

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 MAY 2021 AT 7.30 PM By Microsoft Teams video conference

PRESENT: Cllr D. Cornish, Chair.
Cllrs E. Biskup; S. Bromley; R. Cundy; S. Gurney; G. Jukes OBE;
S. Weeks & R. Woof.

Mrs K. Dagnall, Clerk.

190/2021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs R. Margetts and J. May and Mr J. Alexander, Footpath Warden.

191/2021 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

192/2021 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were agreed and will be signed retrospectively as soon as circumstances allow.

193/2021 MATTERS ARISING

98/2021 Risk assessment

Cllr Woof has reviewed the instructions for two of the circular walks with one outstanding. This will be completed as soon as possible.

98/2021 Adopt a Path Scheme

The Clerk will ask other Local Councils about volunteer involvement with the rights of way network. This will be carried forward.

194/2021 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2021/22

Expenditure to date is £441 for no horses / no cycling signs and plan printing.

It was noted that in addition to the Committee budget, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds are likely to be available for larger scale projects.

195/2021 CIRCULAR WALKS, PROMOTION AND SIGNAGE

No horses/ no cycling signs for footpaths

- These signs have been produced to explain to horse and cycle riders why they should not be using paths intended and suitable only for walkers.
- Suggested locations are Footpaths 5; 6; 9; 13; 16; 29; 33; 54.
- Cllr Cornish will co-ordinate volunteers to install the signs.

Path numbering

- The Clerk will follow up discrepancies in path numbering on the Definitive Map with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

- It was noted that WBC does not support path numbering on the ground as they believe there is no public benefit, and it can cause confusion when path numbers change, for example at Parish boundaries.
- It was previously agreed that signs with QR codes linking to information about the path including its designation and number should be investigated. This could also be used for the circular walks.

Cllrs Bromley, Cundy, and Gurney agreed to take this forward.

Circular walk maps

- The map for one of the circular walks has been drawn up in the same style as the new rights of way map as an example.
- It was agreed that maps for the remaining two circular walks should be redrawn in the same style.

Proposed Finchampstead to Crowthorne circular walk

- Cllr Cornish had circulated information on a proposed new circular walk. This will be circulated again, and any comments should be forwarded to Cllr Cornish.

Potential 'South Wokingham walks'

- The possibility for working with neighbouring Parishes to promote 'south Wokingham walks' was discussed. In its simplest form this could be publishing information on walks developed by other Parishes, or new walks could be developed with consistent signage and promotion.
- Cllrs Cundy and Woof agreed to take this forward. To avoid any duplication this will include consideration of existing walks including those promoted by the Ramblers and the AA.

196/2021 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

The current priority projects were discussed.

Cycle route to Bohunt School

- This joint initiative with Barkham Parish Council includes proposed improvements to paths across Hazebrouck Meadows, a new crossing on Biggs Lane, and a more minor issue of improved markings where the green way meets Commonfield Lane.
- No progress is being made and this has been escalated to senior officer level at WBC. If necessary, a meeting with WBC Councillors will be arranged.
- It was agreed that Wokingham Borough Council and Barkham Parish Council should contribute to any approved works.

Cycle routes to Wokingham

- Cllrs Cornish and Margetts met representatives from WBC and Sandmartins Golf Course on 14 April to discuss the potential upgrading of a section of public footpath around the Golf Course to a cycle path. Part of the path is on WBC owned land and the remainder owned by the Golf Course.

The agreed next stage was for WBC to cost up the survey work and feasibility study required to progress the project, and to consider a form of agreement for a potential permitted path for a set number of years.

Rooks Nest potential access improvements

- Over 50 responses were received to the consultation regarding improvements to the informal access from Booth Drive to Rooks Nest Wood. Cllr Cornish has analysed the responses and will circulate the report for comments when complete.
- Once approved the report will be circulated to those who responded to the consultation.
- There are several points to be followed up with WBC before considering the next stage.

It was noted that a meeting has been arranged with the WBC Green Infrastructure Manager on 27 May and the above cycle route projects will be discussed. Additional matters to be raised include the FP8 hedge encroachment; the byway improvement programme, and the 'missing link' between bridlepaths 26 and 34.

The 'missing link' between bridlepaths 26 and 34 is also of interest to the British Horse Society (BHS) and the Ramblers, with both organisations keen to see the link designated as a public right of way before the 2026 deadline for doing this. Cllrs Biskup, Cornish, May, and Weeks will progress this and a meeting will be arranged with representatives from the two organisations.

197/2021 CONDITION / MAINTENANCE OF RIGHTS OF WAY

A summary of ongoing issues and additional issues raised since the previous meeting was circulated. The current position was discussed, and issues closed, or actions agreed as summarised below.

Paths requiring more significant improvements are covered under agenda item 196/2021 'Improvements to the Rights of Way Network' above.

Location	Date Reported	Current position / Actions	Date completed/ rectified
BP4	Feb 21	Consultation from WBC over BBOWT proposal to install vehicle / horse gate at Park Lane end to allow vehicle access to Shepperlands Copse. Concerns over form of barrier and path surface damage. WBC approved vehicle barrier with gap at the side – now installed. Did not take up suggestion of bollards at White Horse Lane end of path.	April 21
FP6	March 20	Section by the bench, before the descent to White Horse Lane very wet, muddy, and slippery. It seems that a trench is forming in the path and holding the water in. Reported 1/5/20 ref W209652. WBC checked Nov 2020 – advised not an issue. KD reported again March 21 as there is still an issue. Raised again May 21.	
FP9	Feb 21	GJ reported the path is very rutted, partly due to the presence of a spring. Remedial work may be needed. To be monitored.	
FP9	May 21	Fence falling over path due to broken fence posts. Reported to WBC W2122733.	May 21
Byway 24 Heath	July 17	WBC arranged surface improvements Feb 2020 on stretch to Wellingtonia Avenue. WBC to carry out	

Ride		additional work to some areas and reinstate bollards. May 21 WBC advised additional surfacing work completed. Bollards will be installed – date unknown.	
Byway 24 Heath Ride / byway 25		Section of BW24 Heath Ride from the junction with BW25 to Nine Mile Ride very wet – reported by DC and a resident. Can be avoided by using BW25 to Nine Mile Ride. May 21 WBC advise contractor will be looking into this.	
Bridleway 26	Feb 20	Blocked culvert. KD contacted WBC again on this March 21 and April 21. May 21 – WBC has asked for culvert to be cleared. (larger scale drainage issues covered under Project List)	
FP33		(refer to Project List for wider issues around FP33, FP54 and Cemex sites). Tree diverting water flow cleared Nov 20. Gates at FP33 and gates and fencing at FP33/29 reinstated and ditch cleared – March 2021. WBC had agreed to install bollards/ barrier at end of Longwater Lane but has now said this will not be done and the situation will be monitored.	March 21

- The level of use of the path network combined with weather conditions has left many in poor condition although this may improve in the coming months. It was agreed that the paths should be assessed to determine their condition, and which are priorities for remedial works. Cllr Cornish will draw up a rota.
- WBC has agreed temporary measures to alleviate the issue of Wick Hill, a bridleway, being used as a cut through due to the closure of the B3348 The Ridges. The measures include a gate (unlocked) to be closed overnight from 10pm to 8am and large highway signs to discourage traffic. Smaller permanent signs have been ordered for placing at strategic points.
- The WBC Rights of Way team is investigating concerns over access being created from private gardens on to the north end of Nashgrove Lane, a byway.

198/2021 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

199/2021 FORUM

- Cllr Weeks advised that the Leas Field owned by the Finchampstead Sports Club and located north of the Memorial Park has been locked by the Club. There are some concerns locally over the restrictions on access. This will be discussed by the Finchampstead Park Management Committee.
- Cllr Weeks advised that West Court SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) is now open and is an attractive open space. A visit for Councillors was suggested and may be arranged in June.
- Cllr Cornish asked for comments on the preferred meeting start time. It was noted that when in person meetings resume the start time is likely to be 7.30pm, as it was before the pandemic.

200/2021 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on 28 July 2021.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Committee.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
193/2021	Complete risk assessment - review text for remaining circular walk	RW
193/2021	Ask other Clerks about volunteer involvement with RoW.	Clerk
195/2021	No cycling / horses signs installation	DC
195/2021	Resolve path numbering issues with WBC	RW/DC/Clerk
195/2021	QR codes for circular walks / other paths	SPB/RC/SG
195/2021	Circular walk maps	Clerk
195/2021	Finchampstead – Crowthorne circular walk comments	All / DC
195/2021	South Wokingham walks proposals	RC/RW
196/2021	Meeting with WBC Green Infrastructure Manager 27/5/21 (Bohunt Cycle route / Sandmartins cycle route / FP8 hedge / byway improvement programme / missing link)	DC/RJM/Clerk
196/2021	Rooks Nest consultation report	DC / All
196/2021	Bridleways 26 /34 missing link – meeting with BHS / Ramblers	EB/DC/JM/SW
197/2021	Maintain contact with WBC over condition / maintenance issues	Clerk
197/2021	Rota and brief for path inspections	DC
199/2021	Comments on meeting start time.	All / DC