



ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 2015

Introduction from the Chair

[tbc]

Peter Thorn

Chairman of the Local Access Forum.

Activities of the forum

Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2026

As one of the key strategic documents shaping the Council's approach to public rights of way the forum has been and remain closely involved with the Council's review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and have been instrumental in producing the current draft Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2026.

As well as providing formal advice at the December 2014 meeting, members of the forum have held meetings with the Public Rights of Way team in January and March 2015 to help prepare the consultation draft of the document..

Milestones Statement, and targets for the coming year

The forum was consulted on the Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Report 2015-2016 and recommended that the targets and priorities are retained for the coming year. These recommendations were reported to the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel in March 2015 and were adopted for the coming year.

Improvements to 'higher rights' networks

The forum recognises that one of the main gaps in the existing provision of open space for users of 'higher rights', in particular horse riding and cycling. As a result the forum has been investigating ways that these gaps can be filled, providing a better network for all. This work formed the cornerstone of the forum's work programme for the 2014/2015 year.

Multi-user routes and Horse Riding improvements

The forum has continued to monitor the trial of its multi-use route initiative for the Jubilee River, which was a success, and have been involved with the British Horse Society to look at how the benefits of this permission can be recognised. It is currently looking to build upon

this success by working with neighbouring Local Access Forums to extend the route into Slough, Dorney and Taplow as Phase 2 of the multi-use route. In addition to this the Forum has held a separate meeting to discuss horse riding improvements in February 2015.

Improvements to cycling

In addition to making the best use of existing cycle tracks by converting them into multi-use routes where possible, the forum has discussed how the existing provision for cycling can be improved, in particular the forum have responded to the 'Skindles' planning application and suggested that cycling provision is included over the proposed Thames bridge and through the development. It has also responded to the Draft Cycling Delivery plan consultation from the Department Environment, Food and Rural Affairs suggesting that the government consider options to make it easier to create dual and multi-use paths.

Links with other local, regional and national groups

The forum has been very active over the past year in improving its links with neighbouring Local Access Forums and has hosted 3 meetings of neighbouring Local Access Forum chairs to discuss cross boundary issues and ways that the local forums can work together. In addition to this the LAF has continued to be involved on a national and regional level, and was represented at the South-East Local Access Forum conference in May 2015.

The forum has also looked to create stronger links with parish councils and has put in place an information sharing arrangement with the Berkshire Association of Local Councils to share information about consultations that may interest both groups.

Development opportunities

The forum has discussed the edge of settlement analysis work that has been conducted by the Council, including areas of land currently in the Green Belt which are being considered for future development opportunities. The forum provided feedback about these suggested areas, including where opportunities for improvement may exist should areas be developed.

Dog issues

The forum has continued to be involved advising the Council regarding dog issues. 1 October 2014 members of the forum visited Rooks Nest Wood in Wokingham to see how they manage dogs in this area, which led to a number of suggestions that we given to the Council regarding better dog management.

Fast Response Team:

The Fast Response Team, set up by the forum to respond to consultations that fall outside of the forum's formal meeting dates, responded to the following requests for advice on behalf of the forum:

- Thames Path Missing Link at Bridge Gardens, Maidenhead
- Eton Footpath 51 gating proposal
- Bray Restricted Byway 60 partial extinguishment order proposal
- DEFRA consultation on the Cycling Delivery Plan
- New planning application for the development at 'Skindles' and Taplow Bridge

Other issues that the forum has discussed during 2013-2014:

- Volunteer works
- Monitoring the progress of the Deregulation Bill (now the Deregulation Act 2015) through parliament
- DEFRA consultation on Reforming Access and Engagement guidance

Looking forward

To be decided at June 2015 meeting

Meetings of the Forum

The Local Access Forum meetings for 2014-2015 were as follows:

Formal meetings

- 30th June 2014 – Desborough Suite 4, Town Hall, Maidenhead
- 2nd December 2014 – Desborough Suite 4, Town Hall, Maidenhead

Informal meetings

- 24th September 2014 – Local LAF Chairs meeting
- 26th January 2015 – Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan meeting
- 5th February 2015 – Local LAF Chairs meeting
- 24th February 2015 – Improvements to horse riding meeting
- 13th March 2015 – Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan meeting
- 11th May 2015 – Multi-use routes meeting
- 2nd June 2015 – Local LAF Chairs meeting

Site meetings

- 21st October 2014 – Rooks Nest Wood site visit

Membership of the Forum

The forum is expected to achieve a reasonable balance of members' interests. The current membership of the Local Access Forum is listed below.

Name	Representing	Other interests
Cllr. Malcolm Beer	RBWM Councillor	Walking; Cycling; Caravanning; Member of Arthur Jacob Nature Reserve Management Committee; Rights of Way; Old Windsor Parish Councillor
Sara Church	Horse riding	
James Copas	Land and estate management	
Margaret Cubley	Walking and open spaces	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Bisham Parish Councillor
Roy Fabry	Cycling and disabled access issues	SUSTRANS
Rachel Forsyth	Land and Estate Management	National Trust
John Foulger	Walking	Open Spaces; Rights of Way; Bray Parish Councillor
Christine Gadd	Rights of Way; Walking; Cycling	Sunningdale Parish Councillor
Harry Hancock	Walking and open spaces	Mid Thames Ramblers
Gordon Harris	Footpaths and open spaces	Cookham Parish Councillor
Helen Howard	Horse riding	Bray Parish Councillor; The British Horse Society and British Dressage
Phil Jackson	Walking, Cycling & Open Spaces	Wraysbury Parish Councillor
Tom Jarvis	Land and estate management	Crown Estate
Cllr. Asghar Majeed	RBWM Councillor	
Gordon Marrs	Walking	East Berks Ramblers
Julie Mason	Walking	Strategy, Planning & Marketing
Andrew Randall	Land and estate management	Chairman of Royal Berks. Agricultural Association
Joanne Stickland	Walking & Cycling	Datchet Parish Councillor
Cllr. John Stretton	RBWM Councillor	Cookham Parish Councillor
Peter Thorn	Land and estate management	Estate Management; Management of the Countryside; Management of Education and Training
Chris Westacott	Land and estate management	Public Rights of Way, Hurley Parish Council

Finances

			Total Cost (£)
Meeting expenses			
	Meeting refreshments	47.93	
	SE LAF Conference contribution	60	
			107.93
Members' Expenses:			
	Dependent Care	-	-
	Travel / Mileage		91.70
	Other Expenses	-	-
			91.70
Grand Total			£199.63

Note: The costs above do not include overheads such as Officer time or printing costs

How to get involved

For more information about the Local Access Forum and how you can get involved, visit the Local Access Forum web pages at http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/local_access_forum.htm, or contact Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way Officer on (01628) 796122 or email andrew.fletcher@rbwm.gov.uk or prow@rbwm.gov.uk