

SLOUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Introduction:

"Whilst it is recognised that the Slough Local Access Forum is relatively small in size, it is still I feel, very proactive. All members have been involved in various activities around the borough. We are also trying to work with adjoining Local Access Forums to improve the accessibility countryside from urban Slough via cross boundary links"

Laurie Tucker,
Chair of Local Access Forum 2009

What is a Local Access Forum?

The Slough Local Access Forum is made up of a group of local volunteers who have interests in improving walking, cycling and horse riding access across the borough.

Set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, members provide strategic advice to Slough Borough

Council and other organisations managing access.

The Borough Council is legally required to have regard to any advice received from the forum.

Meetings of the Forum in 2009

11th February 2009 13th May 2009
10th September 2009 12th January 2010

Current Members

The Slough Local Access Forum is now actively seeking new members as several current members periods of membership are coming up for renewal.

<i>Member</i>	<i>Representing</i>
David Coe	Conservation
May Dodds	SBC Councillor
Toby Evans	Cycling
Malcolm Hellings	Walking
Margery Hitchman	Accessibility
Ian Houghton (Vice Chair '08)	Cycling
Margaret Innis	General & conservation
Satpal Parmar	SBC Councillor
Laurie Tucker (Chair '08)	Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council & Local Community
Ken Wright	Walking and Local community

Activities in 2009

Building relationships

The Sustrans "Bike It" Officer visited the SLAF once again to explain progress that

has been made across the borough with the Bike It and Bikeability schemes.

The SLAF was eager to hear that increased numbers of children are now receiving the improved training. Questions were raised about how training could be expanded to help those who cannot afford bicycles and how the council can work with and help support the Freewheelers, local cycling group. This is an area the SLAF hopes to investigate further.

The SLAF recognises that encouraging sustainable modes of transport is key to successful transport planning for the future. To help achieve the kind of shift in transport choice required the SLAF is keen to encourage the Council to improve the local access network, including all off road access so that it can meet the needs of the greatest number of people.

Planning Gains

SLAF members attended a meeting with the Council's Transport Planners to look at a major planning application and help identify improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure.

These improvements could then be included in negotiations with the developers for potential inclusion as a contribution under Planning legislation.

The Canal

Members of the SLAF met with British Waterways and the Chairman of the

Friends of Slough Canal to discuss issues arising from accessibility audits previously undertaken by members.

Future plans for development of the basin area and for encouraging use of the towpath were also discussed. British Waterways took on a variety of points made by the SLAF and provided useful information about the day to day management of the canal.

The SLAF continues to be interested in the towpath as a major local walking and cycling link for both functional and recreational access and will look at actions it can take to help British Waterways and the Friends group in managing this local nature resource.

Regional Communication & England Access Forum

The SLAF has discussed its position on Gating Orders, Coastal Access and Shared Use Routes all of which are issues on the national agenda. The EAF has been experiencing difficulty with the necessary support being provided by Natural England, but is continuing to fight to be the voice of LAFs on a national level providing advice at the inception of access policy to Central Government. The Slough LAF fully supports the need for the existence of the England Access Forum.

Walking into the Countryside

Cross boundary links to countryside continues to be a major concern of the

SLAF. Work is continuing after letters were sent out to try to engage with neighbouring Rights of Way teams, Local Access Forums and Parish Councils.

Community Safety

Again this year the SLAF has been kept informed about ongoing community safety issues concerning alleys across the borough.

No actual Gating Orders have been made this year, with the SLAF instrumental in influencing the Council's decision not to make any Orders, balancing access needs with what can often be very real concerns about anti-social behaviour.

SLAF members have been involved in evaluating the accessibility of automated gates should a gating order eventually be made.

For further information about the Slough Local Access Forum and how you can get involved please visit the Local Access Forum web pages or contact the officer to the Slough Forum:

Jacqui Wheeler

LAF Support Officer - 01753 477479 or
email to:

localaccessforum@slough.gov.uk

Link to LAF web pages is:

<http://slough.gov.uk/services/11625.asp>