



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 4

Date: 3rd November 2021

Title: Rights of Way Enforcement Policy 2021

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Local Access Forum members were invited on a site visit to inspect surfacing organised by the Ridgeway National Trail Officer at Bacombe Hill Wendover. This followed an award by the Chilterns Conservation Board for HS2 funding. The routes surfaced are illustrated in APPENDIX 1.

Attendance:

Gavin Caspersz – Disabled Ramblers [on mobility scooter]

Karen Haining - (substituting Alison Heath) – British Horse Society

Juliette Dean – British Horse Society [on horse]

Sarah Wright – Ridgeway National Trails Officer

Jonathan Clark - Buckinghamshire Council Strategic Access Officer

Written representations

Alison Heath - British Horse Society

Bruce Archibald - Mountain biking guide [on behalf of Richard Jennings, Cycling UK]

Summary of works

Surfacing of Bridleway WEN/15/3 (Ridgeway Riding Route 200m; £12,000) and Footpath WEN/15A/2 (Ridgeway National Trail 125m £5000) with Smiths limestone (Bletchingdon, Oxfordshire) topped with fines; clearing overgrown vegetation; and draining water into reinstated soakaways.

Advice and feedback

Overall works and the surfacing were welcomed as an improvement to the previous situation where water had eroded the bridleway into a steep V-shape down to the bedrock with sharp flints protruding, catching cyclist's tyres and pedals.

Concern was expressed regarding likely washout of the surface during heavy rainfall, similar to Hogtrough Lane, Wendover, another bridleway on the Ridgeway washed out around 10 years ago. The reinstated soakaways and French drains would certainly

mitigate the flow of water, but the deep, sunken nature of the lane, steep slope and loose material will mean this likely to be unavoidable.

Horse riders suggested the size of stone (10mm -20mm) and rounded edges used in the ‘fines’ was small enough not to catch in horses’ hooves. This was positive feedback.

The piling-up of stones near the widened track over the French Drain was heavy, causing mobility scooter wheels to spin. This has been fed-back to the contractor and the surface has now been compacted with additional fines. This should improve with light rainfall to bind the limestone.

Horse riders suggested appropriate signage should be installed to mitigate fast downhill cyclists to slow down and share space with other users. A number of example signs were discussed, but no decision was made. Further advice is sought from the Local Access Forum on appropriate signage (Appendix B) to manage behaviour.

Cycling suggested the resulting widening and flattening of the bridleway could lead to faster descents, suggesting a need for some signage, on which they are happy to provide further advice.

Concern was expressed regarding the Ellesborough Road which is dangerous for horses without segregation. It’s likely to be the limiting factor for equestrians who wouldn’t use the newly surfaced route as a result. This isn’t unusual in Buckinghamshire, but a particular issue for family cyclists and inexperienced riders. It was suggested there needs to be a field-edge or widened footway to facilitate connections. Officers agreed they would speak to the HS2 team to see if an off-road route could be designed, such as the temporary connection to Bacombe Lane, or additional funding sought.

Gavin (Disabled Ramblers) surveyed the Ridgeway through Bacombe Hill SSSI (Footpath WEN/15/A/2), as far as possible, but was restricted by steps and lumpy terrain. A 70m section was identified as needing further surfacing works and removal of steps which would require an additional funding bid.

Grangelands SSSI

Karen Haining joined officers through Grangelands SSSI to provide advice on gates which are difficult to open. It was agreed these needed fully replacing. She also identified a dangerous crossing, which officer’s thought could be resolved by allowing a direct crossing of Cadsdean Road opposite the turning for The Plough. The Wildlife Trust have been contacted and a further site visit arranged for 22nd October 2021.

The National Trail Officer thanked everyone for attending and providing such useful feedback. An article was provided for Wendover Parish Council, Wendover News and National Trail newsletter.

https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/the-ridgeway/news/

Signage advice

Please see APPENDIX 2 for some examples of signage that might be appropriate for Bacombe Hill. More generally The Ridgeway Officer aims to promote a code of conduct as part of the Ridgeway Riding Route project and Cycling UK were promoting a code in

June 2021: <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/cycling-guide/off-road-cycling-code-conduct>

Suggested wording

Heading downhill:

SLOW FOR BEND – with bicycle symbol; installed before bend.

SLOW WHEN PASSING OTHERS – combined with an illustration of a horse rearing up with a cyclist speeding past; installed where decline starts and before bend.

Heading uphill:

BE ALERT TO DOWNHILL CYCLISTS – soon after incline starts.