

# ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

## LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

8 November 2016

### ATTENDANCE LIST

<b>Name</b>	<b>Interest area</b>
Peter Thorn	Chair of LAF, Land Management
James Copas	Land management, Copas Farms
John Foulger	Walking
Christine Gadd	Cycling and walking
Steve Gillions	Walking, East Berks Ramblers
Lisa Hughes	Disabled users
Councillor Maureen Hunt	RBWM Councillor
Alan Keene	Bisham Parish Council, Land Management
Gordon Marrs	Walking, East Berkshire Ramblers
Geoff Priest	Walking, Hurley Parish Council

William Emmett	
Tanya Leftwich	Clerk to the Forum
Andrew Fletcher	Local Access Forum Secretary
Gordon Oliver	Principal Transport Policy Officer

#### **OBSERVERS**

Annie Keene	
Colin Patient	Mid & West Berks LAF
Nick Philp	David Philp and PTNS

#### **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Malcolm Beer  
Sara Church  
Margaret Cubley  
Rachael Forsyth  
Councillor Asghar Majeed  
Katie Sarsfield

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
8 November 2016  
MINUTES**

**1 Welcome, apologies and introductions**

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Malcolm Beer, Councillor Asghar Majeed, Sara Church, Rachel Forsyth, Margaret Cubley and Katie Sarsfield.

**Councillor Maureen Hunt** declared an interest in relation to Item 7 of the agenda (Berkshire College of Agriculture planning application: Development of a care village) as the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Group and a member of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel.

A personal declaration of interest was received from **Peter Thorn** in relation to Item 7 of the agenda (Berkshire College of Agriculture planning application: Development of a care village) as he was a trustee on the statutory body.

The Forum approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016.

The Chairman informed everyone present that the meeting was being recorded and would be uploaded onto the RBWM website.

Matters arising from last meeting

Andrew Fletcher referred members to pages 3-5 of the agenda and explained that nine actions had been completed, four were in progress and one was incomplete.

- ❖ **Action (AF): Item 4.2 – To circulate outline information of local wildlife sites to each Parish Council.**
- ❖ **Action (AF): Item 6.3 To develop a site visit schedule for Feb-June 2017.**
- ❖ **Action (AF): Item 7.1 – To approach schools around Sunningdale and Sunninghill for potential volunteer groups.**

**2 Members' update**

Margaret Bowderly

The Chairman, **Peter Thorn**, informed the Forum that **Margaret Bowderly, a leading light in the Ramblers Association**, had recently very sadly died. It was noted that Margaret had been very instrumental in ensuring the Local Authority met its statutory requirements with regard to footpath construction. It was felt that Margaret had been very committed and outstanding in the work that she had done.

**Councillor Malcolm Beer** had sent an email which **Andrew Fletcher** read out:

"We will all be deprived of her vast historical knowledge and continued oversight of local access matters. I would like to propose that "The LAF recommends to the Royal Borough that **Margaret Bowderly's** decades of dedication and enthusiasm to promote and improve access to the countryside is permanently appreciated by associating her name with a local path or linked route with which she may have been particularly involved in its creation or protection, or perhaps some future significant future project".

- ❖ **Action (PT): To write to Mrs Bowderly's family on behalf of the Forum to**

express the Forums' sympathy for their loss and appreciation for her work.

- ❖ **Action (PT/AF):** The Forum recommended to the Council that Margaret Bowdery's decades of dedication and enthusiasm to promote and improve access to the countryside was permanently appreciated by associating her name with a local path or linked route with which she may have been particularly involved in its creation or protection, or perhaps some future significant future project.

#### Rights of Way Team

**Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that there had been a number of changes to the Public Rights of Way Team and that over the last few weeks two teams had been merged into one. It was noted that the title of the team was now the Parks and Countryside team which was lead by Anthony Hurst. It was noted that the merging of the two teams now allowed for cover and the cross fertilisation of ideas. **Andrew Fletcher** explained that they were now able to work closer with Braywick Nature Centre and as a result could use the volunteers for more days.

#### General Forum membership

**Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that Lisa Hughes had joined since the last meeting.

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

- Roy Fabry
- Rachel Forsyth

**William Emmett** requested that someone from the Windsor Park be invited to attend the next meeting. It was suggested that the new Deputy Ranger be contacted and invited to attend.

- ❖ **Action (AF):** To invite the Crown Estate to talk to the Forum about current and future developments and changes within Windsor Great Park.

### 3 **Volunteering in RBWM**

The Forum was advised that this item was being deferred to a future agenda (date to be advised) as Buffy Harris-Jones was unable to attend the meeting tonight.

### 4 **Cross compliance reporting**

The Chairman, **Peter Thorn**, informed the Forum that he would take this item next as **William Emmett** may need to leave before the end of the meeting.

The Forum was referred to pages 163-166 of the agenda which informed the Forum on the current procedures for reporting obstructions caused by ploughing and cropping to the Rural Payments Agency. **William Emmett** stated that cross compliance reporting was something that the Forum had debated in the past but that he had wanted to raise it again today to get the Forums thoughts.

**William Emmett** explained that the farming community worked well with **Andrew Fletcher** to alter byways to restricted byways to tackle unsavoury activities such as fly tipping that were stopping people from enjoying the area. However, **William Emmett**, went onto explain that he was concerned there had been six issues of enforcement action made against farmers in the South of the Borough. It was noted that enforcement action had taken place where a footpath had not been cleared or marked 100% in line with the code /

regulations (Common Agricultural Policy). **William Emmett** explained that there had been two ongoing inspections in the South of the Borough and that consequences were enormous and could be financially damaging to local farmers. It was noted that once reported the Rural Payments Agency inspectors then looked at all aspects of your business.

**William Emmett** went onto show the Forum some photos to help explain his concerns.

**William Emmett** explained that he felt the process used by the Council needed to be softened a bit.

**James Copas** asked **Andrew Fletcher** why farmers were not called directly after a complaint was received by the Council rather than it being reported officially. **Andrew Fletcher** explained that this was the case and that most of the time phone calls worked perfectly well and that the 14 days were counted from the day the issue was reported. It was noted that if the 14 days were exceeded then the issue was reported to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

**RESOLVED: That the Forum recommended to the Council that the procedure for dealing with ploughing and cropping issues be changed to the following:**

- 1. Make first contact with farmers via telephone to explain the report or issue. This telephone call should agree the date with the farmer for the resolution of the issue based upon the 14 day deadline. Explain that if the works are not done by this deadline the issue will be reported to the RPA. Take the 14 day deadline from the date that the farmer is contacted. Where necessary agree extension of this deadline up to 28 days, for example where ground conditions do not allow proper reinstatement.**
- 2. Farmer to contact RBWM when the works have been done, providing photographic evidence.**
- 3. If the agreed deadline has not been met this should then be reported to the RPA.**

❖ **Action (AF): To meet with the Rural Forum to explain this new process and gain contact details for all local farmers.**

It was noted that the above recommendations would be reported to the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel on 07 March 2016.

## **5 RBWM Cycling Strategy**

**Gordon Oliver** informed the Forum that this report (pages 13 - 98 of the agenda) was to present the draft Cycling Strategy and invite feedback from the Forum as part of the public consultation.

It was noted that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead had prepared a draft Cycling Strategy, which set out the priorities for cycling investment over the 10 year period to 2026. It had been prepared with reference to national, regional and local policy documents and draws on industry best practice.

**Gordon Oliver** gave the Forum a brief presentation on the Cycling Strategy which would allow the Council to compare strategies and make it more cost effective. It was noted that it also helped with funding bids and helped deliver the Councils Manifesto Commitments. The presentation covered the following:

- Overview.

- Guiding principles.
- Strategic framework.
- Current situation.
- Vision.
- Aims and objectives.
- Action plan.
- Funding.
- Monitoring.
- Appendices – Area Plans.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That the consultation would be running until the 28 November 2016.
- That the Forum was trying to get someone from the Cycle Forum onto the Local Access Forum. It was noted that since **Roy Fabry** had left the area the Forum had lost his expertise. It was suggested that **Councillor Malcolm Beer** could be the informal link.
- That the link to the survey on the RBWM website be forwarded onto anyone interested.
- That multi-user routes would need to be installed at the developer stage when major housing developments were considered appropriate for the Royal Borough.
- It was suggested that the multi-user routes were not be labelled 'cycle routes' in the report.
- That more responsible cycling in the Royal Borough should be encouraged to avoid competitive / dangerous cycling.

**RESOLVED: That the Forum supported the RBWM cycling strategy in principle, and recommended the following:**

1. **The strategy should seek to generate partnership working to develop multi-user routes and create links to fill gaps in the network.**
2. **The strategy should ensure that the Council take advantage of development opportunities to create new links and improve the network, including ensuring that the cycling strategy is included as far as possible in the Local Plans.**
3. **The strategy should include goals to encourage more responsible cycling in the Borough.**

The Chairman thanked **Gordon Oliver** for attending the meeting and addressing the Forum.

## 6 **Milestones Statement and Annual Targets for 2017-2018**

**Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that this report (pages 99 – 102 of the agenda) 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 2017/18.

The Chairman, **Peter Thorn**, explained that the views of the Forum were requested on the following:

- **Priorities for 2017/18:** Were there any recommended changes to the priorities listed in the current 2016/17 Milestones Statement (Appendix A)?
- **Milestones Targets for 2017/18:** Were there any recommended changes to the Milestones Targets listed in the current 2016/17 Milestones Statement (Appendix A)?
- **Service Standards for 2017/18:** Were there any recommended changes to the Service Standards listed in the 2016/17 Milestones Statement

(Appendix A)?

**Andrew Fletcher** gave Members a brief overview presentation. **Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that over the last five years the number of issues had significantly reduced to leave 18 outstanding. 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.

It was noted that the priorities and targets could be found on page 101 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED: That the Forum recommended to the Council that the following changes be made to the priorities listed in the targets for 2017/2018:**

- **WM 1: remain at 95%**
- **WM 2: remain at 10 surface improvements**
- **WM3: remain at 5 bridges**
- **LD1: Remove this target. The Forum notes the current service standard to deal with uncontested DMMO applications within 1 year.**
- **WP1: Increased to 2 leaflets.**
- **WP2: Remain at 1 leaflet**
- **AC1: remain at 1 new path**
- **AC2: Remain at 15 physical access improvements**
- **EN1: The forum suggested that the target be changed to 'resolve 100% of all new enforcement cases within 3 months'.**
  
- **Change existing priority to "seek improvements and additions to the network and enhance connectivity for horse riders, cyclists and people restricted mobility".**
  
- **Change existing priority to "Liaise with landowners and occupiers on all public rights of way matters, including updating and advising landowners on changes in legislation and encouraging the establishment of permitted routes".**

It was noted that the above recommendations would be reported to the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel on 07 March 2016.

Lisa Hughes asked what indicators in the surveys picked up access issues with regard to changes needed to surfaces. An example was provided with regard to road surfaces of the speed bump on Ray Mead East which did not stretch all the way across the road. It was noted that this speed bump was known to throw people with mobility issues off balance.

- ❖ **Action (AF / SW): To review East Berks Ramblers survey with Lisa Hughes and East Berks Ramblers to capture issues relating to disabled access.**

7

#### **Auditing the list of streets**

**Andrew Fletcher** referred the Forum to pages 103-108 of the agenda and explained that the purpose of the report was to consult the Forum on the proposals put forward by the British Horse Society regarding the Council's 'List of Streets'.

It was noted that the British Horse Society had sent a proposal to all Local Access Forums asking the Forum to consider the processes currently in place for managing the Council's adopted highway records, also known as the 'list of streets'. It was explained that the society had produced a brief paper explaining the list of streets and its concerns about the loss of ways shown on the list of streets. The Forum was advised that this document, along with responses to the questions raised were included in Appendix A to this report.

**Andrew Fletcher** explained that the Forum was invited to consider and discuss the report and respond to the consultation questions.

**RESOLVED: That the Forum recommended to the Council the following:**

**No highway (or part highway) should be removed from the list of streets, other than pursuant to a legal event, unless to correct a mistake where there has been consultation with local interests (such as the local access forum and parish council), the correction is fully documented for archiving and indexation, and the decision be taken transparently within the Council by an appropriate panel, based on a report by officers.**

❖ **Action (AF): To respond to British Horse Society to inform them of the Forums decision.**

## 8 **Berkshire College of Agriculture planning application: Development of a care village**

**Councillor Maureen Hunt** declared an interest as the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Group and a member of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel. **Councillor Maureen Hunt** agreed not to take any part in the discussions on this item.

**Andrew Fletcher** referred the Forum to pages 109-162 of the agenda and explained that the purpose of the report was to consult the Forum on the planning application to develop a care village at Berkshire College of Agriculture (Planning application 16/02814).

It was noted that Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) had submitted a planning application for the development of a care village comprising of a 50 bedroom care home, village care and wellbeing centre, 26 assisted living units, 82 independent living units, landscaping, parking and associated new access drive within land at BCA and bordered by main buildings to the North and Dellars Copse to the South in Burchetts Green Road, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead. **Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that the application would be considered at the Development Control panel in December 2016. The Forum was invited to submit comments on this planning application in advance of the meeting.

The Forum provided comments on the planning application as follows:

*The Forum had a mixed view regarding this application. There was a strong view that the open countryside should be retained, and that the proposed planting would change the nature of the landscape, and conversely there was also a view that the proposed planting would be acceptable.*

*Likewise, there was mixed view from the Forum regarding the height of the proposed development, with some suggesting that the 3 storey high buildings*

would be too high and adversely affect the view from the footpath, and others suggesting that this would not be too much of an impact.

The suggestion from the Highways Development Control Officer, supported by Anthony Hurst, for a 1-way system was debated and on balance the Forum felt that this would not be feasible to mitigate the traffic issues, however there were still mixed views.

An area where there was common ground within the Forum was the vehicular entrance point at the junction of Hurley Footpath 18. On this point the Forum as a whole felt that this would be dangerous.

## 9 LAF Work programme

**Andrew Fletcher** gave the Forum an update on the work programme for 2016/2017. It was suggested that as this was such a large piece of work that working parties be formed between January – March to look at the following areas:

### Multi-User Routes.

- ❖ **Action (All): Members to respond to Andrew Fletcher with details of potential new multi-user routes.**

### Fostering closer engagement with parish councils.

- ❖ **Action (AF/PT/GP): A small working party to be established to look at actions to foster closer engagement with Parish Councils.**

### Opportunities and issues with identified large development sites

- ❖ **Action (GM): To review the weekly planning list and advise the Forum if there were applications made which may be of interest to the Forum.**
- ❖ **Action (AF): To liaise with the Council's planning teams and ensure that they were aware of what the LAF would wish to be consulted about, particularly in regard to large planning developments.**

### Millennium Walk.

**Andrew Fletcher** explained that this was on-going and that information on this subject could also be found in the monitoring report.

It was noted that to date no reply had been received from landowners. **Andrew Fletcher** went on to explain that a revised planning application had been received and the current version indicated that they would carry on with that agreement. It was noted that **Anthony Hurst** had requested £50k from the Infrastructure Levy.

### Improvement to access as Ashley Hill, Hurley.

**Andrew Fletcher** informed the Forum that he needed to look at exactly where improvements were looking to be made, set out parameters and draft a proposal. It was suggested that this could be done via a working group.

- ❖ **Action (AF): To meet with Alan Keene and Annie Keene to develop proposal for new horse riding access within Ashley Hill, to be**



subsequently taken forward to relevant land owners.

**10 LAF Monitoring items**

The Forum was referred to the four page additional document handed out at the meeting.

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.

The Forum were advised that they could read this document at their leisure.

**11 Feedback from meetings and conferences**

**Andrew Fletcher** provided the Forum Members with a handout which could be read at everyone's leisure.

❖ **Action (AF): To circulate slideshow from the De-regulation Act training to all members with the minutes.**

**12 Date of next meeting: tbc**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed by the clerk in due course.

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

**13**  
**14**