

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

11 November 2015

ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Interest area
Alan Keene (LAF)	Bisham Parish Council, Public Rights of Way, Land management
Katie Sarsfield	Waltham St Lawrence Parish Council
Sara Church	Horse riding, British Horse Society
Margaret Cubley	Bisham Parish Council, Campaign to protect Rural England
Christine Gadd	Sunningdale Parish Council, cycling and walking
Gordon Marrs	Walking, East Berks Ramblers
Peter Thorn	Chairman, land management
Roy Fabry	SUSTRANS, cycling & disabled access
Geoff Priest	Hurley Parish Council
Councillor Maureen Hunt	RBWM Councillor
Councillor Malcolm Beer	RBWM Councillor / walking, cycling, Old Windsor Parish Council
Steve Gillions	Rambler
Tanya Leftwich	Clerk to the Forum
Andrew Fletcher	Local Access Forum Secretary

Apologies

Andrew Nye
James Copas
Rachel Forsyth
John Foulger
Tom Jarvis

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
11 November 2015
MINUTES**

1 Welcome, apologies and introductions

The Chairman Peter Thorn welcomed everyone to the thirty-third meeting of the Local Access Forum.

The Chairman explained that very sadly in August 2015 Gordon Harris had passed away. It was noted that Gordon had been on the Forum since 2006 and that this meeting would be held in memory of him.

Apologies for Absence were received from James Copas, John Foulger, Tom Jarvis, Andrew Nye and Rachel Forsyth.

The Forum approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015.

Matters arising from last meeting

Andrew Fletcher referred members to pages 13-28 of the agenda.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** Item 1(c) That **Andrew Fletcher** would look into whether there were any options to put in a crossing at the Bisham roundabout as the 3 options had been dropped.

Councillor Beer arrived.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** Item 1(c) That **Andrew Fletcher** would ask Sharon to update the horse margin as concerns had been raised about the barrier as a number of accidents had taken place and it was felt that someone might die soon.

2 Members' update

None received.

3 Membership update

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chair

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that one nomination had been received for the Chairman's position, that of Peter Thorn. It was noted that Peter Thorn had been invaluable on this Forum and it was hoped that he would continue in his role. Councillor Hunt proposed Peter Thorn as Chairman, which was seconded by Christine Gadd.

Unanimously agreed: That Peter Thorn would remain as Chairman for the next two years and the Vice-Chair position to remain open until the next meeting.

General Forum membership

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that five new members had joined since the last meeting:

- Councillor Maureen Hunt (RBWM Nominated Member)
- Alan Keene (Bisham)
- Andrew Nye (Cookham)
- Geoff Priest (Hurley)
- Katie Sarsfield (Waltham St Lawrence)

It was noted that the following members had been re-appointed:

- Councillor Malcolm Beer
- James Copas
- Sara Church
- Margaret Cubley
- John Foulger
- Christine Gadd
- Tom Jarvis
- Peter Thorn

It was noted that the following members had resigned from the Forum:

- Julie Mason
- Helen Howard
- Phil Jackson
- Andrew Randall
- Christopher Westacott

Andrew Fletcher explained that the Forum membership was made up of a balance of 53% user interests, 29% land management, 6% other interests and 12% RBWM Councillors. It was noted that Slough had a disabled Members on their LAF who was happy to give the Royal Borough advice re: disabled access when needed.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** That **Andrew Fletcher** would write to everyone who had resigned (particularly Chris Westacott who was very ill) to thank them for their time on the Forum.

It was noted that the Royal Borough were able to jointly fund training with other Local Authority LAF's.

- ❖ **Action (ALL):** That anyone interested in being trained to let **Andrew Fletcher** know by the first week in December and to let **Andrew Fletcher** know what were the areas of interest.

LAF Fast Response Team membership

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that the LAF Fast Response Team looked at issues outside the Forum meetings in order to meet deadlines and reported back to subsequent meetings. It was noted that these issues tended to be handled via email as it was less time consuming than meeting face to face. Andrew Fletcher stated that additional LAF members were needed on the LAF Fast Response Team.

- ❖ **Action (ALL):** That ideally two new members to the Fast Response Team were needed - anyone interested to let **Andrew Fletcher** know by the first week in December.

4 **Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2026**

Andrew Fletcher informed Members that the purpose of this report was to consult the Forum on the outcome of the "Draft Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-26" public consultation and to seek the Forum's endorsement of the Final Plan.

The Chairman explained that the Royal Borough had received a commendation from Natural England to say good effort / approach and congratulated officers on their hard work, which was echoed by the Forum.

The Chairman went through the "Draft Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-

26" (pages 33 – 57 of the agenda) page by page and the following comments were noted / agreed:

- It was noted that the annual risk assessment of the Thames Path Nation Trail was felt not to gain any new / useful information and it was proposed by Andrew Fletcher that this be stopped in the future. The Forum suggested that instead of an annual assessment, a risk assessment should be conducted in response to an extreme weather event (such as flooding), and also to ensure that all waymarks along the Thames Path have RBWM telephone numbers on them. EBR also stated that they could arrange for a dedicated Thames Path warden as well.

Unanimously agreed: That the annual risk assessment no longer needed to take place.

Unanimously agreed: That a monthly update of issues and what had been done to resolve them be added to the RBWM website / be circulated to Forum members & Parish Councils.

Unanimously agreed: That the wording on page 37 1.2(b) include 'in consultation with public ROW team on major developments'. Parish councils were also thought to be key to identifying these areas.

Unanimously agreed: That the wording on page 38 1.5(c) include Community Wardens.

Unanimously agreed: (page 39 2.1(a)) to a minimum of 2 cuttings per year.

Unanimously agreed: (page 44 2.23) To add an additional identified needs section in about increasing multi-user routes (for horse riding & cycling).

Councillor Beer left the meeting.

Unanimously agreed: (page 47 3.6) To add in improve communication / responses on issues and problems & to ensure signage has contact telephone numbers on them. This was a target to improve Community responses rather than communication responses.

Unanimously agreed: That Woodland Path be added (B.Hill Recreational Ground to F/Path 13).

- ❖ **Action (AF):** Re: A404 - that **Andrew Fletcher** contact Highways England and also change the wording to emphasise safety re: the Bisham roundabout crossing.

Unanimously agreed: (page 53 ref: 26) To add in the wording 'to establish a continuous riverside route'.

Unanimously agreed: The overall plan (pages 31-47) was agreed subject to the changes noted above.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** That **Andrew Fletcher** send a copy of the final plan to the Forum members once it had been to the Rights of Way & Highway Licensing Panel on the 7 December 2015.

5 Milestones Statement and Annual Targets for 2016-2017

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that this report was to consult the Forum on the priorities, targets and service standards to be included in the Milestones Statement & Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Review 2016/17.

The Chairman explained that the views of the Forum were requested on the following:

- Priorities for 2016/17: Were there any recommended changes to the priorities listed in the current 2015/16 Milestones Statement (Appendix A)?
- Milestones Targets for 2016/17: Were there any recommended changes to the Milestones Targets listed in the current 2013/14 Milestones Statement (Appendix A)?
- Service Standards for 2016/17: Were there any recommended changes to the Service Standards listed in the 2015/16 Milestones Statement (Appendix A)?

Andrew Fletcher gave Members a brief overview presentation which was agreed would be emailed out with the minutes.

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that over the last five years the number of issues had reduced from 314 to 42 which he was very proud of. It was noted that the issues considered 'cold cases' had not been included in his figures as suggested by the Rights of Way & Highway Licensing Panel. The Forum congratulated Andrew Fletcher and his team on such a fantastic achievement.

It was noted that it had been agreed with Viola that they would collect rubbish bins in agreed locations (in this case at the entrance points of Cookham Bridleway 19) but it was not possible to place rubbish bins at every location along public rights of way because the refuse collectors will not walk great distances to empty them.

The Forum were shown before and after photos of:

- Bray Footpath 41 – stile replacement by conservation volunteers.
- Old Windsor Footpath 2 – surfacing works.
- Cookham Bridleway 19 – surfacing works.
- Hurley Footpath 25 – surfacing works.
- Datchet Footpath 8 – bank repair works – a joint scheme between the Royal Borough and the National Trails Office (50/50 funding of £10,700).

Peter Thorn informed the Forum that Andrew Fletcher had been very pro-active in engaging the volunteers for which he was congratulated.

It was noted that the priorities and targets could be found on page 97 of the agenda.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** That **Andrew Fletcher** add cyclists & enhance multi user network to the ninth bullet down on the priorities for 2015/16.

Unanimously agreed:

- That no changes were requested to be made to the priorities listed in the current 2015/16 Milestones Statement.
- That the targets remained as proposed bar LD1 being left blank, WP1 being increased to 3 and the wording be changed to 'targeted user groups', WP1 to include updating current leaflets & EN1 being reduced to 10.
- That the service standards wording was agreed.

- That a vote of thanks be given to the team of 2.8.

6 Proposed diversion of Hurley Footpath 18 at Berkshire College of Agriculture

Andrew Fletcher referred Members to pages 99 – 102 of the report.

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to consult the Forum on the proposal to divert Hurley Footpath 18 at Berkshire College of Agriculture.

Members were informed that Hurley Footpath 18 ran from Hall Place Lane in Burchetts Green to the junction of Hurley Footpath 17 at Prospect Hill in Hurley. It was noted that the route of the path took it through the centre of the Berkshire College of Agriculture campus.

Andrew Fletcher explained that the Berkshire College of Agriculture was considering applying for a diversion of the centre section of this footpath to take the path around the main buildings of the college instead of running through the centre of the complex. It was noted that a map detailing the proposed diversion could be found in Appendix A of the report.

Councillor Hunt expressed her concern that children and young adults used the area / campus and that the new route would allow walkers to walk through the area without being noticed. Andrew Fletcher explained that the Berkshire College of Agriculture had considered alternative route to the south and had discounted it.

- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to give feedback to say that the Forum had no objections to the proposal made by Berkshire College of Agriculture.
- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to request that an information board be added to the bottom of the statue and ensure the bridleway access was OK.

7 Looking forward issues

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that he had nothing prepared for this item as he was seeking views on ways to improve cycling, bridleways and disabled access, etc.

- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to write to the Parish Councils to ask them to help identify and prioritise which bridleways needed linking.
- ❖ **Action (ALL):** That suggestions be sent to **Andrew Fletcher** by the first week in December.

8 South Lincs and Rutland LAF consultation: Making our needs known and future of permissive access

The Forum was referred to pages 103-116 of the agenda.

The Chairman explained that the South Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Access Forum, working with the Mid and West Berks Local Access Forum had sent a proposal and consultation document to all Local Access Forums advocating the re-instatement of a modified “England Access Forum” to work and advise on specific ‘nationally significant’ issues. It was noted that in addition to this proposal, the South Lincolnshire and Rutland LAF were seeking the opinion of the Forum regarding the future of permissive access in stewardship schemes nationally.

The Chairman went on to explain that the proposal prepared by the South Lincs and Rutland LAF was included in the agenda as Appendix A to the report and that accompanying the proposal was a consultation document asking various questions, which was attached as Appendix B to the report.

The Forum were invited to consider and discuss the report and respond to the consultation questions.

- ❖ **Action (GM): Gordon Marrs** to inform Andrew Fletcher of the ones the RBWM had lost.

The Chairman expressed his concerns that there could potentially be issues that the Royal Borough were not consulted on and that he saw this as a group to help raise the Forums profile.

It was suggested that the Forum be more reactive and focus its efforts more on how to solve issues once the Stewardship Scheme had gone rather than trying to influence Government.

Unanimously agreed: That the Forum would prefer to tackle issues at a local level and not support the proposal re: national support.

9 **LAF Monitoring items**

The Forum was referred to pages 117-120 of the agenda.

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to update the Forum about the status of projects on the LAF regular monitoring list and to seek the Forums advice regarding the members' discussion forum.

- Thames Path 'missing link' at Bridge Gardens

Andrew Fletcher showed the Forum before and after photos of Bridge Gardens roadside path which was now in place but explained that the riverside route was still included in the Plan.

- Deregulation Bill update

Andrew Fletcher informed the Forum that the Deregulation Bill had been passed and received Royal Assent on the 26 March 2015. It was noted that regulations and guidance enacting the public rights of way sections of the bill were expected in April/May 2016.

- Volunteer Works

Andrew Fletcher showed some before and after photos of Hurley Footpath 29 and Cookham Footpath 48 and explained that his target was to reach 50 task days with the volunteers which he had already met.

- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to write a letter to the volunteers thanking them for their hard work and also write to the Council (cc. Cllr Dudley) saying how wonderful the volunteers had been and how the Forum would like their work to continue.

- Activities of the LAF Fast Response Team

Andrew Fletcher referred the Forum to page 119 in the agenda that listed the activities.

- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to send the response he had received from Highways England to the Forum members.

- ❖ **Action (ALL):** That suggestions of where to go from now be sent to **Andrew Fletcher** by the first week in December.

10 Feedback from meetings and conferences

- ❖ **Action (AF): Andrew Fletcher** to prepare a briefing note on the feedback from meetings and conferences and circulate it to the Forum members.

11 Date of next meeting: tbc

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting, which started at 6.30 pm, ended at 9.05 pm.