



Hertfordshire Local Access Forum



72nd Meeting Minutes

December 2021

(via Zoom)

Present

Liddy Lawrence, Chair (LL), Ian Gregory, Vice-Chair (IG), Debbie Hougie (DH); Brian Worrell (BW), Diana Collingridge (DC), Mark Mills-Bishop (MMB), Paul Christian (PC), Rosemary Gilligan (RG); Russell Huffer (RH), Laura Frey (LF).

- Richard Cuthbert, CRoW Service (RC).
- Chris Beney, OSS / BADFA

Welcome Laura Frey (LF) new HertsLAF member.

Apologies; Cllr Chris Lloyd (CL), Chris Hall (CH), Tony Bradford, CRoW Service (TB), Lee Tyson, CRoW Service (LT), Gary O'Leary (GO'L), David Keeley (DK).

Welcome – Lynda Warth, BHS Cambs County Access & Bridleways Officer (CABO) & Cambs LAF Member

Promoting Access in Cambs (see Presentation).

Contribution of equestrian industry is over £100M to Cambs economy. Second largest rural employer / contributor to the rural economy after food production / farming industry.

Mere Way (old Roman road) cycleway proposal N of Cambridge to Waterbeach's new 10k to 12k home housing developments.

Stressed importance of having to attend and respond to all such consultations.

Bridleways (BRs) / Restricted Byways (RBs) are seen as the most inclusive form of access, as they cater for walkers, horse riders & carriage drivers, and cyclists.

Important link to very well used BR beside the guided busway constructed to St Ives.

4m of tarmac proposed, under large s106 agreement, but not seen as a good idea.

Non-motorised user path cited in s106 so riders argued successfully they must be included.

Planners and legal colleagues didn't use correct terminology or understand the nuances.

Scheme to be delivered under HA'80 s278 by the CC (not the developer).

S106 agreements do not involve public consultees, so the proposal hadn't given anybody that opportunity.

Multiple user groups inc. walkers, dog walkers, runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians, all prefer softer surfaces.

- **CB** mention of Greenways?

Wilsons Road bridleway 'improved' from grassy wide track to stone surfaced route. However 'Roadification' of PRoW in the countryside is not seen as acceptable by users.

Tarmac 'SMA' product, Stone Mastic Asphalt, known to be slippery to bridle users used on unsurfaced byway, after lobbying for some form of surfacing from cycle

users, now shown to be not safe and is going to be removed – all down to lack of consultation.

Local Cycling & Walking Improvement Plans (LCWIPs) for areas have proposed road verge route specifications which sandwich horse riders between fast moving traffic on one side and faster cyclists on the other side, should not be planned that way round.

Thinking about all vulnerable road users (VRUs) is best, so horses included on new cycletrack verge schemes – need planning and seeing the whole picture, as horses use verges.

Blue cycle and person sign does not extinguish BR rights.

NB: Don't surface centre of grassy routes but one side or the other so it doesn't reduce effective useable width, with unused verges either side.

Greenways around Cambridge aim to create wheel & spoke network.

Their RoWIP states safe off-road access for all user groups.

Non-Motorised User (NMU) example from Holland has canter track, surfaced strip and grassy strips.

Camb LAF supportive, but not always consulted or used as often as it should be.

- **BW** joint forums with Planners went well in Herts, but still not sure LAF has impact or gets consulted on plans as they emerge.
- **RG** large greenbelt release in Hertsmere will kill local horse yards, no mention of contribution to local economy.

Development is however the best opportunity for network improvements such as loop paths, peripheral paths.

- **CB** Greenways should have hardened strip to one side, not central. Perhaps need a Greenways strategy for Herts?
- **BW** worried about more disjointed network of RBs which cater for all user groups cross-county needs joined-up lead / vision by HCC for all 10 Borough / District areas.

RC to provide written response.

- **DH** S106 has no legal obligation for the planning authority to consult stakeholders on.
- **LL** having given advice and observations by LAF, they go to Committees and then are not always taken-up.

CCC recently appointed NMU Champion as a Cllr. Sits on relevant committees LW wants them to ask for bridleways as well as cycleways.

c/o IG - Sustrans National Cycle Network design principles - summary:

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/national-cycle-network-design-principles>

Minutes & Matters arising

Covid recovery fund – our 2 FT officers now well established and starting to see works coming to fruition with a number of structure/surface improvement contracts. Surfacing remains a “marmite” issue re public opinion. Volunteer surveyors have been busy helping us build a package of signpost upgrades, these are being procured currently and will start to be installed post-Christmas. Additional vinyl stickers with a QR code link to the DM / Google ‘My Map’ tool will be affixed to each post during next year’s survey effort. Our regular annual capital programme continues to run in parallel with some large bridge replacements being worked-up.

Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) – Invite Matt Wood to present vision to LAF. BW comparing HGGT to Hemel developments and whether horse riders etc would want to walk / ride beside housing developments when open countryside has been lost. Connections to wider countryside are therefore very important.

PC – QR codes are a good way to get more information across than just the RoW Google map.

Roads in Herts (RiH) Review – when is it coming to the LAF? **TB**

Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (PTRO) Review – new Enforcement Officer recruited & to start in early January.

Access Team – News & Updates – c/o Lee Tyson (written update)

Volunteering remains extremely popular and there has been no reduction in applications as furlough and pandemic restrictions have wound down, all groups are now operating at or beyond full capacity. Currently receiving 30+ applications per month.

Hertfordshire Health Walks operating in a largely unrestricted way although a small number of walks still have max. numbers and requiring pre-booking, this is at the request of the walks' leaders. Current programmes include 60+ distinct walks. Recruitment of new/additional leaders now being targeted to replace those who have not returned post re-start. Work to agree a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Public Health is underway, this will dictate future direction / level of growth targeted for the coming 3 years.

Member Updates

BW – Ridgeway National Trail - Group Meeting update next time.

RG – Hertsmere Local Plan consultation ended 06/12/2021

- Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) write-up suggests it is not good.
- Mass transit system along the A414 needs a BR alongside if it comes, like the Cambs guided busway.

DH – Herts Growth Team gave a talk to University students about the mass-transit consultation – not decided on its form yet and could be up to 10 years away.

- **Welwyn & Hatfield LCWIP** – is anyone on it? **IG** – WH Cycling have been consulted & attended. No opportunity for discussion, just presentation and then respond online. Worried about lines across A1(M) that are not crossings.

RC to ask who can give more info please?

IG – Has had a look around HGGT area, and had trouble along Stort towpath to Sawbridgeworth, muddy river bank, large drifts of leaves on tarmac at Cole Green Way, Hertford end.

- Could more use be made of Open Street Map?

DM&E Team – News & Updates – c/o RC

- DM & Commons cases remain high profile, including a Judicial Review and Development Control Committee hearing.
- Very few get through without objections in Herts now.

- Commons Applications going to hearings while funding available to hire independent Barristers to Chair Hearings.
- Development work taking DM Officer time.

Dates of 2022 meetings:

- Weds **9th Feb - Field Trip** Icknield Way / Telegraph Hill.
- Mon **14th March**
- **Field Trip** early May – RC to do a Poll for dates.
- Tues **14th June**
- Weds **14th September**
- Tues **6th December**

All meetings planned to be via Zoom.