



## Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum held on Wednesday 14 July 2021 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, HP19 8FF - Aylesbury, commencing at 10.02 am and concluding at 11.42 am.

### Members present

Mr D Briggs (Vice-Chairman), Mr G Casperz, Mr A Clark, Mr N Harris, Ms A Heath, Mr R Jennings, Mr A Lambourne, Mr R Pushman (Chairman), Cllr A Turner and Mr B Worrell

### Others in attendance

Mr J Clark, Mrs H Francis, Ms S Wright and Mrs E Hackling

### Apologies

Cllr S Broadbent, Mr C Hurworth and Mr G Thomas

### Agenda Item

#### **2 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

#### **3 Minutes of the previous meeting / Matters arising**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

#### **4 Byway Prohibition Order Permit Scheme**

Helen Francis (Interim Definitive Map and Highways Searches Team Leader) asked Members for comments on the permit scheme which has been in operation on byways open to all traffic Nos 40 and 40A, Greater Little Kimble and No. 62, Ellesborough. The effect of this order was to prohibit all types and levels of motor vehicles throughout this year, with some exceptions including those with a permit. These permits were due to expire on 1st August 2021 and the team were interested in feedback on:

- Whether they have been effective in addressing previous damage and encouraging responsible behaviour
- Whether it's recommended to continue with the scheme
- If it should be kept under review

Opening the discussion, Andrew Clark (Chiltern Society) sought clarification on the type of user applying for permits. Ela Hackling confirmed that it was a mixture of local residents and those outside of the county, with most being members of Trail Riders.

Concern was raised over whether remedial work will be done to tackle the damage that has already been caused to the bridleway. Neil Harris (National Trust) confirmed that the surface of the byway has improved since the order, but work would be undertaken to remove some tree stumps and improve the safety of the byway.

David Briggs (Vice Chairman) suggested the implementation of conditional permits on the basis of weather and surface conditions, to prevent damage. It was explained that the terms and conditions for using the permits are designed to encourage responsible usage. The permit system running in both Hertfordshire and Kent has largely stopped damage of this type.

**RESOLVED:** Members supported of the continuation of the permit scheme and it's effectiveness in reducing damage to the byways.

## **5 Rights of Way Enforcement Policy 2021**

Jonathan Clark presented the item on behalf of Joanne Taylor. The renewed enforcement policy outlined the legislative powers available to the council taking enforcement action and detailed what those breaching the law may expect. It also gave the public an indication of the timescales expected resolve the issue. The policy had been approved by the council's leader, Cllr Martin Tett, but the document was fluid and open to changes. Jonathan Clark invited the Members of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum to comment on the item.

Neil Harris noted that the Gaps Gates and Stiles BS5709: 2006 item in the Guidance Documents section had been superseded by Gaps Gates and Stiles BS5709: 2018. Andrew Clark sought clarification on the timescales in the rights of way enforcement procedure and how it aligns with the rights of way improvement plan 2020-2030 management matrix. Jonathan Clark confirmed that the timescales will be specified and brought into alignment with the management matrix when this is review next year.

## **6 Ridgeway Riding Route: draft Wendover audit report, off-road cycling**

Sarah Wright (Ridgeway National Trail Officer) informed Members of an audit of Wendover for the provision of off-road cycling. This was part of a funded project called the 'Ridgeway Riding Route' but also included recommendations beyond the scope of the Ridgeway Partnership's remit. The audit looked at the existing Wendover Neighbourhood Plan 2020 and the Aylesbury Garden Town Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan 2019. It was found that tourism is an important part of the community and residents were in favour of encouraging cycling as a form of sustainable travel to reduce traffic, congestion and pollution. Moreover, Wendover's

surrounding terrain allows for a variety of trails for mountain bikers ranging in difficulty. Sarah Wright explained that the poor on-road provision and road safety concerns were a barrier to accessing Wendover and connecting off-road routes. Members were also made aware of the proposed off-road cycling routes, including the Buckinghamshire Greenway, with the intention to be non-traffic and locating Wendover as a key settlement within those routes.

The audit also focused on partnership with stakeholders and Sarah drew Member's attention to Chiltern Railways and their interest in offering cycle hire from their stations. A similar offer was supplied by OTEC Bikes providing bike hire services for pick up and drop off at London train stations. The audit noted this as a potential area for growth alongside developing the provision for electric bikes, such as charging points. The Members were informed of the Plus Bike Scheme by Network Rail to encourage cyclists to utilise trains through YouTube videos. Councillor Alan Turner explained that Buckinghamshire Council was meeting with Chiltern Rail to discuss improvements to the station in Prince's Risborough and it would be a good opportunity to promote cycling infrastructure such as pumps.

Members were shown the existing provision for cyclists in Wendover, including facilities such as cycling tool stations, benches, and crossing points. Sarah explained that more work needs to be done in terms of the road environment, as cyclists are pushed into difficult road conditions around the town centre. One recommendation was utilising Back Lane to cater for cyclists, as it has low levels of traffic. The audit also noted the importance of ensuring that access points from Wendover to the trails are accessible to cyclists. Members were also informed as to how businesses can engage with cyclists such as providing cycle parking nearby to where their customers will be sitting. Examples include the Cherry Tree in the Chilterns, who had cycling racks, a tool station and tyre pump.

Sarah invited Members to comment on the report and cycling in Wendover. Members were supportive, but concerns were raised over tarmacking bridleways or restricted byways, due to its negative effects on the environment, aesthetics, and lack of consideration of the needs of other users. Alison Heath (British Horse Society) informed Members of a potential surface called rubber crumb. It had been used in Milton Keynes and had the benefits of being porous and environmentally friendly. Sarah confirmed that the report was a draft and would take Member's feedback into consideration before it is finalised. Information and recommendations on suitable surfaces would be included.

Andrew Clark asked how the scheme can progress and how it can be implemented. Sarah explained that the audit has produced a broader set of recommendations beyond the remit of the Ridgeway Partnership and suggested that the Members distinguish between ones that the Ridgeway Partnership can cover and ones that can be taken forward with other partners. Sarah also presented Members with possible funding sources, such as the HS2 Community and Environment Fund and HS2 Business Grant Stream.

Richard Jennings (Cycling UK) raised concern over the lack of coordination between cycling schemes, such as the Wendover Cycle Way Improvement Scheme. Jonathan Clark notified Members of the council's Strategic Transport Team, whose officers were aware of the audit report. Buckinghamshire Council were developing a county-wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWHIP) which would be consulted on later this year and could provide a platform to draw the schemes together. Any updates on this would be brought to the November Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum and Jonathan would look into inviting a representative from the council's Strategic Transport Team to a future meeting.

Karen Haining (member of the public with an interest in horse riding) requested that education needs to be a part of any promotion, to inform cyclists of responsible behaviour, especially on multiuse routes. Sarah confirmed that multiple organisations, including the bike hire companies, train stations, and Wendover Parish Council were making sure promotion comes hand in hand with education. The Members noted an addition to the report to include working with local schools to include off-road cycling with the cycling proficiency test.

Allison Heath (British Horse Society) flagged an issue of some gates on the National Trail not meeting with British Safety Standards. Sarah agreed that any concerns would be addressed immediately.

## **7 Rights of Way Improvement Plan: Year 1 Action Plan report (Chapters 1 and 2)**

Members received a report from Jonathan Clark on the Rights off Way Improvement Plan. It was noted that the report was a 'self-assessment' and required scrutiny and feedback from the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum.

Jonathan explained the impact Covid-19 had on the team, with the Ramblers and Chiltern Society volunteers out of action for almost eight months. Additionally, the council's contractors stopped work for about eight weeks and when they did return, were only part time or had staff redeployed. Internally, the Definitive Map team leader has also been on maternity leave, but the team is expected to return to full capacity in 2022.

Helen Francis informed Members that the team were working on clearing the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders by training another member of staff. It was planned to recruit someone temporarily to backfill Helen's post, but the recruitment process was unsuccessful. Helen explained that there will be delays until the staff member is back from maternity leave in January 2022. Nevertheless, the team were now able to work more efficiently as internal processes have been streamlined, with delegated power for decision-making given to senior officers, instead of the need for formal committee approval.

Richard Jennings requested a status update of the Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO) to understand how many were completed or in progress. Helen confirmed that they would work on marking completed DMMOs as resolved.

## **8 Rights of way group report**

Jonathan introduced the Rights of Way group update. Members noted the inclusion of a summary table of the current case load and what the team had achieved in previous years. Helen explained that four DMMO applications were being determined by the Planning Inspectorate. There was a backlog of applications as capacity was reduced by a member of staff going on maternity leave, although staffing levels had recently improved. Members of the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum agreed to raise their concerns with the Planning Inspectorate regarding the backlog of DMMO cases referred for determination by the Secretary of State and to raise the matter local Members of Parliament.

Brian Worrell asked for clarification regarding Buckinghamshire DMMO applications, and if they were received before the cut-off date on 1 January 2026 would they still be valid and processed. Jonathan Clark confirmed they would be valid.

Jonathan Clark informed Members of the impact of HS2 on the countryside. Most of the rights of way along the HS2 line had been closed and there was a link on the [Buckinghamshire Council website](#) detailing all of the closures. Jonathan explained that the disruption would be most keenly felt around Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville.

Concern was voiced over the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and its use of existing rights of way. Jon confirmed that, where possible, cyclists would be separated from horse riders where there was sufficient widths. Otherwise, use of suitable shared surfaces such as rubber crumb would be considered. Brian Worrell (British Driving Society Beds, Bucks and Herts) stressed the importance of having split usage rather than cyclists dominating bridleways.

## **9 LAF members' report**

Jonathan Clark introduced the LAF members' group report by highlighting walks led by Gavin Casperz and Andrew Clark at the Chiltern's Walking Festival. The Chiltern Society have opened discussion with contractors for HS2 looking to divert the Chiltern Way. Andrew Clark informed Members that they have way-marked both the Chiltern Way and the Chiltern Heritage Trail across the HS2 line. These will remain open, along with the Waddesdon Greenway.

Members were made aware of the structural changes to the Definitive Map team into transportation rather than planning. In addition, the online forum for LAF members nationally, 'Huddle', has been discontinued.

## **10 Any other business**

None.

## **11 Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 3rd November 2021

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