

The Surrey Countryside Access Forum

Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum Woodhatch Place, Reigate, Surrey Monday, 16 January 2022

Present:

Members (and their primary interests):

- Elliot Cairnes, Chairman (Walking)
- Corinna Osborne-Patterson (Landowner)
- John Barber (Motorcycles)
- Penny Carey (Equestrian)
- Avril Sleeman (Equestrian)
- Sophie Gordon (Cycling)
- Ian Wilks (Walking)
- Gail Brownrigg (Carriage driving)
- Pamela Lyman (Landowner)
- Neil Baker (Commons)
- Gareth Jex (Motor Vehicles)
- Pat Lewis (Walking)
- Thor Simpson (Walking)

Officers:

- Joanne Porter, Countryside Access Assistant
- Jonathan Wall, Countryside Access Assistant
- Rik Catling, Countryside Access Officer
- Adrian Riddle, Countryside Access Assistant
- Rob Fairbanks, Director - Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Observers:

- Peter Hattersley
- John Oliver
- Sally Blake

1. **Membership of Forum 2022/23**

- 1.1 Lauren Kyle has been appointed to SCAF, her primary interests are Walking and Conservation.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Apologies**

- 3.1 Vicky Keller (Countryside Management), Lauren Kyle, Paul Marshall (Mountain Biking)

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022 were confirmed with minor amendments.

5. Matters arising / Action points

Avril has not yet heard from Dan Williams regarding routes across North Park Farm Quarry.

Action: Joanne/Jonathan will ask Dan Williams to liaise with Avril to discuss her concerns.

- 5.1 User issues on the Rights of Way reporting page were discussed. Joanne had discussed the matter with Mary Ann Edwards who was the officer that deals with issues with CAMs. Ian asked who the primary contact should be. Joanne confirmed it is Mary Ann.

- 5.2 Elliot said that there had been no further progress regarding anything to do with the MoD; consultation letter was received in December concerning the Ash Ranges.

- 5.3 Another Local Access forum (LAF) liaison forum meeting with Chairs and Secretaries of nearby LAFs, this was attended by Joanne and Jonathan in Elliot's stead. Jonathan outlined some of the content of the meeting, namely larger issues affecting Local Access, in Surrey's case this involved Junction 10 and WACT. The meeting was attended by larger rural authorities. Avril asked which authorities were involved. Penny requested that minutes from this meeting be circulated.

Action: Joanne will circulate minutes to SCAF membership once these are made available.

- 5.4 Joanne confirmed that an organisation chart for Surrey Countryside Access had not yet been made available. It was confirmed that all vacancies within the team had been filled and the team is at full complement. New team member Rik Catling was introduced.

Action: Joanne to circulate an Organisation chart when updated.

Matters dealt with since the previous meeting

- 6.1 The response to the Stringers Common consultation was acknowledged.

7. Wey and Arun Canal

- 7.1 A letter has been received from Wey and Arun Canal trust in response to SCAF's response to their last planning application. A draft letter has been drawn up in response by Ian, Gail and Elliot. The wording was agreed by members and letter will be sent.

Action: Jonathan to send letter.

7.2 Agreed that site meeting between WACT and SCAF member subgroup necessary to discuss areas of interest/concerns with the proposals. Ian highlights concerns with adverse environmental impact of plan.

Action: Conduct site meeting of committee subgroup with WACT.

8. M25/A3 junction 10 consultation for non-motorised users

8.1 Elliott, Paul, Penny and Sophie attended J10 forum arranged by National Highways to discuss issues.

8.2 Bridleways from Ripley will pass under the A3. Width is less than Surrey's statutory recommendation so is not safe for non-motorised users. Gail says that consideration must be given to a potential future upgrade of the bridleway to a restricted byway, agreed with by Elliott.

8.3 Concerns were raised about the interface between the J.10 plans and the prospective Wisley new town. Elliot reminds forum that airfield Rights of Way may not be impacted by town development. Issues also surround vehicular access – potential for around 2 million traffic movements a year.

8.4 Pegasus Crossings to be in place at J10 Roundabout. This is not the case for Ripley roundabout.

8.5 Gail raised the commons exchange land offered as part of the settlement. It was identified that land around Buxton wood (To the North- west of J10) will be designated common land.

9. Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Access Funding and other projects of interest

9.1 Rob reported that new funding was to be prioritised at 'gateway' sites (such as Box Hill, Newlands Corner). Audit of sites would review needs for resurfacing, toilet facilities, seating etc.

9.2 Newlands Corner resurfacing, boardwalk being installed to enable access to ancient yew trees without causing damage to the trees. Gail requested that equestrian access groups be consulted on this.

9.3 Wide range of measures to work with different user groups discussed. Re-signing in areas of Southwest Surrey, active promotion of walking, cycling and equestrian routes, Rail2Ramblers linking sites with railway stations. Specific aim is to promote countryside for mental health and wellbeing for less – abled users.

9.4 Mountain Bike groups are to be encouraged to self-regulate and promote self-made routes with emphasis on safety and environmental protection. Meetings are also upcoming with the Byways working group with site visits planned. This will report back to SCAF.

- 9.5 Concerns were raised regarding conflicting interests between differing user groups on Bridleways. Avril and Gail reported that hard resurfacing of Bridleways was resulting in a loss of areas where unshod horses can canter.
- 9.6 Sally raised ecological concerns at Newlands Corner. Nitrate levels are too high, pollution from road traffic is an issue. Soil compaction and climate change are causing damage to ancient trees. Concerns that large visitor numbers (especially post lockdown) are adversely impacting sites.
- 9.7 Rob responded that visitors are encouraged due to the mental/physical health benefits of countryside, especially for disabled users. These users require facilities (toilets, seating, surfaced paths etc.) and due to funding, these resources must be targeted at more popular sites.
- 9.8 Use of QR codes at Surrey sites discussed. Avril mentioned that people without smartphones would be disadvantaged. Rob stated that for those without smartphones, similar information would be available on the website. Thor cautioned against QR code scams.

10. Forward Plan

- 10.1 The forward plan was discussed, amendments made, and new suggestion added.

Action: amend Forward Plan as discussed

- 10.2 Representatives from Surrey Police will attend April SCAF meeting. Members encouraged to prepare discussion of concerns and forward questions in advance.

11. Outstanding consultations

- 11.1 Outstanding consultations were noted.

12. Any other Business / urgent questions

- 12.1 Avril raised the issue of dangerous dogs considering the tragic events that occurred near Caterham. The risk to horses posed by dogs, and licensing for dog walkers was discussed. Increased enforcement from Rangers, volunteers and self – policing in the community discussed.

Action: Discuss matter further with Surrey Police in April meeting, including illegal coursing.

- 12.2 Ian suggested that velopeds and walkers should be considered for promotion, which would improve elderly walkers' mobility. Routes should be suitable for people using such equipment.

Action: Ian to suggest routes that would be appropriate if gates/stiles improved or removed.

- 12.3 Forum requested an update on Trigg Street.

Action: Request update from Mary Ann Edwards/Anne Woods who are leading on the issue.

12.4 Gareth asked if there is a planned calendar of works for surface improvements and repairs. Jo responded that there is not as such, but the maintenance team does look to target works where funding is available and known issues are given priority. He was advised it is most suitable to contact the maintenance team for further information. Gareth also asked about the status of BOAT 525 Wolgen's Lane. At present the Order is to be made; a formal consultation will be due to take place on the order as made.

Action: Jonathan to circulate Surrey TRO Policy.

12.5 Neil asked about the Cattlegrid at the Devil's Punchbowl. SCC are looking to fix the path.

Action: Jonathan to find out more information.

12.6 Neil mentioned that smoking is no longer permitted on MoD property, including rights of way.

13. Dates of next meeting

13.1 It was provisionally agreed that meetings will take place next year on the following dates:

Monday 24 April 2023 1.30pm
Warren Farm Barns, Surrey National Trust Office

Monday 17 July 2023 1.30pm
Venue to be confirmed

Monday 16 October 2023 1.30pm
Venue to be confirmed