

BRACKNELL FOREST LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
22 FEBRUARY 2005
(7.00 pm – 8.50 pm)

Present: Diana Pidgeon (Chairman)
Celia Blay
Mike Gates
Caroline Tomalin
Michael Dyer
Simon Weeks
Robert Bonney
Derick Stickler

In attendance: James Dymond, Projects Officer
Helen Tranter, Head of Cultural & Visual Environment
Heather White, Planning and Projects Manager

Apologies for absence were received from:
Stuart Tarrant
Mark Osman
David Bertie
Cllr Anne Haydon

41. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all members of the Forum to the meeting.

42. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 4 October 2004 were approved as a correct record.

43. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) (Item 4)

James Dymond, Projects Officer presented initial statistics from the ROWIP consultation and network evaluation to the Forum. The Forum was asked to provide feedback on the information compiled so far and to offer suggestions for additional information and possible improvements to the plan.

The Forum noted that:

- The unavailable (BOATs) Byways Open To All Traffic and RUPPs (Roads Used As Public Paths) seemed very high at 50%, compared with a national average of 13%.
- The number of public footpaths in Bracknell Forest would reduce as they were adopted by the Highways Agency and made into footpath-cycleways.
- The ROWIP audit on every Right of Way involved the completion of an audit form and photographs. This had yet to be collated, but the Forum requested consideration of publication of the results on the internet.
- A programme of surface improvements was being carried out on the

slippery surfaces of the sleeper bridges to make them safer for horses.

- The results of the questionnaire used in the ROWIP consultation were encouraging. Many of the respondents were using the Rights of Way regularly and were happy with their condition.

The Forum thanked James and Heather for their work on the ROWIP.

44. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) (Item 4, point 2)

The Forum discussed TROs and some of the problems experienced where these were in effect, but the routes were still being used illegally by motorbike users. The Forum was advised that there was the possibility of more help with such problems from the Police, as it was now a requirement that every Police force had a single point of contact for rural affairs. It was agreed that the Forum would write to Thames Valley Police to establish who had been given this role and invite them to future Forum meetings.

(Action: James Dymond)

45. Larks Hill Area Equine Access (Item 4, point 3)

Caroline Tomalin advised the Forum that the nearby playing fields would need to be accessed by children, who would have to cross the A3095 and/or Harvest Ride. The Forum discussed the current plans to make crossing with horses safer by providing a verge to wait in, however, with children crossing, the question was asked as to whether the Highways Agency would reduce the present speed limit of 40mph to 30mph, or lower, which would be safer for anyone crossing. It was agreed that the Highways Agency be approached with this suggestion, and also to request that a representative attend to speak to a future meeting of the Forum.

(Action: Heather White)

46. Watersplash Lane Ford Update (Item 8)

The Forum was advised that reinstatement of the ford was being held up by the Environment Agency survey due to be carried out in April (necessary because the work required would involve altering the bed of the river). Work on the ford would go ahead as planned upon the completion of this survey.

47. LCAF Annual Report (Item 5)

The draft version had been included with the agenda and Forum members were invited to comment on it prior to the final draft being published and available to the public. Members were also advised that a list of Forum members and brief background information may be attached to the final report. The draft Annual Report was agreed.

It was also agreed that, in terms of the Forum's membership, Friends of the Earth should be contacted to provide a replacement Member for Mick Hutson under the 'other interest' category of membership.

(Action: James Dymond).

48. **DEFRA Report on Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (Item 6)**

The Forum was advised that there was currently a draft Bill under consultation particularly around the definitions used for mechanically propelled vehicles. However, it was made clear that there was no final draft due until the end of the year, so it could be considered in more detail later in 2005.

49. **Online Walk Routes & Rights of Way Maps (Item 7)**

The Forum was advised that a number of walks and updated Rights of Way maps had been published on the Bracknell Forest Borough Council Website.

50. **Syngenta Bridleway, Warfield – Update (Item 9)**

The Forum was advised that planning permission had been granted and work on the bridleway could be underway already. Syngenta had yet to apply for the stopping-up of the bridleway running through their site, which would be required for the new bridleway to run as planned. Discussion followed around the possibility of occasional use of the bridleway by carriage users and it was agreed that this could be requested by contracting Syngenta directly.

Bob Ellis and Mark Osman at Syngenta were suggested as the relevant contacts for this.

51. **Items for Next Meeting Agenda**

- ROWIP issues (to include consideration of plans produced by other authorities)
- The cost and problems of maintenance.
- Highways Improvement speaker

52. **Any Other Business (Item 11)**

The Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership had carried out a survey of over 600 people on 4 weekends and it was agreed that the data collected from this survey could be helpful to the Bracknell Forest Countryside and Rights of Way team.

53. The Forum was advised that the Church Farm path, which had been held up by a planning condition, was now making progress and subject to the repurchase of the land by Grundig, they would be putting a path in.

54. Advance notice was given to the Forum of an application to close Crowthorne Byway 13 (Nine Mile Ride – Ceasar's Camp) as this, at present, was an accident blackspot.

55. **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 6th September 2005 in the Council Chamber.

CHAIRMAN