

**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
2 FEBRUARY 2021
7.00 - 8.30 PM**



Present:

Members:

Colin Bird (Chairman)
Richard Mosses (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Michael Brossard
Sue McDaid
Councillor Alvin Finch
Hugh Fitzwilliams
David Warren
Jenny Yung

In attendance:

Graham Pockett, Parks & Countryside Development Manager

Apologies for absence were received from:

Geoff Paxton
Rose Wicks, Parks & Countryside Project Officer

171. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting were approved subject to the below amendment:

Minute 166 – Multiuser signs/update was located at the north end of Hog Oak Lane by Drift Road.

172. Impact of COVID-19

The forum discussed the increased use of local parks and countryside which included the Public Rights of Way (PRoWs). As a result, the paths were becoming eroded and those which were not surfaced were particularly at risk of damage and would require maintenance. It was hoped that as new SANGs were opened, residents would visit different places and decrease demand on individual sites. Many residents were also not using paths and walking on the grass beside the paths so they could socially distance. Paths without surfacing in new SANGs meant they may not be suitable for winter use and were also an accessibility concern as they weren't suitable for wheelchair users. It was noted that accessible routes which have good surfaces in areas such as Lily Hill Park were coping better with the increased usage.

The forum was shown the communications messaging which the council had been circulating to encourage safe use of outdoor space during the pandemic. It was recognised that Bracknell had lots of open spaces which residents were benefitting from, but in a socially distanced way. There had also been some confusion because parks were open but outdoor sports facilities needed to be closed. The Council would also be raising awareness about ground nesting birds whose nests were being damaged by dogs in vegetation. A new sign produced by the Thames Basin Heaths

Partnership to help raise awareness of ground nesting birds in the Special Protection Area (SPA) was also shown. BFC officers had provided feedback on the design, along with other organisations.

Following discussion, the following points were raised:

- The 6-monthly inspection of PRoWs by volunteers were continuing during the pandemic and any repairs required were being carried out.
- Traffic Regulation Order's (TROs) on PRoWs are currently not mapped and there isn't a definitive list of such TROs. This would restrict some vehicles or widths from accessing pathways. **(Action: Graham Pockett to investigate mapping project and list of TROs on the website)**
- If there was something in the draft Local Plan due for public consultation in the next few months which affected PRoWs then there would be an opportunity for the forum to provide feedback.
- PRoWs would be added to the Definitive Map and would include locations such as the Ambarrow Court path on the route of the 3 Castles Path, extending from Sandhurst FP9; Horseshoe Lake bridleway and possibly Mosses path in Binfield. **(Action: Graham Pockett to progress)**
- Updating accessible route maps would continue when Coronavirus restrictions allowed with possible locations included Shepherd Meadows and Sandhurst. **(Action: Chair and Graham Pockett to progress)**
- Forum members were also asked if they had any ideas or features to include in the 2020 annual report.

173. **ROWIP2 Actions**

The forum was updated on the latest RoWIP Actions:

- Road planings were being installed to improve the quality of the pathways during the winter and the forum was shown an example which had been installed at Hedge Lane.
- A meeting had been held in January with Thames Water regarding creating a pathway on their land. Suggestions had included selling or leasing the land for a path which would be located from the SANG at Cabbage Hill to Hazelwood Lane. Currently the funding sources were being discussed and it was hoped that a permanent path might be installed eventually. **(Actions: Graham to write letter to Thames Water; Chair to ensure follow-up meeting with Thames Water in March).**

Investigations were being undertaken with Broadmoor about replacing metal stiles on Crowthorne FP8 with either gaps or accessible gates which would allow more residents to use the path. (Action: Graham to write to estate manager at NHS NWLMHT.)

174. **Binfield FP10**

This footpath between Binfield and Bracknell has had work to rectify drainage issues completed by the developers of adjacent land. There was an ongoing project to clear back overhanging vegetation which had now been completed. The next stage would be to improve the surface and raise it which would improve accessibility in winter. It was commented that it could be suitable for use as a permissive cycle path. It was noted that section 106 funding would be used to fund the project, together with a smaller amount of revenue budget to pay for new signage

175. **Winkfield FPs 13 and 19**

The forum was shown the route of a pathway diversion order around the building of new polo pitches which needed a 6-month extension until June 2021. The Council

was encouraging the contractor and landowner to create a permanent diversion to aid residents who wanted to use the footpath when polo pitches were in use. The current signposting was not clear and considered an ongoing issue which needed to be resolved.

176. **Multi-user path sign**

The forum was shown the new multi-user path sign artwork by David Warren. Maps of the borough had been examined to see where they should be located and would include the north end of Hog Oak Lane with the agreement of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It is hoped signs would be installed by mid-February and the forum was thanked for their input. It was agreed that promotion of the new signs would include pictures of horse rider/motorcycle and rambler for local press. David was thanked by the forum for his hard work towards the scheme.

177. **PROW and Local Developments**

It was reported that Crowthorne FP6 located at Cricketfield Grove had been altered to add steps where there was previously a fully accessible ramp. This had been installed potentially in breach of rights of way and equality legislation and it was hoped it would be rectified by the developer soon.

(Action: BFC to explore whether enforcement under Highways Act can be used to rectify the accessibility problem.)

178. **Any Other Business**

Richard Mosses reported that Binfield FP2 had been diverted and fenced around the edge of a field. Graham confirmed that no application for a diversion had been received or approved. A letter to the landowner had been drafted requesting that formal application should be made for the diversion. The forum expressed its concern about the unauthorised diversion and commented that the hedges on such fenced paths were often not trimmed to maintain the required width of the path. Members of the Forum expressed a preference for the original diagonal cross-field route over the diversion around the field-edge. **(Action: Graham to explore appropriate action)**

Michael Brossard informed the forum that residents local to Wildmoor Heath had participated in litter removal.

179. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

180. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 8th June 2021 at 7pm. The meeting would be held virtually.

CHAIRMAN