



## THURROCK LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

### Public Meeting – Minutes (1)

Tuesday 9 April 2019  
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**  
 Alison Loveridge – Highway and Public Rights of Way Information Officer – **AL**  
 Mike Ostler – LAF Vice-Chair – **MO**  
 Brian Hatcher – Thurrock Ramblers Chair – **BH**  
 David Fish – LAF Member – Sustrans Ranger – **DF**

Item	Description	Action
1.	<p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <p><b>SD Madam Chair</b> opened the meeting by thanking those present for attending and welcoming</p> <p><b>Steve Sweeney (SS)</b> who is a keen walker, cyclist, RSPB Surveyor and representative of the West, East &amp; Linford Forum</p> <p><b>Bernadette and Paul Wakeling (B&amp;PW)</b> who are keen to re-introduce forgotten rights of way within Thurrock by the 2026 deadline.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <p>Steve Plumb- Thurrock Council          Jenny Mann LAF Member &amp; EBA Local Representative</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting:</b></p> <p>Working Group Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were approved following amendments to items:-</p> <p><b>Footpaths 146 &amp; 144 Tilbury</b></p> <p><b>JL</b> Page 5 whilst understanding this I feel we must fight (changed to must resist) the closures of any public rights of way.</p>	

	<p><b>SD</b> Page 6 Reminded members the deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. EBA pay an officer to investigate historic boundaries and presumed rights of ways. A good starting point for historical evidence are the 1859 Finance Act maps – at that time Landowners were required to pay tax on all their land with the exception of public roads so it was in their interests to ensure that all of the rights of ways in existence were listed.</p> <p>In 1949 by law Definitive Maps and statements were created which determined where Footpaths, Bridleways, and byway routes existed. It was down to Parish Councils to designate these routes – but at that time most of those on the parish councils designating these routes were the landowners themselves, so many legitimate bridleway/byway routes were designated as footpaths. It was also not helpful that following two world wars, most people could not afford to own horses for recreational purposes so the number of horses in private ownership during that time was not particularly high.</p> <p>It is this mis-designation of routes that is the subject of the 2026 cut-off. Currently, if one feels that an existing footpath should have had higher rights, historical map evidence (such as the Finance Act Maps and others) can be submitted to the Highways Authority to claim the route as a bridleway or byway. These applications are ultimately decided by the Planning Inspectorate who, based on the submitted evidence, confirms or rejects the Order and, if confirmed, the Definitive Map is modified. EBA currently fund an officer to investigate historic routes and presumed routes for bridleway status and above in an effort to cover all of Essex by the legislated cut-off date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.</p>	
	<p><b>5. Matters Arising</b></p>	
	<p><b>(5A) Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b></p> <p><b>PW</b> Reported on behalf of <b>SP</b> that no further progress has or can be made whilst awaiting completion of the Local Plan completion.</p> <p><b>SS</b> With an agreed local plan surely this would be helpful with negotiations on the pending Lower Thames Crossing.</p> <p><b>SD</b> Thurrock is in a difficult position without a Local Plan. At present they are at the Issues and Options stage with their most recent public consultation. The public rights of way are legal definitive rights of ways and must be taken into account and we must ensure any loss is replaced with a better network of rights of ways.</p>	

	<p><b>PW</b> in addition to the Lower Thames Crossing we also have to take into account the Tilbury 2 re-development which again will have an impact on the public rights of way and proposed Rights of Way Improvement Plan all of which have to provide for the established Thames Estuary path and proposed Coastal Path</p> <p><b>(5B) Lower Thames Crossing</b></p> <p><b>PW</b> The requests for additional copies of the working group plans was refused for those outside the LAF membership as they are still not for the public domain.</p> <p><b>PW</b> asked members if they wish to invite John Costello from Highways England who is dealing with the Public Rights aspect of the new road.. this was agreed? <b>PW</b> enquired whether Thurrock Ramblers had invited Lower Thames Crossing to meet with them. <b>BH</b> As yet they had not.</p> <p><b>JL</b> Ultimately if or when the Lower Thames Crossing commences every effort should be made to keep the east / west routes open especially around the Baker Street area. Ideally with red and white temporary signage this will allow safe passage for cyclist. <b>SD</b> Health and Safety for all is Highways England remit which includes mobility access.</p> <p><b>SD</b> to date we have done a lot of work on the proposals and must continue to do so.</p> <p><b>(5C) Network Rail Closures – Public Enquiry</b></p> <p><b>PW</b> As to date there is no further update following the Public Enquiry.</p> <p><b>MO</b> Informed our visitors Thurrock has three at grade level crossings under threat. FP 145 at Purfleet, FP 32 at Stanford and FP 23 at Fobbing. <b>SD</b> Network Rail originally tried to stop them up individually but have now incorporated them into a blanket closure for Essex. <b>BS</b> informed the meeting Essex Ramblers were represented at every meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>(5D) A13 Widening.</b></p> <p><b>PW</b> Temporary closures are now in place for those Public Rights affected by the works. It was agreed <b>PW</b> invites Dan Ambrose from Kiers back to Junes meeting for an update of the works affecting public rights of ways.</p> <p><b>(5E) Coastal Path</b></p> <p><b>PW</b> As to date nothing further to report other than <b>PW &amp; AL</b> need to visit Fobbing Marshes following Natural England's report of a footbridge being required. Also Natural England are awaiting a traffic study report by our Transport and Development team for A1014 Manorway by Rookery Hill and new DP World Bridleway.</p>	

### **(5F) Parkers Farm Road, Orsett**

**PW** Following **JL** previously reporting a dangerous road surface (in part) along Parkers Farm Road he had been surprised to find a section further north had been re-surfaced. **PW** having spoken the Strategic Lead for Highways & Infrastructure was informed:-

*The section resurfaced was assessed to be in a greater need, due to the surface starting to open up and showing signs of deterioration. The alleged issue raised being a slippery surface he was not convinced could be addressed by resurfacing. Any new surface would be just as likely to experience issues due to the location of the road and influencing factors on the surface. He has requested our Senior Assets Management Engineer be asked to bear in mind these reports when reviewing future programmes of works.*

**JL & DF** both stated their unhappiness in this response along with reporting their fellow cyclist's dissatisfaction in the previous response given as it was felt the money would be better spent on the reported dangerous bend...especially as there had been cyclists injured at this location.

**SD** This issue needs to be reiterated to the Council especially as people are being injured.

### **(6) Planning Applications**

**PW** Has had the opportunity to be consulted on a recent planning application for a residential development on land adjacent Groves Barns, North Road, South Ockendon which had the possibility of linking Footpaths 151 and 135 The proposal would create a safe off road connection for users who at present have no alternative but to walk along the carriageway of North Road.

### **(7) Footpath / Bridleway Issues:**

#### **(7A) Proposed N13 Cycle Route**

**PW** provided members a plan showing in part the above intended cycle route between Thurrock Park Way through to Tilbury 2

#### **(7B) Tilbury 2 Development**

**AL** Informed members of a site meeting held with the Civil Engineering Manager from the Port of Tilbury who is keen to secure our agreement for the Public Rights of Way scope of works proposed to be undertaken during the coming winter months when footfall will be lower.

Plans were provided showing the following changes or upgrades

FP144 from Infrastructure Corridor to Fort Road

FP146 from Fort Road to Worlds End Pub. Works discussed to include: footpath resurfacing, replacement of chicane gate at Fort Road, crossing improvement at Fort Road and improvement of gate at Worlds End pub.

FP146 from Bill Mellroy Creek to Fort Road. Works to include: footpath resurfacing and replacement of a substandard stile.

Also discussed was ways of improving access over the sea wall steps to allow mainly access for cyclists though ideally a ramped access for wheelchairs / prams would be of most advantage.

**SS** Enquired as to why FP 144 is to be closed. **PW** explained that the railway tracks are to be increased at this location along with a new road being created south of the tracks. This crossing will no doubt be on Network Rails next round of closures as there is no possibility of a bridge either cost wise or that residents of nearby houses would want a bridge at the bottom or side of their houses.

#### **(7C) DP World Bridleway Creations.**

**AL** At present the process of trying to formalise DP Worlds Permissive Bridleways into Definitive Bridleways is proving challenging therefore the required legislation and process is now back with our Legal Team to verify.

Defining the correct right of way across the railway track is also a challenge whereby we need to establish 20 years use which requires evidence of use especially from say horse riders and cyclists. It was suggested that local anglers may also be able to assist. Also the RSPB maybe able to assist.

#### **(7D) Harrow Inn Bulphan FP 160 & Tyelands Farm Laindon FP 85 Route diversions**

**AL** We have now received clear instructions from our legal team and hope to have public notices within the Thurrock Gazette over the next week or so.

#### **(7E) Coalhouse Fort Bridleway 187**

It was agreed the extent of bridleway from the shore line to Footpath 146 be extinguished.

#### **(7F) China Lane, Bulphan Footpath 142**

**PW** Thanked Brian Hatcher for his assistance in reviewing a proposal to divert the above Footpath. However since then a decision has been made to continue with the installation of a new footbridge (thereby not having to use what has been considered an unsuitable culvert crossing). The landowner has now been informed of the costs required to formally divert (in part) Footpath 142 within his land ownership should he so wish.

### **(7G) Maintenance Responsibilities Information Leaflet.**

**AL** Provided members with a copy of a leaflet she had produced detailing landowner's responsibilities along with a copy of the standard email / letter to be sent to all known landowners.

**SS** Enquired as to maintenance responsibilities and the law regarding personal injuries and camera damage which he experienced last year on Footpath 61.  
It was agreed that PW & AL would seek clarification on the both. Unfortunately we no longer have the role of a Public Rights of Way Officer to walk the routes on a regular basis. We have been (as **7g** above) trying to make the landowners more aware of their legal responsibilities.

**BH** This is why it is even more important that any of us or members of our groups report any issues found to both PW & AL.

**CH** The Councils on line reporting process allows you to log any issue found and receive a response, this way you then have a reference number to refer to if required.

### **(7H) Definitive Map Modification Orders**

**(B&PW)** Informed the meeting of their concerns over the 2026 deadline for the recognition of any un-recorded rights of ways. They wonder why Thurrock Council has not advertised the pending deadline and law as it seems no one has really heard about it. Since January they themselves have found 20 old, thought to be public rights of ways within the Orsett and Horndon area.

**SS** Shouldn't Thurrock Forums be informed of this pending deadline as well as public rights of way issues? ..biggest concern people in Thurrock have is they are not aware of what is happening.

**SD** Essex Bridleway Association and the British Horse Society are working closely together regarding finding both lost routes but also the definition of those rights of ways they believe should have a higher definition of a footpath.  
EBA now pay someone to do their works as that person needs to be pretty dedicated to the time needed.

The British Horse Society has details on their website assisting those undertaking the challenge of preserving rights of way.

**SD** To provide further information for Junes meeting.

**JL** Would this be something either the Thurrock Gazette or Independent newspapers would be interested in?

**PW** Will enquire whether this can be published on the Councils website.

## **Capital Funding for Public Rights of Ways**

### **Footpath 147 East Tilbury**

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

**AL** With this year's capital funding now available it is hoped (should time allow) for surveying to take place to identify the upgrade of stiles to possibly gates for ease of access along with new signage being erected.

## **Any other business:**

**DF & JL** Enquired when it is anticipated the new signals will become in operational at Thurrock Park Way.

Also enquired if the bridleway surface of Rainbow Lane could be improved.

Reported DP Worlds bridleway surface between High Road and new bridge the stones are too big whereby cycle wheels sink, the surface needs compacting.

**SS** Thanked those present for a warm welcome to the LAF and should anyone be interested you can hear the lovely sound of a nightingale along Footpath 200 at East Tilbury.

**MO** Informed the meeting of a walk taking place at the former Bata's site between 10am and 2pm this Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April.

	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Working Group Meeting Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b> (Changed since minutes were taken to the 18<sup>th</sup>)</p> <p><b>Civic Offices – Committee Room 2 @ 7pm</b></p>	