

## FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.30 PM CALIFORNIA RATEPAYERS HALL, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD

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**PRESENT:** Cllr Woof, Chair. Cllr Cornish, Vice Chair.  
Cllrs Cundy, Pittock and Weeks.

Mr Alexander, Footpath Warden.  
Mrs Dagnall, Clerk.

#### **439/2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Hartwell and Cllr May.

#### **440/2017 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

#### **441/2017 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2017 were signed as a true record.

#### **442/2017 MATTERS ARISING**

##### **319/2017 FORUM – FUTURE OF PATHS ON SANGS**

A query has been raised with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) over the future of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and the paths within them should European legislation relating to requirements for Special Protection Areas (SPA's) be changed.

WBC has advised that SANGS taken over by WBC, and the paths within them, will be safe for the foreseeable future. The Local Access Forum is lobbying Natural England regarding access and potential changes in legislation.

##### **BLACKWATER VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP (BVCP)**

Cllrs Weeks and Woof attended the Annual General Meeting of the Partnership on 3 November 2017.

The Partnership continues to deliver good work within and outside the Valley, but its financial position is not secure in the long term. Options are being looked at for a revised and more sustainable partnership arrangement from 2019/20.

#### **443/2017 CYCLING ON RIGHTS OF WAY**

Following discussion at the previous meeting Cllrs Cornish, Woof and the Clerk have made enquiries into the legislation relating to cycling on footpaths, and information available about cycling locally.

WBC has advised that cycling on footpaths is trespass against the landowner and is a civil offence. However, some of the WBC literature for cyclists indicates that you can cycle on footpaths as well as on bridle paths and byways.

Cllr Woof circulated an article entitled 'Fair Share' which was published in a recent Ramblers magazine. This relates to the current debate over opening up some footpaths to cyclists,

highlighted by the current consultation by the Welsh Assembly about new legislation to create a new category of rights of way called cycle paths for shared use by walkers and cyclists.

It was agreed that ensuring the safety of all users of rights of way is our first priority: particular problem areas are FP16 where WBC has agreed to install signs, and also FP6, FP8 and the western part of FP13. A second priority is to ensure that only paths with appropriate surface and width are used by cyclists or considered for use by cyclists – the views of WBC (as the statutory rights of way authority) will be sought on this before any further action is taken.

Cllrs Cornish and Woof agreed to take this forward and discuss the matter with WBC.

It was accepted that cycling is on the increase generally including on the rights of way network. The developing Green Way network, and the future Fleet Hill and Manor Farm reserves will include bridleways for use by all users. Aside of addressing safety issues, the focus should be on promoting where cyclists can go, rather than on where they cannot go and encouraging consideration for other users especially walkers.

Cllr Cornish has drafted several potential circular routes for cyclists – using bridleways and byways as well as the road network. These are aimed at adult users. Cllr Cornish will develop these further and methods of publication / circulation will then be discussed.

#### **444/2017 FOOTPATH WARDENS' REPORT**

Mr Alexander advised that routine maintenance was in hand and most paths are in a reasonable condition.

#### **445/2017 CONDITION OF RIGHTS OF WAY**

Cllr Woof and the Clerk met the WBC Rights of Way Officer on 6 September 2017 to discuss various matters.

A summary of ongoing issues and additional issues raised since the previous meeting was circulated. The current position was discussed and actions agreed as summarised below.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date Reported</b>	<b>Current position / Actions</b>	<b>Date completed</b>
FP3 overgrown	June 17	Complaint from resident. DC inspected – reasonable condition. JA has strimmed and will do so again.	July 17
BP4 - drainage issues btw Park Lane & Whitehorse Lane	Jan 14	Meetings held with owner of Thatch Cottage, WBC Rights of Way and WBC Drainage, and BBOWT. WBC cleared ditch along BP4 November 16 and checked culverts on White Horse Lane. BBOWT agreed to check ditch in Copse for obstructions but has not done this to date. WBC Rights of Way will supply and lay planings to build up low spots on the path. Delivered October 2017. FPC covered cost. Works due November 2017.	
FP8	July 17	Hedges need reducing. JA or landowner? Noted that the landowner reduced the hedges Spring 2017. The hedges have been reduced again this autumn. Hedges near Lower Cottage should be	Autumn 17

		monitored.	
FP8	July 17	Narrow path width due to planting. WBC agreed to write to landowner Sept 17. Outstanding.	
FP9 obscured sign	Oct 17	Sign at Greyhound end of FP9 is in a bramble bush. Almost completely obscured. JA to action.	
BP11 Gates	July 2017	Field and bridle gates at White Horse Lane replaced by landowner. FPC offered contribution. WBC to contribute 25%. WBC considers specification is wrong and gates are not wide enough, but are monitoring.	
FP13 east of Longwater Road	Oct 17	Overgrown. RW reported to JA. JA has strimmed	October 17
FP13 west of Longwater Road	Sept 17	Potholes. WBC agreed to supply planings – to be spread by allotment tenants. FPC covered cost. Delivery due November 17.	
BW24	July 17	Section leading to Wellingtonia Avenue very wet in winter. Consider surface improvements. Raised with WBC September 17 – WBC to assess what works are required. FPC offered to contribute. Outstanding.	
Wick Hill / Heath Ride – junction FP 24 and 25? Restricted byway	May 2017	Condition of surface. WBC repaired with road planings in the normal way for byways but advised this will deteriorate again. Any further improvements would be up to residents. Work completed summer 17	August 17.
FP33 sign on Western side of Longwater Road	Nov 17	Sign needs replacing. KD/RW to report to WBC.	
FP52 drainage issues	March 16	WBC has completed surfacing improvements along FP52 from Waverley Way to the Golf Course. WBC is advised that improvements to Wokingham FP27 are with the WBC Countryside Service.	July 17

WBC has agreed to provide a supply of various way markers to replace missing or damaged markers.

#### **446/2017 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK**

##### **FP20 - Potential re-designation as a bridleway**

- All relevant landowners have now been identified and will be contacted to establish their views on the potential re-designation of the path.

##### **FP33 - condition and network improvements**

- Improvements to the section of FP33 running from where it meets FP29 to Longwater Lane are a priority, along with re-designation of the path as a bridleway to link in to the restoration scheme for this area. This was raised with WBC as the highest priority improvement project, and one which the Parish Council may contribute to.

### **New reserves and rights of way at Manor Farm and Fleet Hill Farm**

- WBC has advised that access arrangements are protected through the S106 Agreements and that work on progressing the dedication of the paths as definitive rights of way will start when the sites are open.
- Cllr Weeks advised that the agreement between the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Cemex UK Ltd has not been finalised. Works at Fleet Hill Farm should be completed this year, followed by Manor Farm by the end of 2018.

### **BP26 and BP34 - condition and network improvements**

- The drainage report on FP26 was passed to WBC in July 2016. This was discussed with WBC at the recent meeting and raised as a priority project and one which the Parish Council may contribute to.
- There has been no response from the owner of Brunsdon Farm regarding the potential reinstatement of a link between BP26 and BP34.

### **Green Ways**

- Green Way AR3 is not fully open as some snagging works are outstanding. The Clerk will ask the FBC Centre when the access from the Centre car park will be open.

The route will be lit from the FBC Centre to Commonfield Lane, with effect from September 2018. The Commonfield Lane crossing will remain uncontrolled, but WBC will keep this under review.

- The second phase of the Green Way project – the bridleway link from the California Country Park to Nine Mile Ride – is currently at the design stage and there will be a public consultation. Subject to the outcome the work is due to be completed in Spring 2018.

### **Circular walks**

- The way marking of the second circular walk is complete. Way marking of the third walk is on hold pending permission from a landowner.
- Cllrs Cornish and Woof will be discussing future potential circular routes, for example a route in the north of the Parish.
- The new Barkham Nature Walks leaflet was noted.

The circular walks have always been intended to be downloaded from the web site but a number of copies were printed for events in summer 2017 and the remainder have been distributed from the Office.

It was agreed that a further batch of 100 of each walk should be produced but that apart from those distributed at events, a charge should be made for the hard copies at a rate of £1 for one walk, and £2 for all 3 walks.

It was noted that in future the Parish footpaths map could be redrawn and the 3 walks included on this or alternatively the walks could be included on the next edition of the Street Map. Sponsorship could be sought from local developers.

### **447/2017 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2017/18 AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19**

A report summarising the current position was circulated. No issues were raised.

It was agreed that the same amounts would be proposed for 2018/19, with the exception of provision for gates / stiles/ signs/ surfacing which would be increased to £1500. It was also agreed that there should be an Ear Marked Reserve of £5000 for potential major projects such as improvements to FP33 or BP26.

**448/2017 CORRESPONDENCE**

- There was no correspondence to report.

**449/2017 FORUM**

- No matters were raised.

**450/2017 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed shortly.

*These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Committee.*