

## FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 MARCH 2023 AT 7.30PM

At the FBC Centre, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead

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**PRESENT:** Councillor D. Cornish, Chair. Councillor G. Jukes OBE, Vice Chair.  
Councillors E. Allen; S. Bromley; C. Mortimer & S. Weeks.

Mr. J. Alexander, Footpath Warden  
K. Dagnall, Clerk.

#### **404/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors S. Gurney & R. Woof.

#### **405/2023 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

#### **406/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were agreed and were signed by Cllr. Cornish.

#### **407/2023 MATTERS ARISING AND OTHER MATTERS**

##### **291/2022 Permission to work on rights of way**

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. This could include minor works and repairs to paths, using agreed or approved contractors. Any works would be funded by the Town or Parish Council.

Wokingham Without Parish Council (WWPC) and WBC were working on a pilot project with the aim of developing an agreement which could be used by other Parish Councils, but this has not been put in place yet.

This will be discussed with the WBC Rights of Way Manager and the Service Manager for Green and Blue Infrastructure, involving WBC Councillors if required.

##### **291/2022 Manor Farm permissive path closure**

The landowner closed the permissive path in May 2022, due to the local British Horse Society submitting a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) application requesting that an old historic route which follows part of the path is designated a bridleway. This DMMO application has been accepted by WBC for progressing to the next stage, but this does not mean that the application will be successful.

Cllr Weeks will speak to the landowner to see if the permitted path can be re-opened.

##### **294/2022 St. James' Church Circular Walk**

The directions for the walk have been amended to reflect the relocation of the War Memorial.

##### **WBC new online map**

WBC has updated its Definitive Rights of Way Map in partnership with Loddon Valley Ramblers and has launched a new online map. A few errors and omissions have been noted and will be reported to WBC. Promotion for the new map indicates that it provides information on where there are stiles or other accessibility issues, but the 5 remaining stiles in Finchampstead are not shown on the map. This will be queried with WBC.

#### **408/2023 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2022/23**

Committee expenditure to date is £190. Expenditure on larger projects has been through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

#### **409/2022 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK**

The Rights of Way Project List was circulated. The List was prepared with reference to the Council's CIL Project List and the WBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) which includes projects put forward by the Ramblers.

Recently completed projects are the replacement of stiles on Footpath 1 (New Mill Road to Farley Hill) with kissing gates; access improvements to Rooks Nest Woods; and drainage improvements to Bridlepath 26.

The Project List was reviewed and will be updated and circulated.

Priorities for the Committee were agreed as follows, with actions detailed in the Project List:

- **Access improvements**
  - Stile replacement on Footpath 14 – the landowner will be approached.
- **Small improvement projects**
  - Resolving hedge encroachment on Footpath 8 – to be discussed with WBC.
  - Surface improvements to sections of Byway 24 leading to Wellingtonia Avenue – to be discussed with WBC.
- **Major projects**
  - Progressing the completion of the future nature reserves at Fleet Hill and Manor Farms, east and west of Longwater Road, owned by Cemex UK Ltd. To include the completion of new rights of way on the sites and linking to the wider network, and securing the future management of the reserves.

The Parish Council's Working Group met on 10 March to review the current position.

A meeting with Cemex UK Ltd representatives is taking place on 22 March and following this the Working Group will meet again to discuss the next stages, which will include a meeting with WBC Officers involved with the project. The intention is that the Parish Council will be able to support WBC in progressing completion of the sites as nature reserves.

- Reinstatement of the 'missing link' between bridlepaths 34 and 26. Cllr Cornish will continue to liaise with WBC and other interested parties, WBC had previously agreed to approach the landowner regarding a 'Deed of Dedication'.
- Cycle route to Wokingham linking with Finchampstead via Nashgrove Lane. A feasibility study has been completed on a section of the route. WBC is liaising with Network Rail over a railway crossing. A meeting will be arranged

with Wokingham Town Council to share information on projects and plans relating to a Finchampstead to Wokingham cycle route.

- Path alongside Fleet Hill B3348 linking Footpath 29 and the Tally Ho. WBC has committed to do a highway safety study to assess the feasibility of the path. Cllr Cornish has contacted WBC over the recent installation of a fence at an adjacent property which would impact on the proposed path.

#### **410/2023 CIRCULAR WALKS, PROMOTION AND SIGNAGE**

##### **Circular walk way-markers / right of way finger posts**

Some of the circular walk way-markers are missing, damaged or dirty and it was noted that some fingerpost signs are now obscured by vegetation and should ideally be relocated or cleared.

It was agreed that the circular walks should be checked, with Councillors replacing way markers as they find them, or installing new as required. Way markers can be collected from the Parish Office.

Any issues with finger post signs should be reported to the Clerk who will collate a list for submission to WBC.

##### **Proposed Finchampstead to Crowthorne circular walk**

Further progress has been made with the new walk. Cllr Woof and the Clerk will be resuming work on this in April. This will be used for the proposed QR code trial – Cllrs Allen and Mortimer offered to assist with the project.

##### **Potential 'South Wokingham walks'**

Cllr Woof will be progressing this project, the first stage being a desk top study to identify existing walks.

#### **411/2023 CONDITION / MAINTENANCE OF RIGHTS OF WAY**

Current known issues:

Bridlepath 46 (Barkham Bridlepath 14): Overhanging branches reported to WBC.

Footpath 54: Gate closure and path damage from Cemex UK Ltd works at Manor Farm – reported to Cemex and WBC. Noted that the gate has now been opened.

Footpath 33: Blocked culvert causing flooding – reported to Cemex.

Bridlepath 11: Flooding on the path north of White Horse Lane has been reported to WBC.

#### **412/2023 FORUM**

Cllr Cornish noted the plans promoted by WBC for a Covid Memorial Wood at Rooks Nest Farm, adjacent to the California Country Park. It is unclear how the woodland will be accessed, and what parking will be available. This will be monitored.

#### **413/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next Committee meeting will be held on 7 June 2023.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS – RoW 21 March 2023**

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
407/2023	Discuss agreement for minor path works with WBC	Clerk
407/2023	Manor Farm permissive path closure – discuss re-opening of path with landowner	SW
407/2023	Feedback to WBC on new online map	Clerk
409/2023	Update and circulate Project List	Clerk
409/2023	Progress agreed priority projects as detailed in Project List FP14 stiles - Contact landowner  Cemex nature reserves - Further working group meeting then meeting with WBC Cycle route to Wokingham - Arrange meeting with WTC  Arrange meeting with WBC to discuss: FP8 encroachment BW24 improvements Missing Link Fleet Hill Path	Clerk  GJ/Clerk  Clerk/DC  Clerk/DC
410/2023	Check circular walks and replace way markers as required. Collate information on fingerposts needing relocation  Replace / add 'no cycling no horses' signs as required	All All/Clerk  All
410/2023	Finchampstead – Crowthorne circular walk Map route. Information on features. Use for trial with QR codes on way markers Seek permission from NT and BFC	RW/Clerk + EA/CM
410/2023	South Wokingham walks proposals Desktop study of existing walks	RW