

Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum Annual Review

1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

Chairman - *Richard Pushman*

Vice-chairman - *David Briggs*

Meetings - *14th July 2021; 3rd November 2021; & 2nd March 2022*

Member interests and organisations [14]

- *Country Land & Business Association*
- *Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust*
- *National Trust*
- *British Horse Society*
- *Ramblers*
- *British Driving Society (Beds, Bucks & Herts)*
- *Cycling UK*
- *Disabled Ramblers*
- *Trail Rider's Fellowship*
- *Chiltern Society*
- *Buckinghamshire Council - Cabinet Member Transport*
- *Buckinghamshire Council - Member For The Risboroughs*
- *Parish councils*
- *Independent*

Meeting Diary

All meetings are held at 10am in the Paralympic Room, The Gateway, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF. They can be attended in person or remotely having contacted the secretary in advance.

Dates of next meetings: 13th July 2022, 2nd November 2022, 1st March 2023, 12th July 2023 and 1st November 2023.

Guest Speakers

Members welcomed the following speakers:

- Sarah Wright, Ridgeway National Trail Officer;
- Ben Feeney-North, Transport Strategy Officer, Bucks Council;
- Hannah Joyce, Transport Strategy Lead Officer, Bucks Council; and
- Nicola Thomas, Natural Environment Partnership Manager

Regular observers also attend from the British Horse Society and Chiltern Society.

Monitoring success

The regular business of Local Access Forum includes updates from definitive map, strategic access and operations teams, with reports provided respectively in that order. Members provide feedback and questions, through which progress, workloads and priorities are monitored.

Advice

The forum provided advice on the following:

1. The Buckinghamshire Cycleway following HS2;
2. ROWIP Action Plan [Year-1 Report];
3. Bacombe Hill SSSI bridleway works in Wendover [site visit];
4. The Buckinghamshire Natural Environment Partnership;
5. Local Transport Plan 5;
6. Buckinghamshire council's Byway Prohibition Order Permit Scheme;
7. Buckinghamshire council's Rights of Way Enforcement Policy 2021; &
8. Ridgeway Riding Route Wendover off-road cycling audit report.

Open Access Land advice

The Forum provided the National Trust with informal advice on their ash die-back tree works on West Wycombe Hill. In addition, advice was provided to Natural England on open access restrictions at Wayside Farm and Chawley Manor Farm, Bledlow. This resulted in changes to the original proposals to the benefit of walkers.

National Government

The Forum wrote to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with concerns about the slow progress of Definitive Map Modification Orders referred to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. They also lobbied for an extension of the 2026 cut-off date for submission of Definitive Map Modification Orders.

Improving public access: making a difference

Members are involved in following voluntary activities:

1. publishing and leading walks in the Chilterns;
2. surveying promoted routes and completing BVPI reports;
3. trouble-shooting new cycling and walking routes;
4. attending Ridgeway Delivery Group meetings;
5. lobbying HS2 to address impacts of construction on equestrians; and
6. making DMMO applications.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030

Members provided advice and feedback on the draft Year-1 report

Scrutiny

The LAF provides independent strategic oversight of the council's public access work across the county, which has multiple positive outcomes for public access.

Regular bi-annual BVPI-type surveys provide 'Easy to Use' scores and every meeting is provided with a maintenance and improvement summary and major bridge / surfacing schemes for members to monitor progress.

Comments from the appointing authority

LAF advice is valued greatly and we are fortunate to have members with a broad range of countryside experience and knowledge. This results in balanced advice, without any particular interest group dominating. Numbers continue to remain good at 14.

Members challenge and scrutinise the council and speakers. In this way the forum holds the council to account. At the same time, members understand pressures from increasing workloads and residents' high expectations.

Comments from the Chairman

This concludes my fourth and final annual report as chairman.

Our meetings are conducted in good spirits from members demonstrating a great interest and passion for access in our county. Thank you to everyone for your attendance and support throughout my tenure as chairman.

I am also very grateful to Buckinghamshire council for providing a meeting venue, secretariate support, funding and cabinet member appointments.

I would also like to thank our rights of way officers for their commitment to improving access and maintaining high standards, against a background of significant growth and infrastructure pressures.



Richard Pushman (Chairman)