

RIGHTS OF WAY & HIGHWAY LICENSING PANEL

MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Maureen Hunt (Chairman), Lynda Yong (Vice-Chairman), Clive Bullock, Judith Diment, Gary Muir, Samantha Rayner and Simon Werner

Officers: Anthony Hurst and Nabihah Hassan-Farooq

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr D Wilson and Cllr C Bullock.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

That the Part I minutes of the Panel held on the 17th July 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY: MILESTONES STATEMENT 2018/19

Anthony Hurst, Parks and Countryside Team Leader outlined the report on Public Rights of Way; Milestones statement 2018/19.

The Chair wished to place a vote of thanks on record for the support and work of volunteers from BCA(Berkshire College of Agriculture) and the East Berkshire Ramblers(EBR). The Chair shared two emails which had been received by Lisa Davis(BCA) and Steve Gillions (EBR). The emails expressed thanks for all the support received for the students of BCA and the work of the Path Wardens referenced in the progress report. Councillor Samantha Rayner updated the Panel that a new footbridge to be constructed across The Cut at Braywick Park in Oldfield was to be named in honour of Margaret Bowdery. The Panel welcomed the naming of the bridge in honour of the hard work carried out by Margaret whilst she was a leading member of the East Berks Ramblers.

The Panel discussed volunteering hours that had been undertaken and it was noted that there had been 180 hours of volunteering service, with a contribution saving of over £3000. Members wished to thank the volunteers for their contributions.

Action- That the Mayor write a letter of thanks to all volunteer groups within the Borough.

Anthony Hurst outlined specified targets taken from the consultation with the Local Access Forum (LAF) and Local Parish Councils. Recommendations included an increased target from 5 bridge repairs to 7 repairs. Within the presentation there were several photographs of bridges, bridleways and footpaths which evidenced the work and repairs that had been carried out. Members welcomed the photographs and that these were a great addition to the milestones statement. The Panel were informed that objective AC2, 'physical access improvements', had been decreased from 15 to 10 which would include the replacement of stiles with gates or gaps which would facilitate use by those with special needs, the elderly, people with pushchairs, etc.

There had also been two priority amendments from the Local Access Forum (LAF), which had included Planning Position Statements and exploration of opportunities to extend, create and promote multi-user routes.

The Chair stated that under Map Reference HA22 in the Planning Position Statements information had contradicted itself by stating it was “open access land.. and that it was not being accessed or used”, and that she was aware that this particular piece of land was in use by residents, particularly for dog walking. Anthony Hurst stated the land may be used informally but that there was no formal access on the site and that this should be taken into account at the time of consultation on any proposed development, as the site had been designated as open access land by Natural England in the Countryside and Rights of Way(CROW) Act 2000.

Councillor Werner raised a query relating to the Thames towpath in Cookham, and a proposed new link through the Odney Club and whether the proposal had been removed from the Milestone Statement. Anthony Hurst informed the Panel that the proposed improvement was still listed in the Milestones Statement but that the Odney Club owners did not want to have any changes to the pathway. Members were reminded that there were cold case files held for any outstanding issues and proposals (with no resolution) and that previously there had been 600-700 files but had been reduced significantly. The cold files now showed what work had been progressed and officers were able to update the files to show what had been done. Anthony Hurst informed the Panel that all cold files were under a continuous review and any cases that had been subject to a change of land ownership, for example, would provide opportunities to contact the new land owners. The cold files were subject to an annual review in line with the listed Milestone Statement.

Councillor Yong wanted to place a vote of thanks to Anthony and his team for exceeding their targets of bridges. Anthony Hurst informed the Panel that if targets are exceeded and repairs are needed that work was still carried out. There had been various surface improvements carried out for example on Hog Oak Lane in Bray, where 4x4 cars had caused significant damage and that a traffic regulation order had been put in place along with the installation of bollards and restoring the path. Members also welcomed the log bollards put in place to prevent unauthorised vehicular use at another site in Hurley as they looked aesthetically better than steel bollards and commended the team for their hard work.

Members discussed the ways in which the public can contact the team to highlight issues and ways in which their queries were dealt with. Anthony Hurst informed the Panel that the public made regular contact through the customer service centre and through the dedicated email inbox; prow@rbwm.gov.uk

ACTION- That Anthony Hurst forwards photographs of works carried out to circulate to Members in the Members Message and Borough Bulletin. Also that the photographs be circulated to all Parish Councillors.

Resolved UNANIMOUSLY That: The Milestones Statement and the targets be approved in its entirety.

Members discussed ways in which Parish Councils could be consulted with and the importance of their involvement. Anthony Hurst confirmed that Parish Councils had been consulted and that throughout consultation they had been involved. Councillor S Rayner asked upon the progress of the Eton and Eton Wick pamphlet and poster and it was confirmed that work was being carried out with Eton Town Council to complete this piece of work.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY: 6 MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

Anthony Hurst gave a verbal update on the Public Rights of Way six monthly progress report. The Panel were reminded of Diversion Orders that had been approved by the Panel in June 2017 and that the changes to the footpaths had now been implemented. Previous barriers

which had proved difficult for those with pushchairs and wheelchair access had been removed and had been replaced with easy access barriers at Lightlands Lane and Westmead (entrance to cycle way). Members discussed who paid for the barriers and it was confirmed that all costs had been met by landowners and the access improvements had been achieved as it was beneficial to both the land owner and path users.

Members discussed ways in which motorcycles had previously accessed pathways and commended the new barriers which did not allow motorcycles access. Members also queried whether there were any of the old style barriers still in place and it was confirmed that all of the old barriers had been replaced with the new accessible barriers.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.20 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....