

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2018 AT 7.30 PM  
CALIFORNIA RATEPAYERS HALL, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr Woof, Chair. Cllr Cornish, Vice Chair.  
Cllr Jukes OBE (part), Cllr Pittock and Cllr Weeks.

Mr Alexander, Footpath Warden.  
Mrs Dagnall, Clerk.

**142/2018 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

**143/2018 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

**144/2018 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were signed as a true record.

**145/2018 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

Cllr Woof advised that the household consultation undertaken during November 2017 identified rights of way as the highest priority for Finchampstead residents. The comments received are currently being analysed, those on rights of way include many comments on cycling matters.

This puts the Council in a strong position to progress various rights of way projects, and potentially to direct Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to the projects.

Cllrs Cornish and Woof and the Clerk had a positive meeting with the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Rights of Way Officer on 11 April 2018. Various matters were discussed and updates will be provided under the agenda items below.

**146/2018 BUDGET FOR 2018/19**

Details of the approved budget for 2018/19 were circulated. A total budget of £6100 is available with a further £5500 in Ear Marked Reserves including £500 for equipment and £5000 for surfacing improvements should this be required.

As noted above (CIL) funds may also be available for rights of way projects.

**147/2018 CYCLING ON RIGHTS OF WAY**

Cycling was discussed at the recent meeting with the WBC Rights of Way Officer and a meeting will now be arranged with the WBC Officer responsible for shared access initiatives, the Local Transport Plan and the My Journey scheme.

Points to be discussed include the potential for a cycle route to Wokingham, and the potential for a link between the north and south of the Parish (see agenda item 150/2018 below).

It was agreed that pedestrians must always take priority over other rights of way users. Ensuring the safety of all users is the first priority, the second priority is to ensure that only paths with appropriate surface and width are used by cyclists or considered for use by cyclists. Paths identified as suitable for cyclists may not be suitable for horse riders and this will need discussion with the local horse riding community. Paths may not be suitable for use all year round and agreements on seasonal use may be needed.

It was noted that cyclists can be broadly categorised into 3 groups – those cycling for fitness and leisure, often longer distances; recreational cycling such as family groups at the weekend and off road cyclists; and those cycling to get to the station, work, shops or for another purpose.

There is a need to engage with the local cycling community. Cllrs Pittock and Woof will follow this up.

It will also be important to co-ordinate work with that of the Roads and Road Safety Committee.

The Blackwater Valley path may provide an opportunity for a shared use path, linking in with the new routes being created on the new Fleet Hill and Manor Farm nature reserves.

The new Greenway network is suitable for cyclists and will be covered under agenda item 150/2018 below.

#### **148/2018 FOOTPATH WARDENS' REPORT**

Mr Alexander advised that routine maintenance was in hand. Many paths are very wet due to recent weather conditions. Cycling continues to be an issue on a number of paths.

The two strimmers have been serviced and servicing of the hedge trimmer will be arranged in due course.

#### **149/2018 CONDITION OF RIGHTS OF WAY**

The condition of byways was discussed at the recent meeting with the WBC Rights of Way Officer. Wokingham has an unusually high number of byways with adjacent dwellings, a number have had to be closed due to their condition and many others are in need of repair work. This is one of the priorities for WBC at present.

WBC has no duty to seal byways, only to keep them in reasonable repair which generally means through the use of road planings. Byways were originally created when there were less properties, often of a smaller size, and less domestic and commercial vehicles, and as such are often not suitable for the level of use experienced today.

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>
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 cleared some ditches January 2018. WBC Rights of Way supplied and laid planings November 2017. Some improvement but still very wet. Will need	

		more major work to completely resolve issue.	
FP5	April 18	Fencing at White Horse Lane damaged by quad bikes. JA has repaired.	April 2018
FP8	July 17	Hedges near Lower Cottage should be monitored. RW to visit and assess re this and below.	
FP8	July 17	Narrow path width due to planting. WBC agreed to write to Primrose Cottage landowner Sept 17. Outstanding. Rectory Farm hedges well maintained.	
FP8	Feb 2018	Top of FP8 btw Lower Cottage Drive and Church – fence by kissing gate broken down (cows?). JA to repair.	Feb 2018
FP9 obscured sign	Oct 17	Sign at Greyhound end of FP9 is in a bramble bush. Almost completely obscured. JA has cleared.	Nov 17
BP11 Gates	July 2017	Field and bridle gates at White Horse Lane replaced by landowner summer 2017. WBC received complaints. Landowner installed wider gate April 2018.	April 2018
FP13 west of Longwater Road	Sept 17	Potholes. WBC supplied planings – spread by allotment tenants. FPC covered cost.	Nov 2017
FP13 east of Longwater Road	April 17	Path very wet – possibly water leak or natural spring. Monitor.	
FP16	Nov 17	WBC to install no cycling signs.	March 2018
Byway 18? Part of route to Bohunt.	March 18	Arborfield PC reported that railings at Hogwood Industrial Estate end of Byway are too close together to allow wheelchair access. Reported to WBC. Arborfield PC has not had a response.	
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. April 2018 WBC agreed to lay planings – FPC will check timescale.	
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. March 2018 – potholes , tree stump issue, ruts at side of track. RW to visit and assess.	
Nashgrove Lane byway	Jan 18	Large potholes. Reported to WBC. April 2018 WBC agreed to lay planings – FPC to check timescale.	
BP26 ? Byway	Jan 18	Section of Wick Hill Lane that runs downhill from near Warren Crest Farm toward Heath Ride. On the more northerly side, just after Keeper's Cottage, a new fence has appeared . The effect is to reduce the width considerably. Reported to WBC Jan 18 as encroachment issue. Same stretch of Byway, there is considerable plant/shrub growth further down which makes the space for pedestrians and equestrians very	

		restricted. Also reported to WBC.	
FP33	Nov 17 / Jan 18	Sign at FP33/FP54 needs replacing. FPC to report to WBC. SW asked WBC to install no horse riding sign at N end FP33 and at FP33/FP29 junction. January 18.	
FP51	Jan 18	WBC to write to owners confirming status of paths. WBC to replace missing signpost.	
FP52 drainage issues	March 16	WBC completed surfacing improvements along FP52 from Waverley Way to the Golf Course July 17. Apparently now as bad as ever. Significant work may be needed to improve. WBC advised that improvements to Wokingham FP27 are with the WBC Countryside Service.	

## 150/2018 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

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

- All relevant landowners have been identified and the next stage is to contact them to establish their views on the potential re-designation of the path. Both WBC and the Parish Council have other priorities at present so it was agreed that this project would remain an aspiration and be added to the new ROWIP but would be put on hold for the time being.

### FP33: Condition and potential re-designation as a bridleway

- 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.

WBC has agreed to contribute to the £450 cost of drafting proposals and a cost estimate for improvements to the path. WBC may also contribute to the improvement works.

WBC has suggested that the Parish Council contacts the relevant landowners to establish their views on the potential re-designation of the path either as a permissive route, or ideally as a permanent route through a formal creation order. WBC has sent through landowner details and Cllrs Weeks and Woof will look at these to identify who needs to be contacted.

### FP36: Improvements

- It was noted that local residents have arranged for part of Byway 36 to be significantly improved.

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

- There is no further news on when the agreement between Cemex UK Ltd and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) will be finalised.
- 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. WBC has to inspect and certify the paths before progressing this – the poor condition of some of the paths was mentioned at the recent meeting and the WBC Rights of Way Officer plans to visit the site in the near future to assess the paths.
- It was noted that scrambler bikes were seen on the site in March 2018, having gained

access via Longwater Lane. This has been reported to Cemex UK Ltd. and WBC.

### **BP26: Condition**

- The drainage report on FP26 was passed to WBC in July 2016. This was discussed with WBC at the recent meeting but is not a priority project for WBC. WBC may contribute to the cost of drawing up proposals for the improvements if the Parish Council arranges this.

### **Greenways**

- Greenways are a high priority for WBC and a Greenways Project Officer is being appointed – the post should be filled by June 2018. WBC has a significant budget for the implementation of the planned Greenway network
- An overall plan of the proposed network is not available yet pending negotiations with various landowners.
- The California Greenway is still not signed. The route will be lit from the FBC Centre to Commonfield Lane – this work will be completed by September 2018.

The Parish Council and others have reported concerns over the gates on the route and their suitability for cyclists. The WBC Rights of Way Officer has advised that Sustrans, the national cycling organisation, has raised the same issue and is currently working with the contractor on alternative barrier designs.

- The next Greenway will link the California Country Park to Nine Mile Ride and is aimed primarily at horse riders. A consultation has taken place and WBC will be tendering the project shortly with implementation planned for late summer 2018.

Comments were submitted to WBC through the consultation, the main concern is the number of gates planned. This and the potential for alternative barriers was discussed with the WBC Rights of Way Officer.

The WBC Rights of Way Officer has now forwarded the detailed plans for the route. .

- The path from Gorse Ride North to the Greenway will be improved this week. The Parish Council has arranged the work and the cost is being split with the FBC Centre.

WBC has advised that it will be improving the links between Heather Close and Carolina Place and the Greenway this summer.

The status of the path running behind Vermont Woods is uncertain – the Clerk will contact WBC over this as the path is in poor condition and needs improvements.

### **Link between The Village and Nine Mile Ride**

- Cllr Pittock advised that he has met the WBC Rights of Way Officer to discuss a potential route between The Village and Nine Mile Ride, possibly using FP5 and FP6.

### **Circular walks**

- There is no progress to report at present.

### **WBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)**

WBC has advised that it is updating its (RoWIP) and there will be consultation on this later in 2018. It was noted that while WBC has to produce the document it is aspirational rather

than there being any obligation to implement the actions or projects included in the Plan.

The following projects were suggested for inclusion in the Plan.

- FP33 improvements and redesignation as a bridleway.
- Improvements to the path behind Vermont Woods.
- FP20 improvements to allow re-designation as a bridleway.
- Reinstatement of the link between BP26 and BP34.
- BP26 improvements.
- Link between The Village and Nine Mile Ride, potentially using FP5 and FP6.
- Ensure that the Wick Hill Lane BP55 is included on the definitive map and that details have been passed to the Ordnance Survey.

#### **151/2018 CORRESPONDENCE**

- There was no correspondence to report.

#### **152/2018 FORUM**

- The Clerk advised that the subscription to the Ramblers will be renewed this month.

#### **153/2018 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 11 July 2018.

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