

Local Access Forum Annual Review Form

April 2016 to March 2017

Name of LAF	Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum
Name of LAF Chair	Richard Pushman
Name of LAF Secretary	Jonathan Clark

Total number of LAF members	13
Number of members representing users of public rights of way or access land	6
Number of members representing owners and occupiers of access land or land over which PROW subsist	2
Number of members representing other interests	5

Number of full LAF meetings held	3	Number of sub-group meetings held	0
Number of working groups led by others	0	Number of training days provided by the Appointing Authority	1
How many km of PROW have been improved due to LAF input?	0.8	How much funding did the LAF (or an associated body) raise?	£1,220
How many extra volunteer hours were committed to public access (not including LAF committee meetings)?			50

Partners your LAF worked with during 2016/17 (click on a box or type 'x')

Local Nature Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Enterprise Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Wellbeing Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	LEADER funding Local Action Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>

LAF achievements/making a difference?¹ Please give examples to illustrate how your LAF has improved public access to land for the purpose of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. Do you think your LAF has made a difference to public access in your area via its discussions and actions?

¹ These achievements form an important part of the national annual report that is submitted to Defra/Minister and help to promote the work and good practice of LAFs

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The main role of the LAF is to provide independent strategic oversight of public access in the county, but the LAF has volunteered to become involved in a number of specific projects as outlined below. Combined, these have has a positive outcome for public access.

The LAF mediated on a common land issue in Frieth whereby a small parcel of common had been fenced-off into a garden. Though this action was ultimately unsuccessful, the aim was to avoid expensive enforcement action.

The LAF supported two Chilterns Conservation Board bids: the Chiltern's Walking Festival; and Chiltern's Landscape Partnership.

The LAF provided advice to the North Bucks Ramblers Group (rRIPPLE) planning on setting-up a Donate-a-Gate scheme. Now launched, group have raised over £4500 in donations and have installed over 100 new gates.

The LAF have worked in partnership with neighbouring authorities such as Slough borough council and Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead LAFs on a broad range of strategic issues, such as access improvements along the Jubilee River and on recruiting 'Restoring the Record' volunteers.

The Disabled Ramblers continue to receive funding as a 'good cause' from the Aylesbury Vale Lottery.

Two LAF members led walks as part of the Chilterns Walking Festival.

The LAF successfully lobbied the council to purchase the CAMSWeb GIS software to help improve public and volunteer problem reporting and feedback.

Please add numbers to the following differentiating between formal consultations and general advice given by the LAF on particular subjects. If a consultation covered more than one subject area, please count separately.

	Consultations	Advice	Optional Detail
Green Infrastructure strategies	0	0	
Transport (LTP, traffic management, rail, DfT, Highways Agency)	1	3	1. Provided advice to Highways on their new 'Maintain My Street' reporting system; 2. to East West Rail's highway crossing points at a public meeting; and lobbied the council for a Pegasus crossing
Water / Coast (slipways, flood defence, EA, shoreline)	0	0	
Public open space (public space protection orders)	0	0	
Dog control/exclusion/on leads/fouling orders	0	0	

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Planning applications /Housing development schemes	0	0	
Land use and planning matters (e.g. informal advice on land development)	0	0	
Local development frameworks and planning strategies	0	3	1. Wycombe District, 2. Aylesbury Vale District and 3. Slough Borough draft local plans
PROW creation, diversion or closure - number of each	0	0	
Recording lost ways/historical rights - working towards the 2026 cut-off	1	1	Provided advice on web-based information and data sharing
Right of Way Improvement Plan reviews	0	0	
Route improvements (to PROW and other multi-user/cycling/horse-riding/walking routes)	1	1	1. Creation of a new cycleway between Aylesbury and Waddesdon Manor
Promotion of access, open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area	1	1	Provided disabled access advice to Little Chalfont Charitable Trust on a local nature park.
Vehicular access and issues relating to motorised use of PROW			
Parish Council or other grant schemes	0	0	
Access for people with reduced mobility	0	0	
Commons, village greens	0	1	Frieth Common CL217
Open Access land restrictions	4	4	Review cases: 2012026254, 2006070033, 2006040177 & 2006100011.
Coastal Access/National Trails	1	1	Ridgeway National Trail management
NNR dedication	0	0	
Greenspace including Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves	0	0	

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Nature conservation (including SSSIs)	0	0	
Agri-environment scheme issues (HLS and new Countryside Stewardship) e.g. expiring permissive access agreements, effects of land management options on public access etc.	0	0	
Forestry and woodland	0	0	

Any other LAF activity (please specify):

The LAF were consulted on the proposed changes to the council's online highways defect reporting system, based on GIS mapping, and comments were made on improvements to the rights of way area of the proposals. This discussion ultimately led the the LAF recommending purchase of the CAMS Web online GIS system specifically for rights of way.

The LAF also lobbied the council to improve its turn-around of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) - 3 years - and village green applications, but this was unsuccessful.

Following a letter to all LAFs from the BHS, the Bucks LAF lobbied the council regarding it's position on maintaining the List of Streets under Section 36. After investigation the LAF were assured the council would not remove any route off the List of Streets without a legal Order through the Magistrate's Court.

The LAF were consulted by the Ridgeway Officer on general management of the trail, it's promotion, funding and use by MPVs.

What are your top priorities for the year ahead?

1. Maintaining the profile of the LAF to ensure they remain an important consultee on access;
2. Maintain a relevant and experienced membership and recruit a new person to represent cyclists.

Do you foresee any issues or challenges that may affect your LAFs operation and/or its ability to deliver improvements to public access in the coming year?

No

Is there any particular support or training that you need to deliver your priorities or work program for next year?

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None

Summarise any feedback received from section 94(4) bodies²

None

Comments from the Appointing Authority

Membership numbers remain relatively stable and we are grateful to Forum for their excellent advice over the year. A wealth of experience in public access and local government remains and we are privileged to have such long and wide ranging experience. Advice from the LAF is always well-informed, with close scrutiny of the work undertaken by the council and ROW teams. Council resources have inevitably been stretched recently and this sometimes results in a disconnect between member's expectations and what the council can achieve, for example on DMMO timescales. It is pleasing to note the Forum's robust comments to consultations, for example, to Wycombe District Council's PSPO, though this decision ultimately went against members' advice. Forum members are notable for being actively involved in access outside of meetings, by leading walks at the Chiltern's Walking Festival, raising money for disabled access improvements and attending a number of East West Rail consultation events

Comments from LAF Chair

This is my second year of chairmanship of the Local Access Forum and I must thank all the committee members for their continued and helpful support over the past year. These thanks are also extended to the support officers and the considerable number of volunteers whose efforts contribute so much in maintaining our access to the beautiful Buckinghamshire countryside we are privileged to enjoy. The county is indeed fortunate to have a large network of public footpaths, many of which we rely for maintenance on the efforts of volunteers and dedicated leaders. We continue to support partner organisations, such as the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Chiltern's Walking Festival in their efforts to support and encourage the public to access and enjoy the countryside. You will read elsewhere in the Annual Report of the work achieved over the past year and my repeated thanks to those whose efforts have achieved these encouraging results.

² The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, Section 94(4) specifies that it is the function of a local access forum, as respects to the area for which it is established, to advise the appointing authority; the local highway authority; other bodies exercising functions under CROW Act Part 1 (Natural England, Forestry Commission and English Heritage) and such other bodies as may be prescribed. These other bodies are set out in the LAF Regulations 2007, paragraph 21, and include: any conservation board established by the Secretary of State, any parish or town council in the area covered by the LAF, and Sport England.

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Any other comments

None