

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Tuesday, 21st January, 2014 at the Meeting Room 1, Chalvey Community Centre, The Green, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2SP

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley, Local Access Forum (Chair)
Ian Houghton, Local Access Forum (Vice-Chair)
Trevor Allen
Ken Wright
Councillor Wayne Strutton
Tony Haines

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

Jacqui Wheeler
Rights of Way Officer
Sing-Wai Yu
Team Leader Highways Maintenance & Asset Management

135. Apologies and Welcome

Toby Evans
Councillor Satpal Parmar

136. Declarations of Interest

None

137. Minutes of the last meeting held on 26th Sept 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2013 were approved as a true and accurate record.

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

Ditton Park Cycle Path update –

JW informed the meeting that CA Technologies have made repairs on the southern section of the route through Ditton Park estate near to the Major's Farm Road. Though recent pictures show that the newly repaired path is now flooded. CA assured LA's and Sustrans that the path surface was built up however, LAF members questioned how sufficient the works were.

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

Repairs to the cycle route across Northfield are planned during the next financial year 14/15. Members questioned the need for the whole route to be closed for health and safety reasons just because the southern link of the route is flooded. DM requested that a record is kept of the closures, their length and the reasons given. JW agreed to put together a spread sheet of incidents/closures and also stated that CA have downgraded their on-site security. Members felt that CA's threshold for safety issues seems low and they are slow to re-open the path. DM expressed concern that CA Technologies keep up their obligations and that the repaired southern path link is re-assessed for more repairs in view of the flooding issue.

Resolved – JW to set up spread sheet to monitor the closures and enquire with CA about opening of the route.

Jubilee River – Enhancement and Development – updates

JW is awaiting further details of the “CanRow” project after having contacted Kam Bhatti, the officer dealing. JW will also arrange a meeting with Kim Truelove, Healthy Walks Co-Ordinator to discuss opportunities for partnership working between Healthy Walks and the LAF.

Colne Valley Park CIC – updates

JW confirmed the LAF has become a member of the CVP CIC as a community group. The CVP forum in November had been very aspirational with speakers hoping to drum up new membership and thus revenue for the CVP. In his talk, Stewart Pomeroy had given community engagement examples of the kind of projects the CVP are now undertaking.

Discussions ensued as to how the LAF can help with the CVP objectives and what partnership working would include. Important issues for Slough LAF are;

- Colne Valley Trail and where it accesses Slough
- The Slough Arm of the Canal extension of the CVP.

JW suggested a starting point would be to speak to Stewart about the Slough Arm of the Canal being included in the CVP. The extent of the CVP in Slough needs to be clarified with TH referring to minutes of the CVP Standing Conference at the time (1987) confirming that the canal was indeed included within the CVP boundary. All agreed the importance of finding evidence to prove the Canal was officially included in the CVP so that SBC could then be lobbied about renewing its support for the CVP.

DM questioned whether the CVP itself is a legal entity with legally established and recorded boundaries. Members also thought there would be records of the historical funding of canal towpath works organised by Groundwork. JW agreed to investigate whether any old records exist at the Council to prove canal inclusion in CVP.

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

WS thought that as SBC promotes its green stance through talk of the CVP, the closeness of Black Park etc. as destinations for slough residents, SBC ought to be willing to back this up with renewing and funding its interest in the CVP CIC to allow greater involvement of projects within Slough.

SWY suggested that Natural England ought to be able to offer support as the CVP is a regionally important park.

Resolved – LAF wants to encourage SBC to renew its interest in the CVP by lobbying prominent officers and Council members through presenting a business case including evidence that the Slough Arm of the canal was placed into the CVP and that as a result SBC ought to be constructive in partnership with CVP.

LAF also agreed that CVP could be persuaded as a partner in working on the Slough Arm of the Grand Union of the Canal.

139. Stopping Up Order Proposals

Footpath 35a (Herschel Street to High Street Slough) –

JW tabled the latest on the potential stopping up of Footpath 35a between High Street Slough and Herschel Street, explaining that the council owned car park at the rear where shop mobility used to be located, is up for development. The development is not envisaged in the near future though, so the proposal is to permanently stop up the highway rights along this alleyway (including the section through to Herschel Street) as soon as possible due to the narrowness and anti-social behaviour.

WS thought that the section of path alongside the car park through to Herschel Street ought to be retained as it may be required for the new development and also for access by adjoining properties. JW assured everyone that the adjoining properties would be consulted prior to any Order being made and also reminded members that if this section is left then it would become a dead end. The neater solution is to close the entire path between High street and Herschel Street. Any new access required could be designed into the development when and if it goes ahead. JW explained that since the narrow alley section of the path is unregistered land that it would need to be physically gated at council cost and would remain a council concern but without highway status.

Resolved - Members debated their experience of the alleyway and concluded that subject to the appropriate consultations the LAF would not object to this stopping up.

Footpath 57 (Tuns Lane to Glentworth Place) –

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

Residents have been complaining again about prostitution and anti-social behaviour happening in this narrow alleyway that runs between Tuns Lane and Glentworth Place. A new usage survey has been commissioned to happen in March which can then be compared with the previous one. This will help inform the decision on whether or not a stopping up order should be pursued.

Resolved - JW to bring further information/location plan to the next meeting with the new surveys results.

140. Transport/LSTF Schemes/Designs (Updates)

JW highlighted this report with updates on schemes as follows –

East West Cycling route –

JW advised the members of the intentions within Salt Hill Park and that the diversion of the public footpath had been agreed as being necessary at the previous meeting. Previous LAF queries included concern about the mature poplar trees along the park boundary with the railway being removed. Feedback from Transport officer asserted that only those trees which are essential for removal would be taken down. WS commented that poplar trees can be a danger particularly at this location and asked what new trees would be planted in their place.

Members felt that overall the new entrance and zebra crossing on Stoke Poges Lane are effective in encouraging safe crossing by the public at this location.

SWY queried timescales for the cycle route implementation through the park as work on the replacement of Stoke Poges Lane footbridge is due at the end of 2014 and the park will constitute a major diversion route. JW will ask Transport for timescales on this project. WS stated the responsibility for the bridge will be handed over to Network Rail due to the high cost attached if any services are damaged.

The Leigh Road new bridge -

JW updated members with the new drawing which shows that Bedford Ave will no longer be stopped up. This was one of the main concerns from the last meeting. JW would circulate the new drawing to members via email for information. The old bridge which is being kept as a cycleway/footway route is not going to be re-created as a bridleway now; the existing highway rights can remain.

SWY informed the meeting that the old Leigh Road bridge parapets are too low for current European standards. It is hoped that trimming the carriageway surface down by about 6 inches will solve the problem, though detailed designs are yet to be submitted showing how this will be tied in with approach

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

highway on either side. It may involve a ramp down onto the bridge deck level. IH noted that the high parapets make the bridge feel quite claustrophobic, though the new status will mean the whole width can be used by cyclists and pedestrians which should alleviate this. Members also noted that the bridge is a Brunel design and therefore listed.

Pavement Parking Scheme –

JW gave feedback the 6 month consultation ends in Jan 2014. The TROs have all been made and enforcement can start soon. There are 18 months for the council to decide whether or not the scheme will be made permanent. TA felt that the scheme was working at the junction of Montague Road and Shackleton Road. However, he felt that some of the markings have seemed to allow parking across people's driveways. TA felt that though there are some minor problems; the scheme has definitely improved access to the footway for pedestrians.

JW stated Wexham ward will be the next area for the PPS as it is adjacent to the previous area. Members initially felt that pavement parking problems in Wexham justified this decision and that the council ought to perform the same kind of preliminary consultation as before to get as much residential input as possible prior to design stage. However, some members felt there were hotspots with greater need around the borough and that the council could consider dealing with those particular locations rather than on a ward by ward basis. Moving the project westwards would more quickly encompass areas of higher need. The LAF recommends that the council aims the scheme at areas based on a needs assessment and taking into account ease of implementation rather than do entire wards rolling out from the centre. As then those black spot areas would be dealt with faster.

JW said that parking around Wexham Park hospital would be included involving partnership working with Bucks CC to discourage displacement parking.

Members agreed that the need assessment criteria ought to include; accident statistics, CCTV (if available), proximity of schools, residents' complaints, number of pavements obstructed, how severely they are obstructed, presence of bus routes and any enforcement data (tickets issued).

Members wanted to know of any feedback received from the residents on the Central ward scheme so far as this will be informing the council's decision on whether the scheme is altered/made permanent.

Lansdowne Avenue Experimental Closure –

Monitoring is being done via queue length surveys and site visits both before and after. Members questioned why other options could not be trialled as well. JW stated that the route remains open for walking and cycling as part of the East-West route. TH asked that the LAF be given a report on Dolphin Road infrastructure changes. JW will bring details to the next meeting.

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

Farnham Road Better Bus Scheme –

DM questioned the lamp column positions on this scheme which looks complete. This scheme is currently in progress. JW would check the drawings and planned final position of the columns.

Cinder Track –

JW tabled the report explaining the current set of improvements being undertaken along the route. These include;

- Widening of the narrow section of the route leading through to the Godolphin Playing fields.
- Replacement of bollards out of repair
- Graffiti removal – rolling monthly programme by Community Payback – rolling disclaimers signed by owner/occupiers.
- Dog fouling bag dispensers – adjacent to the normal litter bins.

Resolved – Actions to be taken as detailed above and item to be kept on agenda for updates.

141. Gating

Birch Grove Cut through – JW informed the meeting that the LAF was the only objector to the Gating Order at Location Two (the cut through from the flats to Bodmin Ave) and that there were no objections to the Gating Order at Location One (Cut through to Birch Grove). So the council has decided to make both Gating Orders with a review after 6 months.

JW tabled the potential Gating Order at Torridge Road in Brands Hill. A small section of adopted highway footpath would need to be gated to prevent access to a garage site where anti-social behaviour and fly tipping occurs frequently. WS asked if the garages are privately owned. Members felt this wasn't a significant issue for the Forum.

142. Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal

JW tabled the report about the meeting of 18th December 2013 between JW, TH and CRT representatives to look at issues along the towpath. JW showed members a video of the towpath from the Basin to Langley taken from a cyclist's perspective.

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

Kendal Close link on the north side of the towpath –

TH expressed the concern about the narrow width available on this side of the canal and that CRT ought to be asked to give extra width (2m) to add to this location. The lease for this land is due for renewal, so there is scope for CRT to negotiate extra width with any new leaseholders.

Basin-

Members discussed problems at the basin end for public access due to the tiling company's practices. CRT is to check lease to see what use the tiling company are allowed to make of the car park area. KW also noted that the kissing gate at the basin is broken. TH suggested that the tiling company could be serviced from a different access point which would free up the basin entrance for public access to the canal. Many people feel that the basin and the canal is dangerous, uninviting and despite this it is still widely used. Members agreed the need to focus on getting CRT to make improvements to enhance the Basin.

CRT had suggested that land on the north bank of the canal could be cleared and used as a proper towpath, which would mean that a public path leading underneath the electricity pylon could be avoided. JW thought it likely that CRT would agree this route as a permissive path rather than a fully dedicated public right of way.

Dredging is supposed to be happening this year 14/15. CRT is talking in very aspirational terms as they are aiming for funding from TfL's "Vision for Cycling".

The Two Tings campaign has been replaced with Share the Space, Drop your Pace. Signage for this campaign is available from CRT and members agreed this would be beneficial to the Slough Arm and that the council ought to pay for it. Members were adamant that Bucks ought to pay for signage on the towpath in their area. Technically the towpath between Langley and Bloom Park is in South Bucks, not Slough despite the close proximity to Slough residences and that South Bucks needs to be drawn into the working on the canal.

TH mentioned the Trenches Canal Bridge which is in a bad state of repair. All agreed the need for inclusion of the canal in surrounding development with TH explaining the differences in Hillingdon where the canal is open and easily accessible to housing rather than closed off from it.

Resolved - Members agreed that support from Councillors and other partners must be sought to make a combined effort in encouraging improvements. All supported recommended actions detailed in the report. DM noted that the actions are very similar to actions for the CVP as they are closely related. JW will invite interested members to an interim meeting to develop plan of action.

143. Regional and National News

National conferences are being held in Bristol and Durham in February. David Munkley will be attending the Bristol event.

There will also be a SE LAF Conference in London, provisionally on Tuesday 20th May 2014. Any members wishing to attend need to let JW know.

Draft Deregulation Bill – JW attended a seminar on the changes to PRow legislation aimed at stream lining the process for making diversions and claims for new PRow. Part of the Bill includes enacting the 2026 cut-off date whereby any historical routes which are not recorded as PRow by that date will be lost. JW queried the effect of the cut-off date in Slough asking if members felt it was an issue the LAF should look at. Members felt there are several routes in the area that ought to be recorded as PRow, one example being the path running just north of the Khalsa School, between Wexham Road and Stoke Road. TH felt this route should be championed and members agreed a list of potential paths could be developed. SWY suggested that SBC and the LAF should highlight the cut-off date to Slough parish councils and ask for help in identifying routes.

Resolved – JW will draft a letter to parish councils and any other interested parties highlighting the cut-off date and seeking help in identifying possible paths in the area. This item to remain on agenda.

144. Any Other Business

None

145. Date of the next meeting

The Chalvey Community Centre, 6pm, Thursday 1st May 2014

Local Access Forum - 21.01.14

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.15 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)