

Contact: Sue Hills
Telephone: (01344) 352060
Sue.hills@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
Published: 14 September 2007



NOTICE OF MEETING

LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

25 SEPTEMBER 2007

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Local Countryside Access Forum on **25 September 2007 at 7.00 pm** in the Function Room, Fifth Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, to transact the business set out in the attached agenda.

Alison Sanders
Director of Corporate Services

Members of the Local Countryside Access Forum

Councillors Brossard and Simonds
Mr David Bertie, Mrs Celia Blay, Mr Joe Dodson, Mr Chris Gardner, Mr Mike Gates,
Mr Innes McEwan, Mr Richard Mosses, Mr Mark Osman, Mrs Diana Pidgeon OBE,
Mr Peter Radband, Mr Derick Stickler, Mr Stuart Tarrant and Miss Caroline Tomalin

EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

If you hear the alarm:

- 1 Leave the building immediately**
- 2 Follow the green signs**
- 3 Use the stairs not the lifts**
- 4 Do not re-enter the building until told to do so**



LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
25 September 2007 (7.00 pm)
Function Room, Fifth Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell.
AGENDA

Page No

1. **WELCOME**
2. **APOLOGIES**
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING** 1 - 6
4. **FUTURE OF THE FORUM**
 1. Site visits
 2. Membership
5. **THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)**
SPA Strategy update (Melissa Read, BFBC Environmental Policy Officer)
6. **REGIONAL LAF WORK**
 1. SE/Central LAF meeting updates 7
 - a) Dog Control Orders
 - b) NE funding for LAF training
 2. SE LAF Newsletter 9 -14
 3. Regional support for Local Access Forums and role of the National Forum
7. **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)**
 1. Winkfield Bridleway creation
 2. Priory Fields bridleway – update
 3. Improvements to Winkfield 5
 4. Works on Hawthorn Lane
 5. Access
 6. Definitive Map Review
8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
 1. New path proposal linking ascot Station and Kings Ride – update
 2. Consultations
 - a) DEFRA
 - b) Department of Transport
9. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
(Maximum 10 minutes)
10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
1 April 2008

Agenda Item 3

LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
27 MARCH 2007
(7.00 - 8.55 pm)

Present: Statutory Board Members
David Bertie
Celia Blay
Anne Haydon
Innes McEwan
Richard Mosses
Diana Pidgeon (Chairman)
Derick Stickler
Caroline Tomalin
Joe Dodson
Peter Radband

In attendance: Sally Coulson, Parks and Countryside Projects Officer, BFBC
Tina Stevenson, Democratic Services Officer, BFBC
Richard Walton, Parks and Countryside Manager, BFBC

Observers: Hugh Fitzwilliams, Rights of Way Ranger, BFBC
Nicola Harper, Natural England
Nicola Trafford, Natural England
John Winkley, Mid and West Berkshire LAF

Apologies for absence were received from:
James Dymond, Mike Gates, Iain McCracken and Stuart Tarrant

95. Welcome

Diana Pidgeon welcomed all members of the Forum to the meeting including Nicola Harper and Nicola Tarrant of Natural England who would be the new Support Officers for LAFs.

96. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2006 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 54 referring to Minute 81 – “The New Valley Garden Centre” should read “The New Savill Garden Centre”.

97. New Local Access Forum Regulations and Guidelines

The Forum noted the new Regulations and Guidelines which it would consider in relation to later items on the agenda, as appropriate.

98. Future of the Forum

The Forum had a discussion around how it should operate in future. It was agreed that a combination of formal meetings supplemented by site visits as suggested in the new LAF guidance, would be a useful format to try for the next year. It was stressed

that the site visits should be relevant to issues being considered by the Forum and have a minimum attendance of six people. Potential dates for site visits were agreed as:

Tuesday 8 May 2007 at 5pm OR	} Site visit led by Derick Stickler
	Swinley Forest / Crown Estates
Thursday 10 May 2007 at 5pm	
Monday 6 August at 5pm	} Guided historical walk led by Celia Blay
	Binfield / Warfield Borders

It was agreed that Members be canvassed for preferences for dates and the details would be confirmed in due course. **(Action: Sally Coulson)**

In view of the minimum number for a site visit to be held, it was important that Forum Members respond promptly regarding attendance.

It was also agreed that the Forum would at its October meeting review how effective the site visits had been.

99. Regional LAF Work

- a) Central LAF Meeting – unfortunately the Forum had been unable to send representation, however issues highlighted in the minutes included:
 - Rural Speed Limits – the Forum was advised that LAFs should be negotiating with DEFRA with regard to modulation under S71 of the Highways Act and its provisions for margins for horse riders;
 - Car parking – the restricted height barriers on some car parks were an issue for horse riders who used horse boxes;
 - Thames Basin Heath SPA – the issue of mitigation was still unresolved;
 - Environmental Stewardship – again LAFs were being called upon to try and influence DEFRA with regard to an entry level scheme for the support and stewardship available to landowners and managers
 - Proliferation of way marking – better clarity and guidance was needed to avoid the layering of signs
 - North Hampshire Borders – the pathways were believed to be in poor condition, however project officers were now being funded via the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), with areas such as Eversley being targeted for improvements. Details were requested about possible Parish & Town Council help with footpath maintenance, which could be obtained by contacting Sally Coulson.

- b) SE LAF Newsletter – well received and Natural England will continue to produce a newsletter on a 6 monthly basis. The newsletter is currently being revised in order to enable LAF members to network with others, using bullet points and 150 words or less to include successes, problems, projects etc. Aim is to enable other members to learn from each others experiences. In addition there will be a themed lead article, written by a willing officer, which would be circulated for LAF comments to be summarised in the Newsletter. The themed article would be circulated in due course.
(Action: Sally Coulson)

- c) Regional Support for the LAF and role of the National Forum – The Forum was advised that Nicola Trafford would now be the first point of contact for the Regional Support provided by Natural England. Whilst the recent turnover of staff had resulted in a loss of expertise, it was anticipated that this would only be an issue in the short term. With regard to the National Forum, it was believed that this was soon to be re-established with a new name: English Recreation and Access Forum, however more detail of how it would function had yet to be made known.

100. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)**

- a) Horse Riding Leaflet – Forum Members were shown the new “Horse Riding in Bracknell Forest” leaflet which detailed bridleways, byways and restricted byways open to horse riders within the Borough. Feedback and comments on the leaflet should be made to Sally Coulson and the Forum agreed that this was a good start to the provision of information for horse riders locally.
- b) The Cut Riverside Path – the Forum discussed exactly what the intention/aspiration was with regard to this path. Issues such as potentially undermining work being done by local landowners for local wildlife and the cost of fencing and public liability insurance were all acknowledged as important. The Forum therefore agreed that it would be best to pursue joining the footpaths in the more urban parts of Bracknell Forest to make a riverside path. The Forum would also work to ensure the continuation of the path was built into the amenity plan for the urban extension planned in the North of the Borough.
- c) Winkfield Bridleway Creation – the Forum was advised that as part of an original planning scheme, there was an existing agreement which gave 25 years to establish a bridleway, however, as it stands, this would be a dead end bridleway. Consequently, there are three possible approaches to this issue to be considered:
- i) Do nothing
 - ii) Continue to pursue the bridleway as a project and pursue identifying and establishing a connection to the wider access network
 - iii) Create the bridleway as a dead end bridleway

The Forum discussed the available options and considered the bridleway too important to do nothing. It identified that in the current circumstances, it would probably be very difficult to link the bridleway to the rest of the network. The Forum therefore agreed to pursue option three and pursue the bridleway as a dead end bridleway. Although it was acknowledged that there were difficulties managing a dead end route, it was hoped that in time the connection to the wider network could be pursued. The Forum therefore needed to investigate funding to establish the bridleway, possibly via S106 Funding.

- d) Programme of Work for 2007/2008 – the Parks and Countryside Manager advised the Forum that a process of identifying S106 Funding for recreational and green space continued and prioritising work projects had been completed. The proposed work programme for 2007/08 included:
- £60,000 for the development of the Met Office site to include renewal of the play area at Deepfield Road
 - £85,000 to undertake habitat management works with the Wildlife Trust at Wildmoor Heath

- £10,000 to make improvements to the habitat at Chaucer Woods (between Wellington College and Crowthorne High Street)
- £20,000 to carry out surfacing improvements to the permissive bridleway at Horseshoe Lake
- £20,000 to undertake surfacing improvements on the Warfield area bridleway
- £24,000 to make surface improvements to the urban footpath in Sandhurst (Footpath 2)

Linked to this work was the issue of future funding of such work. The Local Development Framework (LDF) Spatial Planning Strategy was looking at strengthening the negotiating position of the planning authority to increase developer contributions for residential development which would be used towards areas of work such as the ROWIP and biodiversity action plans.

- e) Priory Fields Bridleway – the Forum was advised that improvements had been made to these playing fields using S106 money. The gates to the site remained closed at present to allow the reseeded site to establish and future additional development would be staggered. The next stage was work on the bridleway link from the car park to the Hedge Lane bridleway network, which was currently being costed and funding investigated. The timing of this work would depend upon the scale of the work required and consequent cost and a possible application for funding from Natural England was being considered. The Forum asked for details around where most of the funding for Parks and Countryside work came from and was advised that capital projects were generally funded by:
- S106 money
 - BFBC Capital Programme
 - Heritage Lottery Fund
- f) Definitive Map Review – the Forum was advised that Sally Coulson was still progressing this and it would be updated on this work in due course.

101. **Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)**

The Forum was updated on policy and delivery initiatives around the SPA. It was advised that BFBC in conjunction with other planning authorities, major landowners and other relevant organisations, had produced its own mitigation strategy with the aim of providing the required residential growth **and** enhance the value of the biodiversity within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. At a practical level, it outlined a three tier approach:

- i) enhancing alternative recreational sites by looking at potential improvement works to sites outside the SPA area;
- ii) ensuring the sustainable management of these alternative sites; and
- iii) providing management improvements within and specific to the SPA in partnership with other organisations, for example scrub management.

On this basis, a number of alternative sites had been identified, including Larks Hill, Garth Meadows, The Cut, Horseshoe Lakes, Silver Green, Lily Hill Park and Ambarrow Court and Hill and mini improvement plans would be drawn up for each of the sites.

The first of these was for Horseshoe Lake with proposals for improvements totalling £148,000. The Forum was assured that Natural England was being consulted with during the development of this improvement plan to ensure it was in line with what was expected. Proposed improvement activities included:

- improvements to the existing path network
- surfacing improvements
- access improvements for the permissive bridleway
- replacement of stiles
- replacement of site furniture
- habitat and biodiversity improvements

Feedback from Natural England was due shortly and if positive, the next step was to seek developer contributions to undertake these improvements. The Plan was to encourage use of these alternative areas by making them more attractive and using positive marketing to attract users away from areas within the SPA.

102. **Any other business**

- a) Flooding/Sewerage Issues – the Forum was advised that the Environment Agency was surveying the Cut to check whether drainage work was required and Thames Water was photographing the internal sewage pipes with a report back due in May.
- b) DEFRA Consultations
 - The Forum noted the Natural England proposals for improving coastal access and the DEFRA consultation due on these
 - The Forum was advised that new guidance had been issued in November 2006 which has simplified the range of tasks which could now be done in relation to byelaws at officer level via DEFRA. It was also helpful because it identified where areas may have in the past been considered for byelaws, the alternative legislative options available
- c) The Ranger team was currently being trained to issue fixed penalty notices for litter dropping
- d) The need for a path linking Ascot Station and Kings Ride was highlighted. It appeared that much of the land concerned was owned by the NHS and the Forum agreed that approaches be made to Windsor and Maidenhead to see if this could be progressed. **(Action: Sally Coulson)**

103. **Date of next meeting**

Potential date for next meeting: Tuesday 25th September 2007 (TBC)
(Action: Sally Coulson)

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6

Briefing note – Dog Control Orders

Under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, all Parish/Town and District Councils in Hampshire can now make Dog Control Orders for “any land which is open to the air and to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment)”, requiring dog walkers to do any or all of the following:

- a) remove faeces
- b) keep dogs on leads
- c) keep dogs on leads if asked by an officer of the council
- d) not take dogs into certain areas
- e) keep within a maximum number of dogs per person (number specified by the authority)

The County Council cannot make these orders and is not required to be consulted (or even informed) unless the land is access land. Similarly, the Local Access Forum is only required to be consulted if the land is access land.

All orders apply to rights of way and permissive paths, except dog exclusion orders, which do not apply. This means that our usual advice that dogs must legally be kept under close control on ROW but not on leads will not longer be true universally. Forestry Commission land is exempt.

Fines are payable (currently up to £1000 but with a default of £75 if the order does not specify a fine) for offences against any of the orders. Fines may be imposed by an officer of the Parish or District, other people to whom the Parish/District have given written authorisation, and the police.

Making an order is cheap, fast and easy to do. The exact wording for each order is provided by regulations, so the authority just has to insert their name and the areas to which the order will apply. The authority must publish a notice in a local newspaper with a minimum 28 day period in which responses may be made, and must consult the other order-making authority (ie. the District if the Parish is making the order and vice-versa) plus, if CROW access land is involved, HCC and HCAF. The authority then decides whether to make the order; if so, a second notice is placed in a local newspaper and if practicable signs are put up on site and on the authority’s web-site.

Guidance from Defra emphasises that Councils should adopt a balanced approach when making dog control orders, carefully considering the needs of both dog owners and others. Defra consider that failure to do so would leave the orders vulnerable to challenge in the courts. In practice, they say that dog owners should have access to land where they can exercise their dogs and that other people should be able to enjoy reasonable access to land without interference from dogs.

The landowner or occupier may give permission for the order to be ignored (eg. HCC allowing dogs off leads on our sites). In addition, if a private act gives management responsibilities for a particular piece of land that body may require their land to be excluded from the order.

In Hampshire, we believe that Test Valley Borough Council have made an order requiring removal of faeces on all land within the district, and Basingstoke and Deane BC are about to make orders on behalf of Kingsclere Parish Council covering all of the possible restrictions in a to e above for various specific areas including the churchyard, playing fields, school, allotments and open spaces. This has provoked a lot of bad feeling locally, and petitions both for and against the orders. Some feel that in a rural area they should not be subject to such restrictions; others that the orders are necessary to tackle bad behaviour.

Issues

- The orders can impose a variety of restrictions in a piece-meal way across the county – how can we keep an overview of such orders? Should we amend our advice to the public regarding dogs on rights of way?
- How can we have an input to the process? Should we be asking PCs and DCs to consult us? Could we provide guidance to them on when we think an order is justifiable?
- Should we be asking the Secretary of State to exempt Rights of Way from more of (or all of) the types of order? (SoS has the power to do so)

Para 55-68 of the Act: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050016_en_8#pt6

Regulations: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/SI/si2006/20061059.htm> <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20060798.htm>

Defra Guidance: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/legislation/cnea/dogcontrol-orders.pdf>

(Cath Hart, Aug '07)

This page is intentionally left blank



© Natural England/ Anne Katrin Purkiss

New Guidance for Local Access Forums

Tim Squire

New regulations, The Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007, came into force on 19th March 2007 and as a result there is also new guidance from the Secretary of State. The Guidance aims both to disseminate good practice to forum members and outline the changes that have been made in the Regulations.

One of the changes in the Regulations is to extend the list of bodies to whom the forums may give advice. Consequently these bodies are required to have regard to the advice given to them. The new and appealingly entitled "section 94(4) bodies" are;

- Sport England
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Boards
- Parish and Town Councils

Forums will need to consider how to engage with these bodies. Some have decided to write to these bodies to introduce themselves. A very useful model statement is provided in the Guidance which makes clear to all bodies receiving advice, the legal status

of the advice given. Annex C gives a useful summary of the function of the main section 94(4) bodies.

The new Guidance also explains how the remit of forums has been widened to include "functional" or "utility" issues rather than merely recreation. This means that forums should now consider how land or rights of way might be used for journeys to work, school or amenities.

In a section dealing with business between meetings it is recommended that forums have agreed position statements on key issues. This will enable a response to be made to requests for advice which can't be considered due to the timing of meetings.

The Guidance also lays out good practice on how to focus on strategic issues, the value of a forward work programme and the need for cross boundary working.

Advice is also given on requirements in the regulations for public access to meetings, declarations of interest, managing sub-groups and other administrative issues.

Annex A in the Guidance is a list of matters on

which forums may give advice. This covers everything from gating orders to developing national policy. It runs to a mere 8 pages but it is pointed out that it is not a comprehensive list. Nevertheless there is enough to keep us all busy for the foreseeable future.

The new Guidance will provide members and officers with valuable advice on how forums should function and a good reference for best practice. Although not a particularly lightweight document it does serve its purpose. In general the new Guidance bolsters the role of local access forums and can be a useful tool to ensure the effectiveness of their work.

Cutting the Red Tape

A Local Access Forum's approach to simplify the process of creating permitted paths by Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way Officer, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Introduction

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum was established in 2003 and consists of 20 members, meeting 3 times a year.

Keen to be proactive in its duties, the forum decided to set up working groups in order to assist in its activities, and to keep formal meeting times down! These groups are managed and run by the members of the LAF and look at detailed issues and come up with recommendations for the main forum.

Forming the Group

After examining the Council's existing procedures for dealing with permitted paths, the LAF formed a small working group in September 2006 to look at ways in which the Council and the LAF could encourage landowners in the Borough to create permitted paths to supplement the Rights of Way Network.

The working group consisted of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum, and a Rights of Way Officer from the Council. As well as being an issue that the LAF wished to examine strategically, particular permitted path negotiations that are currently underway allowed the Chair to bring to discussions

issues from a landowner point of view, and from the Vice-Chair from a user-group point of view.

Moving forward

In February 2007 the first meeting of the group was held, and after looking at the issue the group decided one of the big issues that prevented landowners from creating permitted paths was the perceived complexity of doing so. The group decided to develop a "Permitted Path Pack" for landowners to attempt to simplify the process.

The proposed pack will contain:

- A flow chart for landowners simplifying the process
- A template agreement / notification to the Council for landowners to create permitted paths
- A template agreement to cover situations where an external party, for example a local user group, was provided funds for the path. This provides for the right for the landowner to close the path if necessary, but contains a sliding scale of compensation to be paid if the path is closed within a certain period (for example 5 years).

This pack is still in development and is expected to be complete by the next meeting of the LAF in September, but should prove to be a very way for the LAF to directly contribute to improving how the Council deal with permitted paths.

For more information, please contact Andrew Fletcher, RBWM LAF Secretary on 01628 683800 or email pro@rbwm.gov.uk

LAF ROUND-UP

Bracknell Forest

The LAF continues to represent a good mix of countryside managers, users and other interested parties and currently has 13 members. Continuing their involvement in the published Bracknell Forest ROWIP, the forum continues with work revolving around the implementation of these projects such as the recent publication of a horse riding leaflet

and a new bridleway creation through a planning agreement. Members also come forward with suggestions of local issues which they can usefully explore at meetings and these are added to the forum's work programme which is reviewed at each meeting.

In addition, approval has been sought for the use of Section 106 funds to undertake capital works which will enhance a number of recreational routes throughout the borough. These works include access improvements, surfacing of paths and the creation of new access opportunities. Linked to this, the forum has expressed a wish to carry out site visits to keep all members informed about access routes affected by capital works and ROWIP projects and also to increase the regularity of informal meetings.

[Bracknell Forest LCAF](#)

Brighton and Hove

B&HLAF have been working hard on a couple of projects recently. The City Council have been looking into the possibility of making a couple of Gating Orders under the new powers introduced by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The LAF were consulted at an early stage and a sub-group examined both cases. They presented their findings to the Forum who endorsed their recommendations.

The forum have also been heavily involved with the preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Again work was carried out through a sub-group. The members of this group looked at the working document at various stages and helped shape it into the draft for public consultation.

[Brighton & Hove LAF](#)



© Natural England/ Julia Bayne

Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire County Council are nearing the time, when the next Local Access Forum Annual Report is due to be produced. To build on the success of last year's glossy "summary" style report, we are hoping to get further input from our Local Access Forum on what they would like to see for this year's edition. We are keen to move focus away from what the council achieved and more toward our Forum and their future planning. To do this, we have set up a sub-meeting with our Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum, to decide on the format and content of the report. Running alongside this, we are continuing to hold sub-group meetings with volunteers from the Forum, to assist with the Improvement Plan - which is rapidly approaching completion. The Improvement Plan is set for external consultation between May to July, with approval for the final document in October.

[Buckinghamshire LAF](#)

East Sussex

[East Sussex LAF](#)

Hampshire

LAF for Hampshire (excluding New Forest), Southampton and Portsmouth

Following open discussion among the whole Forum, a Vehicles Task Group was formed to draft a revised policy for Hampshire County Council. 'Off-road' motor vehicle use is probably the most contentious issue that the Forum has tackled, and similarly the Task Group has members with radically different views. However, discussion has always remained courteous and productive, and a fair and reasonable policy is well on its way - our vehicles representative has even organised a site visit (by vehicle!) for Forum members to look at a variety of routes. The value of having LAFs has really shown through here; if the Council had formed a group of known interested parties, with established attitudes, it is doubted that the outcome would have been so positive.

Together with New Forest Access Forum we are also considering coastal access, with a site visit to Beaulieu Estate in April - this area received much attention in the national press, as the coast and beautiful estuary is

claimed to be one of the places that walkers nationally are most hoping to be able to access more fully.

The site visit ably demonstrated all sides of the argument, and enabled the Forum to form a considered and balanced position prior to the consultation, with its effect on our local coast in mind.

[Hampshire Countryside Access Forum](#)



© Natural England/ Joe Low

Isle of Wight [Isle of Wight Local Access Forum](#)

Kent



The Kent Local Access Forum has changed its name to become the **Kent Countryside Access Forum**. This is reflected in the attached logo and marks the beginning of a positive new era. Some extensive changes have taken place since the Forum's last meeting in September 2006 to reflect the wishes of the members and the excellent advice given in the improved Guidance from the Secretary of State. There are a number of new members representing users, landowner/managers and other interests and all will be welcomed onto the Forum at a lunch followed by their first formal meeting in April 2007. The members will be encouraged to promote the Forum amongst their wider networks and seek the best ways to advise the new bodies identified in the guidance.

[Kent Local Access Forum](#)

Mid and West Berkshire

The Forum is jointly appointed by 3 unitary

authorities – Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. The Members of the Forum have, therefore, to advise 3 councils with quite starkly differing demography and geography. The 3 Councils are not under the same political control and have differing policy objectives.

The Forum is in the throes, therefore, of commenting on 3 draft ROWIPs. To facilitate this, 3 working groups of Members have been established, each with a remit to review 1 draft ROWIP. At the time of writing, the Forum has commented on the Reading ROWIP and that exercise in respect of the similar plans for West Berkshire and Wokingham is imminent. The review exercise has already emphasised the divergent approaches of the 3 councils.

The Forum has adopted a rolling forward work programme and Members have been proactive in suggesting issues for discussion. To this end, at recent meetings the Forum has discussed:

- impact of major road schemes on public rights of way
- rights of way not included on definitive maps
- cul-de-sac BOATS
- volume of business for definitive map modification orders.

In addition, the Forum has commented on 1 Council's Open Spaces Strategy (a part of the Local Development Framework) and on a gating order.

Sadly, despite advertising in the local media, and writing to all the parish and town councils in the Forum's area, recruitment of new members remains a difficulty.

[Mid & West Berkshire LAF](#)

Milton Keynes

[Milton Keynes LAF](#)

New Forest

During 2006/7, their first year of operation, the Forum held four meetings and one workshop. Attendance at meetings averaged 88% over the year. Members considered a range of topics and issues including:

- Participation in a Small Grants Scheme to help fund local access improvements
- Improvements to cycling infrastructure and promotion
- Commenting on local and national consultation papers
- Preparing for the forthcoming proposals for Coastal Access

The Forum is now preparing to hold a second workshop to examine access opportunities, this time in the northern part of its area. The workshop will include presentations from local land and access managers, and delegates will be invited to make suggestions as to how recreational and utility access opportunities can be improved at a local level.

[New Forest Access Forum](#)

Oxfordshire [Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum](#)



© Natural England/ Anne Katrin Purkiss

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Over the past year, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum has been discussing (amongst others) the following issues:

- Implementation of the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Stiles and gates on paths
- Setting up LAF Working Groups to discuss issues of shared routes and permitted paths
- Grant funding for countryside access schemes
- Healthy lifestyles and encouraging people to use the path network for exercise.
- Promotion of the Local Access Forum, particularly to gain more representation from landowner/ land manager interest areas.
- Safe Routes to Schools
- The use of Developer Contributions to improve rights of way and access

The LAF is keen to work with the Council to help realise the aspirations of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan published in 2005. To this end the work programme for the next year includes the following:

- Suggesting updates to the list of approved Developer Contributions schemes
- Achieve 3 objectives in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Support and work to help implement School Travel Plans
- Work with the Council to create a fully accessible route at one part of the Borough

[Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LAF](#)

Slough

Slough Local Access Forum (SLAF) started 2007 with an excellent meeting in January! Attendance is rising and relationships are being consolidated with officers from Parks and Community Safety coming along to provide reports on issues important to an urban borough.

The SLAF is currently interested in promoting cycling training amongst schools and is also working on developing its advisory relationship with the Council's Transport planners through working out the

best method of recommending what walking and cycling routes should be realised.

However, probably the most important matter for this coming year is for the SLAF to feel it is achieving something of value. Hopefully this will be partially accomplished with the next meeting focusing on the draft improvement plan due for publication this year.

[Slough Local Access Forum](#)

South Downs

[South Downs Access Forum](#)



© Natural England/ Joe Low

Surrey

Recent meetings of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum have been dominated by two strategic documents currently being drafted by the County Council. The first is the Surrey Rights of Way Improvement Plan, a draft version of which is due to go to public consultation this month. The second is a draft report entitled Sustainable Countryside Access, which is intended as a first step towards the development of a vision for countryside access in Surrey and will feed into both the Improvement Plan and the next Local Transport Plan.

Other issues currently being considered by the Forum include long term restrictions to open access land, the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area Delivery Plan and the status of routes contained on the list of streets.

[Surrey Local Access Forum](#)

West Sussex (CAFWS)

CAFWS has had a good year and looking to the future will be using working groups to work proactively to:

- maximise access opportunities through major new developments
- investigate access opportunities for disabled and less mobile people
- encourage cyclists to ride responsibly off-road.

Raising concerns about future Forum support and funding from West Sussex County Council (WSCC), resulting from its recent Fundamental Service Review, has had welcome positive benefits, including raising the profile with senior officers. The relevant cabinet member also attended a recent meeting assuring the Forum that the County Council values its work.

CAFWS has been pro-active in responding to many and varied consultations. As well as many of national relevance, more locally it commented on the Pagham to East Head Coastal Strategy, which resulted in a press article, the South Downs Management Plan and the WSCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

WSCC hosted an introductory training session on rights of way and countryside access for the four newest members.

The Annual Report for 2006/07 will be available in June.

[West Sussex Countryside Access Forum](#)