

**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
6 JUNE 2023
7.00 - 8.50 PM**



Present:

Members:

Colin Bird (Chair)
Nicholas Ballard
Councillor Michael Brossard
Councillor Sheila Collings
Denis Crampton
Richard Elsbury
Hugh Fitzwilliams
Councillor Cherise Welch

In attendance:

Graham Pockett, Parks & Countryside Development Manager
Robert Solomon, SANG and Rights of Way Officer
Rose Wicks, Data & Communications Officer

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sue McDaid
David Warren
Jenny Yung

258. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the forum to the meeting.

259. Changes to Membership

Denis Crampton was welcomed as a new member of the forum. Councillors Collings and Welch were also welcomed as new members, taking over from Councillors Finch and Brossard. However, it was noted that Michael Brossard would remain a member in his own right, continuing to share his good knowledge of local rights of way. Colin thanked the previous Councillor representatives for their contribution to the forum.

There was currently a vacant position after Richard Mosses sadly passed away.

Forum membership currently stood at 12. The members' interest list had been updated and would be circulated for approval. **(Action: Rose Wicks)**

260. Tribute to Richard Mosses

Colin Bird led a tribute to Richard Mosses with permission from his family. Richard's first LCAF meeting had been on 4th April 2006. Richard was a keen walker and represented countryside users on the forum. He had also been a member of organisations including the South East Berkshire Ramblers, National Trust, Woodland Trust, RSPB, and Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

Over the 17 years that Richard was a member, he attended many LCAF meetings and site visits and delivered numerous actions to improve countryside access. In March 2016, Richard had been elected to the role of Vice Chair where he remained for the next seven years.

The forum posthumously thanked Richard for all his dedication over the years. He had made a tremendous difference in improving access to the countryside for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.

LCAF and Bracknell Forest Council were working with the South East Berks Ramblers to provide a memorial plaque for Richard and his brother Robin at Mosses Path in Binfield in recognition of their encyclopaedic knowledge of open spaces in the area.

261. Election of a new Vice Chair

Members of the forum were asked to consider volunteering to take on the role of Vice Chair. It was agreed to discuss this further outside the meeting.

262. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

It was noted that minute 247 included a typing error and that the second bullet-point under the 'Winkfield FPs 13 and 19' heading should be read as follows:

- "Query if local MP could be approached on this issue..."

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

A summary of progress on the action points from the meeting was included in Appendix 1 of the agenda reports pack. It was also noted that Appendix 2 of the agenda reports pack included updates on the proposals to the forum for new / modified Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and access routes.

Arising from minute 247, it was noted that no updates had been received on the spring footpath walk organised by Winkfield Parish Council.

Councillor Collings asked who was progressing the bridleways linking the FP from Cabbage Hill SANG to Hazelwood Lane? Councillor Collings had had queries from horse riders in Binfield struggling with the B3034 and they would like to see a bridleway to link to Hazelwood Lane. They were also struggling when they had reached the end of Watersplash Lane moving through to Osborne Lane to access the bridleways in the north of Warfield. Colin replied that these were issues that were relevant to the Forum. Regarding the attempt to get a right of way from Cabbage Hill to Hazelwood Lane, BFC and LCAF had previously been liaising with contacts from Thames Water. After initial progress was made, there had since been no further engagement from Thames Water. There was a limit to how much we could do without Thames Water engaging in discussions. Nicholas asked if the British Horse Society had been engaged. Colin replied that the Forum had discussed previously whether it should be a footpath or a bridleway but, there were safety concerns in establishing a bridleway due to the crossing of the B road. This was why the forum has not specifically engaged with the British Horse Society.

Regarding the Watersplash Lane connection, Graham shared that there was a plan to join up Watersplash Lane with a permissive bridleway through the top end of Larks Hill.

The forum noted that this would be Graham Pockett's last LCAF meeting as he was due to retire from BFC on 31st July after 14.5 years' service. Colin thanked Graham for his support and encouragement to the forum and all the work he had done on PRowS and open spaces in the Borough. Graham explained that he would be handing over as much information as possible to Rose and Rob but it was unclear how his role would be replaced as the team was being restructured. Colin added that there was a need for the forum to not assign too many actions to Rob and Rose in the interim.

263. **PRowS Improvements/Issues**

Winkfield FPs 13 and 19

A Public Path Diversion Order had been made but had not been confirmed yet, due to the condition of the paths (although some improvement had been made). It was hoped that it could be confirmed in time to be incorporated into the new definitive map, which was being updated in 2023.

Shepherd Meadows Hampshire FP 505

The footbridge at Shepherd Meadows had been identified as needing to be replaced following an inspection in April. Quotes had been obtained and the next stage was to procure funding and book contractors to complete the work. Rose added that she had been approached by the site ranger who has been getting lots of queries from the public. Notices had been put up, but it had been agreed to add QR codes to the posters linking to more information on the BFC website.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

The footbridge connected to Hampshire FP 505 to the south. This was currently closed with diversions in place. The footbridge also formed part of the Blackwater Valley Path and SANG route.

It was noted that BFC owned the land on both sides of the bridge.

264. **Definitive Map Consolidation**

The definitive map was being consolidated to include changes made and confirmed via modification orders since January 2013, including path diversions, creations, and closures. The definitive statement was also being updated and would include defined widths where they were available and updated descriptions. Not all changes to the statement required modification orders; for example, where pubs were no longer there. Rose agreed to send a link to the website to new members of the forum.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

It was noted that the definitive map gives strong legal protection to members of the public to use PRowS; it could be used to prove that a PRow existed but could not be used to prove that a PRow did not exist. Also, the information would be transferred to the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps as and when they were revised.

Graham shared two examples of orders which were being processed prior to publishing the new definitive map: stopping-up BR23A, and the Mosses Path public footpath Creation Order.

265. **PRowS and Local Developments**

There were no new PRowS or local developments to report. However, members were reminded that updates on local developments and how they might affect rights

of way were available in earlier meeting minutes and copies of the presentations could be shared upon request to Rose. **(Action: Rose Wicks)**

For the benefit of new members, the following developments were highlighted:

- Updates for Amen Corner North and South (Binfield FPs 11, 14 and 15)
- Hedge Lane Bridleway at Taylor Wimpey site (Warfield BR26)
- Cricketfield Grove at Broadmoor (Crowthorne FP6)
- Avery Lane (Warfield BW8) at Newell Green

It was noted that the Hedge Lane Bridleway was particularly sensitive as lots was being done at the development.

Hugh Fitzwilliams raised that the closure of West End Lane in Warfield was a significant issue. Graham shared that this had been closed illegally without the approval of the Highway Authority. The forum made a recommendation to BFC to take action to open it up and it was agreed that Graham would follow this up. **(Action: Graham Pockett)**

266. **Site Visit**

The forum had previously discussed making site visits to Amen Corner North and South, and the extended Frost Folly SANG and Windmill Meadows SANG. It was felt that Amen Corner would be good to visit over the summer and Colin agreed to organise that. (Action: Colin Bird)

The SANG at Amen Corner North (Piglittle Field) had not yet been transferred to BFC but it was open to the public so this should not prohibit a visit. It was agreed that Amen Corner would be visited first.

267. **Claimed Rights of Way**

Hayley Green Track

Graham explained that, although BFC had received a lot of user evidence about the use of this track, no-one had formally applied for a Modification Order. The process to claim a right of way was not automatically triggered just from having user evidence. There was a need for someone to take responsibility, but it was expected to be a big job as all three landowners were likely to object. Rose added that there were lots of factors and legalities involved and that the council needed to be fair and impartial in its investigation. User evidence was being reviewed in conjunction with evidence submitted by the landowners. For example, if there was historic evidence of signs they had put up.

268. **Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces**

Transfer of management arrangements for Frost Folly 2

A baseline commuted sum had been paid to the council and it was under the same type of Section 106 agreement as Frost Folly 1, meaning that the council would take over responsibility prior to the land being transferred. The SANG had officially been opened and web page revisions were needed to reflect the increased area and facilities; it was to be treated as one large site with Frost Folly 1. Residents would also be informed about the change in management.

Rose had been liaising with the site ranger about the comms requirements. One of the site improvements the rangers were looking to make was to provide better access between the northern and southern areas of the site.

Colin highlighted the need for access at the south so that residents did not need to drive to open spaces. Graham explained that it would probably need to wait until the freehold of the land had transferred to the council. There was also a potential need to discuss with the Highways team as there was a concern that if a proper entrance was created there, it could encourage people to park on the verges on Church Lane. Hugh raised that, if it was a PRow and a footpath, it should not be a consideration of the Highways team.

269. **Administration**

Rose highlighted the following promotional opportunities which could help raise the profile of LCAF and encourage new members:

- RoWIP2 review results – a new web page was under development, and an article was proposed for inclusion in the Town and County newspaper due for release this summer
- New walking events directory on the BFC webpage, including:
 - Weekly Sport in Mind wellbeing walks at South Hill Park
 - Bees and Butterflies walk at Ambarrow Court and Horseshoe Lake on Saturday 24 June
 - Looking into helping with publicity for the walks led by Sustrans

270. **Any Other Business**

Hugh highlighted the Bracknell Forest Society week of walks commencing Monday 31 July. A walk had been organised starting at Windmill Hill SANG carpark on Monday 31 July, time TBC.

The forum discussed the importance of representation from the Crown Estate, and it was suggested that a more personal invitation could be sent to Richard Everett, in addition to the more formal Zoom meeting invite sent out.. **(Action: Rose Wicks)**

271. **Public Question Time**

There were no comments or questions.

272. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 7pm.

CHAIRMAN