

Local Access Forum – Meeting held on Thursday, 1st May, 2014 at the Meet at Canal Basin and continue at West Wing (cafe area), Stoke Road, Slough

Present:-

LAF Members

David Munkley, Local Access Forum (Chair)
Ian Houghton, Local Access Forum (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Satpal S Parmar
Toby Evans (part)
Tony Haines
Ken Wright (part)

Observers

Officers, Slough Borough Council

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

146. Apologies and Welcome

Cllr Wayne Strutton
Trevor Allen

147. Declarations of Interest

None

148. Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st January 2014

Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st January 2014 were approved.

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

Ditton Park Cycle Path Update –

JW tabled report updating the current situation. Members considered photos of the repairs on the path in Southfield, judging the path surface to be lower than the land on both sides. IH noted that the path surface is not ideal for cycling being loose gravel.

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Members found it unacceptable that the Northfield path was closed while the Southfield path was closed due to flooding. They felt that signage at the crossroads of the path would have been sufficient to direct people away from the flooded area and thus allowed the Northfield path to stay open. DM felt that CA would have been covered from a health and safety perspective if such signage had been used and that their extended closure of the northern route was without good cause.

CA can now be challenged by the LAF on spurious closures. Members agreed that they would send a joint letter with RBWM LAF to let CA know their feelings on the closure.

Resolved – JW would approach RBWM LAF with a draft letter to CA. To include a question about when the Northfield path will be repaired this year.

Footpath 35a – A design for the development has been produced by the Council for the car park area that does not include the footpath. The Council still proposes to stop up the route from Herschel Street to High Street, Slough under the S106 planning agreement.

Resolved – JW will forward the planning design to members when received.

Footpath 57 – Glentworth Ave to Tuns Lane –
JW tabled map of the route and explained the narrow nature of the path. The recent usage survey showed similar results to the one last year. Members discussed the level of anti-social behaviour and usefulness of the path as it doesn't provide a great short cut in relation to the main road. The use might just be from the actual residents of Glentworth Place, but all questioned whether that would be justification for closure. ASB has been going on in this path for years with the complainants being the residents living adjacent to the path. JW said this path would be discussed at the next Gating Panel meeting. Members were not convinced a closure is necessary.

Resolved – JW would bring crime statistics to the next meeting.

150. Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal

JW tabled the draft Slough Canal Action Plan and asked for input.

IH didn't like the idea of the wooden jetty being removed as it is a historical feature that ought to be improved with a new wooden top and walkway. TH and DM both disagreed saying that something new would look better.

The jetty as it used to look – photo provided by TH post meeting
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All members agreed that the concrete wall between open space Housing land and the north side of the canal should be removed. TH stated the concrete walls were initially installed as a safety measure to prevent small children from accessing the canal. However, all agreed they had now become an eyesore and detract from the canal environment. Members agreed SBC Housing and CRT should be approached about the wall being removed.

JW suggested a working group evening meeting to develop the ideas in the Action Plan, including a leaflet in time for the Canal Festival. JW would send an invite.

Ollie Kelly, Parks Manager, SBC is very interested in integrating Bowyer Playing Fields and Bloom Park with the canal. A meeting with the residents of Goodman Park is due in early May to discuss this matter. JW would attend and report back to the LAF.

Dredging – the dredging that had been promised by CRT for the last few years is now underway to have a single channel cleared from Highline Yachting to the Basin. Dredging is due to take place over 6 weeks and as much as possible will be done in that period.

Members discussed the recent newspaper article about the dredging which also mentioned development potential of the canal basin. All felt that the towpath needs to be opened out at the basin end and serious attention given by CRT to enhancements.

Members felt that small enhancements at the canal basin, as discussed and contained in the Action Plan would have a positive effect for local people and definitely increase the chances of encouraging future developers who may be interested in the site. JW would draft a letter to CRT listing the main areas of concern and send it around to members with dates for a subgroup meeting to concentrate on the Action Plan implementation. CRT had recently contacted JW mentioning their desire to make enhancements to the interface between the Basin and Stoke Road, which is a positive move. JW would forward this correspondence to the correct officers to ensure this opportunity is progressed.

Resolved – Members agreed the draft Action Plan as a way forward. Actions to be taken as detailed above and item to remain on agenda.

Concerning the CRT Towpath consultation – the following were noted -

- Future towpath maintenance must be secured.
- Conflict between users; boaters, cyclists and walkers must be a high priority.
- Possibility of a Slough Arm Partnership – the three LA's to look at planning and maintenance issues.
- Inclusion of the Slough Arm in the CVP – JW suggested future correspondence should be copied to the Chairman of the CVP.

151. Transport / LSTF Schemes/Designs - Updates

JW tabled the report in the papers with updates on LSTF schemes;

East/West Cycling Route – The scheme needs planning approval and JW would bring further updates as it progresses. JW will contact the Parks Manager for his comments on this route.

Leigh Road Bridge – a drawing was sent around showing the updated layout.

Pavement Parking Scheme – JW had forwarded the LAF's comments from the last meeting. SWY stated that the LAF's comments had been taken on board and the rollout of the scheme in Wexham ward is on hold while the Council asks for suggestions of hotspot areas. Members felt that the greatest need was in the Priory Estate. It was understood that the scheme would now be rolled out on a needs basis instead of ward by ward. The initial logic had been that rolling the scheme out zone by zone would make it cheaper and help reduce street furniture.

JW asked members to let her know of any other hotspot areas for the PPS.

Cinder Track – photos tabled showing the recent works to widen the narrow section leading into Godolphin Playing Fields. TH suggested the LAF look into any existing standards or guidelines for light levels/visibility in alleyways. JW would investigate existing planning guidance to see if there is anything that the LAF could recommend SBC takes into account on improvements to existing and new paths.

Resolved – Actions to be taken as detailed above.

152. Regional and National News

The SE LAF Conference is on Tuesday 20th May 2014. TH proposed that he attend and members agreed, as the conference is a good opportunity to network and engage with other LAF members across the region. Network Rail is to give a presentation about public rights of way crossing points which raised the question of the Stoke Poges Lane footbridge works under the Cross Rail scheme. SP informed members that the Stoke Poges Lane footbridge works would be started at the end of 2014.

JW drew attention to the LAF letter of objection to the planning application for the dis-used railway line route in Colnbrook. JW would let members know the outcome after the planning committee on the 7th May 2014, but noted that the report had fully explained the fact that the route was used as a footpath. The application could not be refused on this basis though, due to the fact that the path is not a recorded right of way.

Summer Site Meetings –

The dis-used railway line route in Colnbrook, would be the first site to visit during the Summer months. JW would send dates around to members. The CA Ditton Park cycle path and Cinder Track were proposed as other locations. TH suggested that the LAF meeting could be held at one of the schools along the Cinder Track.

Resolved – JW would send dates around to members for the Summer site meetings.

153. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 25th September 2014, venue tba

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.15 pm)