



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 5

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Title: LAF members' report

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Open Access

1. A parcel of common land (CL217) near Frieth (RG9 6NR) has been fenced off (see Appendix 2a), on land crossed by Footpath 15 Hambledon Parish, without permission under section 38 Commons Act 2006. The Forum have offered to help resolve the case following complaints to the parish council, who are represented at today's meeting by the clerk. A site visit took place with LAF member Andrew Clarke on 3rd June 2016 where the owner was met who happened to be gardening. The common land is very small, (0.12 acres), has no commoner's rights and is mostly classified as 'excepted' land under CROW Act 2000 open access legislation as it's within 20 metres of a dwelling Appendix 2b. The fence does not obstruct the public footpath as shown in the photos Appendix 2c. Further advice has been sought from the Open Spaces Society on how to regularise the fence or enforce removal. It may be possible for the owner to de-register the common, but we have no evidence suggesting it has been wrongly registered. Advice is sought from the Forum on how to proceed.

Restoring the Record Project

2. This LAF 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 historical documentary evidence. A total of 45 people have volunteered from parish councils and user groups to research lost rights of way, before the definitive map cut-off date on 31st December 2026. Feedback from the training day on 6th May 2016 and led by Phil Wadey and Sarah Bucks was very positive. People were able to meet Ross Osborn, the volunteer co-ordinator, to allocate areas and make commitments. Spatial coverage in the county is shown in Appendix 3. A number of positive outcomes have followed the training day, including:
 - agreement from the Centre of Buckinghamshire Studies to provide an annual photography ticket to volunteers;
 - the project has been added to the Chiltern Conservation Board's directory of volunteering opportunities;

- publication of the 'List of Streets' on the county website and provision of a spreadsheet on request;
- an article circulated to parish councils and Bucks Older Person's Action Group (BOPAG) Appendix 4.
- The purchase of 2 copies of 'Rights of Way: Restoring the Record' books, now available in Aylesbury and High Wycombe libraries.

However, a number of issues have been raised which require the forum's advice:

- Recruiting more volunteers, especially in north Bucks;
- Providing a web-based electronic database of information;
- Issues raised by LAF member Alison Heath (Appendix 5a), the chairman's response (Appendix 5b) and Alison's additional response (Appendix 5c); and
- LAF member Andrew Clarke has asked if applications can be made in the name of the Local Access Forum rather than individuals.

Little Chalfont Nature Park

3. Immediately following the March LAF meeting, advice was sought by the Little Chalfont Charitable Trust from LAF member for the National Trust, Neil Harris, and LAF member for Disabled Ramblers, Gavin Caspersz on provision of disabled access at the emerging Little Chalfont Nature Park. The parish council will take over the maintenance of the park, but wanted to ensure that work to accommodate disabled access at the site was sufficient to avoid a claim under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (repealed and replaced by the Equality Act 2010). A letter from the charity summarises their position (Appendix 6a) and a reply was sent in time for the opening of the Nature Park in April 2016 (Appendix 6b). Gavin has offered to survey the site and can provide feedback to the charity in due course.

District Council local plans

4. AVDC and Wycombe are consulting on their draft local plans over the coming weeks, with a Wycombe deadline in 2 weeks' time. Members should be aware of the proposals as they are detailed and wide-ranging, shaping development over a number of years. Comments are invited in the next 10 days for the chairman to compile a formal LAF response. South Bucks and Chiltern are combining their local plan which will be consulted upon in October 2016.

Ongoing Projects

5. LAF member for disabled access, Gavin Caspersz, has secured £500 from Wingrave with Rowsham parish council to undertake installation of two new gates, drainage works and levelling a Thames Water manhole cover to improve disabled access on Wingrave Footpath 1, located at the end of Castle Street, Wingrave. This has now been completed in consultation with the local farmer, David Murrell.

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

- LAF member for disabled access, Gavin Caspersz has attended a number of meetings with neighbouring authorities in the south Buckinghamshire, the most recent of which, on 8th March 2016, he was unable to attend. A further joint meeting is arranged at Maidenhead Town Hall on 28th July 2016, with Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) LAFs present. Items discussed relevant to Bucks include:

- Joint LAF training session: this will be held from 10am to 4pm on 13th September 2016 at Maidenhead Town Hall, with lunch provided. Richard Pushman and Gavin Caspersz have volunteered to attend and there is one more space. The course will be run by the Institute of Public Rights of Way Management (IPROW) and will cover the following topics, as suggested by the local LAF chairs group:
 - PROW basics and the role of the LAF
 - Impact of the Deregulation Act 2015
 - Access for disabled users
 - Right of way claim process and investigation

- Jubilee River network: the introduction of equestrian access along the Jubilee River between Taplow and Eton was discussed, but nothing could be progressed until the EA reply to the proposals. This has now been received so further discussions to resolve these issues will be discussed on 28th July 2016, where other LAF members are welcome to attend.

Correspondence

6. LAF member for the BHS, Alison Heath, wrote to the council asking about a Pegasus crossing along a bridleway in Wexham which crosses the A412 between Black Park and Langley Park. Alison's letter and the reply from Transport for Buckinghamshire are enclosed in Appendix 7.

7. The LAF have supported two bids by the Chilterns Conservation Board: the Chiltern's Walking Festival (Appendix 8a), for which there is a project brief outlined in Appendix 8b; and the Chiltern's Landscape Partnership (Appendix 9a), for which there is a partner's letter (Appendix 9b) and project brief (Appendix 9c).

8. Independent LAF member, Glyn Thomas, requested further information on the Pegasus crossing of the A413 at Buckingham Park, Aylesbury and the likely installation date. A response from Strategic Planning in April 2016 is included in Appendix 10.

North Bucks rRIPPLE Donate-a-Gate

9. Advice was sought from the LAF at the March 2016 LAF by Bill Piers, from the North Bucks rRIPPLE group (ramblers Repairing and Improving Paths for Pleasure Leisure and Exercise), planning a Donate-a-Gate scheme in north Buckinghamshire. The scheme is now launched and the group have been installing gates over the last 4 months at a rate of 1/week. Regular requests for work are being received from the Rights of Way Team, with sufficient to see them through the summer and beyond. The number on incoming donations is slow, but people are beginning to take an interest, such as The Haddenham U3A Walking Group (£250). More information on donating can be found here: <http://www.bucks-wmiddx-ramblers.org.uk/donate-a-gate.html> and an application form is enclosed (Appendix 11). Since Bill's presentation the Chairman has written to all 7 Local Area Forum Chairmen in the Aylesbury Vale district area (Appendix 12), and the LAF's advice sought on how to further promote the scheme.

Membership

10. Stephen Thorns has provisionally expressed an interest in representing cycling on the Forum and will introduce himself at the start. He has a business in Thame and is

part of a fairly large, but informal group of cyclists that enjoy mountain biking in the Chilterns. He has also been a Ridgeway National Trial volunteer for two years.

Annual Report

11. The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report for April 2015 – March 2016 has been drafted and members are asked to review and agree the content. Natural England's submission deadline is 31st July 2016 (Appendix 13).

LAF News

12. The latest edition of Natural England's quarterly Newsletter is enclosed in Appendix 14.

LAF dates for 2016 & 2017

13. Dates of the next meetings are in Mezz 1 on 20th July 2016; 9th November 2016; 8th March 2017; 12th July 2017; and 8th November 2017.