

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

7 July 2022

ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Interest area
Geoff Priest	Hurley Parish Council
Lisa Hughes	User – Walker
Councillor Phil Haseler	RBWM
Councillor Julian Sharpe	RBWM
Alan Keene	Bisham Parish Council
Mark Howard	Cookham Parish Council
Claire Taylor	User – Cyclist and Biodiversity
Steve Gillions	User – Walker
Susy Shearer	User – Cyclist
Martin Richardson	User – Cyclist
Trisha Mentzel	User – Horse Rider
Jacqui Wheeler	RBWM – LAF Secretary
Laurence Ellis	RBWM – LAF Clerk
Jason Mills	RBWM – Natural Environment Officer

OBSERVERS

Annie Keene
Councillor John Baldwin

APOLOGIES

Name
Councillor Maureen Hunt
James Copas
Ceri Richardson

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LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
7 July 2022
MINUTES

ACTION

1 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and asked those present at the meeting to introduce themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from James Copas, Ceri Richardson and Councillor Hunt.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interests received.

3 Approval of Minutes - 2nd December 2021

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2021 were approved as a true record, provided the following amendments were made:

- In Item 8 – Cycling Action Group, it was corrected to say:
 - “The group had met four times since July 2021, principally to discuss the following topics:”
 - “Earlier in the year, a joint working party formed by Sunninghill & Ascot Parish and Sunningdale Parish Councils and led by Parish Councillors Ceri Richardson and David Biggs had studied cycling is-sues in that part of the borough and was contributing this feedback to the LCWIP process.”
 - “planned with Officers, Councillors and W&MCAG representatives in order to discuss the matter “in the round”.
 - “WCH had been given outstanding support from Maidenhead Cycle Hub which included mechanic training, and was extremely grateful to receive a start-up grant from RBWM together with a grant from The Prince Philip Trust Fund.”
 - “leaving from the Swan at 11:30am and open to anyone in RBWM. It was hoped that cycle “hubs” would eventually be developed in every part of the borough.”
 - “Cycling security and safety matters included a presentation by Jeffrey Pick, the Police, Community Engagement and Resilience Officer for Windsor and Maidenhead Local Police Authority.” The police had also held successful ‘Bike Marking’ sessions at the Windsor Cycle Hub and hoped to be able to continue to provide these sessions on a regular basis.”
 - “Cllr Sharpe expressed his appreciation for this report.”
 - “Susy Shearer said that the routes were graded in terms of difficulty and generally ranged between 8 and 20 miles radius from the Swan.”

- In Item 13 – Borough Local Plan – Next Steps, it was corrected to say:

“She suggested it would be beneficial for the LAF to consider biodiversity and the natural environment in its work on local access issues.”

4 Matters arising from the last meeting

Jacqui Wheeler, Parks and Countryside Access Officer, started the item by going through each action item in the agenda pack.

Progress continued on the Joint Local Access Forum (LAF) Chairs meeting and the permissive multi-use access at Thriftwood. However, Jacqui Wheeler suggested to further discuss these items later in the meeting as these items were in the agenda.

The results of the public consultation for Diversion Order were taken to Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel on 14th March 2022 where it was decided not to proceed with the Cookham 17 (part) and Cookham 59 (part) Diversion Orders.

For the Borough Local Plan, place-making sessions for the Southwestern Maidenhead Development took place where LAF members were invited.

Regarding the annual Milestone Statement Consultation, responses from parish councils and LAF members were received and listed in the agenda. Various items were brought up by LAF members. One of them was a request for improvements to surface and drainage at Uncle's Lane, Waltham St Lawrence. Works had been ordered to rectify this. Other issues were restricted access on public Footpath Sunninghill FP10 and routes in Ascot; both these were being investigated.

Steve Gillions gave an update for the Diversion Order to the Forum Members. Since formal consultation took place, the landowner had withdrawn the proposed permitted paths. The Chairman then gave some context to the Forum Members: when the application was put forward, the landowner had established a permitted path around the outer edges of their field onto which the cross-field path would be diverted with additional permitted cycling. However, after being refused by the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel, the landowner had removed permitted access to the field edge path.

(Trisha Mentzel entered the meeting at 18:40)

After pointing out that a public footpath was a right while a permitted footpath was based on the landowner's goodwill, Mark Howard asked how much public money was spent on the formal consultation for the Diversion Order. Neither the Chairman nor Jacqui Wheeler knew the precise cost, but Jacqui Wheeler stated she would investigate. She explained the process where there was an informal consultation and then the Licensing Panel decided to go against officer recommendation; then the formal legal consultation took place which then went back to the Licensing Panel.

Stating he was present at both Licensing Panel meetings, Councillor Baldwin explained that the landowner was committed to making the permitted pathway a public right of way, where it would have reverted and had the same status as the existing path across the field. He then stated that the second panel hearing was necessary because the law stated that if there was at least one objection, then there had to be a second consideration.

5 Membership Update

The Chairman announced that Lynn Penfold had resigned as a member of the Local Access Forum. He added that there had been successes in recruiting new members, though not all were able to make it to the meeting. He listed the new members: Benta Hickley from Horton Parish Council, Susan Nicholls from Wraybury Parish Council, Ceri Richardson from Ascot Parish Council, Martin

Richardson and Claire Taylor from Eton Town Council.

Alan Keene asked how the new membership affected the balance of interests across the LAF. Jacqui Wheeler pointed to a page in the agenda which listed the new members LAF, where there was a total of 17 LAF members. There were two members with equestrian interest, two other members had landowner interests and one with accessibility interest. Jacqui Wheeler added that LAF could recruit more equestrian and landowner interest representatives to make LAF more balanced.

Jacqui Wheeler then discussed the training options. She asked the Forum Members what kind of training LAF members would find useful. She suggested that the training sessions could be three hours long on each day. She also pointed to the list of topics in the agenda for the Forum Members to consider which were useful for training. She also asked Forum Members if a workshop on the role of the LAF would be more useful.

The Chairman suggested he could circulate an email with list of topics for training as well as whether to have a workshop to LAF members, in which members would give feedback on the approach to the training.

As there was a lot of training to go through, Steve Gillions suggested that some of the factual content could be assembled offline and circulated to LAF members beforehand so that common issues could be discussed when LAF members gathered. The Chairman agreed that factual content should be circulated beforehand so that they could be discussed when LAF members gathered to do the training.

ACTION: The Chairman to email LAF members and receive feedback on training for new LAF members.

6 Sub-Groups Reports

Before discussing the items, the Chairman gave a brief explanation on the three subgroups to the new Forum Members.

The LAF then considered the updates from each group.

7 Multi-User Subgroup

Trisha Mentzel gave the update on the Multi-User Sub-Group. The most important update was the opening of horse access to Ocwells Park and Thriftwood. RBWM Council had laid some waymarkers to show horse riders the route. In addition, the Council had also made some minor modifications to the footbridge by adding a ramp and non-slip surfacing. They also added mounting blocks on either side of the bridge as the parapet was not high enough for horse riders; therefore, it was advised that horse riders dismount and lead their horse across.

Having visited the horse-riding route, Trisha Mentzel explained that the route can be difficult for horse riders to follow due to some of the paths having long grass. She also added that some of the paths had overhanging trees and bushes which was too low for horse riders. She then stated there was appreciation for the new route as horse-riders wished to avoid busy roads; She then gave some statistics on road incidents involving horse-riders.

Councillor Haseler reported that the number of complaints from local residents was low, and the Facebook post he uploaded was positive for the summer trial. Jacqui Wheeler also reported that there was positive feedback from parish

councils for the summer trial (which was planned to end in September 2022). However, based on comments from residents, more work needed to be done, namely putting up more signage at the beginning of Ockwells Park to inform residents of horse-riders as well as signage to inform horse-riders where they can and cannot ride.

8 **Accessibility Working Group - Walks For All Project**

Lisa Hughes reported that the public walking routes were publicised on the RBWM Together Website, with online maps being provided. Steve Gillions reported that he asked Ordnance Survey if their maps with Lake District symbols could be used; but hoped to sign up the Lake District National Park first regarding the use of their symbols. He hoped to extend public access across Berkshire. Lisa Hughes added that the Crown Estate were interested in the Accessibility Working Group to publicise their mapping and accessible walks.

The Chairman asked if anyone asked Lisa Hughes or Steve Gillions to look at other paths in other areas of the Borough. Steve Gillions replied that there were no other specific areas yet but he added that there was another path at Sunninghill mentioned by Councillor Sharpe in the last LAF meeting. Both Steve Gillions and Councillor Sharpe agreed to talk about it later.

Jacqui Wheeler asked if the Accessibility Working Group required another meeting with herself and Sharon to further work on the RBWM webpage. Lisa Hughes replied that it would be helpful. Jacqui Wheeler then said she would invite Lucy Stearn, the website administrator, to show Lisa Hughes what to do.

Jacqui Wheeler asked members if they would like an LAF webpage which links to the RBWM webpage. The Chairman liked the idea because it was difficult to find the LAF webpages on the general RBWM website.

ACTION: RBWM PRoW team to investigate the creation of an LAF webpage on the RBWM Together website.

9 **Cycling Groups Updates**

Susy Shearer conveyed that the Windsor Cycle Hub continued to make cycling accessible, positive and visible in the local community. The first Doctor Bike Session was to be held on 30th July 2022. The sessions were to be organised by WCH and funded by Cycling UK and they were an opportunity for residents to have their bicycles repaired free of charge and with bike parts free up to the value of five or six pounds as well as repaired by qualified mechanics. The hope in the future was to have some kind of cycle hub in every part of the Borough to create connection points and raise the profile of cycling.

Martin Richardson informed the Forum Members that the Windsor & Maidenhead Cycling Action Group (W&MCAG) had expanded to cover walking and cycling. There was also a wider focus on encouraging active travel to align with the national government's central policy to promote active travel. W&MCAG also sought to collaborate with the Council to continue campaigning and educating the public on the benefits of active travel. Martin Richardson also informed that he had replaced Derek Wilson as Chairman of the W&MCAG a few months ago.

The Chairman informed the Forum Members that the working subgroups had a meeting with Tim Golabek, the Service Lead for Transport and Infrastructure, in May 2022 which allowed the LAF to express their interests and concerns regarding any developing projects in the Borough.

10 Biodiversity Action Plan Progress

Jason Mills, Natural Environment Manager, gave a presentation which gave an overview of the Biodiversity Action Plan. He started off with the background whereby the new BAP where work on it began when the Council declared a climate and environment emergency in 2019.

The BAP included 6 different habitat action plans (HAPs): woodland, grassland, farmland, waterways, standing water and urban. There was a target of ensuring 30% of land in RBWM would be a space for nature by 2030 in line with the Council's Corporate Plan goal.

Referring to a Rural Forum meeting May 2022 which discussed the draft BAP and then recommended for it to be reconsidered by the Cabinet, Alane Keene asked if the proposed BAP was being reviewed. Jason Mills replied that it was a working progress whereby feedback and comments were being taken on board.

Susy Shearer asked how he would be working with the wild groups on implementing the BAP. Jason Mills replied that the wild groups provided a lot of input in the BAP. He stated the Borough would continue to give input as they hold the knowledge on the area and wildlife.

Mark Howard asked Jason Mills to confirm if he had reached out to and engaged with the National Trust (the main landowner in Cookham). Jason Mills replied that he was meeting representatives of the National Trust in August 2022 and they would be visiting Battlemead to get overview of the area as well as the National Trust's view of it. Mark Howard then raised that flooding was an issue and concern in Cookham. Jason Mills would take that on board.

Councillor Sharpe asked he was doing any work with the parish councils. Jason Mills confirmed this, elaborating that parish council land would play a key part on promoting biodiversity. He stated they wanted as many people involved. Councillor Sharpe suggested that the work which Jason Mills had been doing should be put on the RBWM website so that the public could be familiar with it, commenting it was not explicitly shown on the website at the moment. Jason Mills took note of that.

In response to Lisa Hughes's comments about the wildlife garden schemes, which encouraged wildlife friendly gardening, Jason Mills asserted that gardens were very important, elaborating gardens made up more land than national parks in Britain. Therefore, they were a key part of nature recovery, especially in urban areas.

The Chairman asked if the development around Battlemead Common in preserving wildlife would be a template for other areas. Jason Mills believed so as the work around Battlemead had been largely a success and the Environment Team were monitoring it annually.

Referring to Councillor Sharpe's point on engaging with the public, the Chairman agreed that communication was key across the various entities, forums and the Borough.

While pleased that many actions within the proposed BAP were going ahead, Councillor Baldwin expressed concern that adopting some of the actions from the BAP would lessen the urgency to actually adopt the whole BAP. He

stated it was required now because it underpins the adopted Local Borough Plan. He elaborated that without the BAP, Planning Officers would not have a benchmark document against which to assess the major planning developments that would be coming forward.

(Susy Shearer left the meeting at 19:43; Councillor Baldwin left the meeting at 19:44)

11 Quiet Lanes discussion & request for Coningsby Lane

The Chairman informed the LAF that a resident contacted the Forum on a particular Quiet Lane. He was uncertain of the LAF's responsibility with Quiet Lane as it was a road rather than a path; but Lisa Hughes wanted it to be added to the agenda.

Lisa Hughes explained to the LAF what a Quiet Lane was: a designation that a highways authority can give to a single-track road where there would be usually less than a thousand vehicles passing through per day. This would then allow a few vehicles, horse-riders, walkers and cyclists to share the road.

Jacqui Wheeler brought the Forum's attention to a copy of a report in the agenda which was presented to the Forum in 2015. The LAF decided to not pursue this report and decided to take the Quiet Lanes out of the milestone statement at the time. With the local resident approaching the LAF on Quiet Lanes and having visited the specific Quiet Lane that resident referred to, Jacqui Wheeler thought it would be useful for public rights awareness to investigate. She suggested that LAF conduct information gathering at the next Joint LAF Chairman meeting and find out if other local authorities were interested or had any successes in Quiet Lanes. Jacqui Wheeler also mentioned she had further communicated with the resident and explained to her the process and how it worked. She also added that it was essential for Quiet Lanes to have support from local community and Parish Councils.

Councillor Haseler asked for a further explanation of Quiet Lanes, namely how was the flow of vehicles managed. Lisa Hughes explained that Quiet Lanes essentially become a "shared use road". She further explained that it protects vulnerable road users on single-track roads by alerting drivers of other road users. Councillor Haseler commented that he would be open-minded to concept. Lisa Hughes suggested she and Jacqui could circulate the process of designating roads as Quiet Lanes.

Steve Gillions stated he was surprised that Quiet Lanes were opposed by the residents of Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and wondered why. The Chairman explained that was one reason why Jacqui Wheeler wanted to add Quiet Lanes to the agenda of the LAF Chairmen's meeting, alongside understanding how other local authorities managed Quiet Lanes.

Martin Richardson believed that Quiet Lanes sounded like powerful tools to remind drivers on narrow roads that they were sharing those roads with other, sometimes more vulnerable, users and that they should drive appropriately.

Alan Keene suggested that the LAF through Jacqui Wheeler approach the Parish Councils, explain to them Quiet Lanes and take on any suggestions from them.

Mark Howard asked if there was a middle ground with more signage and communication with drivers before designating a road as a Quiet Lane. The

Chairman replied he would see how other local authorities approach Quiet Lanes during LAF Joint Chairs meeting.

Jacqui Wheeler also stated she would send an email out to Parish Councils, explaining to them Quiet Lanes and ask them for any suggestions.

Councillor Sharpe stated that there needed to be caution as Quiet Lane could end up receiving a lot of people because many residents may investigate to see what it would be like.

The Chairman stated that based on the depth of discussion involved, the LAF would like to be involved in Quiet Lanes.

12 **LCWIP consultation and update on progress - what should the LAF do next?**

Jacqui Wheeler started the item by informing the LAF that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultation occurred in April 2022. While the LCWIP has some support, there was dissatisfaction towards it, which was taken on-board by the Transport Team. Jacqui Wheeler believed the LCWIP went to Cabinet and was approved on 23rd June 2022.

Jacqui Wheeler then pointed out the schemes which were planned to be implemented in 2022, including:

- Junction improvement at A308/Mill Lane
- Stovell Road/Barry Avenue walk/cycle corridor
- Pedestrian crossing improvements in Datchet
- Walk/cycle improvements in Maidenhead town centre

She then explained that Doug Mellon from the Transport Team planned to visit in Stovell Road and Barry Avenue in late-July 2022 to promote engagement and generate ideas and discussion during the investigation process.

Lisa Hughes commented that the lack of inclusion of the needs for disabled people in the plan meant there was no consideration on the priorities for people with disabilities.

Mark Howard explained his groups' objective in reducing the amount of short-term car journeys on certain roads to provide safer access for walkers and cyclists.

Councillor Haseler reassured Lisa Hughes that if there were any specific issues relating to people with disabilities, these could be resolved during the normal service of the Council in which it continuously provided. Lisa Hughes then asked whether this meant it was down to disabled individuals to identify accessibility issues rather than including their needs in the plan. Councillor Haseler responded that the LCWIP was live document and therefore was constantly reviewed and changed. Lisa Hughes replied that she did not understand how the list of schemes was prioritised. Councillor Haseler then briefly explained why each scheme was a priority. He then stated if there was another scheme that needed to be put forward, then it would then be reviewed and possibly prioritised over another scheme.

The Chairman explained that it was a live document which would allow, for example, Lisa Hughes and her group to make additions and then it would be up to the Council or highway authority to put it forward.

After Mark Howard stated it was important for the LAF to talk to the Planning

Team, the Chairman said the LAF would take that on-board.

13 **LAF Chairs Meeting**

Jacqui Wheeler explained to the Forum Members about the upcoming LAF chairs meeting, which was scheduled for 20th July 2022 and was to be virtual. The Forums that would be present were Bracknell Forest LCAF, Mid and West Berkshire LAF (which covers the Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading areas), Surrey CAF and RBWM LAF. (CAF, Countryside Access Forum).

There had been suggestions to invite additional local access forums, namely Hampshire CAF, Oxfordshire CAF, Buckinghamshire LAF and Slough LAF (through this Forum was inactive). Jacqui Wheeler then asked the RBWM LAF member whether they supported the suggested Forums being invited to attend the LAF Chairs meetings.

Alan Keene welcomed the suggestion of inviting addition forums to the LAF Chairs meeting.

Jacqui Wheeler then explained that the purpose of the LAF Chairs meetings was to understand what was going in the wider region and to share information, ideas, issues and concerns.

The Chairman stated he would welcome the larger local authorities, like Hampshire, being invited into discussion in the LAF Chairs meetings and see how they were progressing as well as exchange ideas.

Councillor Sharpe commented it was absolutely essential for the RBWM LAF Chairman to get together with other forum chairs.

The Chairman stated that he and Jacqui Wheeler would send an email out to the RBWM LAF Members with a summary of what was discussed during the LAF Chairs meeting.

ACTION: The Chairman and Jacqui Wheeler to email the LAF with a summary on what was discussed during the upcoming LAF Chairs meeting on 20th July 2022.

14 **Horizon Scanning - Upcoming Planning Consultations with LAF, Shared Use Campaign and Volunteers Updates**

Jacqui Wheeler informed the Forum Members that she received an email regarding a public consultation on the draft Southwest Maidenhead Supplementary Planning document. Residents were encouraged to look at it and give their comments by 17th August 2022.

There were also various drop-in sessions which provided an opportunity for residents to give comments at the following locations and time:

- Maidenhead Library throughout July 2022, starting on 14th July 2022.
- Braywick Leisure Centre on 26th July.
- Online event via Microsoft Teams on 27th July.

Jacqui Wheeler informed the Forum that the designs were underway for public paths in AL-24 (Woodland Park Road Lillibrook Manor site).

Jacqui Wheeler then suggested issues which could be added to the next meeting's agenda were the 'Share the Space' and a 'Dog Control' campaign.

On the Volunteers Update, Jacqui Wheeler explained that there was difficulty in knowing how the RBWM grants scheme was working in 2022 or if any applications were received. She was waiting to hear back about this.

Ceri Richardson was supposed to give an update regarding the new 20mph speed limit, but she was not present at the meeting. As such, she provided this written update outside of the meeting:

Sunninghill and Ascot Parish Council were planning to hold a public consultation with Sunningdale Parish Council on 20mph speed limits in both parishes. The two parishes had been working together to encourage more local people to walk and cycle, and to make it safer for them to do so. The purpose of the consultation was to determine the level of community support for the principle of introducing 20mph speed limits where appropriate. Both parish councils would review the results of the consultation and if results show strong support for the principle of 20mph speed limits, they would be in a position to persuade RBWM to work with them to develop specific proposals for individual streets or zones and implement them in a timely manner. The consultation document that had been approved by both parish councils had also been shared with the Borough Councillors covering the parishes of both Sunninghill and Ascot and Sunningdale. The timing of the consultation needed to be finalised but was likely to start mid-September and run for 4 weeks.

Sunninghill and Ascot Parish Council was also working on producing a 'Walks in the Parish' style map as well as finger post/totem style signage in the Parish indicating distance and time to walk between locations.

Elaborating on the update, Councillor Sharpe stated that the police were generally not supportive of increasing 20mph zones because they believed traffic was moving at reasonable speed down those roads, based on the conversations he had with them.

Martin Richardson suggested it would be good to get a visual position on the extended 20mph zones before discussing safety improvements. He also stated that when he attended a Road Safety Summit the official word from the police was that they never object to speed limit changes. Councillor Sharpe responded that there needed to be a right balance with the police so that they were not put into a situation where they were not willing to enforce road offences.

To clarify, the Chairman explained the context of draft Local Plan. When the first draft version was published, the LAF did a detailed analysis of all the plots which affected the network of paths and bridleways. After this analytical report was submitted, the site numbers in the plan had changed while the sites did not change. This was then passed to the Planning Team.

15 Date of Next Meeting

Members of the Forum noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 6th December 2022.

The meeting, which started at 6.30 pm, ended at 8.35 pm.