

The Surrey Countryside Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum held at County Hall, Kingston-Upon-Thames Monday, 14 October 2019

Present:

Members:

Ian Russell (Chairman)
Rosie Norris
David Bellchamber
John Barber
Pamela Lyman
Elliot Cairnes
Thor Simpson
Gail Brownrigg
Penny Carey
Leigh Thornton

Primary Interest:

Motor Vehicles
Mobility vehicles
Walking
Motor cycling
Land management
Walking
Walking
Carriage driving
Equestrian
Land management

Officers:

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| Steve Mitchell | Countryside Access and Operations Team Manager |
| Richard Parkinson | Environment Delivery Group Manager |
| Joanne Porter | Countryside Access Assistant |
| Debbie Prismall | Senior Countryside Access Officer |

Observers:

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| Aileen Wood | Hampshire Countryside Access Forum |
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1. Membership of Forum 2019/20

- 1.1. The County Council has re-appointed Pamela Lyman (land owner) to the Forum.
- 1.2. John Whitaker has stepped down from the Forum
- 1.3. Richard Kelly was not reappointed to the Forum
- 1.4. Paul Marshall (cycling) and Susy Jones (biodiversity) have been newly appointed to the forum
- 1.5. The Forum has 18 out of a possible 22 members, so there are 4 vacancies.

Action - Joanne Porter to send membership information around to members.

2. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

- 2.1. Ian Russell, nominated by Gail Brownrigg, and seconded by Rosie Norris, was unanimously elected as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

2.2. Elliot Cairnes, nominated by Ian Russell and seconded by John Barber was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

2.3. Steve Mitchell thanked John Whitaker for his service to the Forum over many years, and all members of the SCAF sent their thanks and best wishes to John.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. Apologies

4.1 Apologies were received from Avril Sleeman (equestrian), Andrew Povey (local government), Paul Marshall (cycling), Sophie Gordon (cycling)

5. Introduction and welcome to Richard Parkinson

5.1 Richard Parkinson, the Environment Delivery Group Manager introduced himself and explained his role. He is now responsible for the Countryside Group as well as Waste.

6. Rights of Way definitive map training session

6.1 Debbie Prismall, Senior Countryside Access Officer gave a short training session on rights of way and the different types of legal order that can be made.

Action – Joanne to circulate a copy of the presentation

6.2 John asked what the status of UCR is. Debbie said that it has no legal status.

6.3 Debbie said that the definitive statements are being re-written at the moment such as updating distances to metric and changing road names where they have changed since the statement were first written in the 1950's.

6.4 John asked if TRO's can be reviewed. Debbie said that they can be.

6.5 Pamela asked about contractors cutting wider than the width of path and destroying planned hedges. Steve said that contractors have a specification that states the width that should be cut, but if there is a hedge then they won't trim as wide.

6.6 Gail said that she has worked with the county council to allow horse-drawn carriages to access BOATs that have a TRO on them by having a width restriction that allows a carriage but not a motor vehicle, and the wording of the order doesn't restrict motor bikes and carriages.

7. Introduction to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

7.1 Steve Mitchell, Countryside Access and Operation Team Manager explained the background of writing the original ROWIP and that it forms part of the Local Transport Plan.

- 7.2 There was a duty to produce the ROWIP, but not to implement it.
- 7.3 There was some funding for improvements detailed in the ROWIP for the first few years of the plan, but this was for local amenity routes such as to shops and schools, rather than recreation.
- 7.4 The ROWIP is still useful to use when bidding for funding such as through the planning process.
- 7.5 The ROWIP has guided Surrey County Council in what improvements can be made on the rights of way network.
- 7.6 The ROWIP should be reviewed every ten years.
- 7.7 Pamela asked if there would be any consultation on the ROWIP in the future. Steve said that there would probably be a consultation when the ROWIP is reviewed in the future, but he said he would have to check the guidance.
- 7.8 Thor asked if the Volunteer Path Warden scheme is still running. Steve said that it is, and Gail said that she had recently been on one of the courses that John Baker runs.

Action – Joanne to circulate information about the Volunteer Path Warden Scheme

- 7.9 Rosie said that the quality of the information that is available should include things like the size of the gates on rights of way.
- 7.10 Steve said that the information about structures on rights of way is on the 'report a problem' map on the Surrey County Council website, although it doesn't specify the size of the gate.
- 7.11 Pamela asked where income from fines go if works over-run on a 5-day closure. Steve said that the Countryside Access team doesn't fine.

8. Minutes of previous meeting

- 8.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

9. Matters arising/action points

- 9.1 Joanne and Gail to check who the letter regarding the use of police off-road motor-bikes should be sent to.

Action – Joanne and Gail liaise to send out the letter.

- 9.2 Ian said that GLASS are also sending a copy of the letter.

Action – Joanne to send the letter

- 9.3 Ian hasn't invited Hugh Broom to a meeting yet

- 9.4 Ian reported that it is unlikely that the Basingstoke Canal towpath could be used for equestrian use for the proposed circular route taking in sections of MoD land. He also said that Hampshire LAF were continuing to pursue this through the MOD Forum.
- 9.5 Aileen Wood said that she could try to find out more information regarding the towpath.
- 9.6 Joanne is still to find out if Huddle is still being used.

Action – Joanne to find out

- 9.7 David said that the original SCAF Facebook page has now been archived, and it needs to be unarchived somehow. He is still working on it.

Action – David to continue working on this.

- 9.8 Rosie has had a look at the East Access Routes that are on the Surrey County Council website and thinks that the information provided is not easy to use – the maps aren't very detailed, there are no grid references and information about car parks is not very good.
- 9.9 Steve said that a lot of the routes listed on the website have been pulled from other sources, such as Elmbridge Borough Council, so it should point to the place that more information is held rather than giving specific information about the routes.
- 9.10 Steve said that the routes on the website probably do need to be looked at to see if any of the information should be updated and improved.
- 9.11 Pamela suggested that SCAF could help by looking at the routes listed on the website to see if any of the information could be updated.
- 9.12 Gail said that any of the routes that are in the AONB could be looked at by the AONB.
- 9.13 Elliot asked if a description of the route could include widths to help users like Rosie.

Action – Pamela to form a sub-group to look at these routes with Rosie.

- 9.14 John asked if the Easy Access Routes could be put on the interactive map.
- 9.15 Steve said that his could be done, but it would need a lot of work and that a lot of the routes were not Surrey County Council promoted routes.
- 9.16 Gail said that there are different types of disability such as partially sighted that should be borne in mind when reviewing the routes.
- 9.17 Steve said that the Fieldfare Trust Countryside for All document is useful, although Rosie said that the Fieldfare Trust likes the terrain to be flat and level and not muddy – so it is almost like not being in the countryside.

9.18 Thor suggested having a common format so that all the information is consistent.

9.19 Penny said that parts of the Easy Access Routes may be permissive and not on the definitive map.

9.20 Joanne said that an accessibility gate will be installed by John Baker near Dunsfold Church in the next few weeks. Rosie said that it must be a large gate to be fully accessible.

10. Matters dealt with since previous meeting

10.1 The forum acknowledged the letter sent to Surrey County Council to support the bid to the Rural Payments Agency to fund a proposed multi-user route linking Box Hill to Leith Hill.

10.2 If the bid is successful SCAF will be more involved in discussions, and there may be further issue to discuss such as safety issues and the surfacing of the BOAT.

11 Forward Plan

11.1 Ian would like SCAF to ask Sophie to provide information about cycling issues / projects that are going on in Surrey and the UK to update the objectives on the forward plan.

Action - Joanne to contact Sophie and ask her to come prepared to speak about Cycling UK's aims for the development of both on and off road cycling in Surrey in order that SCAF can identify what if any actions need to go into our forward plan.

11.2 Gail will look to see if Travel Smart is still relevant as an issue.

Action – Gail to look into the matter

11.3 It was decided to take out the Surrey Nature Partnership / Health and Wellbeing Group issues, but have an ongoing nature conservation / biodiversity issue that it should be considered in all decisions discussed at the SCAF.

11.4 Gail and Eliot said that they were concerned about the promotion of cycling in the Surrey Hills and encouraging more people to visit the area when it is already quite overcrowded in certain places.

11.5 Gail said that she would like education of users as an issue, and also like a member of the Surrey Hills to be invited to join SCAF.

Action - Joanne to contact Surrey Hills to invite them to nominate a possible Forum Member

12. Outstanding Consultations

12.1 Details of outstanding consultations were noted.

13. Any other urgent business/public questions

13.1 David said that the planning application for the A3 / M25 junction has now gone in, and he will keep an eye on any access issues that crop up.

13.2 Steve said that he can give an update on the A3 / M25 junction plans at the next meeting as there are interesting proposals regarding access.

Action – Steve to give an update at the next meeting

14. Date of Next Meeting

14.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting will be held on:

20 January 2020 at 13.30

27 April 2020 at 13.30

20 July 2020 at 13.30

19 October 2020 at 13.30

Venues to be confirmed.