

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th November, 2008 at the Mayor's Conference Room, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

Laurie Tucker, Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council (Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Toby Evans
Malcolm Hellings, Slough and District Civic Society
Margery Hitchman
Ken Wright

Observers

Les James, Slough District Civic Society

Councillor Tony Haines, on behalf of the Friends of Slough Canal

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Ian Houghton
Alex Deans
Bruce Hickman, Community Parks Projects Officer
Kathryn Horsepool
Gerald Pleace, Parks Development Officer
Jacqui Wheeler, LAF Secretary

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Dodds.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 17th July 2008 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

Cycle Training

Laurie Tucker advised that he had spoken to Inspector Boulmer, Thames Valley Police, who would liaise with Claire Robinson, the Council's Bike It Officer.

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Cinder Track

Jacqui Wheeler (**JW**) advised that the graffiti near Cumberland Avenue and Sheffield Road had now been painted over.

Checking Accessibility – Canal Tow Path

It was noted that there was no response yet from British Waterways regarding the list of problems encountered during the recent site visit.

Gating Orders

In relation to the proposed Gating Order on the pathway between Mildenhall Road and Lerwick Drive, Members were advised that the results of the informal consultation held with residents were now available. These had indicated that most residents in the immediate vicinity would like the pathway to be gated but as yet there was no formal Council Policy, defining the percentage required before the Order would be approved. Officers had been advised that a percentage above 50% in favour should be recognised as being in favour of an Order. There were further issues around the extent to which consultation should take place geographically.

It was noted that Kam Bhatti had prepared a draft Gating Order but this was dependent on the agreed policy being implemented.

Provision of Cycle Stands in Town Centre

Malcolm Hellings referred to the discussion at the previous meeting in relation to cycle stands. In his opinion there were insufficient stands within the town centre. **JW** advised that these concerns would be relayed to Roger Kirkham and Rajanayagam Amirthanayagam. **Action- JW**

Bridleway 17 (Wood Lane to Eton Wick)

JW referred to the suggested widening of the bridleway and the request to Eton College to dedicate extra land for this reason. She was not convinced that the Forum should ask for the bridleway to be widened and referred to paragraph 6.1 of the Forum's terms of reference. As a cyclist, Ian Houghton felt that widening the bridleway would be useful and he agreed that he would look at the area. Bruce Hicks felt that the bridleway would lose its character if it was widened. It was agreed that **JW** would prepare a letter to Eton College and circulate this to Members. **Action- JW**

5. **Membership Update**

Members were advised that there was no change to the membership of the Forum which currently stood at ten Members.

6. **Baylis to Town Centre Walking and Cycling Route**

A list of the items that would possibly be implemented as part of the new walking and cycling scheme were tabled. These included the protection of

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walls/fences from graffiti using planting and chain link fencing, the resurfacing of the cinder track, the installation of new dog foul bins and the installation of a new link into Castlevue School. Members considered the list and raised the following questions/comments as follows:-

- It was highlighted that the route did not go all the way to Baylis.
- The cinder track was resurfaced ten years ago – it was felt that it was a waste of money to resurface it again when it was in a good condition.
- It was felt that the part of the route that went under the railway bridge was unsafe. From a cycling perspective it was not safe because there was no line of sight when leaving the tunnel to the north. The Officer commented that the subway had been painted and was better lit than previously.
- A Member wanted confirmation that the new dog foul bins would continue to be maintained when the one year maintenance included in the scheme expired.
- The need to create a new link to Godolphin Junior School was questioned as there was already an access gate. It was agreed that Alex Deans would mention this to the designers.
- In relation to item 13 on the list a Member highlighted that there was uncertainty over the Castlevue School location.

It was agreed that the above comments be forwarded to the relevant Officer.

Action- JW

JW discussed the upgrade of the footpath to a bridleway and advised that it would stay on the definitive map as a public right of way. A report would be considered by Cabinet in January, 2009 and it was noted that there were no objections from Local Access Forum Members.

Members discussed the division of the route between walkers and cyclists.

Agreed - That the Local Access Forum recommends that the walking and cycling route should be designed as an un-segregated track.

Action- JW to forward recommendation to relevant Officer

7. England Access Forum

Members received an update on the development of the England Access Forum and the outcome of the meeting of the South East Region Local Access Forum. It was noted that Matthew Balfour of Kent and Alan Marlow of Hampshire would represent the South East Region on the English Access Forum. Members' attention was drawn to Natural England's outline coastal access scheme. JW commented that Slough should have a voice in this issue even though the Council was an inland Borough. It was suggested that

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the Forum could hold an informal working group meeting to formulate a response to the scheme and other related issues.

Agreed -

- (a) That Marjery Hitchman would continue to represent the Slough Local Access Forum as a Member of the South East Region Access Forum and that Laurie Tucker would deputise in her absence.
- (b) That JW would check Members' availability and agree a date for an informal meeting of the Forum to consider the coastal access scheme, the Marine Bill and other issues such as Gating Orders. An update report would then be submitted to the next LAF meeting in February 2009. **Action- JW**

JW tabled a report outlining Natural England's Draft Policy on Access. If Members had any comments they should forward these to JW by 14th November.

Action- All Members to note.

8. Letter from Suffolk Local Access Forum

Members noted the contents of a letter received from Suffolk Local Access Forum concerning the Forum's involvement at a public inquiry relating to a crossing point for non-motorised users over a new section of the A14 trunk road. The Suffolk Forum had requested examples of any recommendations being adopted in respect of Highway Agency road schemes in other LAF areas. **JW** advised that she was not aware of any in the Slough area.

Alex Deans referred Members to a map of the Heart of Slough scheme, for information. It was noted that the town centre almost backed on to the A4 and the scheme would make the town centre more accessible by creating new walkways and for example raising the pedestrianised area in front of the station. Members noted the cycle ways within the scheme and were invited to forward comments about the Heart of Slough scheme to **JW** who would pass these on to the relevant Officer. **Action-** All Members to note.

Agreed-

- a) That JW would circulate the Heart of Slough plan to Members.
Action- JW
- b) That JW and the Chair would respond to the letter from Suffolk LAF, outlining Slough's severance issues. **Action- JW**

9. Future Work Programme

JW did not feel that the current Work Programme worked well and would phone Members to gather their views on this and consider suggestions for an alternative programme.

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Action- JW

The Chair requested that the Work Programme document be attached to future agenda.

Action- JW

10. Any Other Business

Friends of Slough Canal

Cllr Haines addressed the Forum on behalf of the Friends of Slough Canal and advised that their remit was to promote leisure, walking and other activities near the canal. It was hoped that the public would treat the canal almost as a park and enjoy a whole range of activities.

There were issues surrounding some footpaths leading off the canal that were situated near to and on the border of South Bucks District Council. In many cases the paths had disappeared and were no longer shown on maps. Cllr Haines asked whether the LAF could work together with South Bucks to deal with such issues.

A Member noted that the issue of such footpaths came up regularly at meetings of Wexham Parish Council. Gerald Pleace advised that he had recently been in contact with South Bucks DC about a similar matter and he could encourage future liaison.

Agreed- That the Forum recognises the work of the Friends of Slough Canal and welcomes and endorses the suggestion that links be forged with South Bucks DC to resolved issues around footpaths on its border with Slough BC.

Stoke Basin

In response to a question from Ken Wright, it was confirmed that no response had been received from British Waterways regarding the car parking area at Stoke Canal Basin.

Agreed- That JW and the Chair would compile a further letter to British Waterways. **Action- JW**

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on **Wednesday 11th February 2009, at 5.30 p.m.** - Venue, Mayor's Conference Room, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.05 pm)