

BRACKNELL FOREST LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM
27 SEPTEMBER 2005
(7.00 pm – 8.55 pm)

Present: Diana Pidgeon (Chairman)
Chris Gardner
Mike Gates
Cllr Anne Haydon
Cllr Ian McCracken
Mark Osman
Peter Radband
Stuart Tarrant
Derrick Stickler
Caroline Tomalin
Simon Weeks

In attendance: James Dymond, Projects Officer
Helen Tranter, Head of Culture & Visual Environment
Heather White, Planning and Projects Manager
Cath Hart, Countryside Access Development Officer,
Hants County Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Taharah Azam
David Bertie
Celia Blay
Robert Bonney

56. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all Members of the Forum to the meeting.

57. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2005 were approved as a correct record.

58. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

James Dymond, the Council's Projects Officer, presented the final draft of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan to the Forum. Members were asked to provide feedback on the consultation document and to offer suggestions for additional information and possible improvements to the plan before it was circulated to interested groups.

The Forum raised a number of comments on the consultation draft which are detailed below:

- There should be reference to heritage walks published by Parish Councils in the Plan.
- There needs to be more substance to cross boundary issues.
- A section on the rights and responsibilities of both land owners and members of the public should be included in the Plan.

- There needs to be some reference to rural crime in the Plan, such as information of who people should contact if they witness suspicious behaviour.
- The Action in relation to disabled access to all areas of the countryside should be amended as it was not always possible to do so. This action should be amended to 'where practical/suitable'.

The Forum raised its concern about rural crime in the Borough and asked that it receive a presentation from the police at its next meeting to address concerns.

The Forum thanked James and Heather for their work on the ROWIP. Members noted that once the consultation period had ended, and subject to no significant comments being made, it would be presented to the Executive Member for Leisure, Corporate Services and Resources to be signed off.

59. National Countryside Access Forum (NCAF)

For information, the Forum received minutes from the meeting of the National Countryside Access Forum. Members noted that if they wished to find out more information about membership of this forum, they should contact the Local Countryside Access Office.

60. DEFRA Natural Environment and Communities Bill (NERC)

The Forum was presented with the key elements of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill. The Bill was designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities, through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering government policy. It would implement key elements of the Governments Rural Strategy and establish new structures with a strong customer focus.

The Forum noted that the bill awaited its Third Reading in the House of Commons and would pass to House of Lords shortly after. Further information would be presented to members at a later date.

61. Consultation on amendment of the Local Access Forum regulations

The Forum was presented with the consultation paper on amendments to the Local Access Forum regulations. The document set out a number of amendments that could be made to help the effectiveness of forums. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs asked for comments to be submitted by 29 November 2005.

The Forum discussed the document and considered the proposals. Members agreed that most proposals were sensible. However, they agreed that membership should not be widened. Furthermore, it was felt that the current remit of the Forum was more than enough but in order to keep updated, minutes from other Forums should be sent out with the agenda for noting.

62. Hogoak Lane

Mike Gates presented the Forum with several pictures of Hogoak Lane in Warfield.

