

The Surrey Countryside Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum held online via Zoom Monday, 19 July 2021

Present:

Members (and their primary interests):

Ian Russell, Chairman (Motor Vehicles)
Pamela Lyman (Land management)
Avril Sleeman (Equestrian)
Elliot Cairnes (Walking)
Thor Simpson (Walking)
Romy Jackson (Farming)
John Barber (Motorcycles)
Rosie Norris (Mobility Vehicles)
Lesley Steeds (Local Government)
David Bellchamber (Walking)
Sean Harrison (Countryside management)

Officers:

Joanne Porter, Countryside Access Assistant

Observers:

Matt Sewell (Police Support Volunteer)
Joe Bailey (

- 4.3 There will be a public consultation in September for the MoD byelaw review
- 4.4 There is information about the Surrey Wildlife Trust project that has been funded by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on the Coast to Capital website. The project will create a nature recovery network between Redhill and Godstone and aims to also work in collaboration with developers.
<https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/businesses-in-surrey-to-invest-in-nature.html>
- 4.5 Oak Processionary Moth is on the forward plan as a potential area of discussion.

5. Joe Bailey – Animal Warden, Mole Valley District Council

- 5.1 Joe introduced himself and said that he has worked at Mole Valley District Council for 33 years and is retiring next week.
- 5.2 Joe the last 6-18 months have seen a huge increase in the number of walkers and so also dogs using rights of way and open spaces, although there have not been many reports of attacks by dogs, although it's often the case that people often don't report attacks.
- 5.3 The law is difficult to enforce in relation to dogs, and people usually only receive an advisory letter after a first offence. After a second offence people will usually receive a Community Prevention Warning letter. Failure to comply with this will lead to Community Protection Notice.
- 5.4 Enforcement is very difficult, and Joe covers the large area of Mole Valley on his own, so he is often reactive. People should report any incidents involving dogs so he knows what areas to target for patrol and he can also pick up where there is a problem.
- 5.5 It is difficult to enforce on private land, but Joe does give advice where possible.
- 5.6 There have been problems recently with people from out of the area coming to Surrey.

5.11 Call 101 if there is an incident involving a dog and 999 if it

difficult situation to deal with as the dogs are contained so it would be difficult to take any action. The only thing to do would be to talk to the landowner.

- 5.22 David asked about how dog walking companies are dealt with if they have too many dogs. These dogs can cause a lot of disturbance to wildlife such as ground nesting birds. Is it possible to have dog free wildlife areas?
- 5.23 Sean said that he used to manage dog free areas which involve working with local dog walkers, but as the number of employees and site-based staff has declined this is much more difficult to do. There is also a problem with the promotion of access to the countryside without enough staff to manage the problems caused by the lack of staff and infrastructure.
- 5.24 Joe said that professional dog walkers should have public liability insurance and he thinks that 4 is the maximum number of dogs that they can walk at one time that is allowed by the insurance companies, although some may allow more. Some landowners are now licensing dog walkers and restricting the numbers, but it needs to be enforced
- 5.25 Romy said that the Surrey Hills AONB does promote responsible access, and there is a new project that the Landowner can apply to, for measures to enhance the visitor experience, including signage.

6. Wolvens Lane proposed Traffic Regulation Order Update

- 6.1 Claire Saunders, Access Team manager and Dan Williams, Countryside Access Officer provided the following update:

The Legal Definition Team are presently collating nearly 600 responses to the consultation as well as the Police, Highways and Road Safety.

Once that completed a Committee report will be written with recommendations and sent to our Legal Services for verification. It is intended that it will be an

6.2 Ian queried whether the reason for the original temporary closure still stood as the works were complete? Joanne explained that was why a new temporary closure order was being considered.

Action -

These two positions are now being advertised.

Claire Saunders is acting up to Steve's old role as Access Team Manager

There is still a vacancy for one of the Countryside Access Assistant roles in the East of the County, although this should be filled in the month or so.