



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

AGENDA ITEM 6

Date: 1st March 2023

Title: LAF members' report

Author: Jonathan Clark and James Spratley, Strategic Access Officers

Contact Officer: Harry Thomas [01296 585234]

1. Social Media

National Trails recently shared their methodology for using influencers to promote The Countryside Code. After identifying people with a wide following on social media who advocate for related causes, they were approached to become Countryside Code Champions. These include Haroon Mota [the founder of Muslim Hikers and active Inclusion Network]; Ben Andrews [an Organic farmer from Herefordshire who promotes his local trails and birdlife]; and Amanda Owen [a well-known Shepherdess and author]. Their social media posts have included YouTube videos and Instagram posts. We would welcome any ideas from members wishing to promote responsible usage of the countryside in a similar way.

2. The National Outdoor Expo [18th and 19th March 2022]

This event will be held at the NEC Birmingham with talks from many high-profile speakers including Ray Mears, Ben Fogle, and Claire Lomas MBE alongside a host of exhibiting brands, partners, and workshops.

3. Ridgeway Delivery Group meeting 14th September 2022 [Brian Worrell]

The Ridgeway National Trail Delivery Group [RNTGD] met remotely on 12th December 2022, attended by Brian Worrell. Here is Brian's update:

- a) 2023 is the 50th Anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail and as such many improvements and events are planned to celebrate this milestone.
- b) West Berkshire Council have trialed a new method of surface repair called cut-and-fill. The benefit of this method is an efficient use of resources, with little or no imported additional material. A similar method was used on Bacombe Hill in Buckinghamshire using limestone for resurfacing in conjunction with nature conservation practices.

- c) New signage is being designed for the Ridgeway designed around 'Leave no Trace' and 'Be Nice, Say Hi' with the acorn symbol.
- d) Natural England are preparing a specific cyclists code of practice much like the Countryside Code.
- e) The RNTGD have requested that Buckinghamshire Council's winter clearance and mowing schedules are completed in good time as there is expected to be significant interest in using the Ridgeway National Trail in this anniversary year.
- f) The Ridgeway featured on The Guardian's travel list [No 8] of places to holiday in 2023. The photo includes a Chiltern's Donate-a-Gate.
 - a. <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2023/jan/14/where-to-go-on-holiday-in-2023-23-great-travel-ideas>
- g) Grant Funding 24/25
 - a. Ivinghoe Beacon surfacing project – Ridgeway itself and path to nearby car park. Match-fund with National Trust and Buckinghamshire Council. Sarah to contact National Trust at Ashridge ASAP.
 - b. Chequers footpath – improve the slippery sections through registered parkland. Match-fund with Buckinghamshire Council.
 - c. Grangelands bridleway entrance – improved slope, access and drainage. Match with Buckinghamshire Council.

4. Venue and dates of next meetings

Paralympic Room, The Gateway, Gatehouse Rd, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF - 10am
Wednesday 19th July 2023; and Wednesday 1st November 2023.