



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2016 AT 10.00 AM  
MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY**

### **AGENDA**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Matters Arising/ Action Notes</b> To discuss any matters arising and to agree the minutes of the meeting held 04 November 2015.	<b>3 - 8</b>
<b>4 The Ridgeway Partnership</b> Update from Sarah Wright.	
<b>5 Donate-a-Gate North</b> Update from Bill Piers, Bucks Ripple (Ramblers Repairing and Improving Paths for Leisure & Exercise)	
<b>6 Rights of Way Group Report</b> Update from Helen Francis, Definitive Map team; Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Advisor and Joanne Taylor, Operation Team Leader.	<b>9 - 18</b>
<b>7 LAF Members' Report</b> LAF Members report attached.	<b>19 - 46</b>
<b>8 Any Other Business</b>	
<b>9 Date of Next and Future Meetings</b> Wednesday 20 July 2016, 10am. Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury,	





# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

## *BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM*

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2015, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.20 AM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr R Pushman, in the Chair,     Mr J Elfes, Outgoing Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr N Harris, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr G Caspersz, Mr G Thomas, Ms J Blake, Mr R Pushman, Ms A Heath, Mr A Clark and Mr W Whyte

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mr J Clark, Ms J Taylor, Mr P Turner and Mr A McVail

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Chris Hurworth and Netta Glover.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN**

Nominations were welcomed for the election of a new Chairman. David Briggs nominated Richard Pushman who in the absence of any other nominations agreed to be considered for the role. The nomination was agreed by Members present. Richard Pushman thanked Members and paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman who had put a tremendous amount of work into the forum. The new Chairman pledged to continue this good work and keep the Local Access Forum as the effective force for open spaces it has been.

#### **4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2015 TO BE CONFIRMED**

A typing error was noted on page 2; paragraph 3 – the word '*short*' had been used instead of '*shots*'. Once rectified the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

No matters were raised at this point.

6. **RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT**

*Definitive Map Update*

Phil Turner, Definitive Map Officer presented the definitive map update which could be seen with the agenda. Phil Turner highlighted a number of matters previously determined by committee which were outlined in the report in further detail.

Alongside Definitive Map Order modifications the workload of the team was summarised. 7 modification orders were to be investigated, 2 public pathways had been completed, 1 was on hold and 12 others were at various stages of completion, 1 village green application was awaiting investigation and a number of TRO applications had been processed as and when submitted (an average of 4 a month). No questions were asked.

*Strategic Access Update*

Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access Advisor presented the strategic access update and explained that in respect of HS2, assurances had been received that a cycleway would be implemented alongside the Stoke Mandeville bypass as well as a guarantee that all newly diverted rights of way will conform to the county standard width for new footpaths and bridleways. Agreements made over the last three months had not yet appeared as amendments to the HS2 bill but it was hoped that this would be done shortly.

The first of two public consultations on the East West Rail Project are underway and the County Council had responded on all 42 proposed new rights of way crossings.

During discussions the following questions were asked and comments made.

**What were the views on the increased planning applications?** It was said that the majority of growth was happening within Aylesbury Vale with an increased number of houses being built in the area and together with the economic revival this was believed to have led to a significant increase in planning applications.

**How was the Donate-a-Gate scheme being marketed?** The scheme had been marketed a number of ways over the years and it was said that donors had been slowing. A Member suggested that funeral directors could be targeted as it would appeal as an *in memoriam* scheme. Jonathan Clark would explore this suggestion.

**With the Donate-a-Gate scheme currently being in the Chilterns could community groups start similar schemes with the support from the Local Access Forum and make the public aware of such schemes?** It was

recognised that there had been no coverage in the north of the county although County Council Officers have limited time so ideally there would need to be a voluntary / outside group element. It was said that the County Council could manage the financial side of any project. The Chiltern Society had run volunteer work parties to install the donated gates, but they did not have the capacity to expand into the Vale. The Chiltern Society had also been training some Rambler affiliated volunteers, a group called Ripple, to install new gates, so there may be a small volunteer element available.

A member highlighted the new Aylesbury Vale District Council lottery which was designed for community and charitable groups to apply for funding. The chairman suggested the lottery is designed for all community, voluntary and charitable groups in the Vale and it was up to them to market it to their own supporters. The first thing would be to write a letter in to the county, outlining the proposition, what it is that is wanted done and it would then be dealt with in the official way.

A member also highlighted Friends of Hockeridge and Pancake Wood Group and the work he had been doing with them on a consultancy basis. The Chairman encouraged such work, and suggested membership on the forum from them, but concern was expressed that small, local interest groups might not be a good idea on a largely strategic forum.

**Were the County Council in agreement with what was being proposed on crossings as part of the East West rail project?** Discussions with East West Rail had been amenable and the County Council had formally commented on 42 Rights of Way crossings and had been optimistic these comments would be taken in to account.

**In respect of HS2** - Questions were asked whether noise mitigation orders were granted in particular areas and what the final rights of way network was envisaged to be. Jonathan Clark agreed to investigate the noise mitigation orders. It was explained that the final network was close to having been fully decided and Jonathan Clark agreed to distribute the link to Members to view maps. A question was also asked whether all changes would be featured in next May's bill. It had been anticipated that changes would be made in advance of the bill although Network Rail had taken time to decide where to place bridges so this was not possible.

**Action: Jonathan Clark to distribute link and investigate noise mitigation orders.**

#### *Rights of Way Operations Update*

Joanne Taylor, Operations Team Leader, presented the Rights of Way Operations update which could be seen in the report. The following points were highlighted and questions asked:

- 50-60 Parishes took part in the devolvement project of managing path clearance over the summer and combined with the county council the total clearance was just over 300km. Some parishes had not taken this on which had meant that some paths had not been cleared.

- Volunteer hours had reduced from The Chiltern Society although The Chiltern Society had been involved with the Parish Council devolvement so these hours had shifted. The Ramblers Association contributed 280 voluntary hours over the spring/summer period.
- 5% performance indicator results show that from April to October 2015 paths rated 'easy to use' was down to 65% which was said to be quite low compared to last year.
- The amount of issues on the database had increased from 1423 to 1631. This was said to be linked to staffing resources and a reduced budget. Members commented that further work is needed to engage parishes and community groups.
- The issue of excessive growth on byroads and C roads was raised and whilst adjoining landowners were pursued for hedge cuts it was not always done. This raised questions around safety and the Chairman commented that a policy may need to be adopted.
- Joanne Taylor introduced Alastair McVail who had joined the team as Rights of Way Officer in the north of the county and advised that Corrinne Waldron, previously Rights of Way Officer for the south of the county, had been recruited as the new Rights of Way Bridge Inspector. The target for bridge project was for 600 structures to be inspected per annum with the bigger structures being inspected first. If structures had been found to be dangerous an analysis was to be done as to whether the structure requires closing or can be kept open with a small amount of maintenance. The amount of structures inadequate or which required repair was not anticipated and it was recognised much work needs to be done. No specific money in the limited budget had been identified for bridging repairs.
- The above appointment had left the Rights of Way officer for the south of county position vacant. Recruitment is on hold at this time, but three people are lined up for interview through an agency.
- It was anticipated cuts would continue and efforts would focus on devolving projects to parishes and communities. It was suggested that this be raised and shared with Local Members and Community Groups at Local Area Forums across the county. Two good examples of how the LAF funding had worked positively were given which included matched-funding to install 25 new gates in Haddenham and another to fund access improvements to enable a mother's group in Worminghall to walk their local countryside footpaths.
- It was highlighted the high workload impacts upon staff having to deal with increasing amount of issues leading to increased stress.

## **7. LAF MEMBERS' REPORT**

Jonathan Clark gave the following update (additional information could be seen in the report).

- Chiltern District Council had confirmed that the fence wire had now been removed at Pinner Green following letters sent by the Chairman, which led to good publicity for the Local Access Forum.
- A good response had been received from parish councils and user groups to the 2026 cut-off date letter. The Rights of Way team had offered to help out with training and the need for everything to be organised and structured was recognised. Dr Phil Wadey was said to be an expert in the area who could possibly help out. A member suggested that work could be done by email rather than the holding of frequent meetings and it was recognised that there are many online resources where maps could be viewed. The level of experience of those coming forward had been varied. Jonathan Clark agreed to look into whether Members would be charged for photocopies whilst carrying out research.

**Action: Jonathan Clark**

- LAF Member, Gavin Caspersz had attended a local stakeholders briefing on the proposed A355 Relief Road scheme to the east of Beaconsfield. Gavin Caspersz advised that the scheme was at an early stage and the route had yet to be decided so in relation to access it was too early for issues to have been raised.
- A joint Local Access Forum meeting was held to discuss cross boundary issues between Buckinghamshire and neighbouring authorities. The meeting was said to have been productive and discussions had included the proposal for new bridleway dedication along the Jubilee River network and the M4 Smart Motorway scheme. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment advised that a robust response was sent to Highways England in respect of closing Old Slade Lane Bridge for 12 months during construction, as it is the only right of way in that area for some distance.
- The Chairman attended a South East Local Area Forum Chairs meeting and advised that there were some interesting projects discussed.
- The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum annual report had been submitted to Natural England. Jonathan Clark added that he would also be organising training for new members of Local Access Forums.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman commented that with parish councils being heavily relied upon it would benefit the Local Access Forum to have representation from the Bucks Association of Local Councils. All Members were in agreement.

A Member commented that Taylor Wimpey had provided the County Council with funds for a Pegasus crossing to be implemented on the A413 although it was not clear what stage this was at. Jonathan Clark agreed to look into this and report back to the forum with an update.

**Action: Jonathan Clark**

**9. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, 10 a.m. - Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016.

Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, 10 a.m. – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, 10 a.m. – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016

**Chairman**





## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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## AGENDA ITEM 6

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

**Title:** Rights of Way group update

**Authors:** Helen Francis, Jonathan Clark and Joanne Taylor

**Contact Officer:** Christina Beevers (01296 382938)

### A. DEFINITIVE MAP UPDATE (HELEN FRANCIS)

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**.

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, a Public Inquiry was completed on 25 November and adjourned to 1 February 2016. The Order has been confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
  
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. The Order has been confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
  
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; **Order confirmed with modification by Secretary of State following written representations. CASE CLOSED.**
  
4. **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 was to be held 15-16 December 2015 but adjourned to 10-12 May 2016.**

5. **Iver** – application to record various routes across The Fields and The Clump, Iver as Public Footpaths. **Determined during 10 December Committee meeting. The application was rejected. CASE CLOSED.**

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

All Definitive Map Modification Applications are dealt with in chronological order of receipt. However, where there is a particular need of an application to be investigated urgently, then the County Council may exercise its discretion to deal with that application urgently.

6. **Edgcott** – application to record Lawn House Lane as a Public Footpath to Public Footpath 11 Edgcott. **Application dated 15 June 2013. To be determined during 16 March 2016 Committee meeting.**
7. **Iver** – application to record route from Grange Way to Colne Orchard as a Public Footpath. **Application dated 10 September 2013. Under Investigation.**
8. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade public footpath No. 14 to public bridleway status based on historical evidence. **Application dated 5 December 2013. Investigation not started.**
9. **Bledlow** – application to investigate the alignment of public footpath No. 52. **Application dated 19 December 2013. Investigation not started.**
10. **Quinton** – application to upgrade public footpath No. 4 to public bridleway status. **Application dated 21 October 2014. Investigation not started.**
11. **Great Missenden** – application to record route across Widmer Field. **Application dated 10 October 2014. Application re-prioritised as affected by development, under investigation.**
12. **Hedgerley** – application to upgrade public footpath No. 11 and No. 12 to public bridleway status. **Application dated 25 June 2015. Investigation not started**
13. **Chepping Wycombe** – application to record route between public footpath No. 14 and No. 15 Parish of Chepping Wycombe. **Application dated 14 September 2015. Investigation not started.**
14. **Marlow** – application to record a public footpath from Cromwell Gardens to New Court. **Application dated 15 January 2016. Investigation not started.**
15. **Thornborough** – application to record a public footpath around the field off Back Street. **Application dated 6 January 2016. Investigation not started.**
16. **Denham** – application to upgrade Shire Lane from bridleway to restricted byway. **Application dated 23 January 2016. Application re-prioritised as affected by development.**
17. **Little Chalfont** application to record a public footpath around Statters Field off Burton Lane. **Application dated 13 January 2016. Investigation not started.**
18. **Whaddon** – application to modify the alignment of Public Footpath No. 6. **Investigation not started.**

19. **Lillingstone Dayrell** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 1 to restricted byway status. **Investigation not started.**
20. **Lillingstone Dayrell** – application to upgrade Public Footpath No. 2 to public bridleway status. **Investigation not started.**

### **C. PUBLIC PATH ORDERS**

21. **Aston Clinton** – Application to divert public footpaths No 5 & 6 under the Town and Country Planning Act – **In consultation.**
22. **Chartridge** – Application to divert BW21A – **In consultation.**
23. **Chartridge** – Application to divert FP5(part) Chartridge – **decision made not to proceed to Order making as application did not meet legal tests. CASE CLOSED.**
24. **Hambleden** – Application to divert Footpath No.17 – **In consultation.**
25. **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.**
26. **Little Missenden** – Application to divert Footpath No 4 – **In objection period.**
27. **Maids Moreton** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made and objection received. **Current Order to be withdrawn; further application made and consulted on.**
28. **Marsworth** – Application to divert Footpath No. 3. Order made on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council and no objections received. **Order brought into effect following completion of site works. CASE CLOSED**
29. **Quainton** – Application to divert Bridleway No 21. **Under discussion with landowner.**
30. **Steeple Claydon** – Application to divert Footpath No 6. **Order Made. ON HOLD until further notice.**
31. **Swanbourne** – Application to divert Footpath No. 12/14. **Awaiting completion of works before Order can be confirmed.**
32. **Tingewick** – Application to divert Footpath No.11 - **Order made and confirmed. CASE CLOSED.**
33. **Tingewick** – Application to divert FPs 29(part) and 31 and Stop Up FP30(part) and create new Footpath and Bridleway – **In consultation.**
34. **Wing** – Application to stop up Footpath No. 14 – **Order Made and advertised. No objections received. Awaiting confirmation.**
35. **Wingrave with Rowsham** – Application to Divert/ Extinguish Footpath No.1 (part). **Order Made and advertised. No objections received. Awaiting completion of works before Order can be confirmed.**

## D. PUBLIC PATH CREATION AGREEMENTS

36. **Edgcott** – Bridleway Creation (ERC Land). **Completed. CASE CLOSED.**

## E. VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATIONS

37. **High Wycombe** – land at Meadow Close, Wycombe Marsh. **Further investigation required.**

38. **Wooburn** – land off Cherwell Road, Bourne End. **Investigation not started.**

### Background Papers

None

**For further information please contact: Helen Francis 01296 387123**

## E. EAST WEST RAIL (EWR) UPDATE

39. The County Council's Definitive Map and Rights of Way consultation response to Network Rail's (NR) EWR phase 2 PROW crossing diversion proposals was made in October 2015. We are now actively involved in undertaking detailed diversion assessments with the NR EWR Project Team staff to identify and capture the ancillary works, including the installation of pedestrian gates, footbridges, surfacing, way marking and sign-posting, that will be required of NR on parts of the diversion routes beyond the crossings themselves.

40. We are also using this opportunity to clarify on the ground those diversion proposals where the County Council is requiring changes to the diversion routes originally proposed by Network Rail at a small number of crossings.

41. It is understood that Network Rail's second phase 2 EWR consultation will now be in the Autumn of 2016, allowing them additional time for the inclusion of additional design detail in their consultation document and to further refine their proposals in light of the responses they have received to the first public consultation last year.

42. Members will be aware, EWR services were planned to start in March 2019, but, the precise delivery date is now uncertain. The *'Report from Sir Peter Hendy to the Secretary of State for Transport on the re-planning of Network Rail's Investment Programme'*, lists EWR as a project *'...with significant delivery in CP5 [2014 to 2019] and completion in CP6' [2019 to 2024].*

## B. STRATEGIC ACCESS UPDATE (JONATHAN CLARK)

43. The 4<sup>th</sup> round of 'Additional Provisions' (AP4) were reviewed and the council had no issues from a rights of way perspective. AP's are amendments to the HS2 Bill, to account for more recent changes. The House of Commons Select Committee completed its hearings on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 and rights of way will not be petitioning the next committee process in the House of Lords. The third reading of the HS2 Hybrid Bill is estimated to take place in December 2016, when, if approved by Parliament, will receive Royal assent. This brings to a close the process of negotiating all the bridges, underpasses and diversions necessary to cross the line, a process that was largely successful. We have also received a number of assurances which improve existing ROW, as well as commitments to create new rights of way.

44. The Secretary of State (or their agent) will be responsible for the legal process in relation to making the necessary Orders to stop-up, divert and create the new rights of way and they will bear all administrative costs, including notifications, notices and site inspections. In the future, it is likely the role of the county council will be to take

part in detailed design discussions and monitor works undertaken by HS2. The LAF will be consulted on these discussions and any major issues that arise.

45. Despite the many successes, it is considered prudent to outline the petition points not resolved through assurances (Appendix 1). Notes have been attached to each point.
46. A new cycling and walking route (a bridleway) linking Aylesbury Vale Parkway station to Waddesdon has been proposed, which could form part of a National Cycleway between London and Birmingham. This local section could be worth around £1.2 million, with funding provided by the Department of Transport. A public meeting is planned for 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Waddesdon, with a planning application likely shortly afterwards.
47. We have submitted a bid for £125k to the Planning Inspectorate in order to mitigate the closure of Old Slade Lane, Iver, along the Colne Valley Way, as part of the M4 motorway widening works. We await the outcome.
48. The number of planning applications affecting rights of way is increasing markedly, from 174 to Y/E 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014; to 219 Y/E 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and the current figures stand for Y/E 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 at 260 with 1 week to go. This is an important area of work as it can attract hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of investment in the network, on paths linked to development sites.
49. Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern District have identified up to 250 sites which they think may be appropriate for housing development and requested input from a rights of way perspective. These sites have been commented upon in terms of mitigating the impact of housing growth and providing improvements to the strategic network. Current figures in AVDC indicate a 'need' for 21, 300 homes and a potential 'supply' of 28, 300 over the next 15-20 years.
50. The number of new donors to the Donate-a-Gate scheme now stands at 336 donors. An article on the project featured in the Winter Edition of Chiltern News celebrating 10 years of the scheme, raising over £100, 000, and the spring edition includes donating a gate under '51 things to do in the Chilterns' in the Society's 51<sup>st</sup> year.

**For further information please contact: Jonathan Clark 01296 387695**

### **C. RIGHTS OF WAY OPERATIONS UPDATE (JOANNE TAYLOR)**

51. A 'Summary of Works' is attached to this report in Appendix 2, outlining work carried out by the Rights of Way Operations Team between 1st April 2014 and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
52. The bridge inspection project commenced on 4th August 2015 and the intention is that 400 bridge structures will be inspected up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 (end of financial year). Inspections are made on a priority basis, selecting first bridges on byways, restricted byways and bridleways, as they pose the greatest liability and potential danger to the public if they fail. There are 216 of these bridges of which 5 are currently closed for public safety. Full assessments will to be carried out to inform likely funding sources for repairs. Also, it has become obvious that not all bridge structures have been recorded during earlier surveys and do not appear on the database. It is likely that there will be an increase in bridge stock by approximately 1% - 2%. There is a plan to carry out a further 400 bridge inspections during the forthcoming financial year, but this target will depend on staff and financial resource.

53. Members of the Forum will recall that the Devolvement Project was 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. Funding was given to parish councils wishing to employ their contractors to undertake rights of way clearance work. Over 20 parishes took part in the scheme in 2014/15 amounting to 80 km of clearance being undertaken in those parishes. The 2015/16 devolvement scheme had 45 parishes, carrying out approximately 170km of rights of way clearance, and the agreements also included other highway clearance and maintenance works. The latest information on the Devolvement Project for next financial year is that up to 60 parishes could be involved in agreements and will be undertaking rights of way summer clearance as part of that agreement.

**For further information please contact: Joanne Taylor 01296 383410**

### Public Rights of Way petition points not resolved through assurances

- a. \* The council asked for a temporary connecting bridleway, during construction, on the west side of the M25 between Public Bridleway No 43 Chalfont St Peter and No 44 Chalfont St Peter. We wrote to the Committee in support of the Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company (CVPCIC). *NB. This point continues to be discussed with HS2 by the CVPCIC.*
- b. The original route of Public Footpath 16 Stoke Mandeville is severed by the Stoke Mandeville Bypass. No crossing point has been provided by HS2. HS2 are confirming the arrangements for this, but we will have powers during detailed design to ensure this is raised and recommend a crossing is implemented. *NB. There is a path running roughly parallel which can be amalgamated into one route.*
- c. No track has been created connecting Public Bridleway No 1 Fleet Marston to what will become the old section of the A41 Bicester Road which means that our ambition to create a cycling route between Aylesbury and Waddesdon is not reached. *NB. This is coming forward through the National Cycle route scheme.*
- d. Feedback from local residents in Steeple Claydon suggested the footbridge planned at Public Footpath No 8 Steeple Claydon would be better positioned along Public Footpath No 9 Steeple Claydon. HS2 are discussing this with East West Rail (EWR). *NB. The council are lobbying extensively overall on the issue of the EWR/HS2 integration at Clavert.*
- e. HS2 have proposed a replacement floodplain storage area on the northern side of the infrastructure maintenance depot to be constructed across Public Footpath 8 Steeple Claydon. The council asked for a raised walkway to be constructed across the replacement floodplain storage area. HS2 stated this would not be provided as it was based around a 1 in 100 year flood event. The council's Flood Risk team agreed with that assessment. *NB. Instead the Council focused on creating a new link and improving another current link to ensure access between Calvert and Steeple Claydon is enhanced and available if the route is flooded. This was secured.*
- f. At present the route of Public Footpath 19 Chetwode and Public Footpath 18 Chetwode runs through Manthorne Farm. We petitioned for the route to be diverted away from the farm buildings onto the existing track leading up to the bridge to the former Grand Central Line. We supported the local landowner on this. *NB. This is an existing footpath problem that we hoped could be piggy-backed onto HS2 mitigation as a footpath diversion, but this HS2 were not obliged to do so as it was not required to enable the railway to take place*
- g. The realignment of Public Footpath 18 Twyford lengthens the route. While acknowledging the realignment would allow disabled users to continue using the footpath over the West Street Overbridge, the Council asked for a shortened, stepped route down the embankment for able-bodied users. HS2 rejected the change, arguing this could be brought forward through detailed design. At the time of petitioning we were advised by our Counsel not to take this forward as he agreed this could be dealt with during detailed design. *NB. To be pursued later*

\* Elements taken forward by other petitioners, with support from the county council





# Buckinghamshire County Council - Rights of Way

## Summary of Maintenance Carried Out Between April 2014 and February 2015

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	Aprl 14 - Mar 15	Aprl- Feb 15
Alignment	Path Off Line - resolved issue	6	12
Clearance	Clearance - carried out-jobs/km	133km	151km
Bridge	Installed or repaired	39	48
Finger/post	Installed or repaired	149	199
Fly Tipping	Fly Tipping - removed	10	4
Gate	Gate repaired or installed	91	88
Intimidation + animal	Intimidation - resolved	13	31
Intimidating sign	Misleading Sign - removed	3	6
Obstruction - resolved	Barbed wire	6	4
Obstruction - resolved	Barrier - Fencing, wall or other	71	123
Obstruction - resolved	Electric fence	10	19
Obstruction - removed	Fallen Tree	236	174
Obstruction - resolved	Locked Gate	9	17
Obstruction - resolved	Ploughing and Cropping	107	130
Other	Delivery of materials	27	40
Other	Miscellaneous issues resolved	35	47
Stile	Installed or repaired	163	198
Stile	Stile To Gap	15	29
Stile	Stile To KG	61	74
Stile	Stile To PG	36	56
Terrain	Bank Steps	5	12
Terrain	Path Surface problem resolved	44	83
Waymark Post	Installed/Repaired	126	123
Authorisation	New Structure HA80 sec 147	2	2
Issues Completed	Since 1st April 2015		1816
Volunteer Hours	The Chiltern Society	1750	1122
Volunteer Hours	RA Only		300
Improvements	To aid mobility access	191	264
5% Survey Results	Paths Rated easy to use	84%	64%
5% Survey Results	Structures rated easy to use	94%	90%
5% Survey Results	Routes with Roadside Signs	96%	96%
Number on Database	No. of issues os 31/03/12	799	
Number on Database	No. of issues os 31/03/13	1150	
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/14	1085	
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 31/03/15	1423	
Number on Database	No. of Issues os 29/03/16		1455
% of issues in targ time	Enforcement issues	76%	72%

### Chiltern Society Jobs

#### Completed

upto 29 th Feb 2016

#### Type

Clearance direct from BCC  
Miscellaneous Jobs  
Waymarking and signs  
Gates Repaired and installed  
Bank Steps  
Stiles replaced and repaired  
Trees removed

131 jobs/28km

6

80

41

4

57

43

1122 hours 362 jobs completed





## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

# Report

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## AGENDA ITEM 7

**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

**Title:** LAF members' report

**Author:** Jonathan Clark, Strategic Access

**Contact Officer:** Christina Beevers (01296 382938)

### Open Access

- 1 A parcel of common land (CL217) near Frieth (RG9 6NR) has been fenced off along the south east side of Footpath 15 Hambledon Parish (see Appendix 3). The LAF achieved success in removing an unlawful fence at Blackwell Hall Lane, Latimer, and it may be that a similar approach could negate the need for Hambledon parish council to take legal action. If members agree, an initial site visit is recommended.

### Restoring the Record Project

- 2 Since the chairman's letter to user groups and parish councils in October 2016, 38 volunteers have come forward, as well as a volunteer co-ordinator. The project aims to progress work towards achieving better access in the county before the definitive map is closed for new applications on the basis of documentary evidence. A training day has been organised on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016, led by Sarah Bucks and Dr Phil Wadey, and volunteers have been informed by letter on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 (Appendix 4).

### Local Transport Plan 4

- 3 A 2-month consultation on LTP4 began in December 2015. The Plan has important implications for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the rights of way network in general. The consultation fell between meetings so it was not possible to fully discuss the plan at a LAF meeting. However, a response was drafted by Andrew Clark and approved by the chairman. This is enclosed in Appendix 5.

### Ongoing Projects

- 4 The Royal Forestry Society have agreed in principle to modifications to two gates in order to allow push-chair and mobility scooter access to their site in Hockeridge Woods, Ashley Green (HP4 2SZ) following an approach by member

Andrew Clark. The RFS are to speak with their woodland management team to see if it is possible to combine these works with other improvements on their site. The gate works are estimated to be around £1000.

- 5 In order to raise money for footpath improvement projects and removal of stiles to gates that allow greater access for those with mobility problems, Gavin Caspersz has proposed and been successful in adopting the Buckinghamshire Disabled Ramblers as a recipient for Aylesbury Vale Lottery charitable allocations. However, players must select the Disabled Ramblers as a potential beneficiary from a percentage of their stake and few have done so, thus far. Gavin intends to seek more support on his return.

### **Joint work with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) and Slough LAFs**

- 6 RBWM proposed in 2015 to allow horse riders access to the existing Jubilee River walking and cycling network in Dorney, Buckinghamshire, extending from Maidenhead to Eton. The principle of this additional access was discussed and agreed during the July 2015 meeting. The culmination of this joint working has resulted in a letter to local landowners (Appendix 6). There are some clearance works required to widen the path in some places which can be funded by RBWM, and this survey has highlighted a number of maintenance issues outstanding, for which the county council was provided £30, 000 section 106 money from the Environment Agency.

### **Membership**

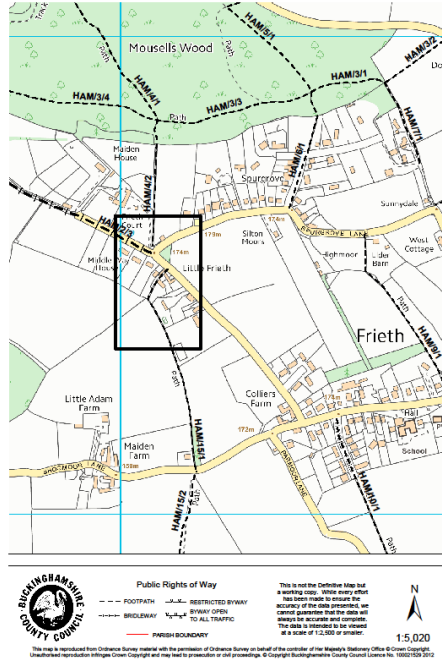
- 7 The chairman wrote to the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Appendix 7) inviting representative of BALC to sit as a member of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum. This followed a discussion at the last meeting where it was agreed that better representation from parish councils on the LAF would complement devolvement of services. We are awaiting a reply.
- 8 In consultation with members, it is hoped to produce an information pack for new members and review of the terms/structure/remit for document as this hasn't been renewed since the LAF first formed. The council will also be in touch regarding member's contracts where they are due to expire.

### **LAF News**

- 9 The latest edition of Natural England's quarterly Newsletter is attached (Appendix 8).

### **LAF dates for 2016**

- 10 The dates of the next meetings, in Mezz 1, are: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016.





## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

*The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is an independent, statutory advisory body on all matters relating to countryside access, with members representing a wide range of interests including farmers, landowners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians, parish councils, National Trust and those with disabilities.*

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for volunteering for the Local Access Forum's 'Restoring the Record' project. It is encouraging to see so many of you willing to dedicate time for the benefit of your local community and the wider public in the county. It's a great start.

We have set a training day with Dr Phil Wadey and Sarah Bucks on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at Old County Offices (Large Dining Room), Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UY together with a tour of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (or archives), likely to start at 9-30am. An agenda for the day will follow in due course.

I would also like to introduce you to Ross Osborn, from Lane End, near High Wycombe, who has volunteered to be project co-ordinator and can be contacted by email on: [rossosborn41@gmail.com](mailto:rossosborn41@gmail.com). The aim for Ross will be to seek a co-ordinated approach to the research to ensure a good spatial coverage of the county and make sure, for example, that different volunteers are not investigating the same route. He will be at the training course to meet you.

You may have seen there is a national movement to record lost rights of way, exemplified in a recent article in the Guardian newspaper. There is also a Facebook page to follow, for those inclined, to keep up-to-date with developments. We would also recommend you purchase the book, 'Rights of Way: *Restoring the Record*', by Dr Phil Wadey and Sarah Bucks, priced £28 from the National Archives bookshop. It is also hoped a copy will be available to borrow within the Buckinghamshire library system. Please see the attached links for more information.

<http://bookshop.nationalarchives.gov.uk/9780957403604/Rights-of-Way%3A-Restoring-the-Record/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/25/countdown-begins-to-prevent-loss-of-thousands-of-footpaths-and-alleyways>

<https://m.facebook.com/RestoringTheRecord/>

Once again, thank you very much for offering to volunteer for this most important project. Some have said it is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to secure public rights across the country, and I hope your work will help guarantee those rights for the next generation to enjoy.

I will be in touch again in the near future with an agenda for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016, but in the meantime, please confirm if you are able to attend the training day.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Pushman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Richard Pushman  
Chairman, Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

*The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is an independent, statutory advisory body on all matters relating to countryside access, with members representing a wide range of interests including farmers, landowners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians, parish councils, National Trust and those with disabilities.*

31<sup>st</sup> January 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed Local Transport Plan 4 as the document addresses many of the access issues normally dealt with by the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and outlined in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). We recognise the county council are under severe budgetary pressures and will need to find new and imaginative ways to implement the plan. It is in all our interests that it is successfully negotiated with the partners.

The plan is designed to continue to 2036. However, an objective is to support the Rights of Way Improvement Plan which expires in 2018. We hope LTP4 will be fully integrated with the new ROWIP and that Transportation will continue to recognise and value the rights of way network as a shared resource to deliver the outcomes of both LTP4 and any new RWOIP beyond 2018.

With regard to the specific issues of walking and cycling, the plan is fairly thorough in its content. However I'm not sure why it narrows the objective down to encouraging people to take short walks. All forms of walking should be supported and for all levels of ability. The document is remarkably quiet on encouraging the more vulnerable members of our community to use the network. The plan should include a commitment to provide better access to those across the whole spectrum of disabilities.

It is absolutely vital that we encourage as many people as possible to partake in the many activities that are available in Buckinghamshire. This would see improvements in health for many people and also sustain the many businesses that depend on our custom. Whilst acknowledging the importance of walking and cycling, the plan doesn't mention the many other user groups for which transport and access is an absolute necessity, for example:

- horse riders;
- runners;
- visitors to nature reserves & heritage sites;
- families on days out;
- schools and educational visits; and
- visitors from outside of the county;

To make this plan work it is going to need a greater involvement with local communities and volunteers. The four objectives, as set out, make no mention of the voluntary sector.

Under 'Managing the impact of new developments' the plan refers to investment in the maintenance and improvement of the county's existing roads and footpaths. This is only part of the story, we should be asking developers to contribute towards the expansion of the rights of way network in areas housing and industrial growth, including bridleways to facilitate and provide the legal framework within which residents can easily walk and cycle in an attractive environment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Richard Pushman', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Richard Pushman (Chairman)

## The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum

**Chair:** Peter Thorn, 3 Stonehouse, Reading Road, Lower Basildon, RG8 9NL

**Secretariat:** Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way Officer  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF

**Telephone:** 01628 796122

**Email:** [pro@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:pro@rbwm.gov.uk)

Environment Agency  
c/o George Shelton  
Kingfisher House  
Goldhay Way  
Orton Goldhay  
Peterborough  
PE2 5ZR

27<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Mr Shelton

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum (RBWM LAF), Slough Local Access Forum (Slough LAF) and the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum (Bucks LAF) are seeking to extend a multi-user route from Eton Wick, through Dorney, to Taplow.

The aim is to produce a traffic free horse riding route by allowing use of the existing cycle ways alongside the Jubilee River. This is a continuation of the existing permitted multi-user route that has successfully been in operation at Eton for since 2013.

We are writing to you as the landowner of the path to ask whether you would be willing to allow these cycle paths to be opened to horse riders as a multi-user route. We are proposing that this is done on an ongoing 'permitted path' basis which would allow the permission to be withdrawn if needed.

A map of the suggested route is attached to this letter. This also gives details of suggested minor alterations that could be undertaken to allow this use.

We would be grateful if you could respond to this letter and let us know if you would be amenable to this proposal. This proposal is being spearheaded by RBWM LAF and the secretary contact details are included above.

Yours Sincerely



Peter Thorn  
Chair – RBWM LAF



David Munkley  
Chair – Slough LAF



Richard Pushman  
Chair – Bucks LAF

## The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum

**Chair:** Peter Thorn, 3 Stonehouse, Reading Road, Lower Basildon, RG8 9NL

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**Telephone:** 01628 796122

**Email:** [prow@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:prow@rbwm.gov.uk)

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The Connell Partnership  
Parmoor Park Farm  
Parmoor  
Frith  
Henley on Thames  
RG9 6NL

27<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Sir / Madam

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum (RBWM LAF), Slough Local Access Forum (Slough LAF) and the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum (Bucks LAF) are seeking to extend a multi-user route from Eton Wick, through Dorney, to Taplow.

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Yours Sincerely



Peter Thorn  
Chair – RBWM LAF

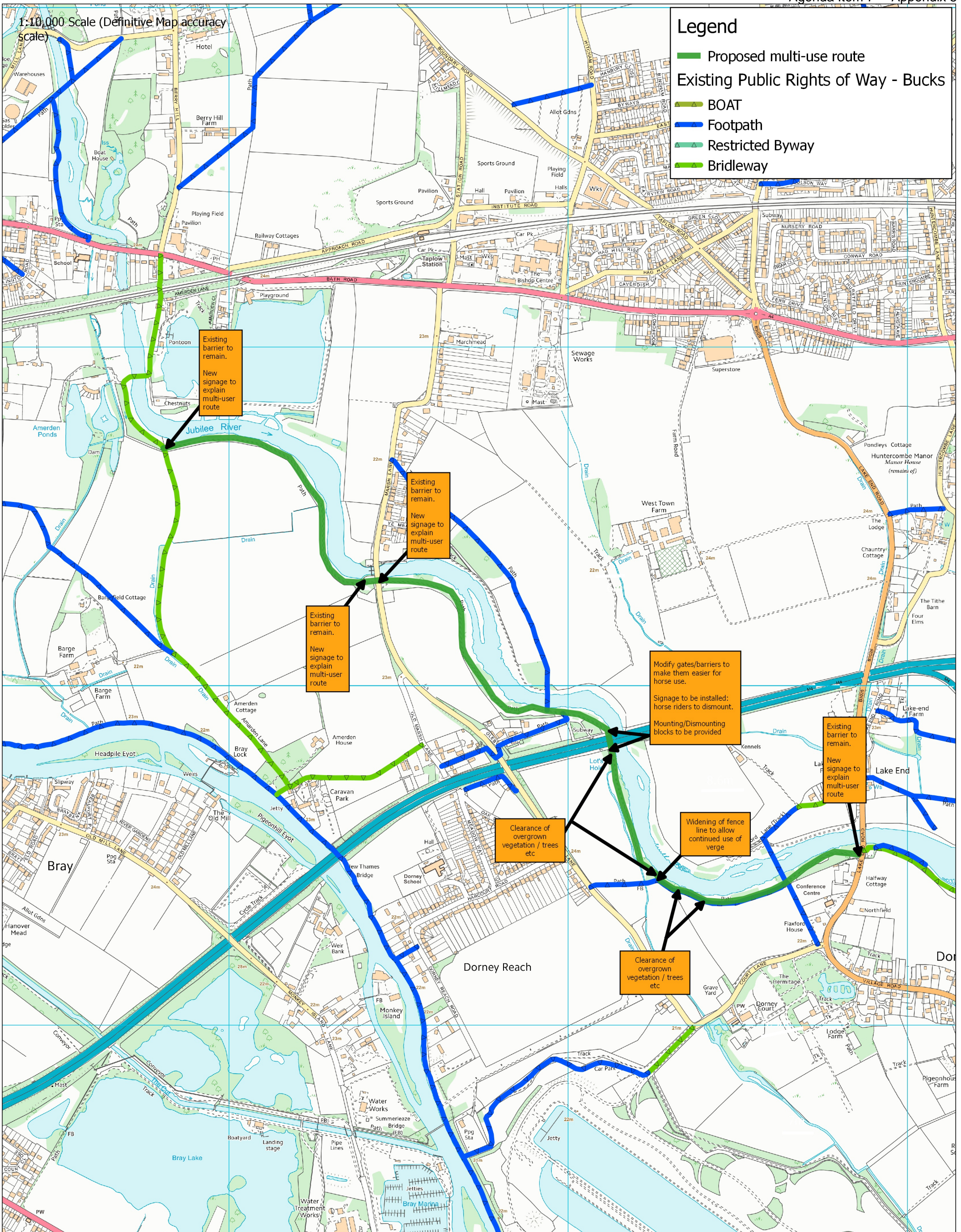


David Munkley  
Chair – Slough LAF



Richard Pushman  
Chair – Bucks LAF





Public Rights of Way  
 Drawn by: Andrew Fletcher

**Proposed Dorney Multi User Route**

Date: 27/01/2016  
 Scale 1:10,000







## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

*The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum is an independent, statutory advisory body on all matters relating to countryside access, with members representing a wide range of interests including farmers, landowners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians, parish councils, National Trust and those with disabilities.*

12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum would like to invite a member of BALC to join the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum (LAF).

The LAF is a statutory advisory body and provides advice on all matters relating to countryside access, rights of way and open access land. While at least two LAF members sit on their respective parish councils (West Wycombe and Westcott), I mooted at the last meeting that the LAF would benefit from representation, at a strategic level, from BALC. This was 'seconded' by county councillor Warren Whyte. With a body representing all Buckinghamshire parish councils on the Forum the LAF will be better informed to be able to work more closely with parishes, particularly in this era of devolved services, hopefully raising the profile of countryside access and attracting more funding for rights of way.

The Forum primarily advises the county council on access matters, but, in theory, can recommend advice to anyone or anybody. The Forum have, for example, engaged recently with all Bucks parish councils to recruit volunteers towards the 2026 cut-off date project, hoping to 'restore the definitive map record' and ensure that, after 2026, there are no 'lost' rights of way in the county. A positive response has been received with around 40 parishes having volunteered. It is also hoped that over the coming year the LAF will also be set up to apply for grant funding.

Ideally the nominated person would be interested in rights of way and public access and have knowledge of countryside issues. It is hoped this request can be raised at the next executive meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

I look forward to hearing from you.


Yours sincerely,

Richard Pushman (Chairman)






 NATURAL  
ENGLAND


 Photograph of finger post in the Dales by Ursula Wolff

# LAF NEWS

## 2015/16

### Issue 8

## Welcome

Welcome to Issue 8 of the LAF newsletter.

I hope that you all had a good festive period despite the seemingly relentlessly bad weather which unfortunately brought much more than the inconvenience of staying indoors to those affected by the terrible flooding in so many areas. Hopefully we've seen the worst of it for now and can look forward to getting out and about in 2016.

We're all looking forward to the upcoming LAF conferences in Bristol and Leeds in February/March and Rob Leek has been very busy organising these events which we hope will be a great opportunity to meet-up and promote the great work that LAFs do. The programme is now just about settled and it looks to be both varied and challenging.

Speaking of variety we have a wide range of topics in this edition with an update from the England Coast Path team, a follow-up item on the Black Environment Network, an introduction to IPROW and articles about Local Nature Partnerships and the Cotswold Water Park. There's also more information about the conferences and what we think is a significant report on the socioeconomic value of the Paths for Communities Scheme; one that highlights the immense benefits that public access can bring.

So I hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to seeing many of you in February and March.

Andy Mackintosh, Natural England

### In this issue...

[Local Nature Partnerships](#)

[England Coast Path](#)

[Black Environment Network](#)

[IPROW](#)

[Cotswold Water Park Bridge](#)

[National Conferences](#)

[Paths for Communities](#)

[What's Hot on Huddle](#)

## Local Nature Partnerships

By Paul Hill-Gibbins, Defra

With the topic of physical and mental health fast rising up the political and public agenda's a number of Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) have been involved with projects to raise awareness and get people outside.

Natural Devon, Devon's LNP, has a vision for everyone to be 'naturally active'. The '[Naturally Healthy](#)' theme is led by a collaboration of partners including Public Health, Active Devon, Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, Local Authorities, AONBs and the Devon Countryside Access Forum. Work includes research into the barriers which stop people accessing the natural environment, two health projects in the National Parks, a *Naturally Healthy Week* and a research project with schools. The national LAF conference on 23rd February includes a workshop on the two National Park projects. With only 13% of adults in Devon regularly participating in a sport or active recreation (including walking and cycling) the challenge is clear.

[Nature Connected](#), the LNP for the Liverpool City Region, was involved with The Natural Choices for Health and Wellbeing [Programme](#). Funded by the Liverpool Primary Care Trust, communities were asked to design their own projects to improve health and wellbeing through utilising the local environment. This included developing connections with others and the environment through 'green exercise'.

The LNP is now, through one of its partners The Mersey Forest Team, backing '[Nature4Health](#)'. A three year project which uses the natural environment to reduce health inequalities by encouraging community participation in activities that include woodland walks, therapeutic gardening and practical conservation sessions designed to get the heart pumping. Both Liverpool University and Liverpool John Moores University will be studying the new programme as part of the emerging Centre of Excellence for Research into the Natural Health Service.

Announced by the government in the 2012 Natural Environment White Paper, 47 [Local Nature Partnerships](#) now cover the majority of England. Founded on the principle that local people know their local environmental priorities better than central policy officials they empower local people to make decisions. Consequently the activity, expertise and priorities of LNPs will often differ as they are tailored to local needs.

However, one aim that LNPs are likely to share with LAFs is ensuring that the value of nature, and the services it provides to the economy and the people who live there, nowadays referred to

## Links

[Naturally Healthy](#)

[Nature Connected](#)

[Natural Choices for Health and Wellbeing Programme](#)

[Nature4Health](#)

[Local Nature Partnerships \(.GOV.UK\)](#)

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# LAF News

as 'natural capital', is taken into account in local decisions. This will include the creation, restoration and enhancement of green space and the importance of access to it for recreation. So a great deal in common with the aims of LAFs.



Membership of LNPs is wide-ranging and includes local conservation organisations, landowners, businesses and individuals with many led by Wildlife Trusts or local authorities. They work in a strategic way, encouraging cooperation and facilitating the coordination of action on the ground.

Working with your local LNP could provide you with a greater strategic overview of projects in your area. They may enable you to develop and strengthen local relationships with many now increasingly forging links with the health sector. LNPs would also benefit greatly from an increased awareness of access.

Further details on individual LNPs, including a map and contact details, can be found on [.GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or you can contact Defra via [LNPs@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:LNPs@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

## Links

[LNP Map and Contact details \(.GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## England Coast Path – work now underway to open up half of England's coastline

By Sue Shipston, Coastal Access Team, Natural England

Natural England has reached a key milestone in its work to deliver the England Coast Path, with work underway to open up half of England's coastline. Set to become one of the world's longest coastal walking routes, the path will stretch out across 2700 miles of stunning walking routes covering 100% of the country.

### What Natural England has achieved so far

Natural England has already opened up 101 miles of our spectacular coastline via the England Coast Path in Cumbria, Durham, Dorset and Norfolk, with a further 95 miles of new routes

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set to open in Kent and Somerset in the Spring.

They are now building on this progress with the aim of completing the coastal path around England by 2020. It is hugely challenging – Natural England staff are learning lessons as they go and sharing these around the coastline.

## **What benefits will the England Coast Path bring?**

Walking in the countryside is good for people's health and wellbeing, and providing more access to our coastline brings huge benefits by both connecting us with nature and boosting local tourism.

Tourism is hugely important to the rural economy, contributing around £11 billion each year – and by attracting even more visitors to explore our iconic coastline, we expect the England Coast Path to benefit even more local businesses like pubs and hotels.

The new routes will also improve public access to our coastline, beaches and foreshore, with existing coastal footpaths used where possible, or in some cases moved nearer the sea so walkers have a better opportunity to properly enjoy our coastal views and beaches.

The England Coast Path will be a well way-marked National Trail around the whole of the English coast, passing through some of our country's finest and iconic landscapes such as the White Cliffs of Dover, St Bees Head, and the sunny beaches of the South West, together with picture postcard villages and the cities that plot our colourful maritime history.

## **Boosting local economies and supporting tourism**

Welcoming the development Rural Minister Rory Stewart said:

“None of us lives further than about 75 miles from the sea, and most of us live much closer, so it's vital to our ongoing relationship with our countryside that the public has easy access to our outstanding coastline.”

“We have already opened up miles of our beautiful coastline for everyone to enjoy, boosting local tourism and growing the rural economy, so it makes sense to extend these plans even further. We know that walking in the countryside is good for people's health and wellbeing, and what better way to do it than with the accompaniment of a nice sea breeze?”

Andrew Sells, Natural England's Chairman added:

“This is the most significant footpath project for a generation, it will be an incredible legacy for our island nation and I'm delighted to report on our excellent progress this year. Visitors from home and abroad enjoy our spectacular coastlines and love to walk our National Trails, which pass through some of our most stunning countryside.”

“We know from our evidence of spending by visitors to the coast, that the route will boost the local economy and help support coastal communities. We are on target and have built a momentum to complete the entire route by 2020.”

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## How Natural England are opening up the England Coast path

To establish the route we've divided the coast of England into 66 'stretches' with eight Natural England delivery teams working around the country. The teams work closely with local authorities, land owners and occupiers, communities, interest groups and others to ensure the best and most appropriate alignment for the new coast path.

Work to open up or improve access along our coast is underway around the country, with work recently started in Essex, Devon, Hampshire, Lincolnshire and Lancashire.

### Find out more

You can see where Natural England teams are working and check the latest progress in your area on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Or you can contact Natural England's England Coast Path Delivery Leads:

**North East** [andrew.best@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:andrew.best@naturalengland.org.uk) 01943 839684

**East** [sally.fishwick@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:sally.fishwick@naturalengland.org.uk) 07900 608 446

**Essex** [james.lamb@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:james.lamb@naturalengland.org.uk) 0300 060 1552

**South East** [jenny.bowen@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:jenny.bowen@naturalengland.org.uk) 0300 060 4056

**South** [tim.hall@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:tim.hall@naturalengland.org.uk) 0300 060 1067

**South West** [sophy.allen@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:sophy.allen@naturalengland.org.uk) 07825 546 123

**West** [andrew.chester@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:andrew.chester@naturalengland.org.uk) 07900 608 111

**North West** [gerry.rusbridge@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:gerry.rusbridge@naturalengland.org.uk) 01931 7144985

## Black Environment Network (BEN) Training Event

By Kathy Miles, Secretary Cumbria LAF and Gareth Lawler, Natural England

*This is a follow-up to the article in [LAF News Issue 6](#)*

The trainers for this event, held in March at the Quaker Meeting House in Manchester, were Max Ghani and Saleem Oppal from the [Black Environment Network \(BEN\)](#). The day was fully-subscribed, with representatives attending from most of the Northwest's LAFs, as well as a Woodland Trust officer, and also three from Natural England. Thanks to Natural England's David Jeffreys' hard work in pulling the event together – putting in a successful funding bid, liaising with Saleem/BEN, and arranging an excellent venue and catering – everything was in place for the day's training. We crowded around tables in a 'cosy' meeting room: ready for group work at various points through the day.

## Links

[England Coast Path \(.GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[LAF News Issue 6](#)

[Black Environment Network](#)

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Photograph by David Jeffreys

We naturally began with introductions and then, from Saleem and Max, a brief on the day's structure, aims and objectives, followed by some information about BEN's origins and work. We looked at case studies on working with and engaging black and minority ethnic communities, and then took part in an exercise and discussion on cross-cultural working and communication. Before lunch we learned about cultural and religious awareness.

After our break and some networking we resumed

for the afternoon, hearing about communication with community groups and organisations and the pitfalls of consultations if not done well. A little quiz followed and then the morning's case studies were reviewed. This showed that participants' initial views had to some extent changed over the course of the day.

A lively open discussion ensued, including talking about the barriers that may prevent BME communities and people from accessing the countryside; that accessible routes are transferable to health walks for the elderly or for BME groups; and that sport is a key way to engage with young people and can lead on to further activities including those based in the countryside.

There were varying views in the room on the role of LAFs and what level of engagement was appropriate for them; considering their own role and how they act in partnership with other groups, including the highways authorities. Following the event David Jeffreys observed:

"We had a good mix of experiences in the room which helped stimulate some really useful discussions on the day, which I found most thought-provoking. I'm sure that the learning from the day will also help drive debates at a local level within each LAF as they examine how they continue to deliver their core aims whilst also adapting to the changes that are taking place around them."

A participant from Bury LAF fed back:

"I learnt such a lot and now feel much stronger to market our

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# LAF News

new Walking Loop to a wider group and hope to interest the ethnic community in Manchester North.”



Photograph by David Jeffreys

Finally, Saleem and Max drew the day to a close with a brief review of its aims and objectives and some parting thoughts and comments. They encouraged everyone to use them as a resource and said they would be happy to come and talk to individual LAFs if this would be helpful. With that, participants chatted as they left, still mulling over the issues they had covered.

## Introducing IPROW

By Jayne Benson, IPROW President

IPROW, or, to give it's full title, The Institute of Public Rights of Way and Access Management, was established in 1986 as the membership organisation representing professionals involved in the management of public rights of way and access in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, principally, but not exclusively, as local government officers.

2016 is thus a celebratory year for us since we will be 30 years old!

IPROW exists to represent and promote the views and interests of members, raise standards of management, encourage the exchange of ideas and information in public rights of way and access management, and to foster communication and co-operation between related bodies. Our member services include: exclusive access to information and the opportunity to share experiences and ask questions of colleagues via our website and online forum, reduced fees for specialist training, direct mailing of job opportunities and receiving our in-house journal 'Waymark' four times a year. Some of these services are also available, either free or for a modest charge, to other interested parties.

The website [IPROW](http://www.iprow.org.uk) has a number of public-facing pages in the 'Good Practice Guide' containing information on a range of rights

## Links

[IPROW](http://www.iprow.org.uk)

[Good Practice Guide](#)

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# LAF News

of way/public access topics. Groups, such as a LAF, can also subscribe to Waymark for £78 (plus VAT) and several LAF's are already subscribers; (Please contact Lisa Smith on 01768 840428 or email [membership@iprow.co.uk](mailto:membership@iprow.co.uk) for more information.) You can also follow us on Facebook by "liking" our page [IPROW FB](#); here we post news items of interest and information about what we are doing as an organisation.

One of our main activities is providing specialist training courses on a range of rights of way and access subjects; we are the leading training-provider in our field. Non-members are also welcome to attend training courses. Bespoke training for groups can be arranged at a time and venue to suit (if your LAF is interested please contact Geri Coop on 01536 514749 or by email [training@iprow.co.uk](mailto:training@iprow.co.uk) for more information).

As well as these services, IPROW is a respected and consulted voice for the profession. We respond to Government consultations, in England and in Wales; a recent one for example being the proposed 'Guidance for the Review of ROWIPs in Wales', (issued by Natural Resources Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government), and we are currently helping DEFRA with the revision of Circular 1/09. IPROW is also represented, either in its own right or via members with dual roles, at ADEPT Rights of Way Managers Group national meetings and on Rights of Way Review Committee meetings.

IPROW does not provide an information service to members of the public over and above what is on our website. We will however, try and put enquirers in touch with individuals or organisations that may be able to assist. As an organisation we generally do not intervene in specific rights of way or access cases, even where there are concerns about poor practice, since there are other mechanisms which are enabled to do this, such as the Local Government Ombudsman. However, where a member of the public considers that an IPROW member has behaved unprofessionally, we have a code of conduct and disciplinary process, in common with other similar professional bodies but, in our 30 year history, complaints of unprofessional conduct have been very rare.

So, in short, IPROW is:

- A respected and influential voice for access professionals
- Concerned with rights of way and access matters
- A leading provider of specialist training
- Consulted by government and representing members on national and local bodies
- Helping to keep access issues on the political agenda
- A great way for rights of way people to keep in touch and share their professional knowledge.

## Improving Access – Cotswold Water Park

By Gloucestershire Local Access Forum (GLAF)

A meeting between Swindon and North Wiltshire LAF and Gloucestershire LAF was arranged to share matters of common interest. One issue that emerged was an unspent 'pot' of money that was being held by the Cotswold Water Park Trust for access

## Links

[IPROW Facebook](#)

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[Cotswold Water Park Trust](#)



Bridge before improvements

improvements within the Water Park.

This was investigated by Gloucestershire PROW team at the request of GLAF, and a representative of the Trust was invited to a GLAF meeting. It transpired that approximately £5,000 of funds

remained from an original sum of £21,000. Importantly, if the fund was not spent before the end of the 2015 financial year in April, it might be 'lost'. A couple of projects were considered by GLAF and following consultation it was agreed to explore the potential of replacing a narrow foot bridge on a heavily used route near the Gateway Visitor Centre, South Cerney with a multi- user fully accessible bridge.

To access the funds an independent organisation was required to make the application. The local Cirencester Ramblers agreed to take on this role for GLAF. With



Bridge after improvements

the support of local disability organisations, parish and district councils as well as other local organisations, an application was made to the Trust's Community and Environment Improvement Fund. The application was successful and the Ramblers, with the assistance of Gloucestershire Public Rights of Way, Amey PLC and a local contractor, completed the new bridge earlier this year. Concurrently, a significant project was undertaken to upgrade and improve the muddy footpath running along the lake edge.



GLAF site visit - June 2015

These projects now enable anyone with limited mobility and those with pushchairs to access a circular walk from the Gateway Centre along a wildlife lake, returning via the Thames and Severn

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# LAF News

Canal. The Gateway Centre also provides the added benefits of parking, toilets and a café.

The whole project was initiated by a chance remark by Swindon and North Wiltshire LAF at the joint meeting, without which GLAF would never have been made aware of this source of funding. The pivotal role of the Ramblers and the co-operation of other local organisations was crucial to its delivery.

Further information available from GLAF member Richard Holmes [horbox@hotmail.com](mailto:horbox@hotmail.com)

## National Conferences

By Rob Leek, Natural England

As covered in an article in the [last edition of LAF news](#), from 11th to the 30th September 2015 we ran a short online survey of LAF members and Officers regarding the possibility of holding national LAF conferences this financial year. We had 138 responses to the survey and many thanks to everyone who responded to it.

Using the information provided to us from the survey we concluded that LAFs would value national conferences being held this year and that their Appointing Authorities would mostly be prepared to pay travel and subsistence expenses for LAF representatives to attend.

To try and keep delegate's travel costs and time to a minimum, we are holding two national conferences, one in the north and one in the south, in locations with good national rail links. Both conferences will run from 10.30 to 16.30 and lunch and refreshments will be provided free for all delegates.

The dates, venue addresses and links to the online delegate booking pages for the conferences are:

LAF National Conference (South)  
Tuesday 23rd February 2016  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6EB  
[LAF National Conference \(South\) Online Booking](#)

LAF National Conference (North)  
Tuesday 1st March 2016  
Oxford Place Centre  
Oxford Place  
Leeds  
LS1 3AX  
[LAF National Conference \(North\) Online Booking](#)

The conference ticket options that can be booked via the links above are:

- LAF Representatives (LAF Chair, member or officer - 1 per LAF)
- Speakers or workshop leads

## Links

[LAF News - Issue 7](#)

*Huddle specific links*

[Conference Survey Results](#)

[Conference Whiteboard](#)

[LAF National Conference \(South\) Online Booking](#)

[LAF National Conference \(North\) Online Booking](#)

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- Natural England/Defra staff
- LAF Volunteers to help on the day (LAF members or officers - limited spaces available)
- Partner organisation representatives to run stalls (limited spaces available)
- Reserves list (for any LAF members or officers - will be able to let delegates know nearer the date of the conference if a space is available)

There will be talks at both conferences from Defra, the Disabled Ramblers, the British Horse Society and a presentation on alternative sources of funding.

## **Workshops (delegates can choose 2 per conference)**

### ***Bristol - South***

- 2026 – Open Spaces Society
- Recreational Vehicles - LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association)
- Registering our White Roads - Herefordshire LAF
- Nottinghamshire Guided Walks Partnership - Nottinghamshire LAF
- Disability Access - Gloucestershire LAF
- Naturally Healthy Project - Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks
- Charitable status for sub-groups - Norfolk LAF
- Dementia Adventure - Dementia Adventure

### ***Leeds - North***

- 2026 – Open Spaces Society
- Recreational Vehicles - LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association)
- Registering our White Roads - Herefordshire LAF
- Nottinghamshire Guided Walks Partnership - Nottinghamshire LAF
- Cycling on a footpaths - Redcar & Cleveland LAF
- Access prioritisation - Durham LAF
- Dementia Adventure - Dementia Adventure
- Story behind the Sandstone Way - Northumberland LAF

We also hope to produce a conference briefing or newsletter to include information and topics that can't be fitted into the programme so please contact [LAF@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:LAF@naturalengland.org.uk) as soon as possible if you would like something included.

## **Paths for Communities (P4C)**

By Pippa Langford, Natural England

The Paths for Communities grant scheme run by Natural England on behalf of Defra closed in March 2014 after awarding just under £2 million to 43 projects. At the end of the scheme Natural England produced a final report which includes information about all the projects that were supported. More recently Defra have released a report which assesses the economic and social impacts of the project. The results of the project are significant: from a grants programme of £2 million the Gross Value Added

## Links

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# LAF News



Bottesford Beck before P4C improvements

was estimated to be over £7.5m with an estimated 187 full time equivalent jobs supported or created. There were also significant benefits to the health of users. Whilst it might seem obvious to LAF members that improvements to the rights of way network result in more people using paths and those extra people also generate local economic and health benefits, actual evidence of the benefits of investing in new public rights of way and improved surfacing and signage is rare. This report should provide very useful data which could be

used by LAFs in conversations with their local authority, LEP and Local Health and Wellbeing Board to demonstrate the local benefits of a programme of path improvements.

The results are provided in the executive summary of the final report which can be downloaded from [here](#)

The Natural England final report which gives more detail about each of the projects is available from [.GOV.UK](#)



Bottesford Beck after P4C improvements

## What's Hot on Huddle

By Rob Leek, Natural England

### Public Participation in the Management of PROW's Survey

Sue Philipson an Access Ranger for West Sussex County Council is running a survey via Huddle to gather thoughts on the 'effectiveness' of LAFs, be that from a members point of view of from the view of a member of the Appointing Authority. My end goal is to develop a model of participation for Access Forums and Appointing Authorities to use to further develop their working relationships and processes to become as effective as possible in improving access in their local areas.

Although this research is for academic purposes I hope you will find the outcomes both interesting and useful and I have agreed to share my final report with Huddle members. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and closes 31st January 2016.

### Organised Events on ProW

A number of comments have been posted to this whiteboard regarding policy/guidance to give to walkers, equestrians, cyclists etc. holding organised events using wholly/partly PROW

### Consultations whiteboard

## Links

[P4C Executive Summary](#)

[P4C Final Report \(.GOV.UK\)](#)

*Huddle specific links*

[PROW Survey](#)

[Organised Events on PROW](#)

[Consultations Whiteboard](#)

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# LAF News

This whiteboard was introduced on Huddle in October 2015 and is used to alert Huddle members to consultations that they or their LAFs may be interested in responding to. Natural England will continue to keep the whiteboard updated with new consultations though Huddle members are welcome to also use it to alert other members to consultations they may become aware of.

## Huddle or alternative?

In 'what's hot on Huddle' in [issue 7 of LAF News](#) it included an article on an informal consultation that was held In September 2015 of all LAF Huddle members for their views and suggestions about whether an alternative social media platform might be more suitable for LAFs than Huddle.

The feedback received suggested that the overwhelming majority of Huddle users would prefer to keep using Huddle rather than move to an alternative) though Natural England will work to try and improve, simplify and produce new guidance for the workspace for its users

For more details see the Huddle link to the right.

## Links

[Issue 7 of LAF News](#)

*Huddle specific links*

[Huddle or Alternative](#)

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