

NOTICE OF MEETING

**Local Countryside Access Forum
Tuesday 12 March 2013, 7.00 pm
Function Room, Fifth Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square,
Bracknell**

To: Local Countryside Access Forum

Mr Michael Abbott (Chairman)
Mr David Bertie
Councillor Michael Brossard
John Deakin
Sharon Holt
Mr Innes McEwen
Mr Richard Mosses
Councillor John Porter
Mr Peter Radband

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

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**Local Countryside Access Forum
Tuesday 12 March 2013, 7.00 pm
Function Room, Fifth Floor, Easthampstead House, Town
Square, Bracknell**

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Please bring ideas for future visits.	
10. Reports from Officers	
11. Reports from Members round the table	
12. Public Question Time	
(Maximum 10 Minutes)	
13. Date of Next Meeting	
Tuesday 1 October 2013, 7pm, Function Room, 5 th Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell.	



**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
2 OCTOBER 2012
7.00 - 8.40 PM**

Present:

Members:

Mr Michael Abbott (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Brossard
Sharon Holt
Mr Innes McEwen
Councillor John Porter
Mr Peter Radband

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

Observers:

Jenny Young, Tally Ho Stables

Apologies for absence were received from:

John Deakin
Mr Richard Mosses
Mrs D M Smith, Mid & West Berkshire LAF
Richard Walton, Head of Parks & Countryside

1. Welcome

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

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 19, 2011 Annual LCAF Report: Diane Pidgeon would be corrected to Diana Pidgeon OBE.
- Minute 20, Reports from Officers: Footpath improvements had been made to parts of Sandhurst Footpath 13A but not Sandhurst Footpath 15. This would be amended accordingly.

3. Membership and Recruitment

The Bracknell Forest Local Countryside Access Forum (LCAF) Terms of Reference were attached to the agenda to remind members of its content. The Forum was always keen to expand on its membership and another representative with cycling

interests was being sought to fill in the gap left by Joe Dodson who resigned as a Forum member. There was an advert on the BFC website. If anyone was interested in being a member of the Forum they should contact the Parks and Countryside Service.

Mart Speyers, who led the leisure cycle ride at the Outdoor and Walking Festival, was keen to find out more about LCAF and its membership. Mart owned a local business Total Fitness and was a keen cyclist and general outdoor pursuit's enthusiast. Rose would forward him information regarding the Forum. An advert would be placed in the next Town and Country regarding membership recruitment. Simon Pettigrew had been contacted at Be Heard to gauge interest in attending Forum meetings as a disabled interest representative. It was suggested that David Putt be contacted, to see whether he would like to join the Forum. His current role as Manager of the Jealott's Hill Community Landshare Project would mean he could represent the interests of community groups. It was also suggested that Nick Hazlitt could be contacted as a Forestry representative.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

People could become members of the Forum in their own right as well as representing a specialist interest. It was discussed about whether there should be greater representation across different Town and Parish Councils on the Forum. It was also suggested that schools and local colleges could perhaps be contacted in order to attract a younger membership to the Forum.

It was suggested that a greater mix of membership may be useful, such as people of different ethnic backgrounds and disabled groups. A large landowner representative would be useful; Sharon had approached Thames Water who were landowners in the borough but they did not have anyone available.

4. National and Regional LCAF Work

Rose had attended the South East Region Local Access Forum (LAF) Officers update, which was a useful meeting. There have been 110 expressions of interest for the Paths for Communities funding, with half showing potential. There were mainly village and community groups applying for funding. There had been a few issues to progress; it could be difficult to obtain landowner permission for creating a new Public Right of Way and there were restrictions on how the 25% match funding could be made up, with it needing to come from private developers or fundraising.

Other LAFs were finding it difficult to encourage people to sign up to Huddle, the online forum which had replaced the England Access Forum. Graham Pockett had signed up as an officer. Forum's could now apply for numerous licences for their members, but these were assigned on a first come first serve basis as costs meant there were a limited number. Huddle was informal and once signed up, people did not need to check the website regularly. Sign up to Huddle was not compulsory for Forum members. If members were interested Martin Gilchrist had offered to demonstrate Huddle and a session would be arranged regarding this.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Members were reminded that if anyone was available to attend neighbouring LAF meetings, this would be useful. Rose would check if travel expenses could be claimed for this.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Natural England had an evidence base in relation to access and engagement. Much was known about access to designated green spaces, for example, most people

visited spaces locally, with 40% within a one mile radius and 60% within a two mile radius. There was little evidence regarding non-designated green spaces however. For example, the relationship between biodiversity and recreation; and the quality of the green space in relation to the levels of enjoyment. For more information regarding this, members could contact Rose.

The LAF Regional meeting would be held in May 2013, a date for this was not known yet. There would be just one LAF National conference in 2013, to be held on 27 February in the Midlands.

The new Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) had now been established and the constitution for this was in the agenda papers. The aim was to improve public access and there would be a closer working relationship between LAFs and LNPs.

5. **Definitive Map and Statement Review**

The Definitive Map and Statement Review had been undertaken for the first time in-house; this had been undertaken previously by BAPTIE.

Changes to the Statement required a Modification Order under section 53(3) & (4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A Modification Order was required for five changes to the Statement, which involved Public Rights of Way across Binfield, Bracknell, Crowthorne, Sandhurst and Warfield. Consultation responses had been received from Bracknell, Binfield and Warfield, who had agreed with the Statement Modifications.

The order was ready to be published in the local papers and a draft copy of the wording for the order was in the agenda papers. If there were any objections, this would be referred to the Secretary of State.

The Map would provide a legal record of the Borough's Public Rights of Way at a point in time and modifications would continue after. The GIS Team had worked on the maps and added grid blocks so that there would be fewer pages, making it easier to refer to. The maps would be on the Public Rights of Way website but the legal copy was at Time Square and the main library.

The link to the maps would be circulated to Forum members when available.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

6. **Thames Basin Heath and SANGS**

At Englemere Pond there were new site entrance signs installed off Swinley Road. Future works were planned for interpretation and waymarked trails. These had been sent out for tender. The aim was for the two trails to be named woodpecker and dragonfly. Three new interpretation boards were due to be established as well as a new viewing platform next to the pond.

At Shepherd Meadows bank restoration was due to go ahead on the Blackwater River. The timber work was in place and good weather was needed to make further progress with this work.

At the Cut Countryside Corridor (Larks Hill) the car park entrance had been widened and there was a new footpath section leading into site. A new cycle rack had been installed and six small site entrance signs.

7. **LCAF Annual Report**

A glossy LCAF 2011 Annual Report had been submitted to Natural England. The method by which LAFs reported to Natural England was under review. A new draft reporting template was being prepared by Natural England, which would include additional questions and follow a new reporting timescale that followed the financial year rather than calendar year. This would allow Natural England to better compare data between LAFs

The Parks and Countryside service had provided feedback on the new draft annual report template at the South East LAF officers update. A key point raised was that the template did not allow for LAFs to celebrate their successes. It was also suggested that Rights of Way should be included in the template. The new template would be used by LCAF to report for April 2011 to March 2012 and then April 2012 to March 2013.

The new template for reporting would be circulated to Forum members once finalised.
(Action: Rose Wicks)

Forum members then should forward any comments about what can feature in the LCAF Annual Report to Rose or Graham. It was commented that the glossy annual report should remain on a calendar year.

(Action: All)

Statistics for monitoring of the BFC website would be sought to help ascertain as to whether demand for reading the LCAF glossy annual report was enough to justify production continuing.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

8. **Site Visits**

A joint Biodiversity Forum and LCAF visit to Crowthorne Woods was undertaken on Tuesday 3 July 2012, which was featured in the local papers. Nick Hazlitt from the Forestry Commission had given a talk about the aftermath of the forest fires. Of the 170 hectares of plantation, the fire had affected 56% with 30 hectares of plantation lost. Nick had given an overview of how forestry was adapting to wildfire and climate change and how land management could benefit biodiversity.

A report of the visit was included in the agenda papers. Conditions had been ideal for a forest fire with low rainfall, unusually high temperatures for the time of year and flammable material in the forest. Fire crews from ten counties had attended the fire. To prevent loss of life or damage to property, the decision was made to contain the fire in Crowthorne Woods, thereby sacrificing it in many places.

Rotational forestry would possibly be implemented which would benefit the wildlife as well. Rhododendron and bracken spraying would be undertaken. There would be new water areas and a network of ponds to help reduce fire risk and benefit wildlife such as dragonflies. Much effort had been undertaken by volunteers to help restore the affected areas of forest and these areas were gradually improving. The fire was in Crowthorne Woods and not Swinley Forest as had been reported. The level of regeneration in Crowthorne Woods had been impressive and it was suggested that this could be used as a future case study.

Ideas for future site visits included:

- Queenswood; seeing the harvest in progress

- 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
- Jealott's Hill Farm; Forum members were invited to visit the farm

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

(Action: Rose Wicks)

9. Reports from Officers

Rose Wicks reported that the Red, White and Blue photo competition which aimed to celebrate London 2012 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee had closed for entries on Friday 28 September 2012. Ninety diverse photographic entries had been received, which would be judged in the next couple of months. The shortlisted entries would be exhibited at the Community Gallery at South Hill Park between 9 February and 7 April 2013.

The Parish and Town Councils in the borough, the public and the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel had been consulted on the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. Objectives of the strategy fell under the headings of provision, maintenance, use and enjoyment. The consultation had finished and a decision was due on this on 12 October 2012.

A Walking and Outdoor Festival was held on 29 September 2012 to celebrate and promote the borough's public rights of way. Activities included walking and leisure cycling from Frost Folly and horse-riding from Cruchfield Manor Farm. There were different walks to suit all abilities: advanced, intermediate and easy access. There was a good turn out of people at the event and positive feedback. People had expressed an interest in participating in more outdoor activities and volunteering. Smaller sessions may be held in future, but there was a logistical difficulty in holding a big event like this on a regular basis.

Graham Pockett reported that there was a temporary footpath diversion in place for Crowthorne Restricted Byway 12. This was to allow contractors (on behalf of Scottish and Southern Energy) to install a 33kV underground electrical cable to supply Crowthorne Substation via the Devils Highway Bridleway. The diversion had been negotiated with the Forestry Commission. The order had come into force on 1 October 2012 and once the work had finished the order would cease to apply. This was open access land and a new circular route would be created with long term benefits.

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

There had been applications for modification orders in relation to three footpaths in the borough. There was an application to remove Sandhurst Footpath 15 from the Definitive Map and Statement but after extensive consultation and research the decision was taken to decline the application. An appeal by the applicant to the Secretary of State was refused.

There were ongoing issues with obstructions to Sandhurst Footpath 15 and misleading signage. The western end of the footpath at Branksome Hill Road had

been obstructed by a door and a scaffold tower, and the eastern end at College Road has been blocked with a wheelbarrow.

Under Section 143 of the Highways Act 1980, Bracknell Forest Council as the authority served notice to the resident of 26 Branksome Hill to secure the removal of an obstruction from Sandhurst Footpath 15, between Branksome Hill Road and College Road, College Town, Sandhurst. The notice stated that the obstructions should be removed from the Right of Way within seven days of the date of the notice (11th September 2012). In accordance with Highways Act 1980 section 143 (2)(3), if the obstructions have not been removed within one month of the date of this notice, the local authority may remove the obstruction(s) and recover the expenses reasonably incurred in so doing from the person having control or possession of the structures causing the obstruction(s).

The obstructions had been subsequently removed but the signage was still an issue as it was illegal to display misleading signs in relation to Public Rights of Way under section 57 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. There had been comments regarding the condition of the surface of the footpath. Vegetation management which had been delayed due to the obstruction had now been completed.

Two applications were received from the Open Spaces Society in relation to defining the widths of Sandhurst Footpath 21 and Crowthorne Footpath 8. The decision was to decline the application to modify the Definitive Statement by adding the claimed widths between 7.5 feet and 8.8 feet. It was considered appropriate that a width be stated and to add the alternative modification of 2.44 metres or 8 feet. The 1951 Parish Survey had been used as it provided a record of the width at the time of the first Definitive Map for East Berkshire. An appeal by the applicant to the Secretary of State was refused; the Inspector agreed with the council decision.

The number of Green Flag Awards being received for areas in Bracknell was increasing year on year. Awards had been received for Lily Hill Park, Pope's Meadow and Shepherd Meadows and Sandhurst Memorial Park (jointly with Sandhurst Town Council). Other sites to receive awards included Jock's Lane Recreation Ground (Bracknell Town Council), Carnation Hall and Lock's Ride (Winkfield Parish Council). South Hill Park would be entered next year, and community groups and private landowners could also enter.

It was queried how to find out how green a borough was. Further information would be sought regarding this.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

Bracknell in Bloom had achieved a gold award again in the small city category for the Thames and Chiltern Region, Britain in Bloom. Bracknell had the highest percentage of successes of any other local authority in the Thames and Chiltern area. Bracknell won the Small City category and also won the Regional Award for Best Roadsides and Roundabouts. Bracknell was nominated to represent Thames and Chilterns in the Britain in Bloom 2013 National Finals.

10. **Reports from Members round the table**

Sharon Holt reported that there was a new code of conduct on the British Horse Society (BHS) website about how cyclists should safely pass horse riders. Sharon had a link to a two minute video put together by the Forestry Commission Wales in association with the British Horse Society. Rose Wicks had liaised with Phillip Burke, Travel Plan Co-ordinator about whether it was appropriate to link to the video from

the Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) website. The link had been added to the horse page on the BFC website. Forum Members could contact Rose if they wished to see the video.

The Forestry Report included information regarding informal access to all woods and forests to all non-motorised modes of transport. Sharon queried why riders had to pay for access.

The Walking and Outdoor Festival went well; people enjoyed the event and queried whether it would take place again in the future. Rose Wicks thanked Sharon for all her work with the event, and thanked Mike Abbott for his help. The Horse Riding leaflet by BFC would be updated.

Mike Abbott reported that the Ramblers in South East Berkshire had obtained five kissing gates and these had been erected on Ambarrow Lane and Three Castles Path with help from volunteers. Mike thanked Hugh Fitzwilliams for the supervision and volunteer team on behalf of the South East Berkshire Ramblers. There was an aim for there to be plaques in future acknowledging the funding by South East Berkshire Ramblers and the help and support provided by the volunteers.

Peter Radband reported that where the Devil's Highway passed under Foresters Way the area became badly flooded when there was heavy rain. Rose reported that this was a public right of way and the flooding was in relation to drainage of the highway. There was a Highway Works Programme and a dredger was used to clear the drainage problem, which was a lengthy process. It was suggested that this process needed to be undertaken every two to three years rather than every five years or longer. Issues in relation to public rights of way could be reported directly to the rights of way e-mail drop account rightsofway@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Peter raised an objection to the new car parking charges at The Look Out which some thought restricted access to the countryside. It was reported that the Forum was consulted and that there was no end date for the car park charging contract; the contract would be reviewed every six months and then yearly. Attendance figures were being monitored and the impact on other nearby parking areas was being checked and results recorded. It was queried why people were being charged for parking at The Look Out. This would be investigated further.

(Action: Graham Pockett/ Rose Wicks)

11. **Public Question Time**

Observer Jenny Young of Tally Ho Stables was appreciative of being invited to the meeting and found it useful to hear about countryside issues. Jenny would consider observing future meetings of the Forum.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 12 March 2013, 7pm, Function Room, 5th Floor, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell.

CHAIRMAN

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ACCESS NEWSLETTER

Issue 54

February 2013

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – review of maps of open country and registered common land deferred

Natural England is required under section 10 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to undertake a review of the eight conclusive maps of open country and registered common land in England, some of which were first published in 2004 and others in 2005.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires Natural England to undertake the first review not more than ten years after the issue of the conclusive map. Further reviews must also then be undertaken within ten years of that first review.

As a consequence of the Government's overall budgetary situation, which means that not all of the work that the Department and Natural England consider useful and important can be given priority at the moment, Ministers have decided to defer the review of the maps.

Regulations, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, will therefore be made to extend the review period in section 10(2)(a) of the 2000 Act to not more than fifteen years after the issue of the original conclusive maps, and to also extend the period in section 10(2)(b) of the Act to not more than twenty years after each previous review.

Proposed extensions to Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks

In January 2012 Natural England made Variation Orders recommending extensions to the boundaries of the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales National Parks. Over 3,000 representations were received in response to the proposals, including objections from five local authorities.

On 29 January 2013 Richard Benyon announced that a local Public Inquiry into the proposed boundary changes has been commissioned. As a first step, a pre-

Inquiry meeting will be held in early March. It is expected the Inquiry itself will open in early June and last approximately four weeks. The Planning Inspector will then set out his conclusions in a report to the Secretary of State.

Once the Secretary of State has received the Inspector's report he will take a decision as to whether the case for designation has been made and he will either confirm one or both of the Variation Orders (with or without modifications) or reject them.

For more information on Natural England's proposals see:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/new/northwestdesignationproject/default.aspx>

Paths for Communities

Paths for Communities is a funding scheme set up to develop and enhance the network of public rights of way in England in order to deliver benefits to rural areas. Local community partnerships are eligible to bid to Natural England for funds. The scheme is funded by the Rural Development Programme for England and will operate over the 2 year period from May 2012 to March 2014, with a total fund of £2m. The first grant offers were made before Christmas last year.

Applications have been received which vary in shape and size and from many different areas of the country. We hope that the full £2m scheme will be awarded by the summer so email P4C@naturalengland.org.uk as soon as possible to avoid missing out.

Further information on Paths for Communities is available at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/rightsofway/p4c.aspx> including the first issue of a newsletter.

If you have any queries about the above, please email us at:

coast.consultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Selected Access & Engagement Evidence

Introduction

Natural England has a selection of evidence that covers the importance of the Natural Environment and the benefits that people get when accessing it. The evidence doesn't cover everything and there are areas that are less certain or open to debate

For example –

We know...

- A lot about where accessible places are (designated land, Open Access Land, Rights of Way etc)
- Not all sections of society access the Natural Environment equally
- There is a relationship between house prices and proximity to green space – although this relationship is difficult to quantify.
- Provisioning, supporting and regulating services provided by urban green spaces are limited and heavily compromised
- Most people visit greenspace close to their own homes – 40% of visits are made within one mile – 66% of visits within two miles & the closer people are to the Natural Environment the more likely they are to visit and engage
- Better health is related to better access to greenspace regardless of other factors

What is currently open to active debate?

- Whether benefits that people get from greenspace are greater where green space is more natural
- the importance of biodiversity in the urban environment to health and well being
- economic value of a quality environment to business and enterprise
- *how* engagement with the Natural Environment leads to behaviour change.

What we don't know...

- The location and distribution of non-designated accessible greenspace
- the extent to which recreation impacts on biodiversity
- the relationship between quality of greenspace and levels of enjoyment
- if green exercise is cost effective at delivering health benefits compared to other interventions

The information above gives a flavour of the kind of evidence we have to show -

- how people use the Natural Environment
- the reasons why they use it
- the benefits individuals get from that use
- the benefits that society gets as a whole

It can all be used to benefit the natural environment through arguing for

- The provision of new natural places
- Improving the management of existing places
- Improving the access to or within natural places for people

Although the evidence may be used to argue specifically for

- addressing inequalities in social / community benefits
- health benefits – both to individuals and to society in terms of health costs
- the mitigation of the effects of climate change mitigation
- other economic reasons such as the increase to house prices close to green places
- to understand how and where people are using places and plan the provision of access to the natural environment accordingly

This evidence includes both our own studies and other peoples work. The main ones are...

- MENE (Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment)
 - This tells us this about where, when, how and why people access the natural environment (and much more)
 - <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/research/mene.aspx>
- MEBIE (micro economic benefits of investing in the Natural Environment)
 - This tells us this about the economic benefits that greenspaces can provide to individuals and society
 - <http://neintranettechnical/content/technical/topics/wiki.asp?PG=2890>
- Mapping tools / information – e.g. MAGIC, Nature on the Map
 - This tells us this where certain green places & spaces are and the socio-economic characteristics of areas
 - <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/> and <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>
- Summary of Health evidence relating to greenspace
 - This is a series of fact sheets produced by the People & Access team that tell us about the health benefits to individuals of the natural environment. It comes from a range of different studies



Health&NaturalEnvironment-Evidencebase

- Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards
 - This is based on research around distances people are prepare to travel to access the natural environment
 - Provides information on desirable sizes of and distances from people that natural greenspace can be provided for.
 - SE region ANGSt analysis 2007
 - [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf/\\$FILE/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf/$FILE/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf)
- National Ecosystems Assessment. This tells us that
 - Urban greenspace provides lots of cultural services
 - Well managed urban greenspace could make an greatly increased contribution to provisioning, regulating and supporting services
 - <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>



UKNEA-Selectedfacts

- Learning in the Natural Environment
 - This reviews the barriers to schools engaging with the Natural Environment.
 - Review of social and economic benefits and barriers
 - <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1321181>

Government response to the Independent Panel on Forestry

Dear All,

Defra has just released the Government's response. The Government agrees with the Independent Panel's recommendations and has gone further in making specific proposals. Full report accessed from this link:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2013/01/31/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement/>

The report covers a wide range of areas including health, people, biodiversity, wood fuel and bio-energy, timber production, woodland management, forestry skills and climate change. The Government believes *'that the Public Forest Estate should continue to deliver a high level of public benefits. These benefits, such as safe and well-marked public access, rich biodiversity and high quality recreational facilities, are fundamental to the integrity of the Estate and contribute significantly both to the rural economy and to wider Government social and environmental priorities.'*

Key general messages for LAFs

- **Public Forest Estate to remain in public ownership.** Policy of 15% disposal has been rescinded. Sufficient funding in the Spending Review to ensure high levels of public benefit.
- **New body to be created alongside the FC to hold the land in trust.** Greater independence from Government but safeguards for long term benefits. Income generating role. Engagement role (LAFS?). To work independently but report to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Exploring whether scope for group of expert 'Guardians', including representatives of community groups, to advise and support.
- **Aim to work with forest and woodland landowners to improve public access.** Particularly close to towns and cities
- **Public health duty.** Recognition of the importance of health and well-being and the contribution made by green space.
- **Localism agenda.** Potential for Neighbourhood Planning to include woodland through the Localism Act 2011, Local Green Space designation under the National Planning Policy Framework or new woodland through section 106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- **Consultation by the Law Commission, Spring 2013, on conservation covenants.** Binding obligation in perpetuity in woodland conservation - benefits for biodiversity or potentially access.
- **Triennial Review of Natural England and the Environment Agency.** Government seeking to ensure that forestry proposals in line with Review outcomes.

- **Local Nature Partnerships and Local Enterprise Partnerships.** Many woodland aspects could be incorporated including access and recreation.
- **Common Agricultural Policy and Rural Development Programme for England.** Revised schemes under discussion. Regulatory framework and budget may offer potential for woodland funding.

Specific access and recreation messages to achieve social and community benefits:

- **Work with the sector in seeking funding for possible future initiatives aimed at developing local access, individual potential and community cohesion through engagement with trees, woods and forests,**
- **Launch a new initiative to develop further the involvement of local communities with the Public Forest Estate,**
- **Contribute to a pilot project to test further social enterprise activities in woodlands,**
- **Provide guidance to assist Local Authorities in reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans, with a particular emphasis on woodland access improvements,**
- **Fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality, and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse,**
- **Continue to provide data for the Woodland Trust's VisitWoods web gateway and work with the Woodland Trust to identify future funding,**
- **Help to support a sector-led Forestry and Planning network encouraging them to demonstrate how trees and woodlands contribute to sustainable development and help enable growth,**
- **Support the Royal Forestry Society to include an Urban Forestry category in their Excellence in Forestry Awards.**
- **The Government will continue to use the Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard to measure progress. A new baseline will be available in 2013 for measuring access improvements. This will allow more effective targeting of future access improvement initiatives.**

Regards,

Jonathan.

Jonathan Clark

Strategic Access Advisor

Planning Advisory and Compliance

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Walton Street | Aylesbury | HP20 1UY

Tel: 01296 387695

www.buckscc.gov.uk/rights_of_way