

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 21st May, 2015 at the Meeting Room 1, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2SP

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley, (Chair)
Ian Houghton, (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Andy Packer,
Toby Evans

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Ollie Kelly
Parks and Open Spaces Manager

175. Welcome

176. Apologies

177. Declarations of Interest

None

178. Minutes of the last meeting held on 28th January 2015

The minutes from the last meeting held on 28th January 2015 were approved as correct and accurate.

179. Matters Arising (other than those on the agenda)

Footpath 35 a and b – High Street to Herschel Street to Hencroft Street North

Planning consent is due to be given as soon as the S106 agreement is signed off by the AD of Housing thus agreeing that the FP35a will be stopped up and physically gated. DM voiced concern that the gated space would still be mis-used. JW stated that the site adjacent is currently hoarded pending development.

JW stated survey results are being awaited as to the use of the path.

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Resolved - JW would bring count results to the next meeting.

SE LAF Conference 19th May 2015 -

No-one from Slough LAF could attend this meeting. DM and JW would work together on the LAF Annual Review.

Ditton Park Cycle path –

JW would ask CA Technologies for an update and also if the driveway to Ditton Park could be used as an alternative route in the event of South Field path flooding.

Linear Park cycle path in Slough

The trees which were overhanging the path near the cricket pitch have been cut back inadvertently due to a tree falling across the path. DM queried the current position concerning future maintenance of the path. JW confirmed the situation is still in stasis due to problems with having the land properly registered with the Land Registry. Transport officers have confirmed they are waiting for advice from the Legal team. JW suggested that the LAF send an email to Transport copying the Legal team in to look into this as a matter of urgency copying relevant Parks officers. Members were united in their concern that this path is properly maintained with TE confirming the current condition of the path surface is deteriorating and being encroached.

OK confirmed that Parks would continue to react to occasional one-off's of need such as the tree falling, but that the programmed maintenance is the casualty at the moment pending a budget being transferred.

Resolved – LAF to push for resolution of this matter through email to Legal and get some clarity on the problems.

St Paul's Avenue/Stoke Road Junction-

Network Management Team fed back to the LAF raising the safety issue of no pedestrian phase at this crossing. This junction is on the priority list for review pending budget availability for a pedestrian phase on the lights though there have been no recorded accidents over the last three years.

TE commented that the new crossing request boxes do not have an audible beep when it turns green and is time to cross. JW would investigate with the Network Management Team whether this is a function that is not available on the new pedestrian crossing designs, as this is a serious accessibility issue particularly for those with visual impairment. eg; Salt Hill pedestrian crossing.

JW to re-send Strava email from RBWM around to all members again.

180. Transport / LSTF Schemes/Designs - Updates

JW directed members to the updates on the report included in the papers.

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JW confirmed that the second LAF letter responding to the Transport letter about the two schemes on Tuns Lane and Windsor Road has been sent to the relevant officer.

[Later Update after meeting – Savio Decruz confirmed a response would be sent to the LAF and confirmed safety improvements at the crossing of Tuns Lane by FP31 are being considered.]

East-West Cycle Route – poplars – feedback from Transport - the only poplar that is being removed is the one closest to the tunnel entrance. OK explained the management of the vegetation around the tunnel and the new cycling route through the park. The temporary porta cabin located at the tunnel entrance is a security measure due to the tunnel being the main diversion route while the cross rail project is on-going at Stoke Poges Lane. The alignment of the cycle route was carefully considered to give maximum forward visibility. The circular path in the park will be re-instated to the entrance on Stoke Poges Lane once the bridge works are complete.

IH explained the whole bridge structure had to be re-designed due to problems with the old abutments and this is the cause of the delay among other issues.

Leigh Road Bridge

The expected opening of the new road bridge is 28th September 2015. Discussions are taking place about how to achieve the old bridge as a walking and cycling route. JW will bring updates and initial design as soon as it is available. Any stopping up will require Network Rail approval as they own the old bridge structure, this could cause complications.

Parking Tickets Herschel Street – 2014-15 there were 896 tickets issued. The double yellow lines are upgraded to a loading ban which means instant PCN can be issued without waiting time. TE thought the problems with illegal parking in Herschel Street had improved to some degree though all recognised it's not perfect. **JW will clarify when the Herschel Street scheme will be complete.**

The enforcement car cannot be used to issue tickets other than outside schools and on bus lanes, due to restrictions in the new Deregulation Act.

181. Update on Basin Proposals Slough Canal

JW referred members to the updates on the Slough Canal Action Plan in the reports.

CRT stated that a planning application is due to be submitted this summer for long term development at the basin. The CRT officers who deal with access are keen to see the proposals for the interface with Stoke Road which the LAF were consulted on, included in the planning application or championed by the Council's planning team.

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JW tabled the revised basin proposals plan which now shows a cycle hire docking station at the rear of the adopted footway outside the basin entrance. The one car parking space remains with a lockable drop down bollard and bollards to define the walking and cycling access, though this is not a separate access as the LAF had wanted.

Bowyer Playing Fields access points to the canal were acknowledged as currently being inadequate and segregating the park from the canal. OK stated that the Parks team have not yet had input into these proposals which incidentally do not make up the main SRP planning application but which it is hoped will feed into the main planning application as well as give direction for interim enhancements at the Basin prior to full development, which do not compromise the long term vision. DDA compliance would be sought though problematic due to the difference in levels between this park and the towpath.

Once the full planning application is submitted, it will be important that the LAF is confident in knowing what it wants the area to be like in order to make relevant representations.

TE was concerned that the LAF ensures that the opportunity to provide a unique public space and accessibility to the canal is not compromised by a development where the priority is focussed on private housing. IH commented that the plan shows a wooden fence along the north side of the canal. JW explained the idea of having a green corridor created on the north side of the canal whereby the CRT land alongside the canal is cleared and the boundary of the CRT land and the Housing owned green space behind are re-aligned.

OK asked where the process of consultation is in regards to the plans for long term development and these interim enhancements. All agreed a consistent approach is needed.

Canal budget spend in 15/16 – JW asked for a steer from members on how to spend this year's budget.

OK tabled the ideas that came out of the public consultation for Bloom Park which has an interface with the canal towpath. There is S106 money available from the Middlegreen development to make improvements in key areas; play, drainage and pedestrian access. OK stated that the Council is keen that master forward planning in all Slough parks is progressed to overcome historic problems of adhoc development in parks and also drive future funding bids. There are no specifics yet, but ideas include improvements to the way the park integrates with the canal. For instance creating managed breaks in the vegetation could open up surveillance between the two resulting in a safer environment. OK felt that drawing together access benefits attached to improving integration between the park and canal would be very valuable in gaining future external funding. Ideas would be firmed up over the next few months for Bloom Park specifically and OK welcomed input and joint working with the LAF.

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All agreed there are opportunities for the LAF to feed ideas into the Parks plan and provide their viewpoint on improving the infrastructure as opposed to using the money just to fund play areas. Also that making the entrance points to the canal more inviting is fundamental to encourage use of the east-west travel corridor the canal represents. DM raised the concern that clearance of vegetation will be vastly detrimental to habitat for wildlife. OK confirmed that a balance must be achieved and that Parks are completely aware of the needs of ecology and environmental protection. JW agreed to send around a draft of the LAF position on this consultation asking for members input so the LAF advice could then be sent to Parks.

Resolved – JW to bring update to next meeting on the progress of the planning submission, any updates from dialogue with the SRP and will continue liaising with CRT and Council's Housing team to see what can be accomplished in the interim.

182. Cycling in Slough

The Transport team extended an invitation to the LAF to see the Cycle Hub prior to its official opening and JW would arrange a suitable date and time. JW tabled the internal layout drawings for the Cycle Hub and referred members to the report on page 25.

There is a cost attached to the secure cycle parking and the workshop area is just for the servicing of the cycle hire bikes. Members thought it might be beneficial to have part of the space available for people to be able to repair their own bikes or have a bike serviced while at work.

Members discussed the weekly cycle hire figures which are continually updated. IH thought that average hires per day was the most significant statistic and wanted to know what targets were set for the project at the outset and are these being met? How many hire bikes were initially bought? Cllr Parmar noted that a docking station in Colnbrook could be beneficial.

Members agreed that where docking stations are installed there must be sufficient safe cycling infrastructure/routes in the vicinity. JW said that initially the cycle hire scheme was commuter driven focussing on people coming into the borough, however the Forum felt that this should now be expanded to include recreational/leisure cycling inside the borough.

JW would ask an officer from integrated transport to the next LAF meeting.

Members were asked urgently to look at the New Cycling Map and feedback any errors, changes, gaps to JW for the production of an updated version.

Resolved – JW to invite a Transport Officer to the next meeting and arrange Cycle Hub evening visit. Members to feedback comments on the Cycle Map to JW asap.

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183. Horizon Scanning

DM and JW attended the Joint LAF Chairs Meeting on 5th February 2015. The officers are working on a GIS layer so that cross boundary issues can be mapped. The next meeting is due to take place on 2nd June 2015.

Multi-User Route –

JW updated members about the next stage of the multi-user route which the RBWM LAF is pushing to extend towards Maidenhead along the Jubilee River. There have been no complaints or problems with the previous section (Wood Lane east towards Eton) for which Eton College have agreed to extend the permission for horse riders for another year. The section of the new route (westwards from Wood Lane) which is inside the Slough boundary is already legal for horse riders to use. However, RBWM LAF would like Slough LAF support for a joint letter to Bucks LAF to request their help in driving this new provision for horse riders forward. The complication is that there are multiple landowners.

Resolved - All members agreed that Slough LAF is happy to support a joint letter as described above.

Summer Site Visits –

JW will put together an action list from each site visit and send photos around. The next visit is on 11th June 2015 to the SIFE site on the north side of the Colnbrook Bypass.

SMART Motorway – This item will be on the next meeting agenda.

ROWIP Review – This item will be on the next meeting agenda.

Big Pathwatch – This is a Ramblers Association project aimed at gathering a dataset on path condition for all PRoW across the country. Volunteers will survey all paths in a 1km OS square and upload data about each path in this grid square to the Ramblers website or via a mobile app. JW will ask John Keegan to give an update on this at the next meeting.

Huddle – JW will request a Huddle username for Andy Packer.

184. House keeping

Re-election of Chair and Vice Chair – The meeting agreed that JW will email members on this matter asking for their formal support for the following action; the proposal on the table at the end of the meeting for the re-election of DM as the LAF Chair seconded by PS and for IH as Vice-Chair nominated and seconded by DM, AP and PS.

185. Date of next meeting

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The next meeting will be at 6.30pm on Wednesday 16th September 2015 at meeting room 1, Chalvey Community Centre

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.40 pm and closed at 8.45 pm)