

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JULY 2021 AT 7 PM by Microsoft Teams video conference

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

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

330/2021 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Cornish welcomed those present and advised that Cllr Biskup would like to join the Committee. This was unanimously approved.

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Woof and from Mr. J. Alexander, Footpath Warden.

331/2021 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

332/2021 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021 were agreed and will be signed retrospectively as soon as circumstances allow.

333/2021 MATTERS ARISING

193/2021 Risk assessment

Cllr Woof will complete the review of the final circular walk as soon as possible.

193/2021 Adopt a Path Scheme

The Clerk has established that none of the Local Councils in Wokingham Borough have any volunteer involvement with rights of way maintenance due to the constraints relating to health and safety. Volunteers would need to be part of a constituted group with the relevant insurance and training, for example on tool use, would be required. It was agreed that the Clerk would make further enquiries in relation to these constraints.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has indicated that it may be possible to develop an arrangement allowing Town and Parish Councils to carry out more work on rights of way. Wokingham Without Parish Council (WWPC) is keen to pursue this and the Clerk will contact WWPC to discuss their plans.

195/2021 Circular walks, promotion and signage

The no cycling / no horses signs have now been installed. The intention is to explain to horse and cycle riders why they should not be using paths intended and suitable only for walkers.

The discrepancies in path numbering on the Definitive Map have not been followed up with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). It was agreed not to pursue this any further.

334/2021 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2021/22

Expenditure to date is £893 for works to Footpath 33, signs and plan printing.

It was noted that the two kissing gates installed on Footpath 7 have been funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

335/2021 CIRCULAR WALKS, PROMOTION AND SIGNAGE

QR code links to path / route information

- It was previously agreed that signs with QR codes linking to information about the path including its designation and number should be investigated.

It was agreed that this approach should be trialled on one of the circular walks, initially using temporary signs. Cllrs Bromley, Cundy, and Gurney agreed to take this forward.

Circular walk maps

- An order has been placed for the maps for the remaining two circular walks to be drawn up in the same style as the new rights of way map produced in 2020.

Proposed Finchampstead to Crowthorne circular walk

- Cllr Cornish circulated information on a proposed new circular walk. Cllrs Margetts and May agreed to walk the route to check the instructions.

Potential 'South Wokingham walks'

- At a previous meeting the possibility of 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 Biskup and Woof will take this forward. To avoid any duplication this will include consideration of existing walks including those promoted by the Ramblers and the AA.

336/2021 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

The current priority projects were discussed.

Stile replacement

In the last 12 months gates to replace stiles have been installed on FP7 (4 gates) and FP29. Gates have been replaced on FP33 and the junction of FP29/FP33 and a new gate installed on FP16. This has been achieved through joint working with the Ramblers and landowners.

FP14 - it was agreed that the potential replacement of the two stiles would be deferred.

FP1 - two landowners had given permission but not the third. The Clerk will approach the Ramblers again regarding the potential replacement of the stile/s which permission has been granted for.

FP3 – one landowner has refused permission and the other is unknown. It was agreed that this would not be pursued further at this time.

Cllr Weeks suggested that the two stiles on the permissive path leading through Manor Farm to Lower Sandhurst Road could be replaced with gates. The path has been in use for over 10 years and is well used, and the stiles are in poor condition. It was agreed that Cllr Weeks should discuss this with the landowner.

Cllr May commented on FP18 which runs from Church Lane to the B3016 Jubilee Hill where there is currently no footway or link to another path. It was agreed that the potential for a footway on Jubilee Hill should be tied in with any proposals for the redesign of the War Memorial junction, and that Cllr Bromley would lead on this.

Bridge at FP17A / Bridleway 49

Cllr Weeks agreed to check whether the refurbishment works to the bridge over the Blackwater River have been completed by WBC.

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.
- As reported at the Council meeting on 21 July, works to improve the paths at Hazebrouck Meadows will be implemented during August, with the works jointly funded by Barkham and Finchampstead Parish Councils.
- WBC has undertaken a safety audit on Biggs Lane adjacent to Hazebrouck Meadows and does not consider that a crossing is required. It was agreed that this should be referred to the Roads & Road Safety Committee for further discussion with WBC and Barkham Parish Council.
- Cllr Margetts agreed to check the warning signage on Commonfield Lane and markings at the junction of the Greenway with the Lane.

Cycle routes to Wokingham

- Cllrs Cornish and Margetts met representatives from WBC and Sand martins Golf Course on 14 April to discuss the potential upgrading of a section of public footpath around the Golf Course to a cycle path
- 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. Cllr Cornish and the Clerk will follow this up with WBC.
- The Forestry Commission has still not responded to the request to consider the potential use of the paths through Gorrick Woods as cycle routes. It was agreed that this project would be put on hold pending work on the potential route to Wokingham noted above.

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. The responses have been analysed and the consultation report circulated to Committee members and to those residents who responded.
- Several points have now been followed up with WBC and others are still under investigation. When all points have been covered Cllr Cornish and the Clerk will produce a report and a separate meeting will be arranged to discuss whether to proceed. The residents who responded to the consultation will be advised of the outcome of the investigations and the decision reached.

'Missing link' between bridlepaths 26 and 34

Cllr Cornish met representatives from the British Horse Society (BHS), the Ramblers and WBC in June. All organisations are keen to see the link designated as a public right of way. WBC has advised that the landowner could be approached regarding a 'Deed of Dedication'. If this is refused WBC suggest a 'Deemed Dedication' for which evidence of use will be required. The BHS has secured user evidence as has Cllr May.

A further meeting will be arranged for September.

Cemex sites path network

Cllrs Cornish and Jukes and the Clerk met a local landowner in June to discuss the path network adjoining the Fleet Hill Farm restoration site.

The Committee agreed that the initial focus should be on the improvement of FP33 and its upgrade to a bridleway, as a step towards creating a circular route for horse riders.

The drainage issues on the Cemex UK Ltd. owned site at Fleet Hill Farm were noted, and the need to ensure that WBC does not accept the site and paths until the drainage and path condition issues are resolved.

Byway resurfacing

WBC has confirmed that its 4-year improvement programme has ended, and no further funds are available.

Cllr Cornish and the Clerk will update the Rights of Way Project List and will circulate this.

337/2021 LOCAL WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)

WBC has circulated information about proposed walking and cycling routes.

It was agreed that Cllrs Bromley, Cornish, Gurney, Jukes, May and Weeks would consider the proposed routes and respond to WBC by the 6 September deadline. The Clerk will arrange a meeting.

338/2021 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 336/2021 'Improvements to the Rights of Way Network' above.

Location	Date Reported	Current position / Actions	Date completed/ rectified
FP6	March 20 March 21 May 21	Section before the descent to White Horse Lane very wet and muddy with a trench forming in the path Reported 1/5/20 ref W209652. WBC checked Nov 2020 – advised not an issue. Reported again March 21 and May 21. Agreed to monitor	
FP9	Feb 21 July 21	Path reported as wet in places due to adjacent spring, leaving a rutted surface in drier weather. Agreed that as this is a rural path no action is required.	July 21
Bridleway 26	Feb 20 March 21 April 21	Blocked culvert. May 21 – WBC has asked for culvert to be cleared. RW to check. (Larger scale drainage issues covered under Project	

		List)	
FP52	July 21	WBC reported as overgrown. RW to check.	

The Footpath Warden is dealing with or has dealt with other paths reported as being overgrown, including FP6, FP8 and FP28.

339/2021 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

340/2021 FORUM

No matters were raised.

341/2021 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on 3 November 2021.

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

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
333/2021	Complete risk assessment of third circular walk	RW
333/2021	Enquire into constraints re volunteer involvement with maintenance Contact WWPC over plans for greater involvement with maintenance.	Clerk
335/2021	QR code trial for one circular walk	RC/SPB/SG
335/2021	Finchampstead – Crowthorne circular walk Walk route to check instructions	RJM/JM
335/2021	South Wokingham walks proposals	RW/EB
336/2021	FP1 – contact Ramblers again re replacing one or two of 4 stiles on the path	Clerk
336/2021	Manor Farm permissive path – contact landowner re stile replacement	SW
336/2021	Referred to Roads & RS. FP18 and footway on Jubilee Hill – for consideration if / when Memorial junction is redesigned.	SPB
336/2021	Bridge at FP17A / BP49 – check if refurbishment complete	SW
336/2021	Referred to Roads & RS. Cycle route to Bohunt / Biggs Lane crossing. Discuss further with WBC and BPC.	SPB
336/2021	Check markings / signage at Commonfield Lane /greenway	RJM
336/2021	Sand martins cycle route - WBC to produce feasibility study – check on progress	DC/Clerk
336/2021	Rooks Nest access – follow up outstanding points raised in consultation. Produce report. Arrange meeting to discuss.	DC / Clerk
336/2021	Bridleways 26 /34 missing link – arrange further meeting with BHS / Ramblers/WBC	DC/Clerk
336/2021	Cemex sites / FP33 upgrade – consider next steps	GJ/Clerk
336/2021	Update and circulate RoW Project List	DC/Clerk
337/2021	LCWIP – arrange meeting to consider proposals and respond to consultation by 6 Sept	DC/SW/SPB/ JM/SG/GJ/ Clerk
338/2021	Maintain contact with WBC over condition / maintenance issues and follow up as appropriate	Clerk