

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

5 July 2021

ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Interest area
Geoff Priest	Hurley Parish Council
Lisa Hughes	User - Walker
Councillor Maureen Hunt	RBWM
Councillor Julian Sharpe	RBWM
Anne Woodward	User – Horse Rider
Alan Keene	Bisham Parish Council
Steve Gillions	User - Walker
James Copas	User - Walker
Susy Shearer	User - Cyclist
Trisha Mentzel	User – Horse Rider
Mark Howard	Cookham Parish Council
Jacqui Wheeler	RBWM – LAF Secretary
Mark Beeley	RBWM – Clerk
Shilpa Manek	RBWM – Meeting Host

OBSERVERS

Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra
Councillor Mandy Brar
Councillor David Coppinger
Councillor Gurch Singh

APOLOGIES

Name

Councillor Phil Haseler

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LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
5 July 2021
MINUTES

ACTION

1 Nomination and election of Chair and Vice Chair

Lisa Hughes nominated Geoff Priest for the position of Chairman, which was seconded by Councillor Hunt.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Geoff Priest was elected as the Chairman of the Local Access Forum for the next two years, until July 2023.

Susy Shearer nominated Lisa Hughes for the position of Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Anne Woodward.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Lisa Hughes was elected as Vice Chairman of the Local Access Forum for the next two years, until July 2023.

2 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chairman, Geoff Priest, welcomed those present to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Haseler.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 Approval of Minutes - 30th November 2020

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2020 were approved as a true record, providing the following amendment was made:

- Spelling of 'Driftwood' corrected to 'Thrift Wood'.

5 St Cloud's Way Development planning consultation

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of agenda items was changed.

Ben Dawson, from Curtins, gave a presentation on the project. He explained that there were three points; the missing links alignment, the removal of the footbridge and the creation of a crossing on the A4. The missing links was part of a wider strategy and there was a requirement to create a missing links route through the site. After consideration on various proposals, it was decided that a clear east to west route would be created. The route would be shared use, with a separate pedestrian route to the south, but would not be open to general traffic. The route would not be straight and this was to ensure that cycling speed was acceptable for the number of pedestrians that would be using the route.

The council suggested looking at an alternative route, which was behind 'Block B' of the development. However, there was a level difference on this route and it would therefore require things like ramps. The route was also not very overlooked which was important from a safety aspect. The council and the

project centre agreed that the route should therefore be in the public realm area through the middle of the development.

Considering the pedestrian route to Maidenhead town centre, a number of improvements had been suggested for the underpass including CCTV, general camera coverage upgrades and the introduction of a domed mirror. The developers had been looking at a crossing on St Clouds Way, which would take advantage of the existing traffic lights outside the Hines Meadow car park. Pictures were shown of what the crossing could look like and also of what the road looked like in its current form. The council had no issues with the removal of the current footbridge. A data survey had been conducted and there was a significant drop in usage since the leisure centre closed. In 2018, around 6,000 people a day were using the bridge, but this had dropped to 193 in 2021. Thames Valley Police had expressed concern about the lack of natural surveillance on the footbridge, especially as the footbridge terminated in the car park.

Councillor Coppinger said that he was pleased to see the progression of this project as he had a number of concerns about the area in its current form. There had been concern about how residents would be able to access the town centre, particularly at night. The underpass improvements looked good and the crossing on St Clouds Way was a positive step towards the future. Councillor Coppinger said that it would also benefit worshippers at the mosque who would have easier access, the crossing would meet the needs of the local community.

Lisa Hughes noted that the route would be shared between cyclists and pedestrians. She asked what the dimensions of the route were and whether entrances to buildings had an impact on this.

Ben Dawson said that the shared route was 3.5m wide at its minimum. The pedestrian only route was 2m wide. Entrances were 1.5m wide and opened inwards so did not impact on the path.

Lisa Hughes said that 94% of the entrances would be accessible, which had been stated on the planning application. She expressed concern about users that would be cycling at a high speed along the route, a shared cycle path should not be hazardous to pedestrians. Lisa Hughes also believed that there had been little consideration given to those with a visual impairment due to the paving surface and the lighting of the route.

Councillor Brar said that she was supportive of the missing links project. She asked how the usage between cyclists and pedestrians would be managed and if there was enough space for all users of the route.

Ben Dawson said that a key concern was the conflict between the users of the route. If the path was straight, it would encourage cyclists to travel at speed. A road safety audit would be undertaken which would highlight conflicts and would investigate if mitigation could be required.

Susy Shearer had noted in the presentation that there would be a 'share with care' sign, which she thought was a useful addition. She suggested that it would be useful to have it displayed at a number of places along the route, along with 'pedestrian only' signage for the other route. Susy Shearer asked how the developers planned to get the message across to all users of the route.

Ben Dawson said that it would be clear where cyclists would go, as the

pedestrian route would be separate and would not be linked to the shared route. Further signage could be introduced if it was needed.

Jacqui Wheeler asked if there were any staggered barriers in the design.

Ben Dawson confirmed that there were no staggered barriers on the route, but there were some bollards.

Councillor Sharpe said that he was concerned for the safety of pedestrians and hoped that barriers would be introduced as a safety measure.

Councillor Singh commented on the junction where the crossing was proposed to be built, it was a busy junction and was on the exit coming out of Sainsburys. He said that there had been traffic issues on the junction in the past. He asked if the road going under the crossing had been considered.

Ben Dawson said that to have the road go under the crossing would require significant infrastructure changes. Discussions were still ongoing with the council on what the crossing would look like.

Councillor Singh asked if the north to south route through the site would be removed. He expressed concern about the route behind Block B not having level access.

Ben Dawson confirmed that the route was still in place, the developers wanted to keep the existing routes open. It was clarified that the route behind Block B was an option that was not being considered, due to the different access levels.

6 Matters arising from the last meeting

Jacqui Wheeler, Parks and Countryside Access Officer, said that discussions were continuing to try and have a joint Local Access Forum (LAF) Chairs meeting with other neighbouring authorities. She asked the Chairman if there had been any progress on recruiting a member from the Berkshire College of Agriculture.

The Chairman said that he had not yet asked because the Forum had not had an in person meeting.

Lisa Hughes said that she had spoken to Elaine Keating, Youth Engagement Officer at Achieving for Children, and who helped to run the Girls Policy Forum. They had expressed an interest in joining the LAF.

The Chairman welcomed this news and said that he was happy to speak to any young person that was interested in joining the Forum.

Jacqui Wheeler said that the next meeting of the Battlemead Common steering group would be on 3rd August 2021.

7 Membership Update

The Chairman welcomed Mark Howard to the meeting, who had recently joined as a member. He said that a member of the British Horse Society might join the Forum soon too.

Susy Shearer said that she hoped there would be another cycling representative who would be interested in joining the LAF.

8 **Milestone Statement/Targets Ongoing Consultation**

Jacqui Wheeler explained that LAF members could feed into the statement at any point over the course of the year. Datchet Parish Council had made a number of comments which had been noted. Jacqui Wheeler showed the Forum some photos of the volunteering which had been taking place.

Steve Gillions commented on Hurley footpath 17 and said that it was very steep and should therefore be given priority. The central section of the Greenway could also be worked on to help people with disabilities and was something that could be fed into the volunteering programme.

Jacqui Wheeler said that work to put in ramps on the sections of the Greenway which had been suggested had now been completed.

Councillor Brar asked if a gate had been installed on Bisham footpath 21.

Jacqui Wheeler said that she would take the question away and get back to Councillor Brar after the meeting.

ACTION – Jacqui Wheeler to see if gate had been installed on footpath 21 and report back to Councillor Brar.

Anne Woodward said that a lot of users ignored footpath signs, for example there was a significant amount of cycling on the River Thames path. She asked how the LAF could help to solve this problem.

The Chairman said that a path near Star Lane had been lost due to the quarry work, which meant cyclists were forced to use other paths.

Mark Howard said that increasing the number of checks or making the path accessible for both pedestrians and cyclists were two options. Making it more accessible for both groups was more practicable.

Susy Shearer agreed with this comment and said that educating cyclists and pedestrians was also important.

Councillor Hunt said that the footpath in Hurley could be reinstated through the site, as had been agreed with the planning permission which had been granted when the right of way was lost.

9 **Thriftwood Horse Riding Permissive Access Route**

Jacqui Wheeler said that the local councillors for the area, Councillor Haseler and Councillor McWilliams, had agreed permissive access for horse riding on the route. Jacqui Wheeler had walked through the route with Jason Mills, who was RBWM Countryside Manager. He was happy with the permissive access which had been outlined. Some areas of the route would be rewilded.

Jason Mills said that he had made a presentation to the LAF in 2017 about the plans. There were two significant areas of woodland on the site. The red route was currently outlined on the map but this may have to be relocated to accommodate wilding. There was hope that a wetlands plan would be implemented at the site, which would be a significant feature. The Cut would be repurposed and then would be allowed to follow its historic channel. Water would then go into the areas that had been marked on the map, making it more manageable.

Jacqui Wheeler said that there was no intention at the moment to change the

existing natural surface to accommodate horse riding. It was important to get the communication and signage right on the route.

Anne Woodward thanked the officers involved for looking at this route, it was a welcome addition. She had recently walked through Bisham Woods and there were blue way markers to show the path, this could also be implemented at Thriftwood.

10 All Subgroup Meeting 16th June 2021: Action Plan

The Chairman said that the sub group had met to identify paths that needed to be upgraded and allow more user groups to access them. Discussions at the group had also included how to involve more people in the process.

Steve Gillions said that everyone on the working group was keen to make it happen and improve safety for all users. There was a focus on areas where an agreement could be reached.

Susy Shearer said that Willows Path connecting to Dedworth Road was a very important path in the area as it connected the north and south. She looked forward to progressing this.

Jacqui Wheeler suggested that Friday evenings from 6pm or 6.30pm would be suitable for a future meeting at the Braywick Nature Centre, she asked members to let her know what would be best.

Councillor Sharpe expressed concern about representation across the borough. He asked what projects had been undertaken in the south of the borough. It should be a Forum for the whole borough.

Steve Gillions said that he was happy to consider any suggestions. The Chairman said that all areas of the borough were considered.

Councillor Singh said that there was a lot of knowledge in the LAF and it was good to take the views of the Forum into consideration when considering future planning applications.

The Chairman said that the Forum had been part of the draft local plan and had created a working group. The Forum was able to submit its views and be part of the plan. The Chairman explained that the Forum did not receive much at the pre-planning stage but they would be interested in considering more going forward.

Susy Shearer said that the Cycling Action Group wanted to join up cycling provision across the whole borough and they welcomed new ideas.

Steve Gillions left the meeting.

11 Horizon Scanning - LCWIP Consultation, Corporate Plan, Planning Consultations with LAF

Jacqui Wheeler said that dates of upcoming consultations had been included so that LAF members were aware. The RBWM Corporate Plan will be forwarded to the Chairman and Vice Chairman in the first instance to decide how the Forum should respond. The vulnerable road user consultation would be taking place in August/September 2021. There was also discussion about what to do regarding how the LAF is consulted on planning applications. Jacqui Wheeler had sent Sian Saadeh in the RBWM Planning team the LAF position statement to see what her opinion was on the report. There were a couple of

other sites that were being planned and the LAF could have a look at these in future meetings.

The Chairman said that the corporate plan was also about housing development and the amount of affordable housing and it was important to consider resources for new housing.

Anne Woodward said that the vulnerable road users consultation did not include horse riders.

Susy Shearer said that the cycling and walking infrastructure plan was starting to emerge.

Lisa Hughes asked councillors what they had seen of the vulnerable users consultation.

Councillor Hunt said that it was important that the council took on board where vulnerable users needed to get to and adapt accordingly.

Councillor Sharpe said that he not been involved with the consultation. Councillor Sharpe had noted that on the RBWM petitions website there was a petition to ensure full and proper access to all footpaths across the borough. Some footpaths were in a bad condition and it was important that officers were aware so that they could be improved.

Jacqui Wheeler asked if anyone had any details of footpaths which needed to be looked at to email the Public Rights of Way team on PROW@rbwm.gov.uk.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Members of the Forum noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 2nd December 2021.

The meeting, which started at 6.15 pm, ended at 8.10 pm.