rights of way crossings in Buckinghamshire.

Influencing the protection and enhancement of 34 at grade crossings through consultation with Network Rail through the East West Rail Project.

Developing and promoting a new new disabled access route.

Strong lobbying of the county council on rights of way budget cuts and TUPE transfer of staff to Ringway Jacobs

4 - Profile and Direction

Has anything changed over the last year? There has been a slight drop in attendance over the past year

What changes / barriers can you see ahead? Maintaining interest and enthusiasm from members when the council is cutting rights of way budgets so severely

What are your priorities for the year ahead (list up to 3)?

- 1 - Establish a partnership project with the Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead LAF
- 2 - Recruit new members, particularly from the farming community
- 3 - Try to ensure the maintenance of rights of way does not deteriorate too much following the budget cuts

What support or training do you need to deliver your priorities? None

5 - Section 94 Bodies

Give up to 3 examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:

- 1 - We wrote to the cabinet member for planning and transportation and met senior managers and councillors to express concern over the TUPE transfer of rights of way staff to Ringway Jacobs and the reduction in the rights of way maintenance budget.
- 2 - We responded to the draft Chilterns Conservation Board 5-year Management Plan document.
- 3 -

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

6 - Open Access Work

How many Restriction Cases have you been consulted on? 0

How many cases have you responded to? 0

Detail any informal involvement with Open Access Restriction cases: We lobbied the county council and Chiltern district council to take action over fencing and obstructions to pedestrian access on Pinner Green common land, near Chesham

We persuaded a landowner in Turville to grant permission to install a gate along new fencing to improve pedestrian links on open access land

7 - Number of consultations, meetings and initiatives your LAF has been involved with over the year. Please add numbers into the boxes below and only count specific consultations once even if advice has been given on them a number of times. If a consultation covers more than one subject area, please count them separately as appropriate.

Public meetings (e.g. LAF meetings)	3	Working groups	1
Training days	1	Definitive map modification orders	0
Highway orders	0	Green Infrastructure strategies	0
Gating orders	0	Local transport plans and traffic management schemes	0
Cycle projects	1	Disabled access	1
Dog exclusion/on leads/fouling orders	0	Housing development schemes	0
Planning applications	0	PROW network and projects	1
ROWIP planning and objectives	0	Local development frameworks and planning strategies	0
Local Nature Partnerships	0	Recording of paths and promoting use	0
Expiring permissive agreements under Higher Level Stewardship schemes - assessing the value and future of and liaison with landowners to improve access	0	Flood defence works - Environment Agency consultations and planning applications regarding	0

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Review Form: April 2013 to March 2014

Slipways and landing stages - public access to	0	Improvement of access through the Paths for Communities (P4C) scheme	1
Disposal and development of land owned by the Council	0	Parish Council or local improvement grant schemes	0
Shoreline management plans	0	Rail freight interchange strategic development	0
Network rail and rail crossing closures	12	Access and nature conservation	0
Horse routes and equestrian provision	0	Multi user routes	1
National Parks	0	Coastal access	0
Motorised vehicle access	0	Access to MOD land	0
New town & village green registration government consultation	0	Natural England consultations	0
Defra consultations	0	Commons grazing proposals	0
Highways Agency consultations	0	Department for Transport consultations	0
Other (please specify):			

8 - Final comments from Appointing Authority: A committed and enthusiastic core of members attend regularly, but attendance overall compared to 2012/13 is slightly down. This may well be partly related to poor moral from reductions in local authority rights of way funding and some lack of influence in challenging this course. Where the LAF have engaged with partners and consultees this has been positive, for example with HS2. We have recruited 2 new members to represent heritage and cycling respectively, and it is hoped to recruit someone from the farming community this year.

9 - Final comments from LAF Chair: I endorse the report. The difficulty in ensuring proper consideration of our advice by the county council may have been improved by a brief informal conversation I had with the leader of the council.