

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th May, 2010 at the Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

Laurie Tucker (Chair)
Councillor May Dodds
Toby Evans
Margery Hitchman
Ian Houghton
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Ken Wright
Malcolm Hellings

Observers

Les James, Slough and District Civic Society

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Alex Deans, Acting Head of Highway Engineering
Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Project Officer
Gerald Pleave, Parks Development Officer
Jacqui Wheeler, Rights of Way Officer

Apologies for Absence:- David Coe and Margaret Innis

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Parmar declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7, Gating Order Proposals - Update, as he lived in Mildenhall Road but he would approach the matter with an open mind.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 12th January, 2010 were approved as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

Stoke Poges Lane / Elliman Avenue

The Forum was advised that junction improvements were going ahead as at the last meeting the Forum had been advised that this was not the case. These had been brought forward as extra funding had been made available. Members asked about the consultation processes for the scheme and were advised that notices had been placed on site. Members were concerned that they had not received any information in advance of the improvements as they had expected to see a model.. A Member suggested that it would be useful to widen the traffic islands

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to ensure that the road width could only accommodate one car to prevent a second from blocking the cycle path.

Agreed: That a plan for the work would be emailed to interested LAF Members.

4. Membership Update

Jacqui Wheeler (JW) advised that there had only been one response to the recent press release, a copy of which had also been placed in the Grapevine. It was agreed that information on the LAF would be placed on the front page of the Council's website. JW reported that Margaret Innis had resigned and two other Members' terms of office had expired. Members suggested that information leaflets about the LAF be sent to anybody who made a complaint or enquiry about footpaths, cycle paths, etc. A further suggestion was to put information about the LAF on the display screens in MyCouncil.

Agreed:

- (a) That letters be sent to those Members of the Forum whose term of office had expired to ascertain whether they wished to continue on the Forum.
- (b) That the suggestions detailed above be implemented in order to attract new Members

5. Evergreen Trust-Update

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on Evergreen Trust activity and the Britwell Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). The Forum was advised that the Council had agreed a work programme and the Trust was currently waiting to see what funding would be available. There were several areas of the Trust's work programme which specifically referred to the LAF including instillation of signs, installation of steps at Lynch Hill Valley and installation of soakaways at Farnham Lane. There was some concern raised that the access for Lynch Hill Valley would be steps and Members questioned whether a ramp could be installed. The Trust's Alan Woodley was happy to meet with Members to discuss options for signage. Members discussed issues regarding access and it was noted that fencing was in place to prevent motorbikes and flytippers using the area but access was still available for pedestrians and cyclists. It was agreed that any developments regarding this would be obtained from Catherine Horsepool.

The Britwell BOA action plan looked to consult with the LAF on improvement of paths and disabled access and improvement of directional signage. It was noted that the Evergreen Trust was attending the Britwell Carnival and it was suggested that the LAF be represented at the Carnival as well.

Agreed:

- (a) That an invite be sent to all Members to visit the Lynch Hill Valley site and following this a meeting be arranged with Alan Woodley to look at the map for the Britwell Loop

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- (b) That the LAF be represented at the Britwell Carnival due to take place on 19th June.

6. Gating Order Proposals-Update

Mildenhall to Lerwick Drive

It was reported that this was on hold as there was insufficient evidence at present to proceed with a gating order. A Member reported that they had received concerns from residents but it was noted that problems needed to relate to the actual pathway and have to be reported to be taken into consideration.

Agreed – That a further update be provided at the next meeting.

Shaggy Calf Lane to Boarderside

The LAF considered a report which provided an update on the gating proposal. A questionnaire had been circulated which achieved a 20% response rate. Footage from a CCTV camera was also being considered along with the survey responses. However Esther Deacon (ED), Community Safety Project Officer was considering not pursuing a gating order on this alleyway due to the high useage.

Agreed – That ED attend the next meeting to provide an update.

Salt Hill Park Tunnel

Nahid Moghul, Community Safety Project Officer and JW attended a recent parks meeting where it was recommended that there was no justification for gating in the evening. A mural had recently been completed in tunnel which had received input for the design from school children.

Proposals for the Gating Order Process

JW advised that comments were requested from the LAF on proposals for the gating order process by the 16th June. Members considered a document which detailed proposals for the process, which included a suggestion for a Gating Order Committee and proposals for response rates to surveys. Members raised the following issues:

- How would non-residents, e.g. footpath users be consulted
- Whether the percentage rates for responses were for households or individuals
- That a third of responses was a high response rate as shown by the Shaggy Calf Lane Survey.

7. LTP 3- Cycling Consultation (ROWIP/LTP3 Integration)

A copy of the Council's cycling survey was distributed to Members. Responses were required by the 26th May. Members asked where the survey was available from and whether Stows Cycles had copies available. JW agreed to look into this.

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Members suggested that useful respondents to the survey would be the Police and possibly be royal mail. Members were asked to pass the survey on to as many people as possible. The Forum suggested that if a survey was ever carried out in future it would be useful to have a shorter more generalised survey to start with and then target focus groups for more in depth consideration.

8. Cinder Track Action Plan

Members considered an updated version of the plan which was circulated following a site visit on 4th May. Members noted that there had been work carried out without consultation and asked whether the fencing put in place was temporary. The fencing had been put in place to allow the planting along the edge to establish and were permanent. A Member noted that soil had been piled up along the edge of peoples fences. Officers advised that developers were instructed to not remove the soil.

JW advised that there was a possibility of the Cinder Track Action Group introducing a graffiti wall. There was some concern raised that the Resident's and Tenants Associations of north Slough had not been consulted about this. It was proposed that a letter from the LAF be sent to the Streetworks Team or Cable Companies as appropriate regarding the vandalism and graffiti to cable boxes. It was suggested that these may still be operational but this needed to be confirmed.

Agreed – That letters be sent in support of the proposal for a graffiti wall and highlighting the LAFs concerns about the vandalised cable boxes.

9. Regional and National Update

The LAF received an update on the England Access Forum. It was reported that the England Access Forum and Natural England were discussing future working arrangements. It was noted that there may be a lack of support for the EAF from Natural England. Natural England had requested comments and views from LAFs on future arrangements for the EAF.

At the South East LAF Members Conference advice was given on publicising LAFs. A Member suggested that a link could be put in place with Slough Council for Voluntary Service or Sunrise mental Health Group.

10. AOB

Slough LAF Annual Report

Members received a copy of the draft for the annual report which detailed the work of the LAF over the past year and included photos to be used in the report.

Agreed - That the Annual Report and photos be approved.

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Recent Modification Orders Jubilee River

Members were advised that the modification orders updated several footpaths and bridleways to reflect work which had already been carried out when the Jubilee River was built.

Agreed – That the Modification orders be noted

Updates on Planning Applications

Members were advised that an outline planning application for development of Kennedy Park had been approved. In principle SEGRO were supportive of a footway scheme across their land. However it was not yet confirmed and further discussions were underway. A member noted that this had been used as a walking route for the past 20 years.

Detailed planning schemes for developments on the trading estate still needed to be considered but outline planning permission had been agreed. Members asked about provision for cyclists and were concerned that the LAFs input was not being considered. Members requested further opportunities for consultation and wanted to receive updates on progress. The Forum were advised that the layout agreed included cycle routes. At this stage further detailed plans were not going forward.

Agreed –

- (a) That the agreed plans showing cycle routes be brought to the next meeting of the LAF.
- (b) That the LAF be given the opportunity to consider the detailed plans as they are taken forward.

Wild Food Project Bid Request

The Thames Valley Groundwork Trust was seeking funding from the BIG Lottery for a project which would help people in the urban fringe to improve their diet through foraging. The LAF would be able to assist with this by suggesting suitable walking routes for foraging.

Agreed – That the LAF send a letter of support for the project.

Planning Application – Intermodal Freight Exchange

Alex Deans advised the Forum that a development for an intermodal freight exchange from rail to road would mean that one Right of Way would be extinguished but another would be updated and improvements to cycle routes introduced. The LAF would receive further updates but the application had not yet been submitted.

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Ditton Park

A Member advised that the gate in Ditton Park was being locked indiscriminately and asked what the agreement was for this. The LAF was informed that there was only permission to lock the gate after dusk and it should not be closed at other times. JW agreed to ask Savio DeCruz to look into the closure by Computer Associates at time when flooding might occur.

Heart of Slough

Members were advised that plans for the cycle routes around the heart of Slough area would be brought to the next meeting.

11. Next Meeting Date - 8th September, 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.40 pm and closed at 7.40 pm)