



**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM  
1 MARCH 2016  
7.00 - 9.20 PM**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Michael Abbott  
Colin Bird  
Hugh Fitzwilliams  
David Lindop  
Peter Radband (Chairman)

**In attendance:**

Graham Pockett, Parks & Countryside Development Officer  
Robert Solomon, Ranger (Countryside and PROW)

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Michael Brossard  
John Deakin  
Richard Mosses  
Jenny Yung  
Rose Wicks, Parks & Countryside Projects Officer

**15. Welcome**

Chairman Peter Radband welcomed members and officers to the meeting.

**16. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting on 6 October 2015 were approved as a true record, after the amendment of the following:

Minute 3

*'in relation to promoting the interests of horse rising...'* be corrected to horse riding

Matters arising

The mapping project for defibrillators was an ongoing task, and was being developed.

The Beating the Boundary Walk had been altered, and had changed into a series of short walks during a week rather than one long walk. The new proposals also included cyclists and cycle routes. The walk routes explored paths and cut-throughs not obvious on maps. These walks would take place on the week beginning 3 October 2016, and would include a walk or cycle in each parish of the borough. It was reported that more publicity around this event would be useful.

**17. Membership and recruitment**

It was reported to the group that membership of the LCAF was now up to 10, and it was recommended that LCAF groups should consist of between 10 and 22 members.

Members of the forum discussed ways of recruiting landowner, disabled and youth representatives onto the forum. One suggestion was that an National Union of Farmers representative be recruited onto the forum, who need not be a borough landowner. It was also suggested that the Bracknell Forest Access Group be approached.

Mark Osman, Royal Farms Manager had been contacted to be on the Forum. Mark had thanked the Forum for their invitation, but had sadly not been able to join the group due to other commitments.

There was reported to be the potential for a local training event for the Berkshire Local Authority LAFs, hosted and lead by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It was explained that this training would cover the basics of shared paths and the deregulation bill without going into legal detail. It was agreed that there would be an update on this at the next meeting.

It was suggested that a brochure could be produced to target potential LCAF members, and that this brochure could be taken to venues to engage with the public, for example, at The Look Out.

#### 18. **LAF related meetings/conferences**

Peter Radband had been to the Local Access Forum National Conference (South) and presented his feedback to the forum.

The Conference had begun with a session from DEFRA on updates regarding 2026, including the new charge for legal proceedings of £750 for an appeal.

There had also been a presentation from Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) who maintain countryside Rights of Way for motorised activities. This presentation had featured a discussion on the use of communications and social media, and it was suggested that Communication and Marketing at Bracknell Forest could be used more to promote the Bracknell Forest LCAF.

John Cuthbertson of the Disabled Ramblers (<http://disabledramblers.co.uk/>) had given a presentation on the issues and problems for disabled countryside users. One major barrier for countryside access users was reported to be small and inaccessible gates which are not big enough for wheelchairs or prams. It was suggested that wheelchair users could use another gate with RADAR key access. Alternatively, the bridle gates which measure 1.2m would be suitable in Bracknell Forest. Peter reported that he had asked John to do a session for Bracknell Forest LCAF to help members' understanding.

There had been a presentation from John Dennis from West Yorkshire on encouraging local authorities to work together to maintain public rights of way. One project working well in West Yorkshire was the 'Greenline'; an urban jogging route to deter drug users from hanging around on public rights of way. It was suggested that although Bracknell's public rights of way did not have a particular issue with drug users, a marked jogging route may encourage people to use the public rights of way and calm fears of getting lost. It was agreed that the possibilities of this would be looked into, and reported back on at the next meeting.

**(Action: Graham Pockett)**

There had also been a session on the recruitment into LAFs, and the problems putting people off. Peter reported that some LAFs used a long and formal interview

style process, and whilst Bracknell Forest's process was not as bad, it could still do with improvement to encourage a diverse group of volunteers. This was particularly true if young people were to be attracted to the group. It was agreed that the forms of recruitment and publicity would be revisited.

**(Action: Graham Pockett)**

#### 19. **Communication**

Hugh Fitzwilliams reported on Huddle, Natural England's Discussion forum, and informed the group that he had found it too complicated and laborious to use practically. There had been many issues with Huddle, including the fact that much of the information sent out was irrelevant to an urban setting such as Bracknell Forest, and that it was hard to navigate. Hugh therefore wished to resign from being the LCAF's Huddle champion.

David Lindop volunteered to try out Huddle instead of Hugh. It was explained that David would need to be set up on Huddle by Rose.

**(Action: Rose Wicks)**

#### 20. **Reports from Members round the table**

**Colin Bird** reported on the PROW improvement plan 2006-2016 which had entered its final year. It was heard that all of the actions on the plan had been achieved and that the 2017-2027 plan needed to be considered. LCAF was invited to have key input into the development of the next plan, which was a statutory requirement.

**David Lindop** reported that he had presented the LCAF and the Beating the Boundary event to Winkfield Parish Council, who had been particularly enthusiastic about the walking event. David had also been speaking to members of the public at Swinley Forest to gauge their perception of horse access. There had been a general agreement that although access for riders is good in the forest, the car park had caused problems with people parking inconsiderately in a small space.

**Michael Abbott** reported on the Ramblers work with bridges this year. There was a bridge on Binfield Footpath 2 which needed repair work. This work had been costed and was going to go ahead.

**Hugh Fitzwilliam** reported on the SANGS land in the Warfield development, and was pleased to report that there was a surplus of SANGS land in the area. He commented that the challenge now was to connect the existing SANGS and for the council to designate PROWs to connect them.

**Peter Radband** commented on the issues at Devil's Highway, including poor car park access, poor gate security giving access to illegal raves, and the poor state of the Highway itself. It was reported that Graham Pockett had been in discussion with the Forestry Commission to address some of these issues already.

#### 21. **Access Improvement Works**

Rob Solomon reported on the recent Access Improvement Works in the borough. Since the last meeting of LCAF, there had been the following developments to PROWs:

- Scrub clearance and head cutting along Binfield footpath 9 up to Terrence Road South, which now offered good views
- The building of a narrow boardwalk crossing along Warfield footpath 7 in the Malthill Road area, to avoid seasonal flooding

- New footpath works along 300+ metres of the Eastern side of Bracknell footpath 22
- A replacement of the kissing gate on Bracknell footpath 15 with a two-way pedestrian gate to allow better mobility scooter access

Rob also reported on the Ramblers Big Path Watch which had run between July 2015 and January 2016. The Big Path Watch had invited reports from members of the public to be submitted to Parks and Countryside, and a spreadsheet of faults, compliments and grid references had been submitted to Rob. Of the responses, 135 had been negatives reporting mostly seasonal issues, but 260 had been positives complimenting the attractive views, flora and fauna, useful signage and more. Rob was very pleased to have had more positives than negatives, and the Chairman congratulated Rob and his team. The Big Path Watch was a one-off event, but Rob reported that he was looking to recruit volunteer inspectors for the twice yearly inspection of 80% of PROWs in the borough, and asked if LCAF members were interested in this.

In Access Improvement Works for SANGs, the following developments had taken place since the last meeting:

- New path had been installed at Horseshoe Lake
- Horseshoe Lake's car park had been extended and improved with marked out spaces
- Bank repair work had taken place along the River Blackwater to combat bad erosion. This would be followed by resurfacing the path on the south side of the river
- Garth Meadow/Anneforde Place bridge had been resurfaced including decorative panels installed in the balustrades by artist Circling the Square/
- A new path planned to link Manor Farm and Anneforde Place
- Heather scraping to regenerate the heath at Englemere Pond
- Scrub clearance from the reedbed within Englemere
- Timeline green entrance surface improvements at Longhill Park

In Access Improvement Works for S106, there had been new pathways, bird and bat boxes, scrub clearance and a pond within Wick Hill woodland. Wick Hill was a small copse in between Lakeside and Warfield Road, with a good mix of trees. New signage had been introduced to encourage people to use the space.

## 22. **2026 Cut-off for recording historic paths**

Graham Pockett reported on the 2026 cut-off date for recording historic paths, and mentioned that the work had been requested by Councillor Turrell to prevent a last minute rush in 2025-26.

Graham commented that he was not expecting many historic paths to be declared as the borough was primarily made up of new towns and Crown Estate land. Larger County Councils would be affected more by this cut-off date than small unitaries. It was reported that Bracknell Town Council had brought up the cut-off date recently, and had received very limited response.

Forum members asked whether there should be more publicity around the declaration, but it was agreed that with so many people already involved in searching historic documents, it was unlikely that anything would be missed.

23. **LCAF Annual Report**

The LCAF Annual Report was received and approved by the present Forum members, who sent their congratulations and thanks to Rose Wicks for her hard work on this.

24. **Site Visits**

Peter Radband reported that as Rose was under pressure in other areas, he had volunteered to organise the next LCAF site visit and proposed a visit to the Crown Estate Historic Sites. It was agreed that Peter should speak to John about this, and also to Councillor Brossard about the possibility of a site visit to Wellington.

**(Action: Peter Radband/John Deakin/Councillor Brossard)**

It was suggested that a visit to the Cabbage Hill site when completed would be interesting, and also to the Frost Folly SANG when completed. Forum members expressed an interest to see the link between the two new SANGs, possibly in Spring 2017 or later.

25. **Public Question Time**

There were no questions from members of the public.

26. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 4 October 2016, 7pm in the Function Room, Easthampstead House. This date was subject to change due to Walks Week happening the same week.

**CHAIRMAN**

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