

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

4 July 2019

ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Interest area
Lisa Hughes	Users, Accessibility
Alan Keene	Users
Steve Gillions	Users, walking
Dom Lethbridge	Landowner
Geoff Priest (Chairman)	Hurley Parish Council
	User – Young People
David Clenshaw	User - walking
Anne Woodward	User – horse riding
Trisha Mentzel	User – horse riding
Jacqui Wheeler (LAF Secretary)	RBWM
Nabihah Hassan-Farooq	RBWM

APOLOGIES

Name
James Copas
Councillor Maureen Hunt
Councillor Philip Haseler
Councillor Julian Sharpe
Lynn Penfold

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
4 July 2019
MINUTES**

1 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. Members were reminded that the meeting was being audio recorded and this would be available on the Council website in due course.

Apologies for absence were received from James Copas, Lynn Penfold Councillors Sharpe, Hunt & Haseler.

A) DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

B) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 5TH FEB 2019

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY; That the minutes of the last meeting held on the 5th February 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2 Terms of Reference Review

Members of the panel discussed the current terms of reference and the need to reduce the quorate for meetings. Current quota arrangements as per the terms of reference relied upon 50% attendance and it was agreed that in practical terms this should in theory be reduced to 6 members with the chairman having a casting vote. It was agreed that the quorate should be reduced to limit the number of cancelled meetings re-occurring. Members were informed that any comments or amendments to the terms of reference should be communicated to the clerk, Nabihah.hassan-farooq@rbwm.gov.uk by Wednesday 26th July, 2019.

Nabihah explained that the LAF has now been removed from the Borough's constitution which is a change in status of the LAF. Though there is little difference in operation only that decisions about the way the Forum runs no longer have to go through Full Council.

A) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

Jacqui Wheeler and Geoff Priest (LAF Chairman) outlined that there were various matters arising from the last meeting which included:

4.1 – Members were informed that the Cookham Cycleway project would require further work and that this was a long term ambition project in conjunction with the project centre and as part of the larger Cycling Action Plan.

Members queried whether there had been any links forged with Cookham Parish Councillors and it was confirmed that there had been some conversations with Moor Hall as a stakeholder in relation to the Cookham Cycleway project. It was highlighted that there was an additional 2.3m needed of land for the access route to be provided as part of the wider cycling route. It was noted that Moor Hall did not seem wholly on board with allowing access through the grounds due to staff and security issues and it was confirmed that this access route would not be a public right of way. Jacqui Wheeler stated that she would be pursuing the project as a permissive cycle path with the owners' agreement and would update the forum as soon as possible.

Members queried what the use of the path would be classified as and it was confirmed that the preference of the Local Authority was to pursue this pathway as a multiuser accessible route. Some Forum Members highlighted their concerns as existing bridle path users and highlighted some of the issues that they had encountered when accessing bridle paths through the Cookham area and highlighted that not all surfaces were not currently suitable for horses.

Members were informed that there were currently 31 land owners involved with the plan to implement and develop the Cookham Cycle route and that discussions were being had with these important stakeholders.

4.2- A Joint Chairs meeting is due to be held with the LAF Chairs and there would be an update at the next meeting on the progress of the Forums. Jacqui Wheeler and Geoff Priest would attend once the dates were announced.

4.3- It was highlighted that it was important to have links with Surrey. Jacqui Wheeler would contact the Surrey LAF representative with regards to future joint chair meetings.

6.1- It was highlighted that Geoff Priest would meet in his capacity as LAF Chairman with Jacqui Wheeler and Anthony Hurst to discuss ways in which the LAF could be promoted through the RBWM Council website and for any further improvements to current available web pages related to the LAF.

6.2- It was noted that efforts would be made to contact the new Crown Estate representative- John Olive and that this would be reported back to the LAF at the next meeting. It was highlighted that no communication had yet been received despite efforts to make contact with the new representative but that members were aware of the work related to the pressures of starting a new role.

6.3- Members were informed that efforts would be made to contact younger representatives to attend the LAF, by contacting local organisations and groups such as BCA.

ACTION- To co-opt a non-voting youth representative from a relevant and associated organisation and to amend the terms of reference to include this subject to this being lawful under the LAF legislation.

3 Members update

Members were introduced to the three new forum members and welcomed their contributions. Members were also informed that there was new councillor representation and that the new councillors were as follows; Councillors Haseler and Sharpe. The Chairman was delighted with the ongoing membership of Councillor Hunt and advised that due to commitments they had been unable to attend the forum meeting on this occasion.

4 Milestone Statement 2019 -2020 Final

Members were informed that this was an information item and that the Milestone Statement had been approved by Full Council earlier this year. The Milestone statement set out achievements and targets for the upcoming year. The statement sought to look at the way in which targets were set, addressed and clear incident management reporting. Members were told that there had been one outstanding action in relation to parishes creating a publication of footpath maps and that this was still currently outstanding but being worked upon.

5 Urgent Response Team

Geoff Priest highlighted that there was a need for the LAF to work and resolve matters between meetings with urgency and as such it was recommended that

an urgent response team be created. The urgent response team would deal with issues that had been flagged as urgent via email, carry out important site visits and work to provide improvements and resolutions. Members of the Forum were asked whether they were able to commit to becoming a part of this additional LAF feature and it was confirmed that Lisa Hughes, Dom Lethbridge and Geoff Priest would form the co-hort for the urgent response team.

6 Battlemead Common Update

Jacqui Wheeler outlined the above titled item. Members were shown a short video clip of the Battlemead Common site. It was outlined that this large piece of land had been acquired by RBWM and had significant amounts of wildlife. The primary reason for purchasing this land was to enable open access. At a recent Friends of Battlemead Common meeting (held on the 18th June), there has been a deeper discussion relating to the types of wildlife on site which included birds and various species of woodland mammals. There were currently 68 varieties of birds and 8 species of mammals, 100 species of shrubs and trees. Members were told that this piece of land was unique as it had both woodland, wetlands and was uniquely placed adjacent to the Thames river. It was outlined that this was a fantastic opportunity for residents to access a significant asset of the borough, but that there were challenges in enabling access without detriment to wildlife on the site. . Members were told that this piece of land had been privately owned and had now been successfully purchased by RBWM.

ACTION- That Jacqui Wheeler circulates the minutes of the Friends of Battlemead Common meeting held on the 18th June 2019 to LAF members.

It was highlighted that there were 40 attendees at the Friends of Battlemead Common meeting and that this included individuals from Cookham Society, Maidenhead Rotary, Ramblers, Access Advisory Forum, Thames Path, LAF and Waterways Board. There had been a range of external stakeholders also present at the meeting and that this had been hosted and facilitated by Kevin Mist, Directorates Project Lead- Communities & Enforcement. It was noted that this was the first tentative attempt to discuss public rights of way plans and access whilst looking at the competing needs of recreation and conservation for the area. Members were told that discussions had been had in relation to when the site would be opened and it was confirmed that an extensive site survey and lifespan of flora and fauna survey was yet to be carried out. Forum Members were advised that the next Friends of Battlemead Common meeting would take place in September.

ACTION- That Jacqui Wheeler forward invitation for the September, Friends of Battlemead Common meeting to LAF members.

At the conclusion of the verbal update members discussed the following;

Planning applications- It was outlined that the planning application would be considered at the relevant development management panel in August and that permitted pathways were planned for opening in July. It was also highlighted that further fencing would need to be added to the site for areas needing protection.

Signage- Members highlighted the need for adequate signage in relation to the routes, protected species and for access reasons.

Car park- Members queried whether there would be a car park to access the

site. It was confirmed that there would be two pedestrian access points from the planned car park space and that there were some challenges with the current visibility of the displays in place. It was also outlined by Dom Lethbridge that the National Trust had looked at the hedgerow aligning the entrance to the intended car park and that this would need to be cut back to Widbrook Common.

Boundary Walk- Members queried whether this piece of land would now complete the boundary walk. It was outlined that this piece of land was the missing link in the boundary walk and that boundary stones had been found on the site. Members were also informed that from the site views of Cliveden Estate could be seen.

Public Rights of Way- It was queried whether RBWM would consider opening the paths permissions to becoming a public right of way and it was confirmed that current plans suggested that all paths would be permitted paths and that there was no ambition to change this presently.

Dogs and walkers- Members queried whether there would be any outlined restraints on dog walkers and it was confirmed that there may be dog control orders in place and signs outlining where dogs could be on lead and off of their leads.

History of the land- Members were informed that the land sought to preserve some of the local heritage and that there was some work being carried out to look at the linking of this particular piece of land with Cockmarsh. It was highlighted that Cockmarsh had some roman heritage and that members would be informed of any progress of these findings.

Members were informed that there would be a countryside walk and it was noted that all LAF members would be invited.

ACTION- That Jacqui Wheeler circulate the Countryside Walk invitation to all LAF members.

7 Feedback from Accessibility Working Group

Lisa Hughes gave a presentation on the above titled item. Members were told that a presentation had been given in 2018 to the LAF relating to the setting up of the accessibility working groups and origins of inception for the working group. It was highlighted that Dom Lethbridge, Lisa Hughes and Steve Gillions had held two meetings. Within these two meetings, terms of reference and working aims of the group had been established. Members were informed that the focus of the group was clear and that they had started working upon identifying key routes and sites, actual access improvements of public rights of way and green spaces. Ambitions of the group intended working within existing infrastructure, extended pathway proposals, access levels and criteria, refined accessibility. Whilst looking at this pertinent points, members of the accessibility working group had looked at approach taken by the National Parks, for example, South Downs National Park where 3 levels of accessibility were clearly identified and signposted throughout the park. These accessibility criteria includes, accessible by all, accessible by some and accessible by many.

It was outlined that the initial focus had been to look at piloting hubs for potential sites and surveys for identified areas. Members were told that South Downs had been contacted and that a response was awaited upon. As part of looking at the initial pilots, members were informed that six potential sites had been identified and that they were heavily or popular areas. Next steps

included agreement on proposals from LAF members and any potential actions arising from discussions at the group meetings.

ACTION- That Geoff Priest email all LAF members and ask for their support in the work of the Accessibility Working Group and their intended actions.

At the conclusion of the presentation, members commended the good work and commitment of the accessibility working group members and welcomed feedback at the next meeting of progress.

ACTION- That Lisa Hughes provides a progress update on the responses from National Parks at the next LAF meeting.

8 Site visits for 2019 - Date and location to be agreed

Members were informed that there would be a site visit scheduled for:

- Battlemead Common- scheduled for September
- Ockwells- To be confirmed and for Jason Mills to feedback at the next meeting

ACTION- That Jacqui Wheeler circulates invites to all LAF members of any confirmed site visit dates.

9 LAF Annual Report - draft

Jacqui Wheeler updated members on the above titled item. Members were advised to email all changes directly to Jacqui.wheeler@rbwm.gov.uk. It was outlined that all LAF (81 nationally) were asked to produce a report which would then be uploaded to the relevant authority website. Members were told that there was a duty imposed on the LAF to update their own authority's pro-forma and submit this to National England. It was highlighted that work with the Chair would be carried out as to how this matter is progressed through the LAF moving forward. Looking forward, members were advised that there would be a particular focus on disabled access and the overview of the Borough Local Plan with access to green sites/spaces.

The Chair highlighted that there was currently no land identified to replace the site known as HA22 within the Borough Local Plan and that an agreement had been made between both Cox Green Park and the Council to look at an evolving plan for this piece of land.

1 Date of the next meeting

Members noted that the date of the next meeting was confirmed at the 26th November 2019, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead, 6.30pm.

Members wished to place a vote of thanks on record for Ambika Chouhan who had supported the LAF in her capacity over the last 12 months.

The meeting, which started at 6.30pm, ended at 19.54pm.