

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: 29 JUNE 2016

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MONITORING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

(a) Eton-Dorney Multi-User Route

Since the last forum meeting we have been discussing the details of the proposed multi-user route from Eton-Wick to Dorney with the neighbouring Local Access Forums of Buckinghamshire and Slough. A joint letter from the chairs of all three forums was sent in January 2016 to the Environment Agency (EA) as the landowner requesting permission for horses to use the jubilee river paths.

The EA responded in May 2016 stating that they were not able to give permission for the route to be opened up to horse riders.

A joint site meeting between Slough and RBWM LAF members was held on 18th May 2016 to look at the route and a response was drafted and sent on 6th June 2016 addressing the points raised by the EA on 6th June 2016.

A copy of the proposal letter and the subsequent correspondence is included as Appendix A to this report

(b) Forlease Road to Green Lane

As part of the response to the Stafferton Link road scheme, the Forum supported the proposal for a link between Forlease Road and Green Lane underneath the bridge. A map showing the proposed route for this scheme is included as Appendix B to this report.

At present the Maidenhead Waterways project are not planning to undertake works here for approximately 3 years. In order to realise the benefits of this path immediately we have been discussing proposals to create a simple surfaced path through this area as soon as possible, with a view that the path will then be brought up to a higher standard once the waterways scheme passes through the area. It is expected that a path will be able to be created in Sept/Oct 2016.

(c) Deregulation Bill update

The Deregulation Bill was passed and received Royal Assent on 26th March 2015. Regulations and guidance enacting the public rights of way sections of the bill has been delayed and are now expected later this year.

(d) Volunteer works

The following volunteer works have been conducted since November 2015 (as of 20th June 2016)

| Path | Group | Date(s) | Task | Total participants |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| Henley Road Horse Margin | BCA | 17 th Mar 16 | Vegetation clearance | 5 |
| White Waltham RB 10 | BCA | 17 th Mar 16 | Vegetation clearance | 5 |
| Hurley RB 2 | BCA | 24 th Mar 16 14 th Apr 16 | Vegetation clearance | 10 |
| Datchet FPs 8 & 9 | WiW | 6 th Apr 16 | Vegetation clearance | 5 |
| The Green Way and Maidenhead FP 2 | WiW | 13 th Apr 16 | Litter picking | 5 |
| Eton FP 6 | WiW | 20 th Apr 16 | Vegetation clearance | 3 |
| Bray BR 29 (Primrose Lane) | WiW | 27 th Apr 16 4 th May 16 | Vegetation clearance | 9 |
| Maidenhead FP 23B | BCA | 21 st Apr 16 (x2) 28 th Apr 16 | Vegetation clearance | 15 |
| Cookham FP 50 | BCA | 5 th May 16 (x2) 12 th May 16 19 th May 16 (x2) 26 th May 16 9 th Jun 16 16 th Jun 16 (x2) | Vegetation clearance | 45 |
| Maidenhead BR 46 | WiW | 11 th May 16 18 th May 16 | Vegetation clearance | 8 |
| Bray FP 57 | WiW | 25 th May 16 1 st Jun 16 | Vegetation clearance | 9 |
| Bray FP 59 | WiW | 8 th Jun 16 | Vegetation clearance | 5* |
| Total number of task days: 26 | | Total participant days: 124 | | |
| *estimated figures | | | | |

(e) M4 smart motorway

Discussions are ongoing with Highways England with regard to requested changes to the fence height for the bridge at Marsh Lane, Dorney to improve horse riding and cycling access across the bridge. Currently under the Development Control Order process the maximum height allowed for the parapet fence is 1.5m however the recommended height for equestrian use is 1.8m. Discussions are focusing on whether it is feasible to design the bridge to take a 1.8m high parapet fence and raise the height of this at a later date.

(f) Ramblers' Big Pathwatch

The Rambler's Big Pathwatch project ended in January 2016, and the full report is included as Appendix C to this report. The Council has recently received an update from the Ramblers with regard to the planned next steps following on from the project:

As we prepare for the next phase of our Pathwatch campaign, I wanted to give you, as key people in protecting paths, a bit more information about what to expect next and how you might like to get involved.

*Thanks to your support we managed to survey **45%** of the path network in England and Wales last year, reporting over **59,000 path problems and discovered how these affected people's walks**. We have used your findings to build a 'state of the nation' report, and to help identify the long-term solutions to protecting our paths.*

The full report launches on 16 July. We will send you a copy ahead of this, but in the meantime we thought you'd like to know some of the key findings.

The good news is that the majority of our paths seem to be in good condition but things could undoubtedly be better. The scale of the challenge is far from insurmountable and with low level maintenance to deal with undergrowth and missing signs, the majority of problems could be solved.

We understand that it's not simply a lack of will that means paths are sometimes neglected - we know many Highways Authorities are working hard to address the problems the Big Pathwatch identified. But local authorities are under pressure from increasingly squeezed budgets, and alternative solutions are needed.

The Ramblers, as guardians of the path network, our active membership and path maintenance teams, are particularly well placed to help. And that's what the next phase of the campaign is all about. We want to ensure that every path in England and Wales is well maintained by 2020. This means better tools for monitoring and reporting path problems and solutions, more volunteers working better with local authorities, identifying alternative funding opportunities to make sure path maintenance remains a priority, and - crucially - more people taking personal responsibility for paths.

We've been working on a new version of the Pathwatch app. This takes into account much of the valued feedback we received from you during Big Pathwatch as well as through the recent online survey, and will be available for use very soon – we will be updating you. We've also been looking at how path problems are reported on our website, and will be introducing an interactive map to locate path problems. Again, more on this soon.

The Pathwatch mobile phone app and interactive map will aim to build on the strong groundwork from the Big Pathwatch survey, and collect similar data on positive and negative features reported on our path network. As previously, the data collected via Pathwatch will be sent to you as someone who protects paths in your area, as well as the Rights of Way teams at your local Highway Authority, on a fortnightly basis.

Thank you so much for your work so far. By working with your local Highway Authority to resolve the path issues highlighted, you are enabling us to protect and promote our fantastic path network across the country within the severe financial restraints that Highways Authorities now face.

Our public facing campaign aims to engage more people in looking after paths. Regular use and low level maintenance could fix many of the existing path problems – but we recognise that many people just don't think about paths very much. Our campaign aims to get more people to recognise paths as a valuable asset, and ultimately to take action to protect them.

As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing pathwatch@ramblers.zendesk.com if you have any questions or require further information.

With kind regards,

Lindsay Walker

*Dr Lindsay Walker
Policy and Advocacy Support Officer
Ramblers*

(g) Activities of the LAF Fast Response Team

The Fast Response Team has responded to the following consultation on behalf of the forum since 11th November 2016. The responses given on behalf of the Forum is included in Appendix D to this report.

- Proposed restriction of Eton Footpath 51, Eton Thameside

Outcome of Panel decision:

The Public Space Protection Order panel agreed to the gating of the undercover area of the footpath only, 10pm to 5am year round. The existing gate and keypad at the Brocas entrance was to removed as part of this decision.

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING ETON-DORNEY MULTI-USER ROUTE

Environment Agency
c/o George Shelton
Kingfisher House
Goldhay Way
Orton Goldhay
Peterborough
PE2 5ZR

27th January 2016

Dear Mr Shelton

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum (RBWM LAF), Slough Local Access Forum (Slough LAF) and the Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum (Bucks LAF) are seeking to extend a multi-user route from Eton Wick, through Dorney, to Taplow.

The aim is to produce a traffic free horse riding route by allowing use of the existing cycle ways alongside the Jubilee River. This is a continuation of the existing permitted multi-user route that has successfully been in operation at Eton for since 2013.

We are writing to you as the landowner of the path to ask whether you would be willing to allow these cycle paths to be opened to horse riders as a multi-user route. We are proposing that this is done on an ongoing 'permitted path' basis which would allow the permission to be withdrawn if needed.

A map of the suggested route is attached to this letter. This also gives details of suggested minor alterations that could be undertaken to allow this use.

We would be grateful if you could respond to this letter and let us know if you would be amenable to this proposal. This proposal is being spearheaded by RBWM LAF and the secretary contact details are included above.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Thorn
Chair – RBWM LAF

David Munkley
Chair – Slough LAF

Richard Pushman
Chair – Bucks LAF

RESPONSE FROM ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – 17th MAY 2016

Dear Andrew,

I have been passed on your enquiry regarding the path along the Jubilee River.

The Environment Agency are the Freehold owners of top section of the path along the Jubilee River to the M4. The section of path below the M4 motorway to Lake End Road is owned by another party who will also need to be consulted on the request.

I have consulted our Operations Team who look after this area and they have advised as follows:-

1. The rights of way along this section of the Jubilee River were adopted by Buckinghamshire County Council who are responsible for any maintenance of the path and therefore they would also need to be involved with the request.
2. The path cannot be traffic free, as access will be required for maintenance and emergency response.
3. Several sections of the path currently are below the minimum 3 meters required and will require upgrading if to be used by horses.
4. Suitable horse gate access will need to be installed or modified at crossing points to allow horses to cross, with security being maintained to prevent motorbike access.
5. There are concerns regarding the section of path under the M4 Road Bridge, as it's not really suitable for horses, even if lead and not ridden by their rider. This section is also dark and noisy. The path at this particular point is only 1.5 meters wide. Highways England will possibly need to be contacted for their views regarding this request.
6. The path from Marsh Lane to Amerden Lane also acts as a flood embankment, therefore, the integrity of this would need to be ensured if to be used by horses.

Given the above, unfortunately at present we are not in a position to provide our consent to permit access to horse riders along this section.

Kind regards

Lindsay Badman AssocRICS
Estates Officer (South East)
Environment Agency

RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – 6th JUNE 2016

Dear Lindsay,

Thank you very much for your reply dated 17th May 2016. I have some answers to the points that you raise below:

Buckinghamshire County Council are also involved with this project and are in agreement with the proposal. I was not aware that there was another landowner for the southern section as this had not come up through my land searches. I would be grateful if you could provide me with the details and I will certainly contact them as well.

The proposal is not seeking to restrict or change the existing set-up, either by the change of widths (except for some vegetation clearance of overgrowth that has happened over the years), barriers or existing access arrangements for maintenance or emergency vehicles (save for that detailed below). Informal use by horse riders is already happening; the proposal is seeking permission to allow use of the facility as is. We would not be seeking to widen the path to a 3 metre width.

You are correct that the M4 bridge is the pinch point along this route – we propose to address this by firstly providing signage and information so that users will know well in advance about the narrow path and route at this point, providing signage and mounting blocks either side of the bridge so that users can dismount and lead their horse under the M4, and making the approach to this path straighter by adjusting the existing barriers. We would also install signage to advise other users that horses may be passing under the bridge. In addition to this I also hope to secure an alternative route through the adjacent fields to Marsh Lane for users whose horse would not be comfortable going under the M4 bridge.

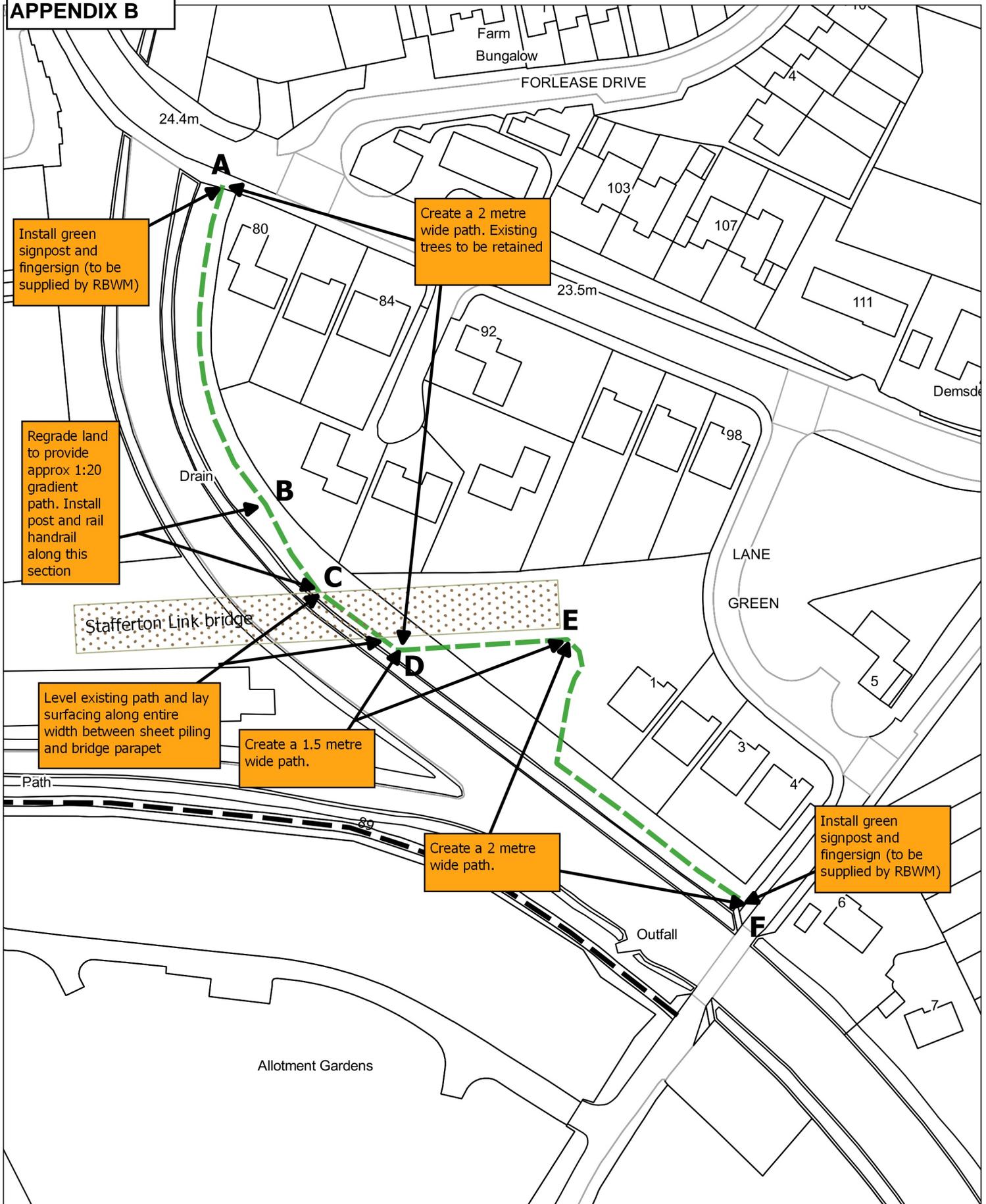
The width of the Jubilee paths between Marsh Lane and Amarden Lane is very wide and well suited to multi-use of the paths in a similar way that is already happening with EA consent near to Eton Wick. We can ensure that the paths are regularly inspected and any necessary maintenance is carried out.

I would be grateful for an opportunity to meet with you on site and discuss any particular issues, if you would be happy to reconsider this proposal. Would you or a member of your operation teams be available to meet?

Thanks and Best Regards,

Andrew Fletcher
Public Rights of Way Officer

APPENDIX B



Public Rights of Way
 Drawn by: Andrew Fletcher

Dwg No. Moor Cut FP 1A

Date: 24/05/2016
 Scale: 1:1,000

**Creation of new footpath along the Moor Cut, Maidenhead
 Design Plan**

The Royal Borough



**Windsor &
 Maidenhead**

Ramblers Big Pathwatch

All Survey Data



The Big Pathwatch aimed to get everyone out walking paths, checking them and telling us what they found. Between July 2015 to early January 2016, we reported back to you the issues they found. We also received a lot of positive data, which showed why people enjoyed walking and how they valued the right of way network.

This report details everything in the Big Pathwatch found on the right of way network in your area during the reporting period. We hope this provides you with a helpful overview; local Ramblers volunteers will be happy to discuss this in more detail with you. To find your local Ramblers volunteer contact bigpathwatch@ramblers.org.uk or visit <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/group-finder.aspx>

The way we work together to protect our paths is very important and we would very much value your feedback on the Big Pathwatch and how it has worked for you. You can provide comments via an online survey - a link to this will be sent shortly in a separate e-mail.

Nicky Philpott
Director of advocacy & engagement

Windsor and Maidenhead (B)

| All Survey data | | features reported: | |
|---------------------|--------|--|---|
| squares adopted: | 189 |  |  |
| squares completed: | 189 | 683 | 197 |
| km of RoW surveyed: | 303.28 | | |

This reporting period 13-July-15 to 10-January-16

The report and all data contained in it remains the intellectual property of the Ramblers. It should not be provided to any third party without the prior written consent of the Ramblers. If any extracts are used/published they should be credited accordingly.

For further clarification please see the full terms and conditions on our website by [clicking here](#)

| Negative Reported Features | | Path unusable | Path inconvenient | Total |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------|
| Intimidating | Dog | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Other | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Bridges, gates & stiles | Unsafe stile | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| | Unsafe gate | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Unsafe bridge | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | Other | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Finding your way | Missing sign on route | 2 | 19 | 21 |
| | Missing sign at road | 0 | 13 | 13 |
| | Broken sign on route | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Broken sign at road | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Discouraging sign | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Path not found | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| | Other | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Path surface | Muddy | 0 | 16 | 16 |
| | Flooded | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Ploughed | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| | Other | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Road crossing | No safe way to cross | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | Other | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Obstructions | Undergrowth | 2 | 20 | 22 |
| | Overhanging vegetation | 0 | 21 | 21 |
| | Barbed wire (close to path) | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| | Barbed wire (across path) | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Electric fence (across path) | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Fallen or hanging tree | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| | Other | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Total | | 10 | 186 | 196 |

Positive Reported Features

| Positive Reported Features | | Positive |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Attractive views | Woodland | 35 |
| | Open country | 137 |
| | Town /City | 5 |
| | Mountains and hills | 2 |
| | Other | 34 |
| Fauna | Small mammal | 5 |
| | Larger mammals | 12 |
| | Birds | 63 |
| | Butterfly | 5 |
| | Insects | 1 |
| Flora | Trees | 57 |
| | Flowers | 15 |
| | Fungi | 10 |
| | Other | 22 |
| Interesting | Toilets | 2 |
| | Bench | 32 |
| | Pub or tea shop | 24 |
| | Buildings | 41 |
| | Lake or body of water | 19 |
| | Other | 43 |
| Welcoming | Person | 2 |
| | Signs | 110 |
| | Other | 8 |
| Total | | 684 |

RBWM Local Access Forum Fast Response Team

Consultation response:

Proposed restriction of Eton Footpath 51, Eton Thameside

The Local Access Forum (LAF) Fast Response Team has examined the proposals for the above path and make the following comments on behalf of the forum. Please note the consultation did not detail the level and nature of the anti-social behaviour. The LAF Fast Response Team made their comments with the assumption that the level of anti-social behaviour experienced is sufficient to justify the closure

The Local Access Forum does not object in principle to the proposal to close the path during night-time hours, however they do raise concerns about the extent of the closure and the proposed timing. There are a number of issues that the Panel needs to be consider before granting the request.

1. Extent of the closure

The Forum have concerns about the proposal to close the entire path and consider that the anti-social behaviour issues could be resolved by restricting use of the "underpass" section of the path without restricting use of the river frontage. This would provide an effective balance between the public use and resident concerns.

In addition to not unduly restricting the public enjoyment of the path limiting the closure to the underpass would make the operation and design of the gates simpler and easier to maintain. Specific comments regarding the design of the gates are included below.

2. Timing of the closure

The issue of the closure is to restrict use of the path during the hours of darkness, to reduce potential intimidation and anti-social behaviour. The Forum advise that the timing of the closure is important and needs to be properly defined. The forum also consider that whatever timing is used it should be well signed and clear to the public when the path will be closed.

The proposal to restrict between sunset and sunrise poses logistical problems as these timings change every day, likewise a fixed time closure could close the path too early in the summer and too late in the winter. The forum consider that the best times to restrict use would be 1 hour after sunset and 1 hour before sunrise every day, as at these times the light levels are still adequate to allow use.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum

Secretariat: Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way Officer
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF
Telephone: 01628 796122 **Email:** prow@rbwm.gov.uk
http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/prow_local_access_forum.htm

If an automated mechanism can be put in place that would open the path 1 hour before or after sunset, the forum consider this would be acceptable. This would however require a more complex timing system. If this is not possible then the forum recommend that a fixed time frame of 10pm to 6am, depending on the nature and timing of the problems experienced.

If the closure is based on a “dusk until dawn” approach this would need to be carefully defined to ensure that the public and the owners of the property are fully aware of the expectations when the path will be open and closed.

3. Nature of the closure

There are no details given about the design and operation of the gate in the consultation, however in preparing this advice the Fast Response Team visited the site and examined the proposed gate position.

The forum consider that there is a risk that the public would be deterred from using the path if they encounter a closed gate, even if the gate was not locked.

The forum consider that it would be better for the public if the gates are left in an open position during the daytime so that the public are not deterred from using the path. The automatic system proposed should therefore physically open the gates.

4. Design and operation of the gates

The gate at the pub side of the path should be a full width single gate, which can swing inwards to open the full width of the path. There appears to be adequate space to enable this to be installed.

There forum have concerns about how the gate at the Brocas end of the path would operate. The current hinged gate would require electric equipment to be installed over the river, which raises concerns about safety and also maintenance issues, particularly should the area flood. In addition to this there is no space for a gate to hinge on the other gate post without the existing bench being moved.

The forum recommend that a sliding gate may be the best option at this point allowing it to retract into the private area to the north of the footpath. It would also be easier to install the necessary electrics at this point.

If the extent of the restriction was limited to the underpass both gates could be simple swing gate designs that can open to the full width of the path.

The Forum consider that a manual operation button will need to be installed to prevent users being trapped inside the gated area. This should be set back from the gates so that it cannot be activated from the other side. Flashing warning

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum

Secretariat: Andrew Fletcher, Public Rights of Way Officer
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF
Telephone: 01628 796122 **Email:** pro@rbwm.gov.uk
http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/prow_local_access_forum.htm

lights may also be needed on the gate to warn people when they are about to move.

5. Signage

At present the signage is minimal and not prominent. Should the gating proposal be implemented new signage should be installed which is prominent and clear, and also details the times that the path will be closed.

6. Costs

It is not clear from the public consultation who would install and maintain these gates. The Forum consider that these gates should not be installed and maintained at the public cost.

In addition to this the Forum advise that there should be a named company or specific person who is responsible for the gates, this would allow the Council to take effective and timely action should any problem arise.

This letter constitutes formal advice from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum. Local Authorities are required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.