

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: 5 JULY 2011

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MONITORING REPORT

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the forum about the status of projects on the LAF regular monitoring list.

2. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

(a) Millennium Walk

One of the priorities set out in the “Milestones Statement 2011/12, is to “Seek to complete the missing links in the Millennium Walk.” The following updates are provided for the forum’s information:

Missing link between Lower Cookham Road and Thames Path National Trail

Discussions are currently taking place with the landowners and the Environment Agency on a proposal to create a new public footpath from Lower Cookham Road to the Thames Path. As well as filling a “missing link” in the Millennium Walk (which runs across the north of the borough from the Thames at Hurley to the Thames north of Maidenhead), this footpath will provide a useful new link to the Thames Path and a link in various circular routes based around the Thames Path and the Green Way.

A funding contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of creating the new footpath has been secured through a S.106 Planning Agreement relating to re-development of the former ‘Stiefel Laboratories’ site off Lower Cookham Road. However, it should be noted that this funding will not become available until commencement of the development, and implementation of the footpath project is therefore dependent upon the timing of the development.

Missing link between Hurley Footpath 18 and Bisham Footpath 20 (Speen Hill)

A map of this link is included in Annexe A to this report. A permitted path agreement has been completed between the Berkshire College of Agriculture and East Berks Ramblers for a new permitted footpath across land owned by the College, emerging onto Henley Road opposite an existing footpath across Temple Golf Course (FP 20).

Due to poor sightlines at the golf course entrance, a short section of roadside footpath and a retaining wall are to be constructed to enable walkers to cross at a safer point along the road. Appropriate signage will also be installed as part of this project.

Design work for the roadside footpath is currently in progress, and it is anticipated that completion will be in late summer or early autumn.

This project is part-funded by contributions from the East Berks Ramblers and Maidenhead Civic Society.

(b) Windsor Great Park Easy Going Route

One of the targets set out in the 'Milestones Statement 2011/12', is "To produce 1 leaflet publicising access opportunities for people with special needs". The following update is provided for the forum's information.

Progress towards the development of the Windsor Great Park Easy Going Route is ongoing and the description of the route is being developed in conjunction with the Council's Access Officer.

The map for the route has been kindly provided by the Crown Estate who have also agreed to provide descriptive text with information about landmarks and points of interest along the route. The Council is working with them to make physical improvements to the route to make it more accessible.

(c) Volunteer works

The Council has begun to work with the Windsor and Maidenhead Conservation Volunteers (WMCV) and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) in the summer of this year.

WMCV were able to provide 2 days of volunteer work and have been focusing on ditch clearance works at Uncle's Lane, Waltham St. Lawrence. They will be on site again in August.

BTCV have offered up to 3 days of volunteer works and have undertaken ditch clearance work at Buckhurst Lane in Sunninghill, and will be undertaking ditch clearance work along Cruch Lane in Bray in August and vegetation clearance on the bridleway around Legoland in Windsor in September. In addition to this the Public Rights of Way team have been working with the BTCV to put together a bid for funding for works along the Thames Path, particularly in Cookham, Datchet and Old Windsor.

(d) LAF website & online forum

Following on from the report developed by Julie Mason regarding improving the LAF website, work has begun to implement the suggested changes, incorporating further suggestions received from Hilary Essen.

Due to other pressures this has not yet been completed but has been scheduled for completion by the end of September.

A LAF members' online discussion forum has been set-up to encourage and enable members to raise ideas and discuss topics of interest outside of the formal meetings.

This uses a free forum service to operate and can be accessed using the main LAF web pages at http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/prow_local_access_forum.htm. Each member who is available on email has been given a password and user name to access the site, but if there are any questions please contact Andrew Fletcher for assistance.

Currently the forum has had little use, but it is hoped that this will grow to become a useful mechanism to encourage greater collaboration between members.

For future developments it is understood that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is considering creating a similar forum on a national level to encourage collaboration between all Local Access Forum members.

At the South East LAF Symposium held on 7th April 2011 Julie Mason did take advantage of an opportunity to discuss ideas about this with Dave Waterman of the Recreation and Access team at DEFRA.
