

Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 9th August 2010 at
Priory Country Park commencing at 6.30pm

Members

Bob Wallace - Chairman
Vicki Barrett - Vice Chair
James Russell
David Binns
David Mitchell
Steve Bumstead
Nigel Jacobs
Les Geary
Robert Tate
Graham Watson
Cllr Nick Charsley
Andy Gerrard
Steve Tomlin

Observers

Phill Fox – Bedford Borough Council
Martyn Brawn – Bedford Borough Council
Lizzie Barnicoat – Secretary
Simon Fisher – Bedford Borough Council

Apologies

Karen Aspinall
Ian Redgewell
Barry Ingram

1. Welcome by Chairman

Bob Wallace welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The meeting opened with a letter read out from Joel Carre who offered his

resignation from the Forum, due to recent appointment as Head of Communities at Bedford Borough Council, members accepted the resignation and wished Joel well in his new role.

2. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions received, as no members of the public present.

3. **Apologies**

See above.

4. **Minutes of previous meeting held on 14th June 2010 to be agreed**

These had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting, it was unanimously agreed by those present to be signed as true and accurate record by the Chairman.

5. **Feedback from previous meeting**

5.1 Forum's logo – Vicki Barrett reported that due to the school holidays it had been difficult to engage with local schools due to the timescale. Phill Fox reported that the Borough's in house design team had come up with some possibilities which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The Chairman, suggested a voting process which was unanimously agreed and members considered the presented logos. The Secretary collated the votes and the agreed logo to be included from now on, on all forum paperwork.

Action

Electronic copy of logo to be received from design team and added to forum paperwork – **Phill Fox and Secretary**

5.2 Waste Core Strategy consultation response – The Secretary had received responses from members and collated and circulated draft Forum response to all members, comments were submitted prior to end of consultation period and acknowledgment of receipt received from Central Bedfordshire Council.

5.3 Allocations and Designations consultation response - The Secretary had received responses from members and collated and circulated draft Forum response to all members, comments were submitted prior to end of consultation period and acknowledgment of receipt received from Bedford Borough Council.

5.4 Countryside Stewardship update – Following the last meeting and discussion of the new Higher Level Stewardship Scheme coming in, Graham Watson had liaised with Natural England on behalf of the Forum, and Darren Braine had offered to attend a meeting to talk through the details of the scheme. Darren Braine had kindly agreed to

attend the October meeting, the Chairman thanked Graham Watson for his help regarding this.

Nigel Jacobs enquired regarding the Riseley route and it was noted that this route would not be expiring till 2018, members discussed the scheme and the problems regarding posters not always being visible to determine the available routes to users and the difficulty therefore of linking routes together. Steve Bumstead reported that the Rural Land Register uses a different mapping system to that of Natural England, making it problematic for landowners wishing to renew existing routes. The Chairman encouraged members to raise any such concerns at the next meeting so they can hopefully be resolved.

Action

Future Agenda Item - **Secretary**

5.5 Website – Phill Fox reported that enquiries had been made regarding the Secretary accessing the website to upload information onto, however, this could only be done in house at the Borough. The Chairman and Andy Gerrard reiterated the importance of the agenda and minutes to be available in the public domain, Phill Fox gave assurance that this would be addressed. The Secretary noted that Natural England had been contacted and request sent that could the Forum's details be uploaded onto there website, to be pursued.

Action

Uploading of Forum agenda and minutes onto Bedford Borough website – **Phill Fox**
Inclusion of Forum details onto Natural England website - **Secretary**

Other items to be covered during the meeting.

6. Bedford Borough Council Greenspace Strategy and information on the Green wheel Project

Simon Fisher, Greenspace Officer from Bedford Borough Council was in attendance and gave a detailed presentation on the overview of the services provided and the workings of the Greenspace Department within the Borough. Information was given to members regarding: responsibilities, community involvement, management of buildings and assets, and green infrastructure currently in the Borough. The importance of keeping the urban and rural balance to ensure green space benefits are used by all residents of the Borough and that feedback from public consultations such as the Green wheel are acted upon, developing strategies that deliver the action points raised.

Members raised questions regarding specific items such as promotion of projects through better publicity, and how to ensure that all users aware of the great rights of way network available to them. David Binns recommended greater promotion of the John Bunyan trail and better links to raise knowledge amongst users that such a historic trail exists. Nigel Jacobs enquired regarding the future plans of lengthening the rights of way 'spokes' out across the Borough, Cllr Nick Charley noted that it is important to

ensure that information boards can easily be interpreted and branded to aid promotion. Les Geary felt it important to action deliverables in an attainable way with current resources and managing expectations is important so users are realistic in what can be provided presently. Steve Bumstead enquired regarding the commuter links and routes, members were pleased to hear that regular routes are established and used by many daily.

The Chairman thanked Simon Fisher for his informative presentation.

Action

Circulation of link to Borough website regarding Green wheel document – **Secretary**

7. Green Lanes Management Plan update

Supporting documents had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting including a draft Management Plan produced by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. Martyn Brawn reported that he and Phill Fox had fundamental reservations regarding the quality of the document not fulfilling the brief that was set by the Borough, feeling it is particularly short in analysis provided. Martyn Brawn gave background history of the document and listed examples within the document which were not to the level of detail expected. A meeting had been arranged with Joel Carre and Cliff Andrews so that Martyn Brawn and Phill Fox can give clear structure on what information they feel appropriate that should be contained in such a document. James Russell added that that the current draft document does not include access proposals so it is difficult to comment further, Andy Gerrard supported that the contract had not been met by BRCC. The Chairman noted that no reference to costing and consultations in regards to Parish Councils included, Martyn Brawn stated this was a requirement in the brief which had also not been included. Members were mindful that ultimately the plan needs to be clearer in intent so actions can be produced and ultimately delivered. Members were unanimous in their disappointment at this stage in the document presented and supported such feedback to be made to BRCC.

Action

Feedback to be presented to BRCC and to be future agenda item – **Martyn Brawn, Phill Fox and Secretary**

8. A short break was taken by members.

9. Outdoor Access and Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (OAROWIP)

Documentation regarding this item had been circulated to members prior to the meeting, Phill Fox reiterated the importance of collating and incorporating member's thoughts from the previous Plans produced to help improve the implementations and actions for the new Plan. Members discussed the vital role of volunteers who carry out a lot of work presently, and with financial resources available being limited due to enforced cuts their role would be even more important. The objectives of the Plan Phill

Fox felt should be kept simple and members agreed with this approach. The Forum discussed the draft in detail particularly the five aims and were encouraged to feedback following the meeting as well, comments included: need to make focus on delivering actions, document needs to actually achieve action plan and how best to present information for each area i.e. per parish, or per area.

Vicki Barrett felt the approach should be to identify who is the customer, user and supplier, this process would identify the volunteer as a vital role in delivering actions, so therefore suggested it would be beneficial to ask volunteers for input.

Members agreed with Phill Fox that it would be productive to form a working group to look into more detailed specific parts of the Plan, information to be circulated by email after the meeting encouraging further member input and information regarding a meeting of a working group to progress things.

Actions

Circulation and formation of working group and to be discussed at next Forum meeting
– **All members, Phill Fox and Secretary**

10. Wider Rights of Way issues

Documents had been circulated prior to the meeting regarding this item, due to time constraints the Chairman felt that it would be best to carry forward item to next meeting for discussion.

Action

Future Agenda Item – **Bob Wallace**

11. Any Other Notified Business

11.1 Invite to Hertfordshire Local Access Forum conference – members reminded if they wish to attend to inform Secretary prior to 31st August.

11.2 Information circulated to those present regarding the Bedfordshire Walking Festival.

11.3 Items to be discussed at next meeting to include way marking and Melanie MacLeod in attendance to discuss Local Transport Plan in regards to walking and cycling strategy.

Date of next meeting

Monday 4th October 2010 – Venue tbc - Full meeting starts at 6.30 p.m.

Signed:

Date: