



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JULY 2016, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.00 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr R Pushman, in the Chair

Mr D Briggs, Mr J Elfes, Mr N Harris, Mr A T A Lambourne, Mr G Thomas, Ms N Glover, Ms A Heath, Mr A Clark and Mr W Whyte

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark, Mrs C Hudson, Ms J Taylor and Mr L Ashton

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr B Worrell, Mrs L Coldwell, Mr R Osborn and Mr S Thorns

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr G Caspersz.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ACTION NOTES/ MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held 23 March 2016 were agreed as an accurate record pending the amendment made below. Updates were also given on action points as follows:

There was not yet any feedback on horsebox parking along the Ridgeway and should Local Access Forum Members have any ideas on locations for horse box parking they were asked to contact Ms Sarah Wright, the Ridgeway Trails Officer.

The Chairman advised he had missed the previous BALC meeting and would raise the issue of Local Access Forum membership at the meeting being held

20 July 2016.

In a correction to the last paragraph on page 5, the Local Access Forum were to write to County Councillors to promote the Donate a Gate scheme rather than Mr B Piers.

ACTION: Committee Assistant to amend previous meeting record to reflect this.

4. RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

Local Access Forum Members were provided with the Rights of Way Group update in the agenda pack and questions were welcomed on the Definitive Map update. Key points raised were as below:

- Mrs C Hudson confirmed that both item 4 (Iver) and item 8 (Great Missenden) had been to Committee on 12 July 2016 and were accepted.
- Item 20 (Chenies, Chalfont St Peter, Denham) – Liaison was ongoing with Hertfordshire and there was a view to take this to Committee in November 2016.

Mr J Clark presented the Strategic Access update and key points were raised as below:

- Recent discussions had taken place with HS2 in relation to the Transport & Works Act Order for the railway sidings at Calvert. Three diversions were proposed, but these would not significantly affect network connectivity in the area.
- Mr A Lambourne attended a public meeting in relation to the planning application for a new walking and cycling route linking Aylesbury Vale Parkway station to Waddesdon village and Manor House. It was understood by LAF Members that no objections had been made to the application. It was confirmed that the route would not be a bridleway although would have a bridleway diverted on to the route for a short distance.
- The number of planning applications affecting rights of way had increased from 219 Y/E 31st March 2015 to 260 Y/E 31st March 2016. This was identified as 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. It was said that this was mainly linked to housing growth within Aylesbury Vale. It was added that several more applications to restore statuses of rights of way may be seen as a result of development.

Ms J Taylor presented the Rights of Way operations update and key points and comments were as below:

- The summary of works could be seen on page 19 of the agenda pack. There had been an increase in the number of issues year on year and there had been a notable increase in the number of bridges repaired. An Officer had carried out data cleansing and a number of issues were resolved when sites were inspected which added to this number.
- The number of hours recorded by Chiltern Society volunteers was down.

The volunteers were said to be working on the Rights of Way network although this was devolved parish work and not directly through BCC. Voluntary hours from the Ramblers Association were also included in the summary.

- LAF Members raised concern that footpaths were not being maintained despite the funds spent on the implementation. The actual width of grass cut was questioned and the new footpaths in Weedon and Padbury were highlighted as a concern as was the Buckingham to Winslow cycleway.

ACTION: Mr J Clark to raise with the Highways Team and provide a response on cut widths.

- Ms N Glover advised the LAF to report any overgrown hedges/verges online via the 'Report it' function if any were obstructing views and affecting road safety.
- There remained seven Rights of Way closed, six due to bridge issues. LAF Members were advised that a number of bridges required work which would require paid contractors for which there was no capital funding. The provisional target of inspections was 400 in a year dependant on staff levels. One bridge crossed the County boundary into Oxfordshire and a joint contribution from each County Council and the landowner was being explored to reach a resolution.
- 86 parishes had now taken up the devolvement project and were clearing paved areas and siding out. A Member asked how work was being monitored. Ms J Taylor advised that staffing levels did not allow ongoing monitoring and the team were reliant on being informed of any issues. Ms J Taylor advised that this could be done online and a list of parishes could be chosen from where the issue relates.
- A LAF Member advised that the 'Report It' system online often shows a resolved status when the issue was not necessarily resolved. Mr W Whyte explained that he had been informed this issue was resolved and this would be raised to be re-looked at.
- There had been a decrease in FTE staff in the Rights of Way operations team and this was currently at 4. It was hoped permission would be given to recruit to the role recently vacated by Ms Rosie Taylor.

5. LAF MEMBERS REPORT

Mr J Clark presented the LAF Members report which could be seen in the agenda pack and the following key points were raised:

- Mr J Clark provided an update on the small piece of common land in Frieth, Hambleden Parish. Further details were provided in the agenda pack. BCC had investigated how the common had been registered and this appeared to have been done correctly although a legal dispute had been ongoing for some time purely over ownership. The Commons register had been checked and there were no commoners' rights. Mr J Clark and Mr A Lambourne attended the site on 3 June 2016 and spoke with the home owner. Access rights were exempted within 20 metres of the property and only a small amount of land fell outside of this restriction. Local residents were worried that were the fencing to remain this could set a precedent for others to do something similar on the both common land and the rights of way network.

RESOLVED

Although the fencing appeared unlawful, it was agreed by all not to take this issue further as pursuing legal action over such a small amount of land would not be in the public interest. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted to the owner outlining the position so that the homeowner could make a well informed decision over the fencing. A dispute over the land would be listed on the land charges register.

- An update on the Restoring the Record project could be seen in the agenda pack. Mr J Clark advised that there had been good cooperation from the Centre of Buckinghamshire Studies who were providing an annual photography ticket to volunteers.
- Mr R Osborn had kindly circulated an article to Parish Councils and Bucks Older Person's Action Group. The map provided in the agenda pack indicated the areas which had coverage and those which did not and Mr J Clark advised more volunteers were required.
- It was asked whether applications for the registering of footpaths could be made in the name of the LAF rather than individuals. Following a detailed discussion it was agreed that Parish Councils may be the best vehicle to take this forward, however should individuals apply that would also be acceptable. It was confirmed that as long as the application was registered the County Council had a duty to investigate.
- A web based electronic database of information had not yet been created, but BCC were unable to host. Following discussion it was suggested that the Open Spaces Society be contacted to see if they could possibly host this on their website.

ACTION: Mr J Clark to draft letter on behalf of the Local Access Forum and send to the Open Spaces Society.

- Little Chalfont Parish Council had designed a small nature park for the local community and sought advice from the Local Access Forum. Mr N Harris and Mr G Caspersz assisted in ensuring the site conformed to the 2010 Equalities Act and Mr N Harris explained he had been happy to help a good project.
- The Local Plan consultations were ongoing with District Councils. Mr J Clark recapped the dates these consultations would close as seen in the agenda pack. Mr J Clark had commented on the Wycombe Local Plan on behalf of the Local Access Forum and made specific reference to green infrastructure and transportation. It was agreed amongst members that a response would be drafted to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

ACTION: Mr J Clark to draft response and distribute to Members for comment before sending on to the District Council.

- Mr J Clark advised Members of ongoing projects all of which were listed on item 5, page 24 of the agenda pack. Mr J Clark also took Members through correspondence items 6, 7, and 8. The Chairman encouraged local users to lobby for the Pegasus crossing on the A413 at Buckingham Park, Watermead.
- Members were asked to review The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report for April 2015 – March 2016 which had been drafted and feed any issues back to Mr J Clark before the end of July.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr N Harris advised Members that the National Trust had released a series of downloadable walks across the Thames Valley through an app. Mr N Harris agreed to send this link to Mr J Clark for it to be distributed to all Members.

7. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th November 2016 at 10am. Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury.

Chairman

