



Leighton-Linslade Ouzel Valley Park Steering Group

1 February 2021 at 10:30am

1. Introduction and Apologies

Present: Cllr Tony Morris (LLTC) - Chair, Cllr Victoria Harvey (LLTC/CBC), Cllr Clive Palmer (LLTC), Cllr Steve Owen (LLTC), Pauline Hey (Local Access Forum), Jon Balaam (Greensand Trust), Mark Saccoccio (LLTC), Howard Hughes (CBC), Steve Lakin (CBC), Siobhan Vincent (CBC), Peter Bate (Sustrans/Buzzcycles), Clive Beckett (Local Access Forum), Ian Haynes (LLTC), Sarah Sandiford (LLTC)

Apologies: Paul Burgess (CBC), Esther Clarke (Buzzcycles)

2. Approval of Minutes of 9 November 2020

The notes of the previous meetings were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the addition of apologies for absence from CB.

3. Matters Arising

7 – water quality of River Ouzel – JB had raised this at a Catchment Partnership meeting in December.

4. Review of action list

See attached updated action list with latest comments in red.

5. Information updates

CBC

SL: no update on back of retail park although earth is being moved – will eventually be connected to bridleway. Improved access to Grovebury Road should be in the plan for next year. Need to review planning consent for the build out adjacent to the retail park.

An update was requested from CBC re waste bins near Grovebury Road.

LLTC

MS: letter sent to Anglian Water re Ouzel water quality on 7 January, no reply received as yet – thanks to JB for drafting letter content.

IH: clarity on plans for land east of Leighton-Linslade has been added to the Town Council's risk register action plan.

GST

JB: currently working reduced hours due to the national lockdown.

Trying to get the Greensand Ridge walk marker project going again – an artist was doing designs – this would be presented first to the steering group – costs, timescales etc could then be finalised.

Rushmere Country Park continued to provide a site for local residents to exercise. Limited resources and very high visitor numbers meant the site was just about coping. New staff included senior ranger Dan Doyle and facilities manager Paul Hurst.

JB would be meeting with SL and EC this week to look at the Government Gear Change impact on the Green Wheel action plan. A Green Wheel steering group meeting would then be convened and this would report back to this group later.

It was noted that there had been local comment on social media about tree felling at Rushmere. This was part of the management plan and long term strategy for the site, to restore it to heathland. There were signs up in the park to explain what work was being done and why some paths were temporarily closed.

It was noted that the park was seeing phenomenal levels of use, giving rise to issues with dog waste and litter – this issue was being seen nationally.

JB also advised of a project with the Rivers Trust on plastics pollution and monitoring levels, working with schools and feeding into a national project raising awareness of the impact of plastics pollution on the environment.

Buzzcycles

PB: market stalls for the Dr Bike service have been successful, offering bike checks and encouraging people to get old bikes back into use. Grant funding had been used to pay for parts, PPE and the stalls. 50 bookings had been received for 60 slots, with hardly any no shows and very positive feedback received. SO advised he had also heard positive comments from residents regarding this initiative.

PB raised awareness of an issue near the Black Bridge where the canal bank was too low, resulting in flooding on the towpath. This was a well used route but the path was in poor condition. Sustrans had a licence for the cycle route to Bletchley and was discussing the issue with the Canal & Rivers Trust. Flooding was not a new issue and might arise from Ledburn brook. Short term patching might help but a longer term strategy was needed to stop the problem recurring. It was hoped that the OVPSG would recognise the importance of this route and support the making of improvements to this section of the towpath.

The group discussed this issue. There had not been attendance from a representative of the Canal & Rivers Trust for some years, since a previous contact had left on maternity leave. PB had a contact name which he would

provide to the town council, but this might need to be followed up at a higher level. It was suggested that this issue might have a public safety aspect.

It was noted that footpaths across the network were suffering as a result of climate change and that the OVPSG could perhaps start looking at this bigger issue and a potential climate change strategy for the Ouzel Valley.

6. Clipstone Park cycle path

South Street to Hockliffe Road. As mentioned earlier, the design would be done first and then funding considered.

7. Pollution in River Ouzel

A water quality audit was being undertaken by the Environmental Audit Committee with a closing date of 5 February. It was suggested that a copy of the letter sent to Anglian Water be submitted. Group members had not all seen the letter, MS would circulate it.

8. Link between countryside access and health

This would be deferred until the next meeting.

9. Tiddenfoot Waterside Park – derelict stable block

HH advised the group of CBC aspirations to replace the derelict stable block with visitor facilities. A feasibility study would provide options with budget implications. Initial discussions had taken place with CBC councillors Dalgarno, Stock and Spurr. This would be a strategic use of the site to fit in with plans such as the Green Wheel and could potentially offer wider community use and access which would be complementary to other, existing local facilities. Possibilities for funding could include S106 for southern Leighton Buzzard, external funding or CBC's capital programme.

Group members expressed support in principle although were mindful of not wishing to substantially increase visitor numbers and traffic to the site, given its location near a residential area and very restricted car parking facilities. A more detailed report would be helpful. Encouraging access by walking/cycling would be ideal – promoting the site as a local facility rather than a destination. The impact on existing park users such as anglers needed consideration. It was noted this was not included in the current (2015) Green Infrastructure Plan and suggested that CBC's Masterplan for the site could be revisited and whether using S106 monies could be better spent on delivering other projects for the Town.

HH was asked if he could provide a copy of his slides. It was suggested that this be discussed further at a future meeting of the Partnership Committee to discuss the use of S106 monies.

10. Any other business

CP advised of a planning application to Aylesbury Vale District Council for mobile homes on the site of The Three Locks golf club. CP was submitting an objection on landscape/ecological grounds and suggested other group members consider this. The application details were on the AVDC website (application reference 21/00143/APP).

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting was agreed for **Tuesday, 4 May 2021 at 10:30am.**

The meeting closed at 12:14pm.