

**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM  
6 FEBRUARY 2018  
7.00 - 9.00 PM**



**Present:**

**Members:**

Peter Radband (Chairman)  
Michael Abbott  
Colin Bird  
Councillor Michael Brossard  
Councillor Alvin Finch  
Hugh Fitzwilliams  
Jenny Yung

**In attendance:**

Rose Wicks, Parks & Countryside Projects Officer  
Phillip Burke, Senior Transport Coordinator

**Observers:**

Colin Patient, Mid & West Berks LAF  
Richard Elsbury

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

John Deakin  
Simon Yates  
Robert Solomon, Ranger (Countryside and PROW)  
Graham Pocket, Parks and Countryside Development Manager

**72. Welcome**

The chairman welcomed members of the Local Countryside Access Forum to the meeting.

**73. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of 10 October 2018 were approved as a correct record.

Arising from the minutes, the following matters were discussed:

- Rose Wicks confirmed the majority of RoWIP actions were completed
- Graham would update the Forum regarding proposals for housing consultations to be brought to the forum.
- Graham would also set up a visit to the new SANG at the TRL site.
- It was questioned whether there was an update on a request for a new cycle path parallel to Old Wokingham Road and it was confirmed that there was no update at this time.
- Forum members were asked to note the future meeting dates.

#### 74. **New ROWIP2**

Rose Wicks reported to the Forum on the new RoWIP2 which had been approved by Council on 19 December 2017. The report was well liked by both Natural England and local Councillors and the Forum were thanked for their input into the new plan.

The report was currently being put into a vibrant and attractive design so it could be updated on the Bracknell Forest Council website. It was requested that anyone with pictures of people walking/in wheelchairs, horse riding or cycling in the borough if they could be sent to Rose Wicks they would be included in the report. It was suggested that Ian Harvey-Brown, who was a previous winner of the photographic competition, may have some suitable pictures.

**(Action: Rose Wicks to source photos for the new RoWIP with help from LCAF)**

An official launch of the RoWIP2 was proposed with a local press release including photographs and further opportunities to promote the work of the LCAF.

It was noted that LCAF meetings should be used to review progress made with some of the actions (particularly those that might prove more difficult to deliver) and Forum members were encouraged to identify areas they had progressed and to report back to the group. Cooperation between partners and LCAF members was highlighted as an important aspect of delivering the RoWIP2 actions.

Concerns were raised by some LCAF members about the number of actions in the RoWIP2 and whether they'd be achievable in the 10-year timeframe. It was suggested that the large number of actions was partly due to the remit of the plan having been opened up to focus on other forms of outdoor access including SANGs and sustainable transport links. This was in response to feedback received from LCAF during the consultation phase of the RoWIP2 production. It was felt positively by BFC that many of the actions could be accomplished, but that they'd need the support of LCAF and other key partners to do so.

#### Cycling routes and Links (Policy 3) and Sustainable benefits (Policy 7).

Phillip Burke presented an update on Cycling routes and Links (Policy 3) and Sustainable benefits (Policy 7). A cycling routes map was circulated to members. The key points raised from the presentation were:

- Many routes were shared between cyclists and pedestrians.
- Cycling routes around the town centre were particularly good however improvements needed to be made in areas such as to the north of the borough
- Particular focus was on linking origins and destinations for employment, education and leisure.
- Links to new housing estates were also a priority.
- Less cyclepaths in Crowthorne and Sandhurst and challenging to establish new ones as there is less land owned by the Borough Council.
- At the feasibility stage for lots of new schemes.
- Broadmoor estate to be linked to College Town and the Meadows.
- TRL to Crowthorne train station, High Street and Sandhurst.
- Where a cycleway cannot be established, will look to carry out improvements to road safety.
- Parish and Town councils had been consulted on the production of the map.
- LCAF discussed the legal position of signing byways i.e. that they shouldn't be signed as cycletracks on the ground.
- LCAF suggested that it might be worth including rural bridleways on this map, such as Hazelwood Lane, which is a long and reasonably straight section of track.

- It was noted the LCAF would like to be consulted before future maps are published so input could be provided on other potential rural links and cycle paths.
- BFC had made a bid for the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan and would receive funding to work with an outside agency to develop a plan to encourage walking. This may include a walking map and it was acknowledged that on the ground signage with directions would help residents find walking routes.
- Connections between Wokingham and Bracknell were important and these were being considered and implemented.
- It was questioned whether progress had been made on the change of use footpath along Nine Mile Ride. It was confirmed that the scheme was currently being worked on but was still in the planning stages. It was noted that permitting cycling along the footpath (the land is owned by Bracknell Forest Council) would open up cycling routes to Crowthorne, but legal advice received by the council indicates that this matter would need to go to public consultation before cyclists could be permitted to use the footpath.

#### Policy 1 Rights of Way for all

Rose Wicks presented an update on Action no. 25, which was to remove or replace stiles and carry out surface improvements where accessibility is impeded. It was reported that a new accessible gate and bridge had been established on Winkfield FP9. A lot of these type of works were carried out in partnership with the South East Berkshire Ramblers (SEBR) and with funding from the Ramblers Association.

Volunteer path wardens were also helping BFC to record the location of gates and stiles as part of their path inspections (BVPI) GIS software was to be used to help provide an electronic map of this information which would eventually be made available online. This would better enable the public to determine the accessibility of Rights of Way and help BFC and LCAF to plan accessibility improvements such as those mentioned above. This ties in with Policies 2 and 3 and Actions 10 and 12. The mapping would start with Binfield Parish, and it was anticipated that an update about progress with this work could be given at the next LCAF meeting in June.

**(Action: Rose to update LCAF at June meeting)**

#### Policy 2 Fulfilling legal duties

It was reported that BFC had met with The Crown Estate to discuss the deteriorating surface condition of the section of Devil's Highway that accesses the car park.

The Devil's Highway is a Restricted Byway (Crowthorne RB12) that should only be used by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn carriages. However, motorised vehicles use it to access the car park and in doing so cause significant damage to the track surface. Constant repairs by BFC are proving costly and ineffective and both parties discussed new ways in which to tackle this long standing issue.

The matter was currently with the Crown Estate on how they would proceed as the landowners. It was noted by LCAF that the poor upkeep of the Devil's Highway would put more pressure on other car parks nearby that would be used as an alternative.

#### Policy 4 Information and marketing

Rose reported that we were well on target in publicising a minimum of 4 articles / events on social media each month (Action no. 3) In January 2 ranger led walks and

three other parks events had been advertised by BFC on their What's On in Bracknell Forest Facebook page. Parks and Countryside (P&C) now had greater control in carrying out their own publicity and marketing, which was proving quite effective.

As a result of the P&C transformation process, it had been decided to charge £3 per person on ranger led walks to cover the cost of staff time and BFC resources. As a result volunteers had come forward to lead some free walks to add to the programme. Members were referred to the 18 walks lined up for 2018, which was included in the appendices. This would take us well ahead of the target of 10 walks per year (Action no. 4). It was questioned whether there were any walks at the weekend which may attract families and it was agreed this would be looked into

**(Action: Rose Wicks / Rob Solomon)**

#### Policy 5 Responsible Use

It was reported that there had been two incidents of criminal damage on the bollards at Hawthorne Lane both at the Farm Shop end and Nuptown Lane one. The damage was reported very quickly by residents and BFC and RBWM both replaced a bollard each. It had not be determined who had carried out the damage, but there could be links with fly tipping along these lanes.

It was noted that the reinforced bollards currently in place at the Drift Road end of Hogoak Lane were working well and no further incidences had occurred.

#### Policy 6 Preserve Rural Character

It was noted that this policy had been quoted in a planning response for a site in Warfield which would have a rerouted footpath running through it. The refusal was recommended on the basis of how the layout plan would reroute the public footpath that was currently across field path to an urban route.

**(Action: Graham to clarify area and update members)**

### 75. **PROW and Local Developments**

It was noted that updates on developments at TRL, Amen Corner North and South, Cabbage Hill and Warfield SPD, had already been given to LCAF by BFC.

It was reported that Cabbage Hill car park was always full and was well liked by residents. The area had nice pathways and circular routes.

Graham would provide an update at the next meeting on the Broadmoor SANG

**(Action: Graham)**

It was suggested that the access routes to Frost Folly would be an area of interest for a future site visit.

### 76. **Membership and Recruitment**

Promoting membership to LCAF is part of RoWIP Policy 9 Raise Strategic Profile.

Rose had new membership leaflets and forum members were encouraged to take and distribute to anyone interested.

It was reported that a Facebook post advertising LCAF had also been posted.

The new BFC website had also been updated with the LCAF details and was now much more accessible than previously.

## 77. **Reports from Meetings and Site Visits**

### LAF Chairs meeting

Attendance at these meetings is part of RoWIP Policy 8 Working in Partnership.

The chairman gave an update on the LAF Chairs Meeting. The key points from the meeting were:

- The Mid and West Berks Chairman was concerned about the affect of Brexit on RoW as land owners currently received a premium from the European Union for having a RoW on their land.
- A positive response had been received from MP's regarding RoW issues which may occur following Brexit however a commitment had not yet been reached.
- The Natural and Rural Communities Act
- Plans had been proposed to close railway level crossings which are unmanned and were generally being replaced with bridges. It was noted that the only unmanned railway crossing in Bracknell had very good visibility so it wasn't thought that a bridge would be required.
- Future training may be conducted on finding lost RoW which may be of interest to Forum members. It was acknowledged there may not be many in Berkshire but Hampshire would have some.
- It was noted that the path next to Longhill Park, which may have been a lost RoW, had actually been designated as a Public Footpath (RoW) and this information needs to be added to the mapping records.

**(Action: Rose Wicks)**

- Jubilee River in Maidenhead which diverts flood water currently had issues with access to the riverside and was being upgraded to a multiuser footpath.

## 78. **Annual Report**

At the last meeting LCAF it was agreed not to produce an annual review form for 2017/18, as we had not been approached by Natural England to provide one. Instead, emphasis was to be given on creating the calendar year annual report that gets uploaded to LCAFs page on BFCs website.

Since the meeting, NE had been in touch asking for a report if one was available. Forum members questioned the advantages of submitting a report to Natural England for last year, unless there was advantage to do so (e.g. benchmarking data). It was noted that the reports are uploaded to 'Huddle' for other LAFs to look at, but there's no evidence to suggest that it would be used for data collection purposes.

It was agreed that LCAF should complete the standard, calendar year annual report for 2017 and provide this to NE.

The Bracknell Forest Annual report was hoped to be completed by 16 February 2018  
**(Action: Rose)**

## 79. **Horizon Scanning**

Forum members were reminded that any future agenda items could be sent to Rose after the meeting at [Rose.Wicks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Rose.Wicks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Suggested topics for future meetings were:

- Looking at further development in Bracknell, especially in Northern Bracknell with regards to building across current RoW and opening up new RoW especially to give residents access to the north of Bracknell.
- An update on the transformation review of BFC Parks & Countryside and how this might affect management of PRoW, recreation and open spaces.

80. **AOB**

Colin Bird

It was noted that more details about the developments in the warfield northern arc development would be appreciated as well as increased involvement by LCAF in looking at the impact of development.

Masterplan in area 1 for the SPD is reaching the point of being approved - Maise Lane through to Priory Lane.

Hugh Fitzwilliams

A request was made to visit the 2 new SANGS at Weller's Lane in June 2020 to view the progress.

Jenny Yung

Jenny fed back to the forum that she found the site visits very enjoyable and informative and looks forward to participating in more of them.

It was noted by LCAF that central Bracknell was increasingly hostile for horse riders and the places to keep horse were diminishing. It was noted that Wokingham had the same problem. It was questioned whether horse riding could be promoted more and whether a joint venture with Maidenhead could be established. Horses were no longer allowed in Swinley Forest which was a concern.

Richard Elsbury

It was noted that google maps detailed lots of walking routes available in Bracknell and this was a useful tool for walkers and cyclists. Members of the public could also upload points of interest and photographs.

Cllr Brossard

It was confirmed that the local plan had been voted through for consultation. 23 sites were detailed on the plan and individual Forum members could respond to the recommendations proposed. It would also benefit LCAF to do a general response to the plan, as it would help further raise the profile of the forum.

**(Action: Emma to send link to Local plan)**

81. **Public Question Time**

There were no questions from members of the public.

82. **Date of Next Meeting**

The dates of the next meetings would be:

26 June 2018

2 October 2018

**CHAIRMAN**