



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 6

Date: 4th November 2015

Title: Rights of Way group update

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A. DEFINITIVE MAP UPDATE (CLAIRE HUDSON)

The purpose of this report is to appraise Buckinghamshire LAF members of the outstanding definitive map caseload undertaken by the Definitive Map Team and provide an update. Changes since the last meeting are shown in **bold**.

MATTERS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED BY COMMITTEE

1. **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. **Matter referred to the Secretary of State who has scheduled a Public Inquiry for 25 November 2015 to determine the matter.**
2. **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. **Public Inquiry held 13-14 October 2015; awaiting Inspectors decision on whether to confirm the Order.**
3. **Chepping Wycombe** – application to record the route from Elmshott Close to King's Wood as Public Footpath. This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 15 October 2014; Objections were received to the Order; case referred to the Secretary of State; **waiting for decision from the Planning Inspectorate on whether to confirm the Order.**
4. **Great and Little Kimble** – Application to divert Footpath 29. Committee agreed that the matter should be referred to the Secretary of State for determination during the 4 March 2015 meeting; **Order confirmed by Planning Inspectorate following written representations. CASE CLOSED.**

5. **Wooburn** – proposal to create a Public Bridleway by Order along the former railway. This application was accepted by the Committee at its meeting on 15 October 2014; Objections were received to the Order; case referred to the Secretary of State; **Public Inquiry to be held 15-16 December 2015.**
6. **Bledlow** – application to record the route from Footpath No 49 to Bridleway No 55 as public footpath. Application accepted by Committee; Order made and advertised; no objections; **Order to be confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**

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

7. **Iver** – application to record various routes across The Fields and The Clump, Iver as Public Footpaths. **To be determined during 10 December Committee meeting.**
8. **Edgcott** – application to record Lawn House Lane as a Public Footpath to Public Footpath 11 Edgcott. **Investigation started.**
9. **Iver** – application to record route from Grange Way to Colne Orchard as a Public Footpath. **Investigation not started.**
10. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 14 to public bridleway status based on historical evidence. **Investigation not started.**
11. **Bledlow** – application to investigate the alignment of Public Footpath 52. **Investigation not started.**
12. **Great Missenden** – application to record route across Widmer Field. **Investigation not started.**
13. **Quinton** – application to upgrade public footpath 4 to bridleway status. **Investigation not started.**
14. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade Public Footpath Nos. 11 and 12 to public bridleway status based on historical evidence. **Investigation not started.**

C. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

15. **Chartridge** – Application to divert BW21A – Application received – **site visit arranged to discuss route.**
16. **Chartridge** – Application to divert FP5(part) Chartridge – **under consultation.**
17. **Great Marlow** - Application to divert FP2 Great Marlow. **Order Confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
18. **Hambleden** – Application to divert Footpath No.46 – consultation period up and objections received – **decision made not to proceed to Order making.**
19. **High Wycombe** – Application to extinguish Footpath No. 27. Wycombe District Council planning matter. Order made and confirmed by WDC. **Awaiting developer works before bringing Order into effect.**
20. **Little Missenden** – Application to divert Footpath No 4 – **awaiting further information from the Agent before proceeding.**

21. **Maids Moreton** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made and objection received. **Under discussion with applicant and objector.**
22. **Marsworth** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council and no objections received. **Awaiting developer works before bringing Order into effect.**
23. **Oakley** – Application to divert Footpath No. 30. **Order Confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
24. **Quinton** – Application to divert Bridleway No 21. **Under discussion with landowner.**
25. **Steeple Claydon** – Application to divert Footpath No 6. **Order Made. ON HOLD until further notice.**
26. **Swanbourne** – Application to divert Footpath No. 12/14. **Awaiting completion of works before Order can be confirmed.**
27. **Tingewick** – Application to divert Footpath No.11 - **Order made – objection period up on 6 November 2015.**
28. **Tingewick** – Application to divert FP29/30(part) and create new Footpath and Bridleway – **consultation not started.**
29. **Wingrave with Rowsham** – Application to Divert/ Extinguish Footpath No.1 (part). **Route agreed with landowner – under consultation.**

D. PUBLIC PATH CREATION AGREEMENTS

30. **Chepping Wycombe** – Footpath Creation. **Completed. CASE CLOSED.**
31. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (ERC Land). **Awaiting go ahead from ERC to proceed.**
32. **Penn** – Footpath Creation at Whilden Lane (BCC Land). **Completed. CASE CLOSED.**
33. **Stewkley** – Footpath Creation at Kingsbridge (BCC Land). **Completed. CASE CLOSED.**
34. **Wing** – Footpath Creation at Long Spinney (BCC Land). **Completed. CASE CLOSED.**

E. VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATIONS

35. **High Wycombe** – land at Meadow Close, Wycombe Marsh. **To be determined by Committee on 10 December.**
36. **Wooburn** – land off Cherwell Road, Bourne End. **Waiting investigation.**

For further information please contact: Claire Hudson 01296 383425

B. STRATEGIC ACCESS UPDATE (JONATHAN CLARK)

37. The Select Committee for HS2 heard evidence from the county council between 13th and 15th October 2015. The strategic officer was due to give evidence, but last minute assurances were received negating the need to appear. These included provision of a cycleway alongside the Stoke Mandeville bypass and a guarantee that all newly diverted rights of way will conform to the county standard width for new footpaths (2m) and bridleways (4m). The 4th round of 'Additional Provisions' (AP's) have been mapped and are now being reviewed. AP's are amendments to the HS2 Bill, to account, for example, for the changes to the footpaths around Mantle's Wood following the decision by the Committee to extend the Chiltern's tunnel.
38. The first of two public consultations on the East West Rail Project are underway and the county council has responded on all 42 proposed new rights of way crossings. Many bridges are shared farm access tracks, having the added benefit access by mobility scooter. Discussions will continue towards the second consultation with the EWR project team about our requirements. Network Rail will produce a revised set of drawings based on any changes we suggest and the final drawings will sit alongside the Transport & Works Act Bill due in May 2016.
39. The volume of planning applications affecting rights of way has increased markedly in the last 6 months, with 168 applications over the half year since April 2015 (69% of which were in Aylesbury Vale), compared to 174 for the whole year 2013/14 and 219 for 2014/15.
40. The rate of new donors coming forward to the Donate-a-Gate scheme has slowed slightly since the 1st July 2015 meeting, with 4 new donors, adding the total to 327.

C. RIGHTS OF WAY OPERATIONS UPDATE (JOANNE TAYLOR)

41. A 'Summary of Works' is attached to this report in Appendix 1, outlining work carried out by the Rights of Way Operations Team between 1st April 2014 and 1st Oct 2015.
42. In August 2015 the Rights of Way Operations team welcomed Alastair McVail to the post of Area Rights of Way Officer (North).
43. At the last meeting, the Forum were advised that it had been possible to secure additional revenue money through the business planning process for a Rights of Way Bridge Inspection Officer. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan acknowledged that no routine condition survey of rights of way bridge structures had been carried out for many years, and therefore a more proactive approach was required. Over the next 4 years every known bridge structure on the network will be inspected, recorded and assessed for condition, amounting to 600 structures per annum.
49. It was therefore necessary to recruit a Rights of Way Bridge Inspector and the post was offered to Corinne Waldron. However, this leaves Corinne's Area Rights of Way Officer (South) post vacant. Recruitment for the vacant post started in August 2015, but was unsuccessful. Recruitment is now underway via a recruitment agency which, it is hoped, will be more successful and interviews are anticipated shortly.
50. The bridge inspection project commenced on 4th August 2015 and the table in Appendix 2 summarises the results. These are made on a priority basis, selecting first bridges on byways, restricted byways and bridleways first, as they pose the greatest liability and potential danger to the public if they fail. There are 216 of these bridges. There are currently 4 closed paths due to dangerous bridges and 6 month closures have been applied to each with 'early warning notices (EWN's) to Buckinghamshire County Council to raise their awareness and outline the amount of

funds that will be required to replace these structures. Inevitably, the cost of replacing a bridge suitable for horses, carriages and vehicles is significant and far greater than replacing a simple footbridge. For example, £15,000 was spent replacing the deck of a bridle bridge in Denham. There are more EWN's than there are Temporary Closures as it has been possible to keep a couple of bridges open. However, if funds are not provided in the near future then further deterioration will result in closures. There are a number of bridges not recorded on GIS records, equating to a 1.6% increase in bridges on the network over 3 months of inspections.

51. A greater knowledge of the network asset is essential, but this also increases financial pressures on the department with regard to maintenance. At present there are no allocated funds for major bridge repairs therefore the likelihood of further long-term path closures is looking likely. The in-house maintenance budget provides enough funding to carry out minor repairs to 50 bridges, but Appendix 2 illustrates it is likely that significantly more bridges will be identified needing repair.
52. 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 contractors to undertake the work. Over 20 parishes took part in the scheme in 2014 amounting to 80 km of clearance being undertaken in those parishes. This year we have between 50 to 60 parish councils taking part in the devolvement project amounting to surface clearance on approximately 170 km. Together with the clearance undertaken by the county council (120 km) this amounts to 290 km.