

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2021 AT 7 PM by Microsoft Teams video conference

PRESENT: Cllr D. Cornish, Chair. Cllr R. Margetts, Vice Chair.
Cllrs S. Bromley; R. Cundy (part); S. Gurney (part); G. Jukes OBE;
S. Weeks and R. Woof.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

483/2021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr E. Biskup and Mr. J. Alexander, Footpath Warden.

484/2021 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

485/2021 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2021 were agreed and will be signed retrospectively as soon as circumstances allow.

486/2021 MATTERS ARISING

333/2021 Risk assessment

Cllr Woof will complete the review of the final circular walk.

333/2021 Adopt a Path Scheme / permission to work on rights of way

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. To be carried forward.

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. To be carried forward.

337/2021 Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Cllrs Bromley, Cornish and Jukes and the Clerk met on 19 August and agreed a response to the WBC consultation on the LCWIP.

487/2021 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2021/22

Expenditure to date is £1334 which is within budget.

It was noted that budget proposals for 2022/23 are similar to the 2021/22 budget. This is a minimal budget with the expectation that any larger works will be covered by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

488/2021 ROOKS NEST ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

A consultation on proposed access improvements to Rooks Nest Woods took place earlier in 2021 and a report on the consultation outcome was produced in May 2021. This was circulated to all Councillors and to those who responded to the consultation.

A number of points were raised in the consultation which have now been investigated, and an updated version of the consultation report including the findings was circulated to Committee members.

It was agreed that on the basis of the findings the project should proceed to the next stage. A meeting will now be arranged with WBC to discuss measures to mitigate concerns raised, in particular inconsiderate parking, and dog fouling.

Subject to the outcome of the discussions, a joint decision will be taken by the Parish Council and WBC over whether to proceed to implementation.

489/2021 CIRCULAR WALKS, PROMOTION AND SIGNAGE

No cycling / no horses signs

These signs aim to explain to horse and cycle riders why they should not be using paths intended and suitable only for walkers. The signs were installed during early summer and any lost or damaged signs are being replaced as required.

It was agreed that the Clerk should order a further 25 signs.

Circular walk waymarkers / right of way finger posts

Some circular walk waymarkers are missing, damaged or dirty and it was noted that some fingerpost signs are now obscured by vegetation and should ideally be relocated.

It was agreed that the waymarkers should be checked and replaced where required. Cllr Woolf will check how many spare waymarkers are available and more will be ordered if necessary.

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 trialled on one of the circular walks. Cllr Gurney and the Clerk have made some progress with this, using the St. James' Church walk as a trial, and will report back at or before the next meeting.

Circular walk maps

- The map for the first circular walk has been redrawn in the same style as the new rights of way map produced in 2020 and was approved by the Committee in May 2021.
- A draft of the redrawn map for the second walk was circulated. The map was approved subject to the inclusion of additional road names.

It was noted that the stylised map is intended to be used with the step-by-step directions / instructions. The circular walks are intended to cater for more 'casual' walkers and to encourage people to walk locally. Ordnance Survey maps are available for more serious or experienced walkers.

- It was agreed that the directions for the three circular walks should be checked to ensure that they align with the redrawn maps.

Proposed Finchampstead to Crowthorne circular walk

- Cllr Cornish previously circulated information on a proposed new circular walk. Cllr Cornish will check the draft directions and Cllr Woof agreed to undertake a map-based check of the route.

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.
- To avoid any duplication this would need to include consideration of existing walks including those promoted by the Ramblers and the AA. Cllr Cornish will prepare a briefing note for the project.

490/2021 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

The current priority projects were discussed.

Stile replacement

At the previous meeting 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 landowner has agreed to undertake the work and Cllr Week will follow this up.

Bridge at FP17A / Bridleway 49

The refurbishment works to the bridge over the Blackwater River have been completed by WBC.

Cycle route to Bohunt School

- The paths across Hazebrouck Meadows have now been improved, and signage and road markings are now in place where the green way meets Commonfield Lane.
- Barkham Parish Council is leading on the proposal to get a pedestrian / cycle crossing installed on Biggs Lane adjacent to Hazebrouck Meadows.
- WBC has been asked to consider signage at Hogwood warning vehicles about the presence of cyclists.
- The Parish Council's Roads & Road Safety Committee will now be leading on matters relating to the cycle route.

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 Margetts will follow this up with WBC.

'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.

A further meeting will be arranged to discuss the next stages.

Bridleway 26 drainage

The Clerk is obtaining quotations to clear the blocked culvert and ditches and to install a pipe to overcome the issue of water from the ditch being channelled straight down the path.

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 previously 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.

This will be carried forward and actioned by the Working Group, led by Cllr Jukes, when resources allow.

Fleet Hill path to link Footpath 29 with the Tally Ho

This potential link is included in the WBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Loddon Valley Ramblers have been in contact regarding working together to progress its implementation. Cllr Woof noted that this forms part of the Blackwater Valley Path.

Cllr Cornish will visit the site to assess feasibility and constraints, and the project will then be discussed with WBC.

Rights of Way Project List

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

491/2021 CONDITION / MAINTENANCE OF RIGHTS OF WAY

Paths requiring more significant improvements are covered under agenda item 490/2021 'Improvements to the Rights of Way Network' above.

- FP6: Section before descent to White Horse Lane is wet and muddy with a trench forming in the path. This has been reported to WBC, most recently in May 2021. The path is currently in reasonable condition, and it was agreed this would continue to be monitored.
- FP29/33: The Clerk is liaising with Cemex UK Ltd over laying material on the muddy area at the junction of the two paths, as an interim measure pending future improvements to the path.
- FP9 from The Village to St. James' Church will continue to be monitored for drainage and surface condition issues.
- BW24 Heath Ride: The surface works implemented in 2019 have significantly improved the byway but it is expected that further work may be needed in 1 to 2 years, depending on the level of use of the route.

492/2021 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

493/2021 FORUM

- Cllr Weeks noted that the next meeting of the Committee is some months away. Interim project-based meetings will be arranged to ensure that projects continue to move forward.
- Cllr Cornish noted the British Horse Society (BHS) proposal to create a roadside track at The Ridges and an additional path through The Ridges to Dell Road. Cllr Weeks advised that this will be discussed with the National Trust at the next meeting of the Friends of Finchampstead Ridges.
- Cllr Weeks requested that the proposed car park on Longwater Road and the Pegasus crossing, both relating to the future nature reserves on the restored Cemex UK owned land, be discussed at the next meeting.

494/2021 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on 27 April 2022

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

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
486/2021	Complete risk assessment of third circular walk	RW
486/2021	Enquire into constraints re volunteer involvement with maintenance. Contact WWPC over plans for greater involvement with maintenance.	Clerk
488/2021	Rooks Nest access improvements Arrange meeting with WBC	Clerk
489/2021	Order 25 no horses no cycling signs Check no. of arrow stickers remaining—order more if required	Clerk Clerk/DC
489/2021	Check no of spare waymarkers and order more if required. Check circular walk waymarkers and replace as required. Collate information on fingerposts needing relocation	RW/Clerk DC All
489/2021	QR code trial for one circular walk	SG/Clerk
489/2021	Progress circular walk maps for routes 2 and 3 Check that directions align with redrawn maps	Clerk Clerk / RW
489/2021	Finchampstead – Crowthorne circular walk Walk route to check instructions. Map route. Draw up and publish directions and map in same style to other walks. Consider adding information on features.	DC/RW/Clerk
489/2021	South Wokingham walks proposals – DC to prepare brief for EB/others	DC/EB
490/2021	Stile replacement - Manor Farm permissive path. Follow up.	SW
490/2021	Sand Martins cycle route - WBC agreed to produce feasibility study April 2021 – check on progress	RJM
490/2021	Bridleways 26 /34 missing link – arrange further meeting with BHS/Ramblers/WBC	DC/Clerk
490/2021	BP26 drainage - Obtain quotes Additional contractor name (Warren Crest Farm)	Clerk SW/Clerk
490/2021	Cemex sites / FP33 upgrade – progress when time allows	GJ/Clerk
490/2021	Update and circulate RoW Project List	DC/Clerk
490/2021	Path from FP29 to Tally Ho Discuss with WBC. Liaise with Ramblers	DC/Clerk
491/2021	FP29/33 – work with Cemex on surface improvements at junction	Clerk