



THURROCK LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Public Meeting - Minutes (2)

Tuesday 9 October 2018
7pm to 9pm, Committee Room 2
Civic Offices, New Road, Grays

Present:

Paula Watts – Projects Leader Highways Information & LAF Secretary - **PW**
 Sue Dobson - LAF Chair and Essex Bridleway Association Representative – **SD**
 Carley Hollands – LAF Member - EBA Member **CH**
 Bernard Smith – LAF Member - Thurrock Ramblers Walk Leader – **BS**
 Bryan Benton – LAF Member – Thurrock Ramblers - **BB**
 John Lane - LAF Member- Rambler & Cyclist - **JL**
 Jenny Mann – LAF Member & EBA Local Representative – **JM**
 Alison Loveridge - Highway and Public Rights of Way Information Officer – **AL**
 Mike Ostler – LAF Vice Chair - **MO**
 Steve Plumb – Thurrock Council - **SP**
 Kim Tolson – Chair of Horndon on the Hill Community Forum - **KT**
 Brian Hatcher – Thurrock Ramblers Chair - **BH**
 Paul Rogers – Programme Manager Major Schemes | Place Delivery - **PR**
 Peter O'Rourke - Forestry Commission – Beat Manager – **PO**

Guest Speakers

Dan Ambrose – Kiers Contractors for A13 Widening - **DA**
 Roy Read – Natural England – National Coastal Path - **RR**

Item	Description	Action
1.	Introduction: SD Madam Chair opened the meeting by thanking those present for attending.	
2.	Apologies: David Fish – LAF Member - Sustran's Ranger	
3.	Minutes of Last Meeting: Working Group Minutes of the 8 th August 2018 were approved following presentations from representatives of Kiers and Natural England.	

5.	Matters Arising	
	<p>(A) Madam Chair Invited Dan Ambrose to speak on the proposed widening of the A13.</p> <p>DA Informed the meeting Kiers in conjunction with Thurrock Council would be announcing proposed venues for the public to view the extents works involved, traffic management proposals and works programme required to undertake the widening scheme. Also newsletters will be produced.</p> <p>There will be a need for both short and long term closures and changes to existing Public Rights of Ways. SD How long would a long term closure likely to be? DA December 2018 through to Autumn 2020...though please be assured we will not keep rights of ways shut just for the sake of it.</p> <p>Footpath 37 will be affected by long term closure to allow for the creation of a new drainage pond. Notices will be placed on site well in advance. BH How long will this path be closed? DA At present unable to provide this information but he would like to separately meet with Thurrock Ramblers to ensure they are kept up dated.</p> <p>It is proposed to provide an alternative footpath route along the new hardened access road which will allow walkers access up onto the B1007 rather than the existing steps. BS Safety barrier needs to be considered to protect walkers at this location.</p> <p>BS Requested that he be kept notified by email due to programming of future walks. Essex Ramblers would also need to be kept notified of any changes.</p> <p>DA Footpath 81 across the frontage of Petrol Station on the east bound track of the A13 will be closed under a long term closure. The diversion will require the use of FP 12 & 11.</p> <p>PR We are currently exploring with the landowners to permantley divert this footpath to the rear of the petrol station purposes</p> <p>DA Also Footpath 12 Saffron Gardens will need to closed around December time. JM & JL requested the new bridge be constructed with a 1.8m parapet infill for future use by cyclists and horse riders (as an infill prevents horses seeing vehicles travelling below them) as in the future it is hoped Footpath 12 will be upgrade to a bridleway. DA said he would report back on this request.</p> <p>JL An old footpath still exists between the A1013 and A13 could this not be utilised and upgraded to a bridleway thereby providing access eastwards to the Bucking Hill Road to then connect onto the bridleway being created within the former St Cleres Golf Course development. A crossing facility could then be included into the proposed new traffic signals.</p> <p>JL Also what safety barrier protection is intended between between the A13 and A1013 at this location.</p>	

FP 104 (Orsett Show Ground) to be closed when the Orsett Cock Interchange is widened. Users will still be able to gain access onto the Brentwood Road or alternatively continue along Rectory Road to the A1013 Stanford Road.

Bridleway Way 48 The new bridge will be built like for like alongside the existing. It is endeavoured there will be the need to close the existing bridge for one weekend. A mini bus shuttle service will be provided for both pedestrians and cyclists.

DA Informed the meeting he would ask PW & AL to provide him with contact details for Thurrock Ramblers, Cycling and Equestrian clubs.

Madam Chair thanked both Dan Ambrose and Paul Rogers for attending and updating those present of the pending A13 widening works. DA & PR then left the meeting.

(B) Madam Chair then introduced Roy Read from Natural England who is responsible for introducing the Coastal Path within Thurrock.

RR Informed those present that in 2009 the then Government in conjunction with cross party support introduced by law a proposed coastal path around Britain with funding being made available up to 2020.

The coast line was broken down into 75 sections with Natural England taking on the consultation role under the powers of the Secretary of State. Approximately a year ago Natural England began looking at the section of coastline between Southend and Tilbury using Tilbury Ferry as the end of the Essex stretch as the only alternative was the Woolwich Ferry which was just not practicable mainly due to both residential and industrial developments along the north bank of the Thames. The Kent side has the opportunity to provide walking access into London.

KT Enquired how closely Natural England had been talking with Highways England regarding the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. **RR** Within the agreement we have with the Secretary of State there is a section called Future Changes which allows us to request the Secretary of State to approve amended routes... which is all we can do. **SP** Thurrock has been in talks with Highways England and Footpath 146 (Two Forts Way) is potentially the safest of all our Public Rights of Ways.

MO Do you for example take a scoring point as to present usage at Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts be it usage within the Fort or outside its perimeter **RR** We take lots of factors into a survey for example car park facilities, toilets, ease of use for all users, wildlife and their protection are all taken on balance.. especially with regards to future maintenance.

There is already a huge amount of protection for nature on the Essex coast therefore in creating this new path we are endeavouring to provide a balance between nature and those using the path.

Once Natural England creates a proposed route and submits it to the Secretary of State it does take quite a long time to finalise the submission. At Blackwater one objection was received to the proposed coastal path which then took quite a time for a Planning Inspectorate to then visit the location and then produce a report which dismissed the objection.

In Thurrock we are at present in the stage of preparing draft routes / maps. We look to use existing rights of ways where possible by improving them by removing stiles and replacing them with kissing gates, narrow bridges are widened and steps removed for ease of access for all users. The Government wants a both well managed and sign posted coastal path.

We have consulted with the present owner and Essex Wildlife at Mucking especially regarding footpath 147 and its flooding issues and the suggested permissive route. At present they do not wish to commit to the coastal path travelling through their site due to extending their present land fill operations (possibly for five years). So once works are completed Natural England will apply for a revised route linking the river front up to the visitors centre.

BS You appear to be incorporating the Thames Estuary Path within the Coastal Path. **RR** we have consulted with John Meehan and will continue to do so as John may amend the Estuary Path by following the Coastal Path route.

RR Fobbing Marshes still requires the coastal path route to be defined. **JL** Is there an opportunity for a bridge link between Marsh Farm as the present route is via Pitsea Station which is not ideal. **RR** This has been considered but financially is not possible. **SP** In 2009 there was a Sustrans report which then costed a bridge at 10 million... this location is a tricky one to resolve.

RR To confirm there is an agreed future maintenance funding for this new National Trail via DEFRA as Thurrock will be expected to maintain the coastal path route overseen by National Trails.

RR Should LAF members wish to follow the progress of the Coastal Path creation then please visit the National Trails website.

Madam Chair thanked Roy for his presentation.

(C) Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan

SP At present Highways England keep changing the boundary lines. The latest extents are shown coloured beige on the plans provided. Trying to bring together many rights of way issues in conjunction with the Lower Thames Crossing, Network Rails closure proposals and yet to be finalised Local Plan continues to restrain works on the Improvement Plan.

	<p>(D) Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>SP Having had a meeting with Highways England we are looking to create multiuser routes across the borough. Separate funding will be made available for feasibility schemes and projects. At present Highways England have drawn a five kilometre area either side of the proposed motorway route where we will be looking at the more strategic routes.</p> <p>SD The A14 has been constructed with non-motorised user routes alongside. Thurrock really needs to push for the same.</p> <p>BS Have we any idea of what type bridges they intend to use for rights of way access. SP A new release is due on the 10th October where it is hoped a more detailed information will be provided though we may have been promised at least one green bridge.</p> <p>JM Can we prevent dead end routes being created which happened with the A13.. for example Mill Lane, Orsett.</p> <p>KT Over the next 10 weeks Highways England will be holding their formal consultations bearing in mind they seem to have 70% of the land already set aside.</p> <p>SP Hence again this has a knock on effect on the Local Plan and trying to establish a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p> <p>SD Should members have any comments having viewed the Lower Thames Crossing proposals then please feed this back to the LAF for recording purposes should we then have the opportunity to meet with Highways England.</p> <p>(E) Network Rail Closures – Public Enquiry</p> <p>SD Attended last Fridays Public Enquiry as the Essex LAF representative. Having spoken with the Vice Chair of Essex Ramblers Gordon Bird he said he would be happy to undertake Thurrock’s issues if required. There is no reason why as a local group any of our members cannot attend and speak and strongly advise local representatives to do so. BH Thurrock Ramblers have already provided their representations to Gordon Bird.</p>	
	<p>(F) Bridleway 187 – Coalhouse Fort.</p> <p>AL Informed the meeting she had met with a Deborah Priddy from Historical England and the Coalhouse Fort Ranger regarding signage of the definitive route through the grounds of the Fort. Historical England do not want way marker posts erected within the Fort though they would consider small way markers affixed to fencing with the possibility of a wooden sign post being erected by the play area. They would also like to see a site map installed at the entrance of the Fort showing the route of the bridleway. The Ranger also voiced concerns horses may get stuck in the shore line mud..plus disturbance to the wildlife. He would like to see the bridleway downgraded to a public footpath from the</p>	

tarmac surface of Footpath 146 (and Thames Estuary Path) to the river front.

SD This would be a retrograde step to stop up this bridleway and any other bridleway. Could signs not be put up stating unsafe for horses. **AL** Being a definitive route we have to legally sign the route. **CH & JM** agreed they would visit this location and report back.

(G) Footpath 162 – North of A13 Laindon Hills

AL Informed the meeting that further to placing notices on site landowners came forward to object to the proposal to upgrade Footpath 162 to a bridleway.. along with objections being received from adjacent land owners. After speaking and corresponding with the objectors in a bid to try and get them to withdraw their objections this was unsuccessful.

(H) PW Informed the meeting of Natural Englands – Huddle website which provides help and advice for LAF members. Should any of our members wish to join Huddle then please contact Andrew Mackinstosh 0208 026 1819 andrew.mackinstosh@naturalengland.org.uk Or ring Head Office 0300-060-1114

(6) Planning Applications

PW Non recently offering the opportunity for Public Rights of Way improvements.

(7) Footpath / Bridleway Issues:

(7a) CH / EBA Bridleway Issues

Due to the amount of issues raised it was agreed **AL & PW** will speak with **CH, JM and KT** at the end of the meeting.

(7b) Marsh Lane, Fobbing

AL Mr Young (landowner) continues to complain both cyclists and horse riders are illegally riding across his land and he wants the status of Marsh Lane to be changed from a bridleway to a Footpath especially as there is nowhere for horses or cyclists to go at the end of the lane. He insists we are inviting illegal activities by keeping this lane a bridleway. It is our intention to re-sign this route informing users of the extent of bridleway and to turn back if a horse rider or cyclists.

JM EBA would be reluctant to lose this bridleway. Please install signage to see if users then adhere to the correct route.

(7c) Footpath 127 North Stifford Church

AL This footpath was severed by the construction of the A13 and on our files there is a note for its extinguishment between the Church and A13. As we have now received two requests from horse owners grazing the land for its removal due to people walking around their fields we wish to know the thoughts of members. No objections to this proposal were received.

7(d) Belhus Woods Country Park – Pegasus Crossing

Report of problems at the Pegasus Crossing on Romford Road over to Celey Woods. To be able to reach the button horses riders have to stand there horses in the road. Plus the gates no longer have the long arms which are needed to be able to hold the gates back whilst coming through.

PO He believed the gates are standard horse gates.. though will check. Peter also explained the concrete blocks placed at this location were to prevent Travellers gaining access following a large incursion at Belhus Park.

7 (e) Davy Down Bridge

PW Advised bridge should be installed in November.

7(f) Turf Meadow adjacent Butts Lane Stanford le Hope.

PW Confirmed a request had been raised with our Environment Team to reinstate a route through Turf Meadow.

Capital Funding for Public Rights of Ways

Footpath 147 East Tilbury

Still no further on trying to create a Permissive Footpath due to flooding issues.

Manorway Bridleway A1014 Corringham

No further in the proposal to create a bridleway link along the southern verge between DP Worlds new bridleway and Springhouse Lane.

Turf Meadow Bridleway Creation.

No further progress has been made

Any other business:

JL Confirmed the section of footway along St Andrews Road between Asda's and the Dock Entrance has now been cleared.

JL Manorway Interchange to Greenacres Bridge could a link be provide via the eastbound down slip which has been widened.

KT Could consideration is given for the possibility of footways being upgraded to bridleways within the Thames Nature Park.

SP informed KT that an approach had already been made the other year with Tanya from Essex Wildlife who was the then pending Projects Manager for this site. The suggestion of a bridleway creation was not totally dismissed...but now with another possible 5 years land fill extension being considered it is very unlikely we will be able to progress this at the present time. KT provided the name of the Director for the Essex Wildlife Trust at Thames Nature Park as Mr Holland.

	<p>SD We must continue to try and achieve a bridleway connection between Mucking Park and Wharf Road.</p> <p>JM Rainbow Lane bridleway gates require repairing.</p> <p>BH Are there any intended repairs to the cycle route along the A1014 Manorway PW to enquire. JL Fixed penalty notices should be issued under the clearway order</p>	
7	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Working Group Meeting Tuesday 4th December 2018</p> <p>Committee Room 2 @ 7pm</p>	