



Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Local Countryside Access Forum (Countryside & Rights of Way Act, 2000)

Terms of Reference

1. Constitution

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local highway authorities to establish Local Access Forums to advise authorities about improvement of public access to land in their area for open-air recreation. The Bracknell Forest Local Countryside Access Forum shall operate in accordance with the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002, which sets out procedural rules for the establishment and the administration of the Forum.

2. Membership

The membership of the Local Countryside Access Forum shall be appointed so that they shall represent local people within the following groups:

- Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, disabled people, dog owners, bird-watchers, horse-riders, cyclists, carriage drivers, recreational vehicle users). *1
- Owners, occupiers or land managers of land crossed by public rights of way or owners and occupiers of open access land within the borough.
- Two Councillors from Bracknell Forest Borough Council if the group is comprised of between 10 and 16 members or three Councillors if the group is comprised of between 17 and 22 persons.
- Other interests especially relevant to the borough, such as Parish Councils.

The selection process will ensure a balance in the membership between these groups so as to avoid dominance by any single interest. The minimum number of members shall be 10, the maximum number of members shall be 22 and a meeting of the Forum shall be quorate if a minimum of 5 Members are present. Co-option may occur at any time so long as the final number does not exceed 22 and a reasonable balance between interest groups is maintained.

- *1 Individuals who are existing members of an interest group, such as the Ramblers Association, must act in a non-partisan manner by representing walking issues and walkers in the broadest sense.

Preference will be given to applicants who live within the Borough.

Preference will be give to applicants who are not members of other Local Access Forums.

3. Terms of Reference

- To represent and be available to local people so that a wide range of local issues can be expressed.
- To offer advice to Bracknell Forest Borough Council as to the means of improvement of public access to land within the Borough for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment for all.
- To offer advice to Bracknell Forest Borough Council on all matters relating to Public Rights of Way in the Borough.
- To assist with the development and implementation of a 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' for the Borough.
- To comment on the preparation of maps of 'open access' land in the Borough and future management of any such land.
- To comment on national or local consultation documents relating to public rights of way or access to open countryside.
- To liaise with neighbouring Local Access Forums on matters of shared interest, and with other groups or agencies with an interest in the Borough's countryside.
- To provide input to, and comment on, other Strategies and Plans being developed by the Borough Council, such as the Local Transport Plan, Local Plan, Children's Play Strategy, Walking Strategy, Cycling Strategy etc.

4. Procedures

1. Forum members will be selected by the Local Countryside Access Forum Appointment Committee, comprising:
 - One BFBC Councillor
 - Two BFBC Officers
 - Two non-BFBC representatives
2. All applicants for selection to the Forum will be invited to attend a group selection interview and appointed according to selection criteria which will assess their potential contribution to the Forum.
3. Appointments to the Forum shall be for three years.
4. The Forum shall meet at least twice a year (at six-monthly intervals), with any additional meetings to be arranged by agreement of the Forum.
5. The Forum Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed by election from amongst the members of the Forum at the first meeting.
6. The period of appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be three years.
7. Members of the Forum may resign by giving notice in writing to the Council (Director of Leisure Services).
8. The Appointment Committee may terminate an appointment if, without consent of the Appointment Committee, he or she has been absent from all meetings of the Forum during a period of one year.
9. The Appointment Committee may terminate an appointment within the provisions set out in the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002.
10. The decision to replace a member of the Forum after a resignation or termination will be at the discretion of the Appointment Committee, except where the minimum number of members has been reached.
11. The meetings of the Forum shall be open to the public, subject to powers of exclusion to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour.

12. Individual members of the public will have an opportunity to ask **one question** to Members of the Forum in a 10 minute 'question time' at the beginning of each meeting. The 10 minute period will not be exceeded.
13. Copies of agendas and reports for the meetings of the Forum shall be open to inspection by the public at least three clear days before the meeting, except that where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, the copies of the agenda and reports shall be open to inspection from the time the meeting is convened.
14. Urgent items may be considered at a meeting of the Forum without prior notice, at the Chairman's discretion, but only by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the minutes of the meeting.
15. The minutes of the meetings of the Forum shall be open to inspection by the public.
16. The Council shall reimburse members of the Forum reasonable expenses incurred in connection with attendance at Forum meetings or other activities relating to discharge of the functions of the Forum, in respect of travelling expenses and expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants.
17. The Council shall support and fund appropriate training or development programmes for Forum members as identified by the Forum.
18. The Forum shall prepare an annual report, which shall be published by the Council.
19. The Council may alter or amend the Terms of Reference if required provided that the Terms shall at all times comply with the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 or any replacement Regulations.