

12LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: 6 DECEMBER 2012

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 2012/13, is to “*Seek to complete the missing links in the Millennium Walk.*”

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

As members will be aware, this new section of the Millennium Walk was opened on 12th May 2012, and a leaflet promoting the Walk has been published by Maidenhead Civic Society and the East Berkshire Ramblers. A project to sign and way mark the Walk is also being explored.

Missing link between Lower Cookham Road and Thames Path National Trail

Discussions are continuing with the landowners on a proposal to create a new public footpath from Lower Cookham Road to the Thames Path. As well as filling a further “missing link” in the Millennium Walk, 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 proposed 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 there is no indication that the development is imminent.

An alternative source of funding (through Natural England’s “Paths for Communities” grant scheme) is therefore also being explored by Maidenhead Civic Society and the Council.

As in previous years, a route across this land was made available by the landowners for the annual Maidenhead Boundary Walk, which took place on 7th October 2012.

(b) Volunteer works

The Council continues to engage and work with The Conservation Volunteers (formerly BTCV) and the Windsor and Maidenhead Conservation Volunteers (WMCV).

Most recently the TCV have spent 4 days building steps along Bisham Footpath 3, which is a particularly steep path. A fifth day is planned for the new year. 2 days were paid for by grant funding, and the additional 3 days were funded by the

Council, including materials for the works. The works were very well received and members of the public complimented the volunteers for their work as they passed.

WMCV continued their revetment repair works along Bisham Footpath 4 which runs along the banks for a steep hill. The works involved placing planks and stakes into the ground on one side of the path, and digging and backfilling along the path to restore a level surface and widen the path. The materials were sourced by the Council and delivered on site for the day. In total the group repaired approximately 60 metres of path, adding to the 45 metres of repair works that were conducted during the previous year. Further works along this route are planned for the future.

In addition to this, the Council has continued to work closely with the East Berks Ramblers with respect to path surveys and occasionally maintenance and signage works.

A report detailing the works undertaken is attached as Appendix A.

(c) Multi-use paths

Following the meeting of the Multi-use path working party in March work has continued to create a multi-use route along the cycle tracks and the Jubilee River paths at Eton on a 1 year trial basis. A map of the current proposal is attached as Appendix B.

Discussions are currently ongoing with Eton College regarding the trial route. A meeting has been arranged on the 18th December to discuss the new proposal with Eton College and the project is on hold pending the outcome of this meeting.

(d) LAF website & online forum

The LAF website was reviewed and updated prior to the last Forum meeting, and the forum asked for a report about the number of visitors received (measured in 'hits') to the website and the amount of feedback received. Unfortunately we do not have complete information, but the figures since April are detailed below:

Web page	March 2012	Sept 2012	October 2012
LAF Members	4		
Walking, Cycling & Horse Riding	8	1	
Fast Response Team	1		
About Us	1		
Getting Involved	1		
Maps, Signs and Publications	1	1	
People and Projects	1		
Strategy and Planning	1		
Useful Links	1		
Meetings and Reports		2	1

The feedback for the site is handled by a special “Gov-Metric” section included in all RBWM web-pages. These are represented by a series of faces at the bottom of each page, however there has been no feedback received to date about the LAF pages.

The LAF online forum is found at <http://groupspaces.com/rbwm-laf/>. This forum is designed to facilitate communication and discussion between the forum members in between the formal meetings and forum members are encouraged to contribute and be engaged with the site. Currently the forum is heavily dependent on officer support to operate but it is hoped that the LAF online forum will help the forum to become more active and independent.

(e) Easy going routes

The Cookham Easy Going Route web pages have now been developed following the advice of the forum on the 7th June 2012 to create simple web pages rather than enhanced content.

The Windsor Great park leaflet is still in development and has needed to be revised following advice from the Access Advisory Forum in order to shrink the content down to fit onto an A3 folded page size, similar to the other leaflets that the Council have produced.

This is nearing completion and, subject to approval from the Crown Estate, it is expected that the leaflet will be ready for publication in January.

The web pages will be developed following the template established during the creation of the Cookham Easy Going Route web pages. It is intended that the content for both Easy Going Route web pages will be increased and updated regularly, including much more information about the route and also including user reviews and comments where available.
