



**Local Countryside Access Forum
Tuesday 27 September 2005, 7.00 pm**

AGENDA

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**BRACKNELL FOREST LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
22 FEBRUARY 2005
(7.00 pm – 8.50 pm)**

Present: Diana Pidgeon (Chairman)
Celia Blay
Mike Gates
Caroline Tomalin
Michael Dyer
Simon Weeks
Robert Bonney
Derick Stickler

In attendance: James Dymond, Projects Officer
Helen Tranter, Head of Cultural & Visual Environment
Heather White, Planning and Projects Manager

Apologies for absence were received from:
Stuart Tarrant
Mark Osman
David Bertie
Cllr Anne Haydon

41. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all members of the Forum to the meeting.

42. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 4 October 2004 were approved as a correct record.

43. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) (Item 4)

James Dymond, Projects Officer presented initial statistics from the ROWIP consultation and network evaluation to the Forum. The Forum was asked to provide feedback on the information compiled so far and to offer suggestions for additional information and possible improvements to the plan.

The Forum noted that:

- The unavailable (BOATs) Byways Open To All Traffic and RUPPs (Roads Used As Public Paths) seemed very high at 50%, compared with a national average of 13%.
- The number of public footpaths in Bracknell Forest would reduce as they were adopted by the Highways Agency and made into footpath-cycleways.
- The ROWIP audit on every Right of Way involved the completion of an audit form and photographs. This had yet to be collated, but the Forum requested consideration of publication of the results on the internet.
- A programme of surface improvements was being carried out on the

slippery surfaces of the sleeper bridges to make them safer for horses.

- The results of the questionnaire used in the ROWIP consultation were encouraging. Many of the respondents were using the Rights of Way regularly and were happy with their condition.

The Forum thanked James and Heather for their work on the ROWIP.

44. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) (Item 4, point 2)

The Forum discussed TROs and some of the problems experienced where these were in effect, but the routes were still being used illegally by motorbike users. The Forum was advised that there was the possibility of more help with such problems from the Police, as it was now a requirement that every Police force had a single point of contact for rural affairs. It was agreed that the Forum would write to Thames Valley Police to establish who had been given this role and invite them to future Forum meetings.

(Action: James Dymond)

45. Larks Hill Area Equine Access (Item 4, point 3)

Caroline Tomalin advised the Forum that the nearby playing fields would need to be accessed by children, who would have to cross the A3095 and/or Harvest Ride. The Forum discussed the current plans to make crossing with horses safer by providing a verge to wait in, however, with children crossing, the question was asked as to whether the Highways Agency would reduce the present speed limit of 40mph to 30mph, or lower, which would be safer for anyone crossing. It was agreed that the Highways Agency be approached with this suggestion, and also to request that a representative attend to speak to a future meeting of the Forum.

(Action: Heather White)

46. Watersplash Lane Ford Update (Item 8)

The Forum was advised that reinstatement of the ford was being held up by the Environment Agency survey due to be carried out in April (necessary because the work required would involve altering the bed of the river). Work on the ford would go ahead as planned upon the completion of this survey.

47. LCAF Annual Report (Item 5)

The draft version had been included with the agenda and Forum members were invited to comment on it prior to the final draft being published and available to the public. Members were also advised that a list of Forum members and brief background information may be attached to the final report. The draft Annual Report was agreed.

It was also agreed that, in terms of the Forum's membership, Friends of the Earth should be contacted to provide a replacement Member for Mick Hutson under the 'other interest' category of membership.

(Action: James Dymond).

48. **DEFRA Report on Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (Item 6)**

The Forum was advised that there was currently a draft Bill under consultation particularly around the definitions used for mechanically propelled vehicles. However, it was made clear that there was no final draft due until the end of the year, so it could be considered in more detail later in 2005.

49. **Online Walk Routes & Rights of Way Maps (Item 7)**

The Forum was advised that a number of walks and updated Rights of Way maps had been published on the Bracknell Forest Borough Council Website.

50. **Syngenta Bridleway, Warfield – Update (Item 9)**

The Forum was advised that planning permission had been granted and work on the bridleway could be underway already. Syngenta had yet to apply for the stopping-up of the bridleway running through their site, which would be required for the new bridleway to run as planned. Discussion followed around the possibility of occasional use of the bridleway by carriage users and it was agreed that this could be requested by contracting Syngenta directly.

Bob Ellis and Mark Osman at Syngenta were suggested as the relevant contacts for this.

51. **Items for Next Meeting Agenda**

- ROWIP issues (to include consideration of plans produced by other authorities)
- The cost and problems of maintenance.
- Highways Improvement speaker

52. **Any Other Business (Item 11)**

The Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership had carried out a survey of over 600 people on 4 weekends and it was agreed that the data collected from this survey could be helpful to the Bracknell Forest Countryside and Rights of Way team.

53. The Forum was advised that the Church Farm path, which had been held up by a planning condition, was now making progress and subject to the repurchase of the land by Grundig, they would be putting a path in.

54. Advance notice was given to the Forum of an application to close Crowthorne Byway 13 (Nine Mile Ride – Ceasar’s Camp) as this, at present, was an accident blackspot.

55. **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 6th September 2005 in the Council Chamber.

CHAIRMAN

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Local Countryside Access Forum
27th September 2005**

Rights of Way, Access, Parks & Countryside Update

Green Flag Awards

All three sites entered for 2005 Green Flag park awards were successful this year, as follows:

- Pope's Meadow, Binfield for the fourth year running
- Westmorland Park in Warfield for the second time
- Shepherd Meadows & Sandhurst Memorial Park – the second award for this joint BFBC / Sandhurst Town Council application.

Snaprails Park, Sandhurst

Work at Snaprails park in Sandhurst, funded by a Countryside Agency Doorstep Greens grant, was completed in June. Improvements to the site included the removal of secondary woodland to increase safety and security, planting of a wildflower meadow and other new shrubs and trees, installation of a new play area and the laying of new paths. Meridian Television visited the park during June for a local news feature. The Countryside Agency are also employing a consultant who will use Snaprails as a Doorstep Green case study in a forthcoming report.

The official rededication of Snaprails Park following completion of the Doorstep Green grant works took place on 10th August.

Shepherd Meadows, Sandhurst

Funding of £15,000 has been obtained from the Environment Agency for the construction of disabled fishing platforms at Shepherd Meadows in the next financial year.

Lily Hill Park, Bracknell

The first phase of the restoration project at Lily Hill Park was officially opened on 16th June by the Earl and Countess of Wessex. The Royal couple took a tour of the restored woodland areas and wildflower meadows, were greeted by school children from Holly Spring infant and junior schools and then unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion. Numerous groups who have been involved with the project were present, including the Friends of Lily Hill Park, local conservation volunteers and the Bracknell and District Gardening Club.

On 26th June the park was home to a Victorian themed fun day, including stalls, sideshows, rides, morris dancers, a hog roast, farmer's market, birds of prey demonstrations and tours of the park. Environment and Leisure staff were on hand in Victorian dress during the day, which was attended by approximately 3000 people, exceeding all expectations.

South Hill Park, Bracknell

Following a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £42,000 in early 2005, consultants Land Management Services Ltd were appointed to prepare a restoration plan for the public park at South Hill Park.

The project has carried out a major review of the park before preparing the plan, including consultation with a wide range of interested bodies and with the public, as well as a review of the landscape and its use.

A draft management plan will be presented by LMS at the end of September.

Biodiversity/Wildlife

A team of local volunteers completed great crested newt surveys at six ponds across the borough including the Thomas Lawrence Brickworks Newt Reserve.

A barn owl survey training course was held at Westmorland Park pavilion on Sunday 19th June. The course was led by Jason Ball (Barn Owl Conservation Network) and was attended by local volunteers/council staff who ultimately will be licensed to check nesting boxes in the Borough.

As part of a programme of six biodiversity courses co-ordinated jointly by Berkshire's Local Authorities and BBOWT, a birds for beginners course was held at Sandhurst Memorial Park on April 23rd and attended by 25 people.