

## FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 7.30 PM CALIFORNIA RATEPAYERS HALL, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD RG40 3RL

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**PRESENT:** Cllr Woof, Chair. Cllr Cornish, Vice Chair.  
Cllr Cundy, Cllr Jukes OBE, Cllr May and Cllr Weeks.

Mrs Dagnall, Clerk.  
Mr Alexander, Footpath Warden

#### **439/2018 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All members were present.

#### **440/2018 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

#### **441/2018 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018 were signed as a true record.

#### **442/2018 MATTERS ARISING**

##### **281/2018 Risk assessment**

Further progress has been made on the risk assessment covering rights of way activities. Outstanding work involves checking the text of the circular walks, and preparing a briefing note for Councillors undertaking work on rights of way.

##### **Other matters**

Cllr Cornish attended the Local Access Forum meeting on 26 September. Some useful contacts were made but the meeting content was of little relevance to the Parish.

It was agreed that representatives from the Ramblers Association (RA), the British Horse Society (BHS) and cycling groups could be invited to attend future Committee meetings on a rotational basis. Cllrs Cornish, Woof and the Clerk will discuss how to progress this.

It was noted that these groups are among those being contacted in relation to the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan, and that this provides a good opportunity to initiate communications on rights of way matters.

Cllr Weeks agreed to ask the Health Walks Leaders to let him know of any issues with the paths used for the Walks.

#### **443/2018 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2018/19 and proposals for 2019/20**

A report showing current expenditure was circulated. No issues were raised.

It was agreed that budget requirements for 2019/20 would be as the 2018/19 budget, with the exception of consultancy / legal expenses which would be increased to £750. The Footpath Warden salary will be discussed separately by the HR Sub Committee.

Ear Marked Reserves are held for maintenance equipment (£500) and rights of way improvements (£5000).

#### 444/2018 FOOTPATH WARDENS' REPORT

Mr Alexander advised that maintenance work is in hand and there are no major issues on the network. Some points are covered under the following agenda item.

Equipment servicing and maintenance are in hand. It was agreed that the Tanaka hedge cutter should be serviced to keep it in good working order although it is not currently in use. The previous service was in 2015 and the equipment has not been used since then.

#### 445/2018 CONDITION OF RIGHTS OF WAY

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

Paths requiring more significant improvements are covered under agenda item 447/2018 'Improvements to the Rights of Way Network' below.

Location	Date Reported	Current position / Actions	Date completed
FP5	May 18	Fences down over path. Path passable in July 2018 but WBC agreed to write to landowner again. Fences down again November 2018. <b>KD to report to WBC.</b>	
FP9/10	Nov 18	Apparent water pipe leak near High Barn. <b>JM to notify Water Board.</b>	
FP10	Sept 18	Sleeper bridge nr junction of FP6 and FP10 rotting – reported to WBC – WBC has acknowledged and will investigate.	
FP13 east of Longwater Road	April 17 Nov 18	Path very wet – possibly water leak or a natural spring. Monitor. <b>Brambles encroaching – JA to action.</b>	
FP13 west of Longwater Road		= allotment track. One bollard damaged. WBC has agreed that a gate can be installed providing there is a gap for pedestrians. <b>In hand with KD – installation February 2019.</b>	
FP14	Aug 18	WBC reported that stile at Finchampstead Road end damaged. RW assessed – all repaired and OK	Sept 2018
BW24	July 17	Section leading to Wellingtonia Avenue very wet in winter. Raised with WBC September 17 – WBC to assess what works are required. FPC offered to contribute. April 2018 WBC agreed to lay planings – uncertain if this has taken place. <b>DC to check.</b> (Noted that works seen in area but probably related to property improvements not the right of way)	
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. Further complaints June 2018. RW visited and assessed – issue is outside the expected maintenance of	Aug 2018

		the byway. Resident has been advised.	
Nashgrove Lane byway	Jan 18	Large potholes. WBC has advised that large potholes were filled September 2018. DC confirmed this.	Sept 2018
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 been installed – significantly reducing the path width. 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. RW/DC have assessed – cannot see an issue.	Sept 2018
FP33	Nov 17 / Jan 18	Sign at FP33/FP54 needs replacing. Reported to WBC. <b>RW to check if implemented.</b>	
FP33	May 18	Metal fingerpost uprooted and propped against bridge on Blackwater Valley path. WBC will be reinstalling this by the end of July. <b>RW to check if implemented.</b>	
FP41?	June 18	Footpath by Sandmartins golf course very overgrown. Reported to WBC. <b>DC to check.</b> Note may be potential for use as a cycle route.	
FP51	Jan 18	WBC to write to owners confirming status of paths. WBC to replace missing signpost – in hand to be completed by end July. <b>RW to check if implemented.</b>	

Digital mapping was discussed. The Parish Council uses Parish Online mapping and this includes a rights of way layer provided by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) in 2013. The Clerk will check if a more up to date layer is available.

It was noted that the Parish Online mapping can be used by Councillors. The Clerk can provide the log in details if required.

The current Parish rights of way map originated from a WBC leaflet produced in 1998. The leaflet was updated in 2001 and the map may have been updated at this time. The leaflet is no longer in print and a digital version of the map is not available. The Clerk will look in to having the map redrawn.

#### **446/2018 REVIEW OF 2011/12 SURVEY AND CONSIDERATION OF A FURTHER SURVEY**

The Committee undertook a survey of the network in 2011/12 although surveys of some paths may not have been completed. The survey data for some paths was put in to a standard format report. The Clerk will circulate the information available.

It was agreed that it would be useful to review and update the survey, but this was not a high priority at present and should be deferred, possibly until 2020/21.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to categorise paths according to their type and / or level of use, for example whether the paths are very rural and a level of mud is acceptable, or are used as routes to schools or for cycling where a better surface is ideally required. This would be helpful in deciding priorities for action and when looking at potential cycle routes. Cllrs Cornish and Woof will discuss how to progress this.

## **447/2018 IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK**

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

- This project is currently on hold while other priorities are addressed.

### **BP4: Drainage issues**

- WBC has laid scalplings which have improved the path and Mr Alexander advised that some drains around the path on the Berkshire Buckingham and Oxfordshire (BBOWT) Nature Reserve have been cleared. The path is still very wet in places and further drainage work will be required in order to improve it.

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

- A Landscape Consultant has drafted proposals for improvements to the section of FP33 running from where it meets FP29 to Longwater Lane. WBC has suggested it may contribute £3000 to improvement work. This is on hold pending resolution of the issues with the paths on the Cemex site – see below.

### **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. Dates for the completion of restoration at Manor Farm and the opening of the sites have not been confirmed.
- The agreed restoration plans included improvements to the stretch of FP33 leading from the restored site to the junction with FP29, with the stretch becoming a designated bridleway. This work has not been completed – the path remains the same width and a small kissing gate has been installed where FP33 meets the Cemex site. It appears that a path may have been constructed following an alternative route within the Cemex site boundaries. There are also concerns that some other paths on the site may not have been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.
- The path layout and quality are the subject of a Section 106 Agreement. WBC has to inspect and certify the paths on the restored sites to ensure they are laid out in accordance with the plans – or approved alternative routes - and are fit for purpose prior to adopting the paths and progressing their official designation as rights of way.
- Concerns over the path layout and quality have been reported to WBC previously. This will be followed up again as a priority, and WBC will also be asked to progress the dedication of the rights of way as soon as possible. It was agreed that the intention should be to get the site officially open for public access as soon as possible.

### **BP26: Condition**

- The drainage report on FP26 was passed to WBC in July 2016 and has been discussed with the former WBC Rights of Way Officer. This will be raised again with WBC.

### **BP34: Missing link on the Devils Highway**

- The local BHS representative is collating information on a number of 'lost', unrecorded or under recorded routes with a view to submitting Definitive Path Modification Order (DMMO) applications for the routes prior to the 2026 deadline after which further action will not be possible.

BP34 is included in the project and Cllrs Cornish and Woof plan to meet the BHS representative to offer support for the work and explore any other opportunities for linking BP34 to BP26.

### **FP52: Waverley Way to Sand Martins Golf Course**

- Major drainage works will be required to resolve the issues with the path on a permanent basis.

It was noted that WBC has advised that it has improvements to FP27 in hand.

### **Greenways**

- California Greenway - the surfacing of the link to Heather Close and the link to the lakeside path in the California Country Park are outstanding. The work is due to be completed with the final works to the second Greenway running from the Country Park to Nine Mile Ride which is partially complete – it is understood that the work may not be completed until March 2019.

Modifications to gates and access points are in hand as is the installation of new signage.

- WBC had not planned to surface the short link from Carolina Place to the Greenway but the Clerk has again asked that this is considered.
- It is understood that the next Greenway will link Barkham to Woosehill and that construction is planned for 2019. It is assumed that the route will link with the California Greenway which runs to Arborfield Green (in Barkham).
- WBC has advised that an overall plan of the proposed network is not available yet pending negotiations with various landowners.
- WBC now has a Greenways Officer – a meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.

### **Briarwood**

- The Clerk has established that the path linking Briarwood to the FBC Playing Fields is owned by Cala Homes not WBC. The path is a well used route to and from the FBC Centre and playing fields as well as to the Gorse Ride Schools, and is in need of improvement. The Clerk will contact Cala Homes – Cllr Weeks advised that the Company is now owned by Legal and General Homes.

### **New route into Rooks Nest Country Park avoiding Barkham Ride**

- Cllr Woof will look at the potential for creating a new access to the Park from Booth Drive or Gilbert Way.

### **Proposal for a new path linking the new paths on the Hogwood Farm site to the existing network**

- A resident has contacted Cllr Weeks with a proposal for a new path apparently running from FP28 alongside Park Lane to BP4, linking the existing network with the new paths to be created on the Hogwood Farm development site.
- The Clerk will request more information on the proposal.

### **National Trust proposals**

- Cllr Weeks advised that the National Trust is intending to improve a section of path between Dell Road and Drift Lane. This is not a right of way but is a well used path. The Finchampstead Society is donating £200 to the project and it was agreed that the Parish Council would match this amount from the rights of way budget and provide £200 towards the project.

#### **448/2018 CYCLING ON RIGHTS OF WAY**

The Clerk will arrange a meeting with the WBC Officer responsible for shared access initiatives, the Local Transport Plan and the My Journey scheme.

The status of the footway running from near Woodcray to Wokingham Town Centre was queried. The Clerk will look in to this.

#### **449/2018 CORRESPONDENCE**

- There was no correspondence to report.

#### **450/2018 FORUM**

- Meeting venues were discussed and the Committee agreed it would continue to meet at the California Hall.
- The Clerk has purchased a new reference book on Highway Law which covers all forms of highway including rights of way.

#### **451/2018 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- The next meeting will be held on 13 March 2019.

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

### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
442/2018	Complete risk assessment	RW/KD
442/2018	Contact with local RA/BHS/cycling group representatives – possibly in conjunction with NDP communications – and invitations to future meetings	DC/RW + KD
442/2018	Ask Health Walk Leaders to report any issues/ suggestions on paths used – to SW or direct to the Clerk.	SW
443/2018	Journal expenditure on FP33 proposals to budget line for consultancy/legal expenses	KD
444/2018	Ensure all equipment is serviced including Tanaka hedge cutter	JA
445/2018	Condition reports/checks to be followed up as per table included in minutes.	RW/DC/JM/JA/ KD
445/2018	Check if WBC has/can provide an updated rights of way layer for digital mapping	KD
445/2018	Any Cllrs wanting access to the digital mapping to contact the Clerk for login detail	All
445/2018	Look in to having the Parish footpath map redrawn	KD
446/2018	Circulate details of the 2011/12 survey.	KD
446/2018	Look into ways of categorising paths according to level and type of use	DC/RW
447/2018	Arrange meeting with WBC Rights of Way Officer – main issues are paths on Cemex site at Fleet Hill Farm and the implications for FP33, and plans for BP26	KD for DC/RW and KD

447/2018	Arrange meeting with BHS representative re missing link on BP34	DC/RW
447/2018	Arrange meeting with the new WBC Greenways Officer	KD for DC/RW and KD
447/2018	Contact Cala Homes (L&G) re Briarwood Path	KD
447/2018	Look into potential access to Rooks Nest Country Park from eg Booth Drive/Gilbert Way	RW
447/2018	Seek more information on suggestions for walks on Hogwood Farm	KD
447/2018	Advise National Trust that FPC will contribute to path improvements between Dell Road and Drift Lane	SW
448/2018	Arrange meeting with WBC Officer responsible for cycling and related initiatives	KD for DC/RW and KD
448/2018	Clarify status of footway between Woodcra y and Wokingham	KD
	WBC Rights of Way Improvements Plan – due to be reviewed in 2018 (ref previous meeting minutes) Review current list and consider additional items for inclusion	KD – agenda item for next meeting