

Notice of Meeting

Local Countryside Access Forum

Colin Bird (Chairman)
Richard Mosses (Vice-Chairman)
Mike Abbott
Councillor Michael Brossard
John Deakin
Richard Elsbury
Councillor Alvin Finch
Hugh Fitzwilliams
Geoff Paxton
David Warren
Simon Yates
Jenny Yung



Tuesday 11 June 2019, 7.00 - 9.30 pm
Room 8 Ground Floor South - Time Square, Market Street,
Bracknell, RG12 1JD

Agenda

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7.	Site Visits	
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10.	Any Other Business	
11.	Public Question Time	
	(Maximum 10 Minutes)	
12.	Date of Next Meeting	
	15 October 2019	

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LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
12 FEBRUARY 2019
7.00 - 9.00 PM

Present:

Members:

Peter Radband (Chairman)
Mike Abbott
Colin Bird
Councillor Michael Brossard
Richard Elsbury
Councillor Alvin Finch
Hugh Fitzwilliams
David Warren
Simon Yates
Jenny Yung

In attendance:

Graham Pockett, Parks & Countryside Development Manager
Rose Wicks, Parks & Countryside Project Officer

Apologies for absence were received from:

Richard Mosses
John Deakin
Geoff Paxton

103. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He was pleased to announce that David Warren had joined the forum. David introduced himself as a member of the Trail Riders Fellowship.

104. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting of the Forum held on 2 October 2018 were approved as a correct record.

The following updates on action points were noted:

- Graham Pockett was still looking into the possibility of a visit to the TRL site and intended to plan this visit during the spring / summer when the evenings would be lighter and the ground less muddy.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

- Peter Radband asked Councillor Brossard to amend the wording of the policy to not print documents “unless absolutely essential” to “unless essential” as the qualification was unnecessary.

It was noted that Bracknell Forest Homes has changed its name to Silva Homes.

105. **ROWIP2 actions**

Rose Wicks briefly explained the purpose of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 (ROWIP2) and the mechanisms of how the actions being delivered would be monitored and reported on. Parks & Countryside (P&C) officers would update members on actions delivered at LCAF meetings, as well as prepare a report by the end of March to present to Bracknell Forest Council's Departmental Management Team (DMT). Members were invited to share any updates to be included in that report.

(Action: All)

Graham Pockett and Rose Wicks presented examples of ROWIP2 actions delivered since the last meeting. These were centred on some of the main policies put forward in the document

Policy 1 Rights of Way for all

Action 10 concerned providing and maintaining an up-to-date online web-based map which was to include detail of potential impediments to access such as gates and stiles. It was confirmed that once the mapping work was complete, that this information would be made available to the public so that they could use this to better plan their recreation/work/school routes.

Work was progressing well to record and map Public Rights of Way (PRoW) furniture such as stiles and gates, with the valuable assistance of volunteer path wardens

Sandhurst was the latest parish being mapped, with an example given of footpaths which were deemed as having only moderate access owing to the five kissing gates along its length.

Work needed to be continued in Crowthorne and the rest of Winkfield once the mapping of Sandhurst had been completed.

A Borough-wide map of PRoW furniture would be used to prioritise resources to improve the network by removing obstacles to access. Consideration will be given to including this type of project as part of future planning obligations.

Members discussed the accessibility of kissing gates to all users, but particularly to wheelchair users, and the need to only provide furniture where it was necessary. BFC were asked to look into the possibility of depicting on the map where animals reside, so this can be used to inform decisions about if furniture was necessary on PRoW, in consultation with the landowner. Rose Wicks proposed to add this detail as part of attributes within the GIS data i.e. not as a symbol on the map, which was already very busy with other symbology.

The focus would be to finish this mapping work, quality check the information and then prioritise removing/updating what's deemed the least accessible furniture first. Members would be kept informed and involved in this project.

It was proposed to provide volunteer path inspectors with copies of the furniture map for them to check and use in future inspections.

(Action: Rose Wicks, Rob Solomon and Volunteer Path Inspectors)

Policy 2 Fulfil legal duties

Action 17 concerned responding to issues with PRoW. Graham Pockett updated members on the agreed new restriction to come into force to motorised vehicles

along a section of the Devil's Highway, and which was due to coincide with the closure of The Crown Estate car park

The new restriction was necessary to protect the surface of the right of way (Restricted Byway) from further deterioration caused by heavy motorised vehicle use. Preparatory work was already well underway, with new signage being prepared and surface repair works being drawn up so that its intended users (i.e. walkers, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn carriages) could still access the right of way. There was a concern about people parking on the private road being the first section of the route when the car park was closed. It was decided during a recent consultation with residents that official-looking signage would hopefully discourage parking on the private road. A communication has been drafted to be included in the Crowthorne Eye publication with a link to the council website which would have more detail.

Other matters included the resurfacing of a small section of Sandhurst FP13 – Calvert Walk – following a report that tree roots from a neighbouring property were growing through the surface of the path. This route was noted to be very well-used and a good linking route used by Uplands Primary School. Resources have been allocated for these resurfacing works, which will be carried out by the end of the financial year. BFCs transport team confirmed that there are no plans at present to turn this FP into a cycleway. There was a mixed reaction from members about the suitability of this route for cycling.

Action 19 concerned processing temporary closures of PRow where required. Graham Pockett outlined plans for a new access road and beginning construction of a segregated crossing where Avery Lane (Warfield BW8) meets the new highway. A discussion followed about how pedestrians and riders would have to give way to new traffic.

A permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Avery Lane was consulted on and approved by the Thames Valley Police prohibiting motorised vehicles and horse drawn carriages.

It was proposed to provide members with a copy of the PRow map so they have this to refer to at the future meetings.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Policy 3 Routes and links

Action 1 resolved to review and update current online BFC route guides and maps. Rose Wicks had received suggestions about potential new accessible walking routes from a colleague who was a keen walker at a recent One Council event. One of these routes was a circular walk starting and finishing in Jocks Park Binfield, and passed through green spaces including Garth Meadows, Piggy Wood, Quelm Lane and Cabbage Hill. This route would be two miles approximately with hard surface for most of the route. There would be many pedestrian gates but no stiles. It was noted that the map displayed was not entirely accurate and would be redrawn.

(Action: Rose Wicks to update the route map and circulate for feedback.)

Policy 4 Information and marketing

Action 5 concerned supporting existing healthy walking and green exercise schemes and backing the development of new initiatives. P&C joined forces with Public Health

to run the Pope's and Amen Corner volunteer-led walk which celebrated Self Care Week and which ran from 12-18 November 2018.

Reference was made to the action to review the three Accessible Rural Route Guides (Jock's Lane and The Cut, Larks Hill and West End, Frost's Folly and Warfield Church). Members were asked for assistance in suggesting new walking, cycling and horse riding routes, which would then be drawn up by BFC and tested before being made available on BFCs website. A number of volunteers agreed to help out with this work, which would be done as a working group via email. Several members volunteered to assist with this work including Jenny Yung, Hugh Flitzwilliams and Colin Bird. It was proposed to circulate an email to members following the meeting.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Rose displayed a list of activities promoted by the Public Health Team. Members discussed additional activities which they felt needed to be included on this list; in particular Park Run was deemed to be very popular in Great Hollands.

Policy 8 Working in Partnership

Action 28 concerned working with neighbouring LAFs and highway authorities to identify and address cross boundary Rights of Way anomalies and explore opportunities for promoting PRoW and circular routes. Other aims included exploring ways of improving consistency in signage and way-marking on cross-boundary routes. Members were informed of the meeting dates of neighbouring LAFs and members who were interested in attending were invited to contact Rose Wicks who would assist in getting something set up for them.

It was noted that Andrew Fletcher who used to work at The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) is now the Rights of Way manager at Wokingham.

Policy 9 Raise strategic profile

The new logo designs (one in colour and the other in black and white) were displayed. Members agreed that the new logo made correspondence look more professional. The colour version would be preferred unless the letter needed to be printed in black and white.

106. New Cabbage Hill path link

It had been proposed to seek a permissive path between Cabbage Hill and Hazelwood Lane to avoid the need to walk along the busy Forest Road.

Thames Water who own the land have indicated their support in principle for the proposed path. They are progressing evaluations of how it might be implemented.

Colin Bird and Rob Solomon met with Ian Crump – the Biodiversity Officer at Thames Water – to discuss the proposal. There was enthusiasm on both sides to move forward.

Thames Water had indicated that they might like to transfer the land to the Council, which prompted Graham Pockett to check if this could be treated as a delegated decision. If the value of the land was under £400,000 then this could be a Director delegated decision i.e. by Andrew Hunter. The Hedgerow Regulations also wouldn't be a problem due to the small size of the opening required to access the land from Forest Road, opposite Cabbage Hill.

Colin Bird informed the Forum that there were lots of overhanging trees along the route. Members also considered the mast at the top of the hill.

It was suggested that creating a path along the boundary would be simple and inexpensive to do, but that there may be further costs associated with this work; for example Thames Water require a new stock-proof fence to be established along the line of the path.

Ian Crump was due to cost up these works and provide a quote. Members discussed options for funding these works outside of what could be provided by Thames Water.

Rose Wicks has been investigating whether this type of project would likely qualify for funding from S106 developer contributions for open space and recreation enhancements, It would increase the number of people able to access the countryside and rights of way routes and therefore help mitigate the impact of the local developments. A discussion followed re CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money which would involve liaising with Parish Councils and if the need arose to look at securing development monies then S106 funding might be a simpler solution.

Colin Bird proposed setting up another meeting with Graham Pockett, Rose Wicks and Ian Crump to go through the particulars.

(Action: Colin Bird, Graham Pockett, Rose Wicks)

107. **SPA and SANGs**

Rose explained that SPAs are Special Protection Areas and SANGs are Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces.

Horseshoe Lake SANG

Rose Wicks provided an update on the Horseshoe Lake proposal which sought to enhance the visitor experience, providing a welcoming place and removing barriers to access.

Councillor Brossard updated that the Executive unanimously agreed in principle to allocate money to this project. It would be necessary to undertake surveys (highway, wildlife, stakeholder consultation).

LCAF members were invited to form a working consultation group. Colin Bird, Jenny Yung, Simon Yates and Councillor Brossard expressed an interest in joining this consultation group.

Amen Corner North – Piglittle Field SANG

Graham Pockett informed members that this site was currently managed by Bellway Homes but due to transfer to Bracknell Forest Council from January 2019. This SANG, which was linked to a neighbouring Wokingham SANG (Stokes Farm), was now open to the public but was difficult to access through the adjacent construction site, although there are public footpath links from Murrellhill Lane and the Coppid Beech roundabout

Broadmoor Farm Meadows

Graham Pockett advised that this site was now open to the public. The site was part of the historic landscape surrounding Broadmoor and included the Butter Stream, wet meadow areas, woodland and a man-made knoll.

Peter Radband expressed regret that the kissing gate was inaccessible to wheelchair users. It was noted that livestock would be grazed there.

Securing links

Action 22 concerned providing links to circular / multi-use routes in existing and future SANGs with the PRoW network. Rose Wicks informed members that BFC's Implementation and Infrastructure Team were keen to engage with LCAF and in particular to receive requests for improved links for recreational routes. A spreadsheet has been created which will be distributed to members in order for them to make suggestions for creating new routes and recreational links and send these back to Rose Wicks to then liaise with Planning.

**(Action: Rose Wicks
All – to consider any suggestions)**

Members discussed the need for better signage for these routes and links and suggested that paths should be formally named. "The Hooks" was suggested as a name for the new Thames Water path as this is the name of the woods on the adjacent Warfield Hall land.

Graham Pockett presented the following examples of securing links, which had been provided by BFC Planning. Each one showed maps and descriptions:

- Linking Ralphs Ride to the open space at the Parks development
- Linking the Parks and Harmanswater open space has been partly completed
- BFC owned land north of Garth Pond which had no access northwards. A proposed development at Warfield presented the opportunity to create a river park alongside The Cut which was in the process of being completed by the developer. Members discussed the benefits of this being a designated PRoW as it was felt it would give longer-term security and eventually appear on OS maps. Rose Wicks would add to the list of suggestions.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

There was an existing route running through BFC open spaces Piggy Wood / Quelm Lane. The northern route linked with the existing southern route creating a leisure route from the Three Legged Cross in Warfield to central Bracknell. Hugh Fitzwilliams noted that this shouldn't show as a cycle track on the Ordnance Survey map as it can't be a PRoW and a cycle track.

The new route would connect nicely to the East to West Greenway and connections would be enhanced across the existing routes across Larks Hill, Priory Fields and Hedge Lane. It was proposed that improved signing as a through-route would be beneficial.

- A route needed to be determined to create the link from Hedge Lane to Westmorland Park over the Bull Brook which would be permissible to cyclists.

108. Site visits

It was requested that members be more proactive in proposing ideas for site visit. It was suggested that members could develop a "SANG tour" programme of evening visits during the summer months. The next visit after TRL would be Frost Folly Park (Wellers Lane) which was being managed by BFC although hadn't yet transferred to BFC. Members suggested visiting Horseshoe Lake to develop a clearer understanding of the proposal to turn this into a country park.

Members discussed the need for greater publicity of new open spaces. Rose Wicks informed that there were mechanisms in place for publicity including a SANGS webpage on the BFC website and a SANGS leaflet pack which was regularly distributed to libraries and council offices. Rose Wicks would bring copies to the next

meeting of LCAF. It was proposed that new SANGS could also be added as news items on the BFC website.

(Actions: Rose Wicks)

Members questioned whether LCAF had contact with Thames Valley Heath Partnership. Rose Wicks advised that P&C and the rangers had contact details and indicated she was looking to invite Sarah or another representative to a future LCAF meeting.

109. Annual report

Rose Wicks expressed apologies that the draft had been delayed. The draft annual report would be distributed to members once it has been completed for members' feedback before being finalised and published online.

Rose Wicks informed the Forum that there had been no request so far from Natural England about the need for LAFs to submit an annual review form for 18/19 financial year. This reflected last year's stance, whereby LCAF will upload their own annual (calendar year) report to Huddle unless Natural England suggest otherwise. Members expressed regret that the annual LAF conferences had stopped and that national and regional support had been cut, as it was important for LAFs to maintain the network of contact at a regional and national level.

110. Horizon Scanning

Hugh Fitzwilliams advised that there had been a vast rush of development applications in Warfield. Colin Bird added that these were not always on designated sites on the Local Plan and expressed regret that there had been three applications north of Forest Road in this year alone.

It was suggested that a member of the planning team e.g. Simon Cridland be invited to the next LCAF meeting to give an overview on development applications and the work being done by BFC to mitigate for the impact of local development.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

111. Any Other Business

David Warren advised the Forum that the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) was set up to promote responsible riding. TRF would be able to offer assistance to councils to clear overgrown vegetation along byways or potentially donate funds for resurfacing works. It was suggested to talk to Rob Solomon regarding the schedule of works.

(Action: Rob Solomon)

David Warren informed that TRF could assist at horse events. Jenny Yung offered to put David in touch with the British Horse Society.

(Action: Jenny Yung)

Jenny Yung advised that the British Horse Society would like to know if there are any unclaimed bridleways.

Councillor Brossard praised the rangers for an excellent job during the snow.

Peter Radband expressed that he was perplexed by the new Crowthorne Forest sign as it was listed as Crowthorne Woods on the OS maps.

It was noted that the Horseshoe Lake bridleway was not showing on the Definitive Map and this should be looked into.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

Councillor Finch expressed a willingness to publicise things for LCAF in his capacity as Borough Mayor.

It was suggested that rangers could run a series of events "introducing you to our new SANGS".

Members agreed that this style of room was preferable to meeting in the Council Chamber.

112. **Public Question Time**

Jennie Green asked when the new SANG development at Wellers Lane was due to open. Graham Pockett advised that he was not sure. Hugh Fitzwilliams added that Warfield Council were responsible for the car parking provision for this new SANG in addition to the existing one at Frost Folly. Jennie expressed regret that all the bins at Frost Folly were in the car park at Frost Folly, whereas they were distributed right across the Cabbage Hill SANG.

113. **Future Chair of the Forum**

It was noted that Peter Radband would be stepping down from the Forum following this meeting. In order to enable officers to plan the next meeting in conjunction with the Chair, the Group was invited to appoint his successor.

Expressions of interest had been received from Richard Mosses (current Vice Chair) and Colin Bird. Rose had provided members with an overview of the time commitment required to deliver the role of LCAF Chair. Richard felt that he couldn't always commit this time and was happy for Colin to step forward as he felt that his interest in cycling as well as walking would make him more qualified

A motion to nominate Colin Bird as Chair of the Local Countryside Access Forum was moved by Councillor Brossard and seconded by Hugh Fitzwilliams and a recorded vote was requested. On being put to the Forum the voting on the motion was as follows:

For (10) Councillors Brossard and Finch, Peter Radband, Mike Abbott, Colin Bird, Richard Elsbury, Hugh Fitzwilliams, David Warren, Simon Yates and Jenny Yung

It was therefore

RESOLVED that Colin Bird be elected Chair of the Local Countryside Access Forum.

COLIN BIRD IN THE CHAIR

The forum expressed their thanks to Peter Radband and he was presented with a gift from the forum in recognition and appreciation of his sixteen years' service to the Forum.

114. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 11 June 2019.

CHAIRMAN

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The Second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) – report on progress against key priorities

The RoWIP is a 10-year strategic document that sets out how we intend to work with others to improve the management, provision and promotion of the Bracknell Forest Rights of Way (RoW) network.

There are ten RoWIP policies as follows:

1. Rights of way for all
2. Fulfil legal duties
3. Routes and links
4. Information and marketing
5. Responsible use
6. Preserve rural character
7. Sustainable benefits
8. Working in partnership
9. Raise strategic profile
10. Monitor and review

In summary, the actions required to make progress against all policies are underway, including:

1. Work is being completed by the council staff and volunteers to continuously capture data about the condition of the network and to prioritise works.
2. The Definitive map is being maintained, TRO notifications and restrictions are being implemented and reported defects are being addressed.
3. New and adjusted links on the network are being explored and implemented.
4. Publicity about the network is ongoing with a vibrant Local Community Access Forum (LCAF) meeting regularly.
5. Work underway to engage with local landowners, and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, amongst other communications.
6. Where required input is made to the planning process to shape the protection and enhancement of the network.
7. Sustainable benefits are delivered wherever possible, through schemes such as school access routes and joint events with Public Health for instance.
8. Extensive work completed and in progress with Parish and Town Councils along with Police and other agencies, such as Natural England.
9. Various works to raise profile completed, including creating a logo and embedding the network within the council's local plan.
10. Completed on a cyclical basis, through regular officer meetings, LCAF meetings, Quarterly Service reporting and these annual updates to DMT.

The detailed actions delivered in 2018 against each RoWIP policy are annexed below for reference.

Policy RoWIP 1 Rights of Way for All

Increase accessibility of the RoW network.

Physical improvements to RoW included:

- Vegetation maintenance - 14,863m of verge flailing and 16,188m of strimming/hedge-cutting by contractors twice per year
- Surface improvement to Sandhurst FP13 and FP22
- Repairs and replacement paving slabs to Sandhurst FP5 steps
- Repairs to ditch crossings through Winkfield FP19, Spinningwheel lane and Winkfield FP5
- Resurfacing around entrance gate to Snipes Lane using 5 ton of loose stone
- Removing older stiles and 'squeeze' gates along Winkfield FP8 and Winkfield FP5 and replacing with new accessible gates

New data is being collected by volunteer path wardens about the location of key features on RoW including signage and furniture to be combined with data derived from the six-monthly Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) inspections (see RoWIP 10 Monitoring and Review) and provide a full catalogue of the network. This will help identify issues and prioritise resources to improve the network.

Work is underway (about 70% complete) to map the location of furniture including gates and stiles to provide a map of obstacles to accessibility on RoW. The goal is to provide this information to the public as online interactive maps, so they can better plan their leisure/school/work routes.

Policy RoWIP 2 Fulfil Legal Duties

Deliver statutory functions of RoW.

The Second Consolidated Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way in Bracknell Forest Borough was updated in 2013. A working copy is kept updated by P&C and a hard copy can be made available for public view upon request.

Motor vehicles are due to be restricted from using the section of Devil's Highway leading to Crowthorne Woods (Crowthorne Restricted Byway 12). The RoW will be open to authorised users, which includes pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and carriage-drivers. Essential access will also be available for carrying out forestry work, for emergency services and to home owners with private access rights to their property.

The restriction is necessary to prevent damage to the surface of this RoW that is caused by motor vehicles along a route that is not classified or constructed for motorised traffic. These changes will also help to protect the rare and valuable wildlife that can be found in Crowthorne Woods and Swinley Forest, which are part of the wider Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Residents and a local business affected have been consulted.

Recent TRO width restrictions along several byways in Warfield/Winkfield will prevent all but the smallest motorised vehicles (e.g. trail riders) having access. This will help protect the surface from damage, allow authorised users better access and reduce the requirement for BFC to carry out repairs.

Reports regarding faults with RoW are received through Achieve and Confirm. P&C aims to respond to these within 5 working days. Follow up works, such as removal of fallen trees and repairing vehicle barriers such as bollards used to enforce width restrictions, are prioritised. Incidences of fly-tipping dealt are dealt with in conjunction with Public Protection Partnership officers.

Policy RoWIP 3 Routes and Links

Provide additional PRoW network linkages and safe circular routes, expanding this to a wider Green Infrastructure network.

Network Rail have consulted on closing the unguarded level crossing (across the mainline from Ambarrow Court) which is on a public footpath. The footpath will be diverted over an existing bridge, with the right of way diverted through the National Trust woodland at Ambarrow Hill. The Three Castles Path will be affected by the level crossing closure in Sandhurst and we will work with Ramblers and Open Spaces Society to ensure that the diversion from the published route is clearly signposted on site.

A proposal is being explored to seek a permissive path (or dedicated right of way) between Cabbage Hill and Hazelwood Lane to avoid the need to walk along the busy Forest Road. Discussions have been taking place with Thames Water who own the land, and LCAF has been proactive in promoting this route.

Much of the Open Access land in Bracknell Forest Borough comprises land in the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). While access to Wildmoor Heath, Crowthorne Woods and Swinley Forest cannot be hindered, active promotion of improved access to the countryside is focused on the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs), to help protect the important heathland habitat of the SPA and the rare ground nesting birds that can be found there.

New links and extensions to the network have been made possible via paths and routes that are included within public open spaces associated with housing developments. This is most notable around the Warfield development where the Cabbage Hill SANG, East-West Green Corridor and The Cut riverside park have created paths that connect to existing byways and quiet lanes.

BFCs Implementation and Infrastructure Team have devised several linked routes to the north of the borough (Ralphs Ride/The Parks, river park along The Cut etc.) and are keen to receive requests for more improved links for recreational routes from P&C and LCAF. They need to be deliverable i.e. ideally on land which we can easily access (BFC/parish ownership).

Policy RoWIP 4 Information and Marketing

Provide access information on RoW and promote the network to encourage use.

P&C publicised traffic free cycle routes and a health and wellbeing initiative (social prescription) on viewing screens at an Outdoor Cinema event at Lily Hill Park last summer.

Volunteer led-countryside walks are advertised in P&Cs events leaflet, via social media and on BFCs website.

Information about long distances recreation routes including the Bracknell Forest Ramblers Route, the Blackwater Valley Path and The Three Castles Path are provided on BFCs website. A Bracknell Forest Ramblers Route leaflet and horse riding leaflet is promoted online and hard copies are distributed to local libraries.

Online route guides / maps which are available on BFCs walking page, are being reviewed in conjunction with the Bracknell Forest Local Countryside Access Forum (LCAF). The intention is to provide new recreation routes with differing levels of access i.e. easy access

for people in wheelchairs and with mobility issues, moderate access which includes countryside circular walks of between 2.5-10.8 kms and differing types of terrain and long-distance routes such as the Bracknell Forest Ramblers Route, the Blackwater Valley Path and The Three Castles Path.

An annual public walk event is due to take place in June, which will use a section of The Three Castles Path.

Policy RoWIP 5 Responsible Use

Promote and publicise legal and responsible use of RoW and access to the countryside, supporting landowners and land managers regarding public use of their land.

Landowners were contacted to create resolutions to the following issues:

- Reduction of overgrowth to Sandhurst FP5a.
- Bird Hill Golf Course have removed low limbs to encroaching trees into Pendry's Lane (Warfield BW17)
- Thames Water have installed bollards along their section of Hazelwood Lane bridleway to reduce fly-tipping issues.
- Somerton farm have removed blockage to Winkfield FP10.
- Royal Parks have cleared vegetation along Winkfield FP3.

Where a new road crossing has been constructed part way along Avery Lane (byway), a crossing point has been carefully designed to provide a waiting area for equestrians, and a separate crossing point for walkers and cyclists. Recent new signs have been provided where new access road crosses the byway, leading to the Newell Green housing development.

Measures are being taken to reduce the vulnerability of the RoW network to fly-tipping e.g.

- Bollards installed on Hazelwood Lane by Thames Water
- The new TROs on rural byways to the north of the borough, to protect the surface condition from heavy motorised use, should also help prevent illegal fly-tipping.

P&C work closely with SAMM wardens within the SPA to encourage better understanding of users' responsibilities regarding RoW and Access Land.

Policy RoWIP 6 Preserve Rural Character

Protect the rural character of RoW in the countryside.

Where appropriate / applicable the planning process is used to maintain the rural character of RoW. For example, RoWIP policy 6 was quoted in a planning response for a site in Warfield with a footpath running through it. The policy works well alongside Defra Rights of Way Circular (1/09) para 7.8, which refers to not embedding RoW in the highway footways next to trafficked roads. BFC recommended refusal on the basis of how the layout plan rerouted the public footpath, completely urbanising the route that is currently a pleasant cross-field path.

Policy RoWIP 7 Sustainable Benefits

Manage a countryside and access network that delivers benefits to health and well-being, economy and biodiversity.

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey collected by Natural England provides trend data for how people use the natural environment in England.

Findings from the 17/18 report suggests that a greater percentage of adults are visiting the natural environment each week (54% in 2009/10 to 62% in 17/18), and the main motivation for spending time in the natural environment is health and exercise.

P&C joined forces with Public Health to run the Pope's and Amen Corner wander, to celebrate health care week which ran from 12-18 November last year.

P&C worked with volunteers to set-up monthly free countryside walks, which encourages people to get physically active and provides an opportunity to socialise with other walkers, thus improving health and wellbeing. Over 175 local people participated in these walks in 2018.

The surface improvement to Sandhurst FP13 (Calvert Walk) will help maintain links to the local school and is a good example of how BFC are enhancing the traffic free RoW network around urban areas to increase the use of sustainable transport for accessing work, schools and services.

Policy RoWIP 8 Working in Partnership

Develop volunteer initiatives and partnerships with other organisations to help make resources go further; collaborate with neighbouring authorities to deliver solutions to cross-border maintenance, legal and improvement issues.

P&C produce an end of financial year PRoW financial report for town/parish council's and provide updates at Parish, Parks and Public Realm meetings to recognise existing support and encourage increased future parish /town council involvement in the management of public access.

Volunteers have an important part to play in helping to manage our RoW network. They inspect 63,085m of PRoW twice per year spending roughly 105.2hours and local volunteer groups have spent 70 hours on PRoW improvement works.

P&C work with neighbouring authorities to tackle issues and take advantage of cross boundary opportunities. Two incidences of criminal damage to bollards on Hawthorn Lane, were reported by residents, and quickly dealt with respectively by RBWM (farm shop end) and BFC (Nuptown end). The reinforced bollard arrangement on the Drift Road end of Hogoak Lane is working well, with no further incidences to report. RBWM have also cut back Ashmore lane vegetation and BFC has improved the gate at the Hawthorn Lane junction.

BFC work in partnership with landowners and the local Police to address issues such as fly-tipping on PRoW and the illegal use of footpaths and bridleways. Fly-tipping is reported through CADIS and new signage to deter fly-tipping has been installed around 'hot spots' such as Winkfield RB1 (Sandy Lane, Ascot).

Policy RoWIP 9 Raise Strategic Profile

Increased awareness of organisations and policy and decision-makers about the importance of RoW and the wider green infrastructure network will enable better planning and development of neighbourhoods.

RoWIP is embedded in council plans including Local Plan, LTP3, BAP etc. to promote the key role that RoW play in maintaining Bracknell Forest's high quality of life.

RoWIP is quoted in internal planning consultations where appropriate, to protect the network, prevent or reduce the effects of urbanisation and to prevent unauthorised obstruction or diversion. This includes pre-app advice where RoW are on or adjacent to sites.

BFC helped to produce a new logo for LCAF to give the forum its own identity and raise its profile. This logo was used in recent written correspondence to Thames Water regarding creating a new permissive path between Cabbage Hill and Hazelwood Lane. Membership promoted to LCAF via a leaflet (available online or as hard copies). The application process has been improved by creating a new online application form, which fits in with BFCs move towards self-serve.

Policy RoWIP 10 Monitor and Review

Monitoring the condition of the PRow network and assessing progress made with RoWIP actions

Six-monthly BVPI inspections, were carried out which covers over 17,000m of PRow per year and collects data about the condition of features including surface condition, obstructions and furniture. Formal inspections of footbridges and culverts are completed by Atkins as part of BFC Highways department inspections.

BFC provides information to IPRoW surveys and Ramblers FOIs, as well as comparing information with other unitary authorities and county councils through ADEPT South East Rights of Way Managers Group.

P&C's RoW team regularly meet to review progress made with delivering RoWIP actions. Updates are provided as part of BFC's Quarterly Service Reports and the three LCAF meetings held each year. Report review outcomes to DMT annually.

LCAF produce an annual report (with support from P&C) on key activities and achievements of the forum, and which gets submitted to Natural England and published online.