



Who are the Forum members?

Steve Bumstead
 (Chairman)
 Angela Barker (Central
 Bedfordshire Council)
 Dave Taylor (Luton
 Borough Council)
 Tom Chevalier
 Julian Clark-Lowes
 Jane Conway
 Andy Gerrard
 Brian Golby
 Pauline Hey (Vice Chair)
 Angela Kirby
 Andy Knight
 Marion Mustoe
 Andrew Pym
 David Simkins
 Tony Welch
 Rosalyn Whisker



Large carved chair at
Rushmere Park

Annual Review 2013-2014

A word from the JLAF Chairman – Steve Bumstead

This is my third term as Chairman of the JLAF. It has given me immense pleasure in being involved with a forum that is continuing to go from strength to strength. I now hand over to the safe hands of Pauline Hey my former Vice chairman.

Last year we have met six times around our catchment area.

Our group is made up of people with diverse interests and this leads to interesting and lively debate within our meetings.

Whatever our representation be it landowner/occupier, conservationist, horse rider, motor user, cyclist, rambler, dog walker or casual walker we all have one thing in common; a mutual passion for outdoor access.

In my opinion we do need to promote our forum further and recruit members who will represent young people, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

An area of debate that has been aired extensively this last year and is continuing is that of dog control and behaviour. This naturally has provoked lively discussion and will hopefully give rise to guidance and advice to dog walkers of their responsibilities to other users and the wider environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow members for their valuable support and add special thanks to both Caroline Romans (secretariat) and Jonathan Woods for their support and guidance.

What is the Central Bedfordshire and Luton JLAF?

The Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF) is an independent statutory advisory group which works on improving public access to land in Central Bedfordshire and Luton for all types of open air recreation. This group of local volunteers has attended six meetings over the last year to discuss outdoor access matters and many of the issues arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The forum is made up of people with wide experience of a diverse range of outdoor access interests. The members are drawn from countryside user groups, farmers and land managers and other relevant interests. There is a requirement to have a balance of interests to enable the group to develop actions which will improve outdoor access in Central Bedfordshire and Luton for all.

Consultations and Advice

Chilterns AONB
Management Plan

Central Bedfordshire
Council – Leisure Strategy

10th Anniversary celebration



The forum celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the creation of the former Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Local Access Forum, at a joint meeting with the Borough of Bedford LAF. Members of Milton Keynes LAF also attended the meeting which included very informative presentations on:

- Bedford – Milton Keynes Waterway
- East – West rail
- NCR 51 west of Bedford
- Local Nature Partnership

The forum members enjoyed the opportunity to meet members of the neighbouring LAFs and to discuss matters of interest to all.

Luton – Dunstable Busway cyclepath

The formal opening of the Luton – Dunstable guided busway took place on Tuesday 24th September 2013. The forum welcomed the creation of a cyclepath along the access track for the busway and has worked with Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that the surface and structures are appropriate for cycle use.

Central Bedfordshire Council – Rights of Way updates

The forum has been very pleased to receive regular updates from the Rights of Way team at Central Bedfordshire Council on progress made over the last year. This has included information on BVPI results and progress on the strategy to replace stiles with gates/gaps. This is a key priority for the forum which has worked hard over recent years to promote least restrictive access on rights of way. It is good to see the number of stiles reducing through a combination of the hard work of rights of way officers, amenable landowners and committed volunteers.

Outdoor Access Improvement/Rights of Way Improvement Plans

JLAF members have reviewed the Luton Rights of Way improvement plan and have continued to provide input to the Central Bedfordshire Council Outdoor Access Improvement Plan (OAIP) 2013-31. Following adoption of the CBC plan the forum have now switched their focus to monitoring progress against the actions within the plan.

You are welcome to our meetings

Members of the public are always welcome to attend our meetings to learn more about what we are doing to improve access to the outdoors in Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

Future meeting dates and times, agendas and minutes can be found on the website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Our meetings this year

24/3/13 Priory House,
Chicksands

18/6/13 Mount Pleasant Golf
Club, Lower Stondon

11/9/13 Gateway Centre,
Dunstable Downs

1/10/13 Forest Centre,
Marston Moretaine

20/11/13 Priory House,
Chicksands

28/1/14 Watling House,
Dunstable

Mapping of excluded areas

The forum has been working closely with Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council to ensure that Definitive Maps are produced for the currently excluded areas of Luton, Biggleswade and Dunstable. It recognises the risks of these non-mapped areas for the future and is pleased to note that work is now planned by both authorities to get Definitive Maps produced for all 3 areas.

JLAF visits

The forum meets at a variety of venues to provide opportunities for members to visit interesting sites and to balance travel times for members. During the summer months we try to hold meetings at venues where a short walk can be undertaken before the meeting. This year the forum visited Mount Pleasant Golf Club in Lower Stondon. Members were taken on a very enjoyable and informative walk around the course and were able to see how the Golf Course is managed to reduce the need for fertilisers and to maximise biodiversity. Thank you to David Simkins (JLAF member) for his hospitality.



Non-motorised Users forum for the Woodside Link (A5-M1)

A substantial amount of development is planned for the area north of Houghton Regis which includes a new road linking the A5 to the M1 (known as the Woodside link). The road should improve traffic congestion in the area and support new housing developments and economic growth. The forum have driven the establishment of a non-motorised users forum for the link road and surrounding developments to seek to ensure that the needs of non-motorised users are considered within any proposals. An initial meeting was very positive and noted the need to ensure that wherever possible consideration is given to improvement of the rights of way network and any crossings for non-motorised users.

Contact JLAF Secretariat :

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Health and wellbeing

The forum had interesting presentations from both Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council on the new Health and Wellbeing role for the local authorities. It is now considering how it can support the local authorities to achieve health and wellbeing improvements (with one suggestion being no cake at forum meetings!)

Houghton Hall Park – HLF bid

Central Bedfordshire Council was very pleased to receive a Stage 1 Development Grant of £215k from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Renaissance and Renewal Project at Houghton Hall Park, Houghton Regis. Kim Owens, Senior Fundraising Manager gave a very informative presentation on the work being undertaken to submit a Stage 2 bid for over £2m of funding to

- bring together different user groups
- increase accessibility and pride
- celebrate park heritage
- improve facilities to meet the needs of a growing modern community



The forum provided a number of useful suggestions for items to be considered as part of the bid and provided their support to the bid. We look forward to hearing a successful outcome in due course

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Paths for Communities

The forum was proud to support a successful bid to the Natural England Paths for Communities scheme for £26,495 towards the creation of a new cyclepath to the west of Biggleswade. The path, which was created by dedication with the landowner, uses an existing A1 underpass to provide a safe link from Biggleswade to Shuttleworth college, local tourist attractions and the village of Old Warden.