

**Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 19th January, 2011 at the Mayor's Conference Room, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough**

**Present:-**

**LAF Members:**

Toby Evans  
Ian Houghton (Vice Chair),  
Councillor David J Munkley  
Ken Wright

**Observers:**

Spencer Lowe

**Officers, Slough Borough Council:**

Alex Deans, Bruce Hicks, Gerald Pleace, Jacqui Wheeler and Viv Vallance

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Satpal S Parmar

**15. Election of Chair**

**Resolved –** It was noted that Laurie Tucker had resigned from the Chair and as a member of the Slough Local Access Forum and that a new Chair would be elected at the next meeting. Ian Houghton, Vice Chair would be acting Chair in the meantime.

**16. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**17. Minutes of the last meeting held on 13th September 2010**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010 were approved as a correct record.

**18. Matters Arising (other than those on the agenda)**

Stoke Poges Lane – Elliman Avenue Junction update – JW advised that an update from the Network Management team was received on 4<sup>th</sup> January stating that the contractual issues had been overcome and the scheme would be completed when two poles with pedestrian push buttons had been installed and the controller re-programmed. The poles and push buttons were due to be delivered soon with an estimated completion given as the end of January.

Ditton Park Cycle Path update – JW advised that contact had been made with the Principal Rights of Way Officer, Anthony Hurst from Windsor and

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Maidenhead to inform him of the problems with the cycle path surface and the gates being closed in contravention of planning conditions. The relevant planning conditions are set out in clauses 4.7 and 4.8 of the S106 agreement. Anthony Hurst would visit the path on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan and thereafter contact CA Real Estate.

**Resolved** – JW would speak to Anthony Hurst following his visit to the site and this item would be updated at the next meeting

### Gating Order Proposals Updates Mildenhall Road – Lerwick Drive -

JW stated that the problems have abated following some of the troublesome families moving away and young people moving on.

**Resolved** - That the situation should continue to be monitored.

Shaggy Calf Lane to Borderside – JW updated members on behalf of Esther Deacon. The path will remain as a priority on the Police patrol plan and Community Warden Patrol list. No barrier of any kind will be erected as the motorcycle and anti-social behaviour problems are being monitored and reports do not justify putting in a barrier.

**Resolved** - That the situation should continue to be monitored.

Salt Hill Park Tunnel – The members were informed that a crime statistics report presented at the recent Action Plan meeting proved the success of the CCTV camera in the park at the south end of the tunnel. As a result a design for a permanent CCTV set up has been put forward. It is hoped to have approval for this expenditure before end of April 2011. Other recent improvements in the tunnel are the fence re-alignment allowing better vision through the tunnel and the success in getting Simpsons Recycling to cut back the overhanging vine at the north end of the tunnel. JW advised that the lighting remained an issue as it had not officially been handed over to the street lighting maintenance team. The Transport Section would need to arrange repairs to the lights before this could happen.

**Resolved** - Members recommended that the Transport Section be asked to make repairs to the lighting and hand over to the Street Lighting team. JW would send members a copy of the Crime Statistics report on the current CCTV camera.

Footpath 35a – Members were advised that this development had not yet moved forward, so there was nothing to report.

**Resolved** - That the situation be monitored pending the outcome of the proposed development.

**19. Membership Update**

The Forum was advised that Laurie Tucker had resigned from the Forum on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011 for health reasons. Along with the sad news that Margery Hitchman, a much loved and valued LAF member, passed away at the end of November 2010. The outstanding contributions of both Margery and Laurie were recognised. The current membership now stands at five so a discussion ensued about how to recruit new members. JW advised that an article had been placed in the October edition of the Citizen magazine and Laurie Tucker had been interviewed on the local Asian Star Radio channel. Further promotional avenues discussed were continuation of the adverts in the new Slough Road Safety Guide and in the Volunteer Magazine which was distributed throughout all the local hospitals. JW advised that the advert in the Volunteer would proceed if the finance became available to pay for it in the new budget. A further suggestion was made by VV to contact large local employers to see if any of their employees would be interested in applying for membership. It was also thought that a letter to the Slough Tenants and Residents Association could be fruitful. Members agreed that LAF leaflets needed to be placed advantageously in Stows Cycle shops and that Gerald and Toby could help with talking to Stows. VV advised that he had a contact list of local cyclists who had responded to the cycling consultation, who could be targeted for LAF recruitment. Lastly, TE proposed that the LAF enter the world of Facebook and it was agreed that this would be investigated.

**Resolved -**

- (a) That the suggestions as detailed above to attract further members be implemented where possible.
- (b) That a letter be sent to LT thanking him for his time and valuable contribution spent as a LAF member and as the Chair.

**20. Memoriam for Margery**

Members all agreed that Margery had been an inspiration and her contribution to the LAF and what it stands for ought to be recognised in some way. TE put forward the idea of naming a walking route after her as it would be more appropriate to her fighting spirit than a bench. The route through the Herschel Park nature reserve area was thought to be suitable. The Friends of Herschel Park would need to be asked as well as Margery's family.

**Resolved -** That in the first instance, TE would contact the Hitchman family to find out if they would be happy for this route to be named after Margery.

**21. LTP3 - Walking and cycling Strategies public consultation - Presentation**

Viv Vallance, consultant Transport Planner for Slough Borough Council gave a brief overview of the public consultation for the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP 3) and supplementary documents including the Walking and Cycling

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Strategies. It is intended for this LTP 3 to run for 15 years until 2026, with reviews every 5 years.

VV explained that comments could be made by forum members individually on the link to the Council's Limehouse public consultation pages. He would forward this round to everyone via JW. JW advised that though the official closing date for comments was the 21<sup>st</sup> January, Rub Nawaz, Head of Transport Policy would accept comments up until 26<sup>th</sup> January at the latest. VV supplied members with hard copies of the draft Cycling and Walking Strategies (supplementary documents to the LTP3). He explained that any comments would be welcome including those about style and omissions.

Discussions ensued with TE stating that the current network for cycling in Slough is not very well linked up. He asked if the strategy aimed to try to integrate the existing network and improve links. VV replied that the cycling strategy may not go into a great amount of detail in solving gap problems on the network. He did refer however to cycle permeability being the links between developments as an aim in the strategy (see SA7 - Cycle Routes Infrastructure).

IH asked if there were targets attached to the two strategic documents in terms of increasing walking and cycling activity. He questioned the fairness that the Council appears not to be setting itself targets but expects developers, SEGRO, for instance, to achieve modal shift targets. VV countered that the Section 106 developer contribution agreements had a different context to the strategic policy documents being discussed. However, he acknowledged the value of the comments being made and encouraged members to pass these onto the Council.

Quantification of the problem was discussed with VV relaying that automatic counts from loops provided statistics on how many cyclists were using the network which informed the strategy. IH asked if this important data could be made public and TE suggested it could be hung on the walking and cycling web map currently on the Council website at;  
<http://sloughwalkingandcycling.yourmap.net/document.aspx?display=maps>

IH commented that though the Council says it's keen, it still felt like cycling and pedestrian facilities/perspectives are an after-thought in the design process for planning applications and any road schemes. He felt that the designers ought to cycle routes themselves before designing, mentioning the problems with the Bradley Road/Stoke Poges Lane road safety scheme. In this scheme he thought the road narrowing created unnecessary difficulty for cyclists where none existed before.

KW mentioned the road widening as part of the access works for the Sikh Community Centre development site further up Stoke Poges Lane. He complained that the cycle lane had been closed for a long time. AD advised that the works had been delayed due to problems with the sewer connections. KW also complained that the new virgin media cable boxes being installed across the borough were obstructing the free passage of pedestrians on the

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pavements. AD advised that the utility companies did have a legal right to locate these boxes in the public highway.

VV pointed out that Cycling England had criticised the Slough LAF specifically for having too strong a focus on off-carriageway and recreational routes. Members felt this was unfair criticism with TE saying it showed a lack of respect for volunteers. JW commented that it would be most effective for the Slough LAF and a potential Slough cycling forum to be amalgamated.

**Post Meeting Note:** In May 2009 DEFRA issued further Guidance to Local Access Forums which had the effect of enabling forums to advise on functional or utility access issues, which might include using land (or a right of way) to get to work, school, shops or local amenities.

**Resolved** - Members would go through the LTP3 documents provided and either comment themselves using the Council website or forward comments via JW.

## 22. Regional and National Update

JW advised members that Natural England was currently working out its finances and where its support would be directed. However, it had been confirmed that funding is now available to hold a LAF event/conference for LAF members and officers. The two dates proposed are; Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 or Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

**Resolved** - JW will forward details of this event as soon as they become available.

## 23. Cinder Track Action Plan updated following inspection

The LAF considered the latest Cinder Tack action Plan following the inspection on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Community Payback teams have now been secured for regular monthly visits to the Track, with new dates for the next four months. The works undertaken during these visits included; hand sweeping, weeding and painting over graffiti, were intended to compliment the regular contract works undertaken by Enterprise and would hopefully greatly improve the appearance of the route. With regards to 'Slough sheds' JW had received an update from the Planning enforcement team; that action is being taken against 84 Gloucester Ave where there is an outbuilding is in illegal use. Planning has requested that other addresses where there are concerns about illegal use of outbuildings need to be forwarded to the relevant planning enforcement officer. Members also discussed the merits of supporting a project to have artwork on a wall along the Track. Several people felt that the wall was more attractive left alone. No definite conclusions were drawn at this stage. The current temporary access at the end of Hampshire Ave that crosses the Cinder Track was brought to the attention of the forum. Baylis School has asked for the access to be made permanent. However, members noted that the school would have to make a planning application for this and that it is unlikely that the Highways Section would support this proposal.

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**Resolved** - That the action plan be noted and that a date for a future visit to the Cinder Track be circulated by JW. Also that JW liaise with Jean Sellars to identify the properties as described and inform Planning Enforcement.

### 24. Access to Jubilee River in Chalvey FP 33 and 32 - Action Plan

JW introduced Spencer Lowe the artist working on the mural design with Slough & Eton Sixth Form art students and Montem Primary School Year 6 pupils. Spence showed that the mural was being taken forward by using stencils of simple images. This would create an effective mural, allowing younger kids to have input, while retaining a consistently professional look. Spence was hopeful that the wall would have a flow and that the themes of recycling, sustainable transport and biodiversity connect well. Super-saturated paint would be used to paint the mural as it usually only needs one coat. Spence also confirmed that along with him a small group of the most dedicated sixth form students would help with the actual painting. There is a possibility that a couple of other artists who are experienced in spray painting will also help. JW advised that immediately after the mural has been painted it is intended to coat it with anti-graffiti varnish.

GP informed the forum that the metal girder at the pinch point along the wall needs to be cut back as it is sticking out and causing a hazard to users. JW agreed to action this matter urgently and she also advised that if the budget allows the path could be overlaid to improve the surface and overall look.

**Resolved** - That an update be brought to the next meeting.

### 25. Updates on Planning Applications

The Forum was referred to the draft letter to be sent as the LAF response to the Slough Intermodal Freight Exchange (SIFE) planning application. After much discussion it was agreed that the letter would be sent with no amendments as the SIFE proposals went against the LAF agenda of improving access to countryside and mitigation ought not to be mentioned in the initial letter objecting to the entire scheme as it weakens the strength of the objection.

**Resolved** – That the letter be sent and signed by Ian Houghton as Vice Chair.

### 26. Invitation to appoint an observer to attend the meetings of RBWM Local Access Forum

A letter had been received from the Chair of the RBWM Local Access Forum inviting members to appoint an observer to their forum meetings. Unfortunately, due to the current position with membership at Slough LAF members felt it would be too difficult to undertake this commitment at the current time. DM had previously attended the RBWM LAF meeting and found

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it very interesting. JW agreed to forward the date of the next RBWM LAF meeting to members.

### 27. Walk4Life - LAF Involvement

JW advised the members about this project /website run by Walk England which aims to encourage walking and requires help identifying short walking routes and having them waymarked. It was agreed that JW would send the link to this website to members and that this item would be put on the next meeting agenda.

### 28. Any Other Business

#### The Bradley Road/Stoke Poges Lane Road Safety Scheme –

JW tabled design drawings of this scheme. IH stated that he felt cyclists' interests seem to have been ignored in this scheme and that danger points had been added rather than eliminated. A pinch point had been introduced narrowing the road to reduce traffic speed, however it was felt that there was little warning of this change for cyclists. AD confirmed that the carriageway had been narrowed and furthermore that normal practice was for the accident data to be analysed and then the scheme designed in an attempt to eliminate the type of accidents occurring most frequently. It was noted that the scheme was not yet finished and that concerns from the LAF members would be forwarded to the Transport team. Discussion moved onto cycling in the Town Centre with TE complaining about the narrow traffic calming layout in Herschel Street which is difficult for cyclists to negotiate, while the alternative route through the wide High Street area, cyclists are prohibited from using.

LAF members suggested that a counter flow cycle lane on the carriageway in the west end of the High Street between Church Street and Windsor Road might be useful to allow cyclists an easier link through to the end of the High Street.

#### **Resolved -**

- (a) Members would like to keep this item on the agenda.
- (b) That AD/VV arrange a meeting where key council officers involved in transport scheme design could cycle with LAF members to see first hand the types of problems encountered. VV will get back to members with some possible dates.
- (c) That JW forwards the LAF's formal request that a counter flow cycle lane as described above is strongly considered for implementation.

### 29. Date of the next Meeting

Dates for the next three meetings will be forwarded.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)