

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2018 – 2019

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Activities of the forum

Milestones Statement, and targets for the coming year

The forum was consulted on the Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Report 2019-20 and recommended that the targets and priorities are retained for the coming year. These recommendations were reported to the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel in March 2019 and formed the basis of the targets for the coming year.

Disabled Access and Public Rights of Way

The Forum heard a presentation about the accessibility of public rights of way for people with disabilities highlighting the impacts of changes in the Equality Act 2010. The forum discussed a range of disabled access issues on public rights of way and formed a task and finish group to produce recommendations on accessibility improvements. The working group has meet and is providing valuable feedback to the forum and the Borough in conjunction with the Access Advisory Group to inform works to new and existing public rights of way and open spaces. This work will be ongoing with the aim of deepening the commitment to create accessible public spaces and thereby encourage use by those who are mobility impaired.

Local Nature Reserve – Thriftwood/Ockwell's Park

The Forum heard a presentation about the Borough's purchase of additional land known as Great Thrift Wood at an existing LNR which incorporated plans for a new wetland area with improved public access while also conserving and increasing wildlife habitat. The Great Thrift Wood being a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Forum supports the work being done and is continuing to be consulted on progress with this exciting project.

Cycling Action Plan

The Borough's Cycling Action Plan was supported by the Forum and members were pleased to consider the proposal for a new circular cycle route around the Cookhams presented by a prominent local landowner.

Multi-user routes and Horse Riding improvements

The Forum has continued to consider reports regarding horse riding access to Ashley Hill and approaches made to the Forestry Commission on the forum's recommendation to request horse riding access as Ashley Hill. This is an ongoing project which is being dealt with by the Borough's Rights of Way team. Updates continue to be given to the Forum with recommendations received.

Volunteer Works

The forum continued to monitor the volunteer works that are carried out on the public rights of way network.

Recruitment and Promotion

The forum formed a working group to examine ways in which the forum's membership could be bolstered in conjunction with the responsibilities of the council as the Highway and Appointing Authority for the area.

The group made several recommendations to improve the functioning of the forum including reducing the quorum required, developing better avenues of communication and promotion to highlight the forum's purpose and encourage applications for membership. As a result of advertising in the local "Around the Borough" publication three new members have been appointed in 2019.

Links with other local, regional and national groups

Maintaining links with other neighbouring Local Access Forums has been increasingly challenging over the past year with authority resources reducing and officer time under pressure. The last LAF Chairs meeting was hosted by Bracknell Forest Borough in Jan 2018 with Wokingham suggested as the venue for a future meeting.

All LAF Chairs have agreed via email that the meetings need to be continued as there is definite value in regional bench marking and information sharing and in discussing cross boundary issues and ways that the local forums can work together.

Other issues that the forum has discussed during 2018-2019:

- Volunteer works
- Millennium Walk
- Access and Brexit
- National Trust Right of Way plan
- Battlemead Common

Looking forward

To be decided at 4th July 2019 meeting

Meetings of the Forum

The Local Access Forum meetings for 2018-2019 were as follows:

Formal meetings

- 11th June 2018 – not quorate, meeting abandoned
- 11th October 2018
- 5th February 2019
- 4th July 2019

Membership of the Forum

The forum is expected to achieve a reasonable balance of members' interests. The current membership of the Local Access Forum is listed below.

Name	Representing	Other interests
Cllr. Malcolm Beer	Walking / Cycling	Walking; Cycling; Caravanning;; Rights of Way; Old Windsor Parish Councillor
James Copas	Land and estate management	
Christine Gadd	Rights of Way; Walking; Cycling	
Steve Gillions	Walking	East Berks Ramblers
Lisa Hughes	Disability access	
Cllr. Maureen Hunt	RBWM Councillor	Chair of Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel
Tom Jarvis	Land and estate management	Crown Estate
Alan Keene	Land and estate management	Bisham Parish Council, countryside, rights of way, farming and land management,
Cllr. Asghar Majeed	RBWM Councillor	
Geoff Priest	Open countryside, access for younger users	Hurley Parish Council
Katie Sarsfield	Rights of way	Waltham St Lawrence Parish Council
Dom Lethbridge	Land and Estate Management	National Trust
Anne Woodward	Horse riding	
Lynn Penfold	Wildlife Conservation	
David Clenshaw	Rights of Way – Walking	

Finances

			Total Cost (£)
Meeting expenses			
	Meeting refreshments	200	
			200
Members' Expenses:			
	Dependent Care	-	-
	Travel / Mileage	-	-
	Other Expenses	-	-
Grand Total			200

Note: The costs above do not include overheads such as Officer time or printing costs

How to get involved

For more information about the Local Access Forum and how you can get involved, visit the Local Access Forum web pages at https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200938/local_access_forums , or contact Jacqui Wheeler, Parks & Countryside Access Officer on (01628) 796289 or email jacqui.wheeler@rbwm.gov.uk or prow@rbwm.gov.uk