



**The 45th Local Access Forum
held at Ramada Hotel
on 3rd March 2015**

- LAF Members;** Liddy Lawrence, Chair; Norman Jones; Robert Bolt; Ian Gregory; Diana Collingridge; Roger Thomas, Cllr Mark Mills-Bishop, Rosemary Gilligan, Lynn Myland
- Officers Present;** Richard Cuthbert – Team Leader Access & Rights of Way, Bob Fenton – Countryside Access Team Leader, Kavita Gooch – LAF Secretary, Fiona Lai – Support Officer / new LAF admin support.
- Apologies;** Debbie Hougie, Mike Hartley, Bill Storey, Tony Ferrari.
- Welcome;** Ray Booty – Chair of Essex LAF
7 members of the public; Friends of Panshanger Park, BHS, Green Lanes Association and University of Herts student.

1. Minutes and matters arising.

Page 2, item 2, Brian Worrell (public) raised issue of horses recognising a human voice saying 'hello', rather than a bell? LM stated both are acceptable even though the BHS leaflet suggests a bell, also the same should apply to carriage drivers' horses. LL suggested contacting Jez Cox as he has contact with various cycling organisations.

NJ – Sustrans website is useful as it mentions horses and ramblers facing problems with cyclists.

2. Members' Updates.

MMB – Highway verge dispute in Wildhill reached a compromise with the landowner after 3 years, gave a thank you to RC for all his work on this matter.

NJ – huddle item from the Canal & River Trust on sharing towpaths. Following a consultation there is now a final report on the website. See:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/new-policy-aims-to-give-better-towpaths-for-everyone>

IG – Bus consultation, the university has taken on the 797 route which is good news.

LL – Bus consultation, HCC claim to have sent information to the parish councils and town halls, however, appears that people are unaware of changes, or the survey. Suggested that maybe information be put in more public places such as doctors' surgeries.

LM – St. Stephen's PC received a presentation on RoW improvement plan and are happy to adopt as part of their neighbourhood plan. Meeting is to be held on 12th March at the parish.

Plaque from Natural England for new P4C bridle route at Sandridge footpath 32 is waiting to be put up.

LL – will be going to present to Natural England's board, on behalf of HertsLAF (crime link).

LM – will be attending a forum regarding fly-grazing as is an issue everywhere now.

RB - wanted an update on fly-tipping issue at DC's farm. DC said they still awaiting action on it, Tom Goldsmith followed up but will chase (**RC/TG**).

LL – LAF to do a letter to chase this issue at Mardleybury. (**LL**).

BF – fly-tipping forum is useful with advice offered and it is hosted by Herts police.

RG – in Hertsmere people can be taken to court for fly-tipping, is willing to assist anyone who needs assistance. RG also mentioned that in Aldenham the reservoir is to be treated which will turn the water blue temporarily, letter from sailing club expressing their concerns for the future use of the lake.

LL – Natural England ceasing the role of LAF regional co-ordinators, so Herts contact from now will be Fiona Taylor.

LL – updated members on LAF secretarial support, KG leaving, Fiona Lai to take over many administrative duties but not minute taking as that role has now been advertised on the website to recruit a volunteer, until then, RC and BF will be taking minutes.

ALL expressed their thanks and best wishes to Kavita for all her hard work over the years and said she will be missed.

3. Ray Booty (Essex LAF)

Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014

The act came into force in October 2014 so has not been well used yet, it covers various issues such as dangerous dogs, firearms, civil injunctions and Community Protection Orders which include closure of premises and Public Space Protection Orders (for more see the presentation slides).

- See Jerry Pearlman's report on Huddle – said it was "bad news for RoW".
- Not applicable to any metalled road.
- Criminal offence to break an order.
- Community Protection Notice – could be good news?
- Possibly remove obstructions, replacing Mags court order (s130A)?
- See statutory guidance
- Before order placed there should be consultation with police chief officer, police and crime commissioner and owner/occupiers.
- Council should consider discussing this with forums/user groups, LAF, Ramblers and BHS
- Ask Jim McManus in forum
- St. Albans and Broxbourne are looking at it via CSPs.
- Would it apply to places such as Panshanger Country Park?

LM – could be used for fly-grazing, i.e. a sign could be placed prohibiting horses to be left there.

DC – but would we need to know who the offenders are?

LL – act states order can be used to remove obstruction so would apply for fly-grazing as no requirement to know who culprits are.

4. Proposal for HertsLAF AGM each September

LL – at last regional meeting it was proposed LAFs hold their own AGMs, to discuss Annual Report and budgets etc. Asked other members if they agree for one this September? Agreed that would be useful to look at budgets and annual reports and start to complete them.

5. Network Rail Level Crossing Closures

RC – Suffolk, Needham Market case; there was a proposal to replace a level crossing with a stepped footbridge, the Suffolk LAF and Council stated that it was not appropriate and managed to successfully prove that Network Rail had not documented an equalities assessment, potential underpass or ramped bridge instead, but more expensive, there is a footpath crossing at the moment. Work is being undertaken with NR on level crossings in Herts to get the best deal for the community, sometimes a step bridge is appropriate but not in all cases.

LL – will LAF be involved with the level crossings?

RC – yes, the LAF will be briefed and updated with a list of level crossing issues.

RC – St Alban's, Abbey Line Cottonmill Lane level crossing although a low use line is extensively used by pedestrians, cyclists, shoppers etc. so would like to have a ramped bridge, although only footpath status currently.

6. Future venues for meetings (public and business).

LL – asked members if they prefer the Ramada for public meetings? All agreed to stay with it. Also agreed to keep business meetings at County Hall, providing it is just twice a year, all agreed.

7. Access & RoW News [RC/BF]

Oughtonhead Common – guided tour to take place on Monday 9th March regarding issue of enclosure for grazing. **NJ** – new proposals include kissing gates, an area there is quite boggy & walking is not easy, so idea is to make it better for walkers.

NJ – For grazing at Chorleywood Common, and Furzefield, Colney Heath Common, the LAF should always be consulted. **RC** – this would be the case. If s38 consent is agreed for temporary fencing, it is dependent on the Planning Inspectorate as to outcome and reactive to the application, but will check. (**RC**)

Panshanger Country Park – Friends of park gave a summary – 900 acres of grade 2 star English Heritage status, there are currently 1000 members, a third of park only open to public after a 32 year wait, the aim is to open a lot more.

- It is not great for paths and fencing which should be improved over time.

Several consultants have been hired and sacked by Lafarge.

- A plan will be presented to HCC (including Jan Hayes-Griffin and RC) on the 16th March highlighting that more should be opened-up for spring/summer, currently it is the Wildlife Trust who have had the only part.

- On 31 March is a Peoples Anniversary Walk; Kate Ashbrook, Open Spaces Society will be participating and everyone is invited. Suggested LAF re-visit and consult with HCC.

LL – LAF will make decision after the 16th March based on decision from HCC.

- Old s52 agreement was for Lafarge Tarmac (formerly Redland) to keep the park & heritage assets, such as the Orangery, in good condition. This has not been adhered to, which impacts on the public. Hoping Lafarge put the land into trust.

- Want LAF to campaign to Lafarge to improve access, the gravel extraction was not carried out as was planned under the old s52 agreement.
- New s106 agreement, more strongly worded specifying a timescale, master plans and actions. Website address is friendsofpanshangerpark@gmail.com.

Green Lanes and white roads – RC – definitive maps need to be complete by the 2026 cut-off, which includes all alleyways, green lanes/white roads otherwise they will disappear. This started in 2000 with the CRoW Act and user groups were concerned that time would run out.

Brian Worrell – asking for review of routes to see if we have an issue in Herts for Green Lanes/White Roads at cut-off date. Concern that they are not on the List of Streets so not recognised and may affect all rights of way users, some would be maintained by Highways but overlay not complete between some of these routes (ORPAs). The desire would be for a scoping exercise to take place, hoping for support from LAF and RoW team.

RC – is the road publicly maintainable? Cannot tell until after the assessment, will require volunteers to carry out assessments.

There will be a build-up of applications towards 2026 which will cause problems. Need to advise government how to write Regs, i.e; Will there be a clause stating what will be saved, so that duly made applications may be saved?

To update further after RC attends forthcoming Ramblers meeting. **(RC)**

RG – could all user groups (reps) join to offer support maybe.

LL – could we obtain details of what we are supporting on paper? **(ALL)**

8. Any Other Business

LL – Summer field trip to Tyttenhanger, now however, may be Panshanger due to issues raised, discuss via email. **(ALL)**

LM – Tyttenhanger; a lot of work has been done with Ros and Trustees, so contact Ros & Phil Escritt if LAF decide to go there.

RC – explained CMS outsourcing situation to LAF as RT asked - explained that the 3 tenders had pulled out even though Groundwork Trust have maintained interest. This means it is business as usual for CMS for the next year.

9. Dates of future meetings

10th June 2015

16th September 2015

8th December 2015

Meeting closed at 21.35.