



LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

12 MARCH 2013

7.00 - 9.00 PM

Present:

Members:

Mr Michael Abbott (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Brossard
Sharon Holt
Mr Richard Mosses
Councillor John Porter
Mr Peter Radband
Mrs Jenny Yung

In attendance:

Hugh Fitzwilliams, Rights of Way Ranger, BFC
Graham Pockett, Parks & Countryside Development Officer
Amanda Roden, Democratic Services Officer
Rose Wicks, Parks & Countryside Projects Officer

Apologies for absence were received from:

John Deakin
Mr Innes McEwen
Richard Walton, Head of Parks & Countryside

13. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

14. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

15. Membership and Recruitment

Mike Gates, Vice-Chair of the Forum had resigned and a new Vice-Chair was sought. Peter Radband volunteered for the role and as there were no other volunteers, Mr Radband would be the new Vice-Chair of the Forum. The Chairmanship of the Forum was due for review in September 2013. Michael Abbott mentioned that he was happy to be considered again for this role.

The Forum had a new observer from Mid and West Berkshire, Ian Pittock. A membership application had been received from Jenny Yung of Tally Ho Stables and was accepted by Forum Members. Jenny was welcomed as a new member of the Forum.

There would be a recruitment drive for new members for the Forum as some members had resigned and there were a few vacancies. Work had been undertaken

in relation to Town and Country, Bracknell Forest Homes, and a flyer had been created for notice boards and libraries. It was suggested that the flyer also be circulated to Parish and Town Councils, and it was suggested that recruitment could be mentioned at Parish and Town Council meetings but it would need to be made clear that the Forum was seeking lay people with, for example, land owner interest, cycling interest etc.

Dog walkers could be targeted and flyers could be posted on the Crowthorne Woods Forestry Commission notice boards. An e-mail version of the flyer would be useful for Forum Members to pass on.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

16. National and Regional LCAF Work

There had been a national conference in Sheffield for Local Countryside Access Forum (LCAF) Members but not officers, and no one had been able to attend this year from the Bracknell Forest LCAF, in part due to the distance to the location. The summary and notes from talks and speakers were awaited but it was noted that the event had been successful. Feedback from the event would be given at the next LCAF meeting. There had also been a Regional Officers meeting.

Natural England had a selection of sources of evidence on the importance of the Natural Environment and the benefits that people received when accessing it. There were match funding projects and authorities had round table reports. There were a number of websites from which to gain information, listed on page 12 of the agenda papers and including <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx>.

There was no definitive guidance regarding the mid-term review as Bracknell Forest were one of the first local authorities to produce their Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and so the first to review it. A questionnaire had been completed from Defra and Natural England and it was queried whether LCAF members would benefit from training.

It was queried whether a route via Billingbear Park was a permitted route but it was thought that the route was not a public right of way and it was not present on the definitive map. The land had changed ownership a few times over the years. This would be investigated further.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

Dates regarding the annual regional LAF conference would be circulated when known. Forum Members considered an Access Newsletter of 18 February 2013 from Defra. There had been concern regarding professional fungi pickers, and the West Surrey Badger Group were concerned regarding the effect on the environment and local wildlife of young people biking or building trails in forests and green areas.

The Forum considered the government response to the Independent Panel on Forestry released by Defra <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2013/01/31/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement/>. There was a new body to hold land in trust and to work alongside the Forestry Commission to advise and support.

17. Definitive Map and Statement Review

There had been no representations or objections to the final Modification Orders linked to Definitive Map and Statement Review received after 42 days, so this would be published on 1 April 2013 (Relevant date 1 January 2013). This was the second

consolidated Definitive Map and Statement for Public Rights of Way for Bracknell Forest. The sheets had been reorganised relative to the OS grid resulting in a document with fewer pages. There had been some Modification Orders to tidy up errors and changes of descriptions in the definitive statement. Public notices were published in the local paper at the end of January 2013.

The Definitive Map and Statement Review would be held at the Time Square offices and Bracknell Central Library. Modification orders would be accumulated for the next review in ten years. The Definitive Map would be published on the Borough Council's website and PDF copies would be circulated to neighbouring authorities. This was not the legal record but was based on the same information.

The Forum congratulated everyone involved in the working on the Definitive Map and Statement Review.

18. Thames Basin Heath and SANGS

There were projects including three new interpretation panels at Englemere Pond: Wetland Wonder, Heathland and Forestry and a general site entrance board. There would also be a new viewing platform. There would be a series of way markers around the site for the Dragonfly and Woodpecker trails.

Initial bank restoration work had been completed at Shepherd Meadows and follow up work was due during spring or summer.

Work was being undertaken with the Forestry Commission to produce interpretation panels at key access points to the Crowthorne Woods site, such as, Devil's Highway and Muzzy's roundabout. It was noted that there was no parking by Muzzy's roundabout and there was a permitted route but this was not a right of way.

19. LCAF Annual Report

There was a new draft reporting template prepared by Natural England which was expected to be available around April or May. This would be used to submit the LCAF Annual Report (proforma) for April 2012 to March 2013. The glossy version for 2012 was due to be published on the Borough Council's website in the near future.

20. Site Visits

Ideas for future site visits included:

- Crown Estate; £250,000 would be invested in bike trails here and Forum members may be interested to see how the trails would be constructed
- Jennett's Park; tree planting and creation of new footpaths
- Shepherd Meadows; bank restoration, a possible site visit in Spring 2013
- South Hill Park; new waymark trails, floating pond to be assembled by end of March 2013
- Jealott's Hill Farm; Forum members were invited to visit the farm
- Broadmoor/ Foresters Way

It was suggested that the Jennett's Park site visit be organised first. Saturday morning appeared to be a good time for a site visit and dates would be circulated soon for this.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

John Deakin would be contacted regarding the possibility of a Crown Estate visit.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Bad weather and some issues with workmanship had affected the bank restoration at Shepherd Meadows and it was suggested that this site visit should be postponed until at least autumn 2013 after follow up work had been undertaken. The Jealott's Hill Farm visit would also be weather and season dependent.

A new suggestion for a site visit was Broadmoor/ Foresters Way to look at issues arising from work undertaken here and how rights of way had been affected. A contact would be sought in the NHS for this visit with the aim of organising the visit later in the year.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

21. Reports from Officers

Rose Wicks reported that the Red, White and Blue photo competition in Bracknell's parks and countryside had taken place. The shortlisted entries were being exhibited at the Community Gallery at South Hill Park between 9 February 2013 and 7 April 2013. First place was Summer with Regrets at Horseshoe Lake, by Ida Groot-Attias; Second place was 100m Final at Lily Hill Park by Barry Callan; and Third place was Ladybird on flower, by Peter Edwards.

A new photo competition for 2013 would likely have a watery theme to coincide with the UN International Year of Water Co-operation.

The Green Flag Awards had been submitted for four sites: Lily Hill Park, Pope's Meadow, Shepherd Meadows & Sandhurst Memorial Park (in partnership with Sandhurst Town Council), and restored South Hill Park for the first time. Notification of the judges' arrival would be in June or July. For the record, Bracknell Town Council entered Jocks Lane park and Winkfield Parish Council entered Locks Ride and Carnation Hall and Grounds, giving a total of seven applications in the borough area.

Bracknell Forest Council had developed a new Dog Owners and Dog Walkers Code of Conduct leaflet which promoted responsible dog ownership and included important messages regarding dog health (vaccination), identification (tags and chips), fouling (dog bins, reporting, fixed penalty notices) and behaviour (dogs under close control near livestock and ground nesting birds). The information leaflet involved rangers, environmental protection officers, Sandhurst Town Council and the Cleaner Borough Group, and connected to the action the six Parish and Town Councils in Bracknell Forest were undertaking with the 'Be A Responsible Dog Owner' (BARDO) campaign.

The leaflet would be trialled via dog walkers on site and would be available to download on the Borough Council's website. There would be a limited print run initially to gauge feedback and comments. It was suggested that dog fouling and behaviour be listed above health and identification in the leaflet. It was suggested that people should be made aware of the effects of dogs chasing people on bikes or horses. There was a need to be positive and focused in the leaflet, which suggested places for walking dogs. Veterinary surgeries and dog wardens would likely find the leaflet useful.

Any feedback on the Dog Owners and Dog Walkers Code of Conduct leaflet should be forwarded to Rose Wicks rose.wicks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or Graham Pockett graham.pockett@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Graham Pockett reported that the temporary footpath diversion of Crowthorne Restricted Byway 12 had been extended. The current order was due to expire on 31

March 2013 and an extension beyond six months could not be granted without referring it to the Secretary of State.

A footpath creation agreement with The Crown Estate had been drafted for signing. The path would run from the eastern end of Winkfield Footpath 15 at Sunninghill Park to Sunninghill Road opposite Ascot Gate, Windsor Great Park.

22. Reports from Members round the table

Michael Abbott mentioned that the Ramblers were considering obtaining two kissing gates this year, to replace styles, to stop cattle getting out and to provide access to open access land and rights of way, for example, for disabled people. Each gate would cost approximately £200 to £300 and they were cost effective and enduring.

Sharon Holt highlighted the following articles from the BHS:

- Important Milestone for equestrian Access in Scotland
- Equestrian Access Forum launches Making Way for Horses
- Are Lower speed limits the answer?
- No extra speed for HGV's says horse charity
- New leaflet aims to make roads safer for all
- Catching the bus As campaign success
- <http://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/press-centre/results?&page=1>

There had been an accident involving three people and horses out riding; two horses were killed instantly and two people were air lifted to hospital. A drunk driver was responsible. The horse riders had all survived but were seriously psychologically damaged as a result and may never ride again.

Horse riders were encouraged to wear high visibility gear and undertake a riding road safety test to know the requirements when riding on a road. Motorbikes and lorries were found to be the most respectful users of the road for horse riders.

Sharon and other horse riders, in light of the accident, were looking at all bridle paths in the borough to see if there were ways to connect them via roads and pathways. Councils and landowners were being approached regarding this and possibly linking different circuits in different local authorities. Where to park trailers and horse boxes was an issue.

Access to car parks was difficult due to height barriers and keys needed to open them were difficult to use. Car parks were vulnerable to fly-tipping and travellers, so height barriers were needed. A possible design solution in some cases could be to leave a couple of bays outside the barrier at the entrance to car parks but these would still be vulnerable to misuse.

Graham Pockett reported that some resolution on the Winkfield bridleway creation was making some progress but the land had changed ownership a few times, making enforcement of the section 106 agreement more complicated.

It would be clarified where permits were needed for horse riders, for example, at Swinley Forest, where parking charges had been introduced. There was no intention to charge horse riders twice. John Deakin at the Crown Estate would be contacted regarding this.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Jenny Yung mentioned that she liked the dog walkers leaflet and that the cost of under £200 to use Windsor Great Park for a year was very good value. Jenny would think about how to possibly link Winkfield bridle path to Crouch Lane.

Cllr Brossard mentioned that Huddle training had been impressive and thanked Rose and Graham for arranging it. It was suggested that cycle ways could be incorporated in developments.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 1 October 2013, 7pm, Function Room, 5th Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell.