



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2019, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.02 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.54 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr D Briggs in the Chair

Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Elfes, Mr A Lambourne, Ms A Heath, Mr A Clark, Mr B Worrell and Mr C Harriss

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr J Clark, Ms J Taylor and Ms E Hackling

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs S Bayne, Ms S Wright, Mr K Foster and Ms S Taylor

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr G Caspersz, Ms H Francis, Mr G Thomas and Mr R Pushman.

Mr D Briggs chaired the meeting in Mr Pushman's absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MATTER ARISING / MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING TO BE CONFIRMED

The minutes and actions of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 were reviewed and the following points were noted:

Item 6 – LAF Members' Report; Mr B Worrell also attended the barbeque at Black Park to thank volunteers for their work in the county.

Item 7 – Any Other Business; Mr J Clark to follow on the action to recirculate the 'promoted routes spreadsheet' for comment.

ACTION: Mr Clark

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 were AGREED as an accurate record, subject to the minor amendment noted above,

and were signed by the Chairman.

4 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2018-2028 UPDATE

Mrs S Bayne, Director, Blackwood Bayne Ltd attended the meeting and provided the following update:

- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was midway through the engagement phase and would continue for a further 4-6 months.
- There had been an excellent response to the survey which would close on 31 March 2019; 1,180 full online responses and 233 part responses had been received.
- Mrs Bayne asked members of the Local Access Forum (LAF) to promote the survey.
- The results had not yet been analysed.
- 43 parish councils had responded. Mrs Bayne would be contacting the remaining parish councils to encourage a response by mid-April; a slightly later deadline to give them time to discuss the ROWIP at their parish council meetings.
- Stakeholder organisations had been contacted but not many had responded so far.
- Mrs Bayne had met with representatives from Colne Valley Regional Park and the Chilterns Conservation Board and was trying to meet people who were not traditional rights of way users.
- The LEAP organisation, whose role was to try to get people active, was taking part in the ROWIP process.
- Mrs Bayne had spoken to a number of organisations such Bucks Vision, Parkinsons UK, Chilterns Multiple Sclerosis Centre, Visit Buckinghamshire and Berryfields (a new community).
- Engagement would cease in early May and the responses would be analysed and presented at the extra ordinary LAF meeting on 21 May 2019 at Green Park.

The following key points were discussed:

- The Chairman stressed the importance of the LAF members attending the meeting on 21 May 2019 which would be solely on the ROWIP.
- In response to a question from a member of the forum Mrs Bayne confirmed that no analysis had been carried out to define the mix of the 1,180 respondents.
- A member of the forum stated he thought a priority should be to look at the missing links in the existing network; Mrs Bayne confirmed that comments could be added on the survey.
- Mr K Foster from Cycling UK highlighted the importance of the integration between the ROWIP and the [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), to help create a consistent flow between urban and country footpaths.
- In response to a question as to whether the Lost Ways Project could be restored and considered as part of the ROWIP, Mrs Bayne stated she would need to discuss this point with her team.
- Mr Foster advised that sometimes it was a more financially effective solution to do a creation order rather than go through the Lost Ways process.
- The draft ROWIP plan would be published in the autumn of 2019 for a draft consultation period and be adopted in early 2020.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Bayne for the update.

5 RIDGEWAY RIDING ROUTE

Ms S Wright, Ridgeway National Trail Officer and Mr K Foster, Cycling UK attended the meeting.

Ms S Wright provided a short presentation, appended to the minutes, on the circular rides and walks that were promoted by the Ridgeway National Trail and used part of the Ridgeway. Ms Wright highlighted the following:

- The Ridgeway Partnership was a group of organisations/people who decided a review of the circular walks/rides was required; also, some of the leaflets were very out of date.
- The Ridgeway Partnership recognised there was a real demand for cycling these days, and wanted to cater for cyclists, young people and families and provide an 'easy access' set of leaflets.
- The draft vision listed the criteria and the attractions to be incorporated to help decide which circular rides/walks should be promoted. Ms Wright asked the forum members to let her or Mr Clark know if anything was missing from the list.
- Slide 5 showed a list of highlights/landmarks which had been rated as tier 1 or 2.

During discussion the following key points were raised:

- Members of the forum suggested the monument on Aston Hill as it was used to trial Aston Martins; Whiteleaf Cross, the Kop Hill Climb and Halton Cycling Hub.
- It was suggested that cafes in towns such as Princes Risborough provide discount vouchers to encourage walkers/cyclists to visit.
- In response to a question on the next steps, Ms Wright stated that once the routes were decided and were in good order, they would be promoted on the website and leaflets would be produced.
- Ms Wright clarified that it was a way of investing in Buckinghamshire and that she would apply for funding if investment in a circular route was required.

Mr K Foster, National Off-road Cycling Adviser for the UK provided a presentation, appended to the minutes, and highlighted the following:

- The data on how people used the national trails showed that 89% arrived by car; the vast majority walked 0-5 miles or 6-10 miles; 7% of people cycled on the Ridgeway compared to 5% on the South Downs Way and 31% on the Pennine Bridgeway; which was probably due to promotion in the area.
- 90% of Ridgeway users were out for the day and long distance circular walks were important as people did not want to walk back along the same trail.
- Cyclists were the predominant users for six months of the year and there was clear evidence of demand for National Trail type routes, however, only half of the Ridgeway permitted cycling.
- There had been complaints regarding the lack of connectivity in the National Trail and that cycling was not permitted on the whole route.
- Gateway locations were important in order to improve the user experience e.g. car parks, railway stations, country parks, Forestry Commission properties etc.
- Thought needed to be given to how to encourage people to walk from home rather than drive a short distance.
- There were huge opportunities for the rural economy e.g. rural pubs, cafes, and B&B's, campsites and bunkhouse options.
- Mr Foster showed possible draft routes with identified interventions which may be of benefit and asked for feedback/comments. Ms Wright explained that

there were parts of the Ridgeway in Buckinghamshire that were footpath and these stretches needed to be looked at to see how to create a route that could be used by cyclists, horse riders and walkers.

The following key points were raised during discussion:

- A member of the forum emphasised the need for parking at any access points.
- In response to a member of the forum asking if there was any data on where people travelled from, Ms Wright offered to find out.

ACTION: Ms Wright

- It was suggested that a survey be carried out on Facebook by the British Horse Society for local riders in the area.
- Mr Foster advised there was potential for a rambler ticket to be provided by the rail networks.
- Walking on the Ridgeway should be promoted at Marylebone Station.
- Ms Wright stated she had met with Chiltern Railways and the Chilterns Conservation Board who were keen to have cycle hire available at Princes Risborough and Wendover railway stations.
- Ms Wright explained she would be surveying the routes which ran parallel to the Ridgeway e.g. the Swans Way which needed a large amount of maintenance (signage and surfacing) and the Icknield Way. Volunteers would also help survey the options.
- Ms J Taylor, Team Leader, Rights of Way, advised that The Swans Way was a critical route and stated she would treat any surface problems as a priority. As The Swans Way extended into Oxfordshire it was recommended Ms Taylor contact Mr Harris at Oxfordshire County Council to suggest they also treat it as a priority.

ACTION: Ms Taylor

- A member of the forum stated that the impact of the popularity of cycles with electric engines should be considered as cyclists could travel longer distances.
- Ms Wright asked members of the forum for suggestions on suitable gateways (places where people access the trail) e.g. rural car parks. Once the gateways were identified, facilities could be improved.

The Chairman thanked Ms Wright and Mr Foster for their presentations.

6 RIGHTS OF WAY GROUP REPORT

DEFINITIVE MAP

Ms E Hackling, Definitive Map Officer, stated that the latest update was contained in the agenda pack and that the Public Path Orders were up to date. There were some outstanding Modification Orders and these would be dealt with as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED: The Forum NOTED the report.

STRATEGIC ACCESS

Mr J Clark, Strategic Access Officer, provided the following update on HS2:

- HS2 were fencing off all areas where possession was being taken for construction e.g. Ellen Road in Aylesbury.
- In the area south-west of Aylesbury some fences had been cut in protest, but almost all the rights of way had been kept open; HS2 were working around the public footpath network and the main footpath closure was on Chalfont Lane, near Maple Cross and the M25; this would be closed for the entire

construction period.

- Preliminary discussions on bridge design had commenced: there would be approximately 60 new bridges in Buckinghamshire.
- Bi-lateral meetings with Heathrow Airport were taking place; it was hoped that funding would be obtained to improve the cycling routes around Iver, Black Park, Pinewood Studios and to Slough.

It was also noted that:

- The number of district council planning applications affecting rights of way had risen significantly in 2019; particularly in Aylesbury Vale.
- The Chilterns “Donate a Gate” scheme was continuing.
- A member of the forum mentioned that there were three bridleway bridges in the Grendon Underwood and Quainton area and expressed concern over the HS2 and the East West Rail organisations which would be working in the area and whether the bridleway would be incorporated into the new bridge. The Chairman suggested that a letter to the appropriate people, stating that there was general concern from the forum; it was felt that there needed to be a common-sense approach to the bridges. However, Mr Clark pointed out that the East West Rail project was still in the planning process.

ACTION: Mr J Clark

OPERATIONS

Ms J Taylor, Team Leader, Rights of Way, reported that Ms C Brownsell, the Bridging Inspector, was on maternity leave and was due to return to work in May 2019. There were currently six full time equivalent Rights of Way team members.

The Summary of Maintenance Carried Out table in the agenda pack showed the figures for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2018 were slightly up on last year on clearance and bridges completed. However, there was still a backlog of bridging problems to resolve, and there was also an increase in the number of outstanding issues on the network.

Capital projects – these were almost complete with two projects outstanding. Extra capital money was acquired for works to be carried out in this financial year on Hillesden Bridleway 11A, Great Marlow BW52, Ivinghoe FP37 and Fawley FP12. This would reduce the amount of money available for capital projects for the year 2019/20 by the equivalent amount of overspend in 2018/19.

The Wexham project BW21 improvements had been put on hold due to a possible County Council planning application to carry out major groundworks on the site.

The clearance figure was up as an outside contractor had been employed which allowed the existing team to carry out the bridge works.

The launch of the new Rights of Way online reporting tool, CAMs Web, had been set back several months due to ‘accessibility’ compliance. However, testing was in the final stages and it was due to go live week commencing 25 March 2019. Ms Taylor showed the new reporting tool on screen, presentation appended to the minutes, and highlighted the following points:

- The map could be seen without logging in to the site.
- Any Parish Council or user group with links on their websites to the old system had received an email to advise the new system was in place.
- An email address and password would be required to log in and report an issue.
- Issues could also be reported via the contact centre.

- An explanation of what should be reported would be included and the reporting page would include a link to Fix My Street for issues relating to pavements/roads.
- The tool would only allow an issue to be reported if it was within 50 metres of a right of way.
- Reported issues would appear on the map instantly.
- Photographs could be uploaded.
- People could volunteer to be a footpath warden and be assigned work. However, it was agreed that discussion would be needed with the Chiltern Society as to how the process would work, for the path maintenance volunteers.

ACTION: Ms Taylor

7 LAF MEMBERS' REPORT

Mr J Clark, Strategic Access Officer, reported the following:

- The Buckinghamshire LAF Annual Report for April 2017 – March 2018 was almost complete and asked members of the forum to let him know if anything needed to be added; it would then be published on the website.
- There was an error on the front page of the agenda; the meeting on 24 July 2019 would start at 10.00 a.m.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member of the forum requested an update on the Unitary Authority. Mr C Harriss reported that the court had refused the district councils' (Chiltern, Wycombe and South Bucks) request for a Judicial Review. A number of formal meetings would now take place; the officers on the various councils were working well together and the benefits would be seen in the future.

9 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The extra ordinary meeting, solely on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, would be held at the Stafford Room, Stables Block, Green Park, Stablebridge Road, Aston Clinton, HP22 5NE at 10.00 am on Tuesday 21 May 2019.

The next Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum would be held on 24 July 2019 at **10.00** am.

Chairman