

**LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
11 JUNE 2019
7.00 - 9.00 PM**



Present:

Colin Bird (Chairman)
Richard Mosses (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Michael Brossard
Richard Elsbury
Councillor Alvin Finch
Hugh Fitzwilliams
Geoff Paxton
David Warren
Simon Yates

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mike Abbott
John Deakin

115. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, the first that he was Chairing since the departure in February of the former Chair Peter Radband.

116. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting of the Forum held on 12 February 2019 were approved save for the following amendment:

Horizon Scanning (page 9): the words in **bold** to be added to the following sentence:

Hugh Fitzwilliams advised that there had been a vast rush of **large-scale speculative** development applications in Warfield.

The following updates on action points were noted:

- Graham Pockett to provide the Chair with a contact name at TRL so that arrangements could be made for a summer evening visit to the TRL site.
(Action: Graham Pockett)
- Work would continue to map gates and stiles and a further update on this task would be provided at the next LCAF meeting on 15 October 2019.
(Action: Rose Wicks, Rob Solomon and Volunteer Path Inspectors)
- Rose Wicks provided members with printed copies of the PRoW map and advised she could provide additional copies if more were required.
- It was noted that it would be beneficial to facilitate the setting up of independent groups formed from LCAF members and other rights of way users who could help update the BFC online route guides and maps.

- The meeting between Colin Bird, Graham Pockett, Rose Wicks and Ian Crump – Biodiversity Officer at Thames Water – to discuss the proposal to seek a permissive path between Cabbage Hill and Hazelwood Lane had not yet taken place.
- The action for Rose Wicks to distribute to members a spreadsheet for suggestions to be made for the creation of new routes and recreational links to be carried forward, as was the action to add to the spreadsheet examples of securing links presented by Graham Pockett which had been provided by BFC Planning. Richard Mosses had made a suggestion for a new route which he will circulate to members via e-mail).

(Action: Rose Wicks and Richard Mosses)

- Rose Wicks to work with key P&C team members to carry out greater publicity about when new SANGS open to the public. To use social media and news item on the BFC website as a means of achieving this. Rose had also brought to this meeting SANGS leaflet packs for distribution to members.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

- David Warren to liaise with Rob Solomon about the schedule of works regarding TRF assisting with clearing overgrown byways and resurfacing works.

(Action: Dave Warren and Rob Solomon)

- David Warren to follow up with Jenny Yung who had offered to put David in touch with the British Horse Society.

(Action: David Warren)

- Graham Pockett was continuing to research the reason why the Horseshoe Lake bridleway was not showing on the Definitive Map and Statement.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

117. **ROWIP2 Actions**

Rose Wicks presented a summary of the progress made against the RoWIP policies which included:

- Work being completed by council staff and volunteers to continuously capture data about the condition of the network and to prioritise works.
- The Definitive Map and Statement was being maintained, TRO notifications and restrictions were being implemented and reported defects were being addressed.
- Work was underway to engage with local landowners and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, amongst other communications.
- Where required, input was made to the planning process to shape the protection and enhancement of the network.
- Sustainable benefits were delivered wherever possible through schemes such as school access routes and joint events with Public Health for instance.

Devil's Highway

Members discussed the proposal to restrict motor vehicles from using the section of Devil's Highway leading to Crowthorne Woods to prevent damage to the surface of this RoW, which was not classified or constructed for motorised use. It was a private road but there was no record held of who owned it. The intention was to narrow the

road with no parking spaces allocated from the roundabout to the electricity sub-station. The restricted byway from the new barrier past the sub-station to be resurfaced and reduced to 3m width. The new barrier would require a key holder process to be implemented to accommodate horse drawn carriages, but BFC anticipated that there wouldn't be a great demand for using this. New signage would be installed to indicate emergency vehicle access only was permitted. The timescale for the project was 2 to 3 months to be enacted. Parking enforcement would be a challenge, as being a private road, it would not be a Highways or Police matter.

Avery Lane TRO

Complete apart from removable bollards, which should have been installed last week. Avery Lane was subject to a TRO and the intention was to have an online map of TRO's which would be an additional resource to assist with project works and when published online could be used by rights of way users to plan their journeys for work, school and recreation There's scope to tie this in with the work being done by the Trail Riders Fellowship to map all TROs nationally. This would be looked at by BFC once the furniture mapping work had been complete.

Rail Crossing and Sandhurst FP9a diversion

There was to be a diversion of the only rail crossing in the borough, which was in Sandhurst, and which was going to impact on the route of the nearby footpath (FP). In the interests of public safety of those using, or likely to use, the FP, BFC is making an order to divert the FP on to land belonging to the National Trust at Ambarrow Hill, over a bridge belonging to Network Rail, and onto land belonging to Wellington College.

BFC are working with Network Rail on bridge improvement proposals to deal with surfacing, signage, cycle barriers and fencing. Awaiting S119 application and fee but progressing related work in the meantime. The length of the footpath (9A) would be extinguished where the current level crossing was and members were shown where the new path would be diverted to, which was via Ambarrow Hill.

Members were advised that the improvement proposals were seen as a vast improvement in safety and that Network Rail would fund all works, including signage. It was hoped that works would be completed by the end of July 2019 dependent upon the application process and whether any objections would be forthcoming.

Routes and Links

Members were advised that a new accessible, circular walking route – starting and finishing at Jocks Park – had been suggested by a BFC staff member and it was intended that this new route would be published online.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

The Chair noted that Rose was undertaking many of the actions of the LCAF and suggested volunteers from the Forum came forward to suggest/plot new routes. The Chair proposed that members met outside of this meeting to devise new accessible circular routes, for example wheelchair-friendly routes and that he would ask Jenny Yung if she would like to be involved too.

(Action: Chair & All)

Rose said the aim was also to update current routes that were:

1. Accessible – short circular routes, with no obstacles and accessible surfaces, which can be used by wheelchair users

2. Moderate – longer circular routes where there may be small obstacles (such as kissing gates to overcome) and which may include some unsurfaced sections which would suit those with more mobility
3. Long distance routes – such as the Ramblers Route, Blackwater Valley Path, Three Castles Path, and which are more challenging for those using them.

David Warren said he would be happy to become involved in this project and suggested the use of an App called Viewranger whereby individuals could map a route which could be published for others to use. It was suggested by Stephen Chown that LCAF could hold an account on the App which would help raise the profile of the forum. Simon Yates said that he would also be happy to be involved with particular regard to cycling routes.

(Action: David Warren & Simon Yates)

Information & Marketing

Members were presented with details of Nordic Walking which was taking place every Friday morning at The Look Out and shown the link to the Bracknell Forest Society's 'Week of Walks' due to take place between 29 July and 4 August 2019. This would be shared to BFCs social media pages.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Working in Partnership

Members were advised of the upcoming neighbouring LCAF meetings:

Mid and West Berks, 22 May – Shaw House, Newbury
HCAF, 18 June – Royal Victoria Country Park, Southampton
Slough, TBC
RBWM, 8 July – Maidenhead Town Hall

Rose Wicks said she could advise members of the contact details for each of the above meetings if required and would endeavour to establish and circulate the date of the Slough meeting.

(Action: Rose Wicks)

Graham Pockett said he had been trying to establish the date of the next regional meeting. Rose suggested the Chair write to the relevant Chairs to set a meeting up and Stephen Chown suggested to the Chair that Bracknell LCAF offer to host the next regional meeting in order to keep the momentum going.

(Action: Graham and Chair)

118. 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 had indicated their support in principle for the proposed path. The Chair advised members that not as much progress had been made as had been hoped. Forest Road was busy and 40mph and remained an issue – Graham Pockett said he had already spoken to Highways and was meeting with them to discuss ways in which the traffic could be slowed down, other than by use of a warning road sign or change in surface. Graham said that he would feedback to members following the meeting and the Chair suggested a meeting was then arranged with Ian Crump to progress the works. The Chair advised that Ian Crump had enquired as to whether the Council would be happy to take ownership of the land

to which members agreed it would be beneficial for the Council to do so and that the land would be easy to maintain.

119. **Horseshoe Lake**

Stephen Chown updated members that surveys were still being undertaken on the site and the project was still in the early stages. Once details of the consulting process had been obtained the Forum would be asked to provide details of groups that could be invited to take part in the consultation process.

Stephen Chown summarised the benefits of the Country Park project, in particular its spectacular location, availability of facilities and access for those residents and visitors with mobility issues. A café would be situated on the site, and whilst not large, it would also provide meeting space, albeit may be a cordoned off area, including for future LCAF meetings. The site would have a number of linear routes as well as circular routes and would remain a SANG.

Members were shown a slide indicating where the new building – with an aspirational green roof – was planned to be situated. Free car parking for 17-18 spaces was planned to the North of the site though this was located a little bit away from the intended facilities.

Discussion took place as to how the charges for Horseshoe Lake Country Park would be applied. It was intended that usage mirrored that of The Look Out whereby regular visitors would be entitled to a season ticket. Colin voiced that it would be good if residents could benefit from a discount. Stephen Chown said the season ticket could have a BFC resident rate and the Edge loyalty card was also being considered for ways to help local residents have additional benefits. All decisions would form part of the future site management process and council charge setting procedures.

(Action: Stephen Chown)

Members were shown a slide showing the whole site, including play area, rest and educational facilities and the café. The latter including audio and visual equipment to potentially show the works of LCAF.

Stephen Chown advised members that Freetime Leisure ran the water sports provision and were keen to continue doing so and would be expected to meet their own costs having previously been subsidised by BFC. The water sports changing facilities would be located in a cabana-style structure close to the lake/sports area.

In the car parking areas an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system was being looked at with the facility to take card payment as well as cash.

The project was targeting a biodiversity net gain, to go beyond mitigating impact to delivering a measurable enhancement of wildlife value. Impact of additional site usage on the road network was being carefully considered.

120. **Site Visits**

The Chair reiterated the intention to visit the former TRL site, which is now called Bucklers Forest SANG, on a summer evening. Another site that members have expressed an interest in visiting is the new SANG at Frost Folly Park where Hugh Fitzwilliams suggested it would be a good opportunity to extend the walk to Windmill Farm. With regard to Horseshoe Lake, it was proposed to meet there at the pre-planning application stage. It was agreed that the Chair and Hugh Fitzwilliams would

liaise to propose at least 2 dates over the summer for site visits for members to consider.

(Action: Chair & Hugh Fitzwilliams)

121. Annual Report

Rose Wicks advised that the LCAF report for 2018 was a bit delayed and apologised for this but that it would soon be circulated for members' approval, along with a request for feedback if there was any way in which improvements to the reports could be made.

(Action: Rose Wicks and all)

122. Horizon Scanning

Members were advised that some organisations were requesting an extension to the 2026 deadline of recording historic ways from between 5 and 24 years, although most in the south-east did not require an extension.

Graham Pockett advised members that local volunteers had offered to research any historic ways and Councillor Alvin Finch proposed research be undertaken into one that existed at the old Garth School site.

The Chair asked members to submit suggestions if they have evidence of paths that could be reinstated.

(Action: All)

123. Any Other Business

David Warren advised members there had been a 40% increase in the sale of e-bikes. This allowed cyclists to go further and faster and that e-bikes looked like normal bikes and were permitted on established bike trails.

Rob Solomon would be attending the next LCAF meeting to update members on the potential impact of e-bikes.

(Action: Rob Solomon)

Hugh Fitzwilliams asked why there was no access to the additional SANG at Wellers Lane from Church Lane resulting in the public creating an unofficial path. Graham Pockett said he would investigate this and feedback to members.

(Action: Graham Pockett)

124. Public Question Time

No members of the public attended the meeting.

125. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meetings were confirmed as:

15 October 2019

4 February 2020

CHAIRMAN