

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2019 AT 7.30 PM CALIFORNIA RATEPAYERS HALL, FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD RG40 3RL

PRESENT: Cllr R. Woof, Chair. Cllr D. Cornish, Vice Chair.
Cllr R. Cundy, Cllr G. Jukes OBE, Cllr Mrs R. Margetts and Cllr S. Weeks.

Mrs K. Dagnall, Clerk.
Mr J. Alexander, Footpath Warden.

105/2019 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

106/2019 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

107/2019 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2018 were signed as a true record.

108/2019 MATTERS ARISING

442/2018 Risk assessment

Cllr Woof and the Clerk will complete this as soon as possible.

445/2018 Condition of rights of way / mapping

The Clerk will contact Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to see if there is a more up to date layer for the online mapping used by the Parish Council.

At the previous meeting it was agreed that the Parish footpath map should be updated and redrawn. The Clerk is still looking for someone able to undertake the work and will contact the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership for information on who they use for maps and leaflets.

109/2019 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2018/19

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

110/2019 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.

Cycle use is an ongoing issue, particularly on paths around St. James' Church and The Village.

Servicing of the equipment is in hand.

111/2019 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 112/2019 'Improvements to the Rights of Way Network' below.

Location	Date Reported	Current position / Actions	Date completed
FP3	Feb 19	Problem with gatepost. JA will try and source a replacement post.	
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. KD reported to WBC November 2018 but fences still down. KD will report again.	
FP9/10	Nov 18	Apparent water leak near High Barn. JM to notify Water Board.	
FP10	Sept 18	Sleeper bridge nr junction of FP6 and FP10 rotting – reported to WBC – WBC has acknowledged and will investigate. WBC advised that this has been patched up – this was confirmed.	March 2019
FP12	March 19	Holly prunings not obstructing path but may be a future issue. Monitor.	
FP13 east of Longwater Road	April 17 Nov 18	Path very wet east of Longwater Road – possibly water leak or a natural spring. Monitor. Brambles encroaching – JA to action.	November 2018
FP13 west of Longwater Road		= allotment track. Gate installed February 2019 with a gap for pedestrians	February 2019
FP15	Jan 19	Damaged Kissing gate / post at top of FP15 near Warren Crest Farm. JA will try and source a replacement post.	
Byway24 Heath Ride	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 – not thought to have been done to date. DC to check.	
Byway 31/34 Roman Ride	Feb 19	Resident reported as in poor condition – bad potholes. KD explained situation with WBC byways. KD to report comments to WBC.	
FP33	Nov 17 / Jan 18	Sign at FP33/FP54 needs replacing. Reported to WBC. RW to check if implemented.	
FP33	May 18	Metal fingerpost uprooted and propped against bridge on Blackwater Valley path. WBC will be reinstalling this by the end of July. SW confirmed completed.	March 2019
FP41?	June 18	Footpath by Sandmartins golf course very overgrown. Reported to WBC. Note may be potential for use as a cycle route. DC checked most footpaths around Sandmartins - good condition.	January 2019
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. RW to check if implemented.	

As agreed at the previous meeting Cllrs Cornish and Woof will meet to discuss how best 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 if the paths are used as routes to schools or for cycling where a better surface is ideally required.

112/2019 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

- The path is currently in reasonable condition although it may deteriorate in very wet conditions.

FP33: Condition and potential re-designation as a bridleway

- Proposals have been drawn up for improvements to the section of FP33 running from where it meets FP29 to Longwater Lane. This project is on hold pending resolution of the issues with the paths on the new nature reserve at Fleet Hill Farm.

Cllr Woof and the Clerk met the new WBC Rights of Way Manager on 17 January and stressed that the completion and opening of the new nature reserves and rights of way is a high priority. WBC Officers are meeting Cemex UK Ltd. representatives later this month.

The Clerk will circulate any feedback received from this meeting in due course. Subject to this a meeting with WBC Officers may be requested to ensure that any agreed actions are followed through.

The WBC Greenways Officer has indicated that there may be funding for improvements to FP33. The Clerk will follow this up and request that the contractor undertaking the Greenway work is asked for proposals for improvements to the path.

Short term improvements to the path could be considered, with the path then being upgraded to bridleway standard at an appropriate stage in future.

BP26: Condition

- The drainage report on FP26 was passed to WBC in July 2016 but improvements to the path are a low priority for WBC. Cllr Woof and the Clerk will discuss how to take this forward.

BP34: Missing link on the Devils Highway

- The local BHS representative is collating information on '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 has been in contact with 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

- The path is in reasonable condition at present although FP27 which lies within Wokingham Town is in very poor condition. WBC has previously advised that it has improvements to FP27 in hand.

Greenways

Cllr Woof and the Clerk met the new WBC Greenways Officer on 17 January.

- The bridge on the route from the California Country Park to Nine Mile Ride is due to be installed in or by May 2019.

- The Clerk has asked WBC when the surfacing of the link to Heather Close and the link to the lakeside path in the California Country Park will be completed. It is still unclear whether the short link from Carolina Place will be surfaced.
- The Clerk has asked WBC when the signage and interpretation will be installed.
- The next Greenway will run from the Arborfield Development to the North Wokingham Development. A public consultation is currently underway.

Finchampstead Road crossing near Church Lane

- The lack of visibility for pedestrians crossing the Road has been raised with WBC and some work has been undertaken to clear the footway. The landowner has cut back the hedges but visibility is still poor.

Briarwood

- The unmade section of the path linking Briarwood to the FBC Playing Fields is owned by WBC, not Cala Homes as previously advised.

The path is a popular route to and from the FBC Centre and playing fields as well as to the Gorse Ride Schools, and is in need of improvement. It was noted that the route is now being used by the weekly California Park Run.

New route into Rooks Nest Country Park avoiding Barkham Ride

- Cllr Woof has found that the Park can be accessed from Booth Drive via some unfenced woodland. The Clerk will look in to ownership of the land and will discuss the potential new entrance with the WBC Countryside Service.

It was noted that at the planning stage for the Park there was strong opposition to an access from Booth Drive from the residents due to concerns over parking in the Road. However, there is a large free car park located on Barkham Ride which those driving to the site are most likely to use.

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

- A resident contacted Cllr Weeks with a proposal for a new path to run along Park Lane between FP28 and BP4, linking the existing network with the new paths to be created on the Hogwood Farm development site.
- The Legal & General plans for the Hogwood Farm site, now known as Finchwood Park, include rights of way linking to the existing network. It was agreed that this should be monitored as plans for the development evolve.

Status of paths on and around estates including Gorse Ride

- Cllr Woof and the Clerk will discuss how to identify any paths within or around local areas of housing which should be designated as rights of way before the 2026 deadline in order to protect them for the future.

Status of new paths on SANG (suitable alternative natural greenspace)

- If WBC take on the ownership and management of a SANG the paths within the site will be permissive. If the SANG is managed by a Community Interest Company or a Developer the status of the paths is less clear.

Cllr Weeks advised that the provision and maintenance of SANGs is subject to detailed

legal agreements with an obligation to provide the open spaces in perpetuity. The Clerk will ask the WBC Rights of Way Officer for comments on this.

113/2019 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In 2018 WBC advised that the RoWIP was due to be updated and that a consultation would be undertaken in 2018. This has not taken place but an initial list of projects and issues has been collated for submission at the appropriate time.

The Clerk will circulate the current RoWIP for information. There may be a number of projects or other items in the Plan which should be included in an updated plan, together with new items.

Additional documents supporting the Plan can be found at:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads-and-outdoor-maintenance/footpaths-and-bridleways/improvement-plan/>

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.

114/2019 CORRESPONDENCE

- The 2019 Blackwater Valley Walk will be held on 28 April. Places need to be booked in advance. Cllr Weeks advised that volunteers are needed to help with the walk, for example as marshals.
- The new secretary of the Loddon Valley Ramblers is Steve Vale. Cllr Woof plans to arrange a meeting in due course.

115/2019 FORUM

- Cllr Jukes raised the issue of the missing section of the Devils Highway. Cllr Cornish will provide the history and background to the issue.

116/2019 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on 10 July 2019.

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

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
108/2019	Complete risk assessment	RW/KD
108/2019	Check if WBC has/can provide an updated rights of way layer for digital mapping	KD
108/2019	Look in to having the Parish footpath map redrawn	KD
110/2019	Ensure all equipment is serviced including Tanaka hedge cutter	JA
111/2019	Condition reports/checks to be followed up as per table included in minutes.	RW/DC/JM/JA/ KD
111/2019	Look into ways of categorising paths according to level and type of use	DC/RW

112/2019	FP33 - contact Greenways Officer - seek feedback from WBC / Cemex meeting	KD KD
112/2019	BP26 – progress drainage works	RW/KD
112/2019	Greenways – continue to ask WBC for information on completion of the California greenways	KD
112/2019	Potential access to Rooks Nest Country Park from Booth Drive – undertake land search and discuss with WBC	KD
112/2019	Estate paths and potential designation by 2026	KD/RW
112/2019	Status of paths on SANGS – consult WBC	KD
113/2019	Circulate RoWIP	KD