

FROM: LUCY LEMPRIERE, HDRC Bridleways Liaison Officer
Tel. 01403 730333 lucy.lemprire@Tesco.net

TO: All HDRC Members

I liaise with Patricia Butcher, the BHS Bridleways Officer for West Sussex. From time to time I will give you an update on matters relevant to our district and I hope you find the following items from Tricia's JANUARY 2008 report of interest.

Rusper BW 1566: This BW now has a new bridge over the stream at the eastern end and following meetings between WSCC and the landowner, the "unofficial" diversion which has been used by riders for many years was formally approved at the Nov. ROW committee meeting. Following the making of the necessary Orders in the New year, widening and resurfacing work can take place. The cost of all the works are being shared between Mr Barker (the landowner) and WSCC, with a generous contribution from Rusper BG.

Itchingfield Downs Link DMMO 14/99: The Inspector has finally confirmed that the abandoned stretch of railway line from Baystone Bridge to Christs Hospital Station is a PROW. A BW up to the old platforms and a FP to the gate of the live platforms. There has been no challenge from the landowners to the High Court and the period for this has now expired. This is the culmination of two years work by the BHS (assisted by the Ramblers and a Slinfold Parish Councillor) following our agreement to take over the supporting role from the original claimant Paul Hamlin. WSCC have placed a Temporary Closure Order on the path so as to carry out essential works and will now be working on creating the link from the new BW to FP 1628, so that the Downs Link can be routed off road to Christs Hospital. They will also have to find the approx £100,000 it will cost to make the BW usable.

The Bower, Crawley: The creation agreement to upgrade FPs 86aW and 98W to BW are now with Crawley BC (the landowner) for completion. This upgrade will complete the route (almost all off road) from the eastern side of Crawley to Tilgate Park.

Sedgewick Park: Following the making of the Order for a BW on the West Drive (3rd July 2007) WSCC have received three objections. However, meetings and discussions have taken place regarding a diversion of the path away from the front drive of the house and a route has been suggested by WSCC. There appears to be disagreement between Mr and Mrs Davison as to whether this route is acceptable and Judith Grimwood (WSCC) and Christine Luff (WSCC) have had a another meeting with John Davison (landowner) and Robin Nugent (neighbour) on 14th Dec to view their suggested alternative route. However, it appears likely this will not be acceptable to WSCC and unless the objectors agree to the original diversion, it seems inevitable this will end up at a public inquiry.

Horsham District Community Partnership: A "Visioning Horsham" conference was held in Billingshurst on 11th Oct. to provide a forum for a discussion of the alternative outcomes for Horsham based on events and developments that are likely to impact on the District over the next twenty years. Aim is to work together to secure a better quality of life for all in the District. I attended this with Hilary Jubert, our aim being to publicise the need for a safe, linking network of multi-use off-road routes and to raise the profile of CAFWS and the ROWIP.

South Downs Access Forum AGM: This was held at Washington on Thurs 6th Dec. The main topic of debate was the future of the SDAF, which is now in jeopardy because of recruitment problems and threatened cuts to funding. A decision on the SDAFs future will be taken at the SDJC meeting in March.

South Downs Way: A SDW Management Plan Consultation Draft came out for consultation in late Dec. This document is meant to set out what should be achieved in the period 2008 to 2013 and is needed in order to plan funding required for a bid to Natural England (the body that funds National Trails). Final date for comments is 1st Feb with a final publication date of March 2008.

National Trust: The Trust has been reviewing and revising its guiding principles for recreational activities taking place on its land. The Guiding Principles were first produced in 1995 and revised in 2000. Consultations have taken place with representative organisations.

WSSC BW improvement programme 2007: Work was completed on this in Oct. The BWs which received attention were Broadbridge Heath & Itchingfield 1630, Pulborough 2307, Loxwood 806, Wisborough Green 774 & 755, Cuckfield Rural 40, 42, 67, 73 & 78, Crawley 321sy, Thakeham 4T, Warnham 1433 & Slaugham 16s at a cost of just over £150,000. I have just submitted my "desire" list of BWs to be included in the 2008 improvement work programme, based on info I have received from contacts around the County. I have now heard that both the structures and BW maintenance budgets have had to make a contribution to the repair of the Shoreham Toll Bridge this year, so there will not be quite so much funding available for the work programme as in the last 2 years.

S. Downs National Park: Since the CAFWS meeting we have heard that it has been decided to re-open the public inquiry so the Inspector can consider certain new issues, including the proposed alternative boundary line and possible additional areas of land recommended for inclusion against which there have been objections. The inquiry will re-open on Tuesday 12th Feb 2008 at The Chatsworth Hotel, Steyne, Worthing, further details can be found on the DEFRA website.

Strategic Development West of Crawley: Horsham DC published the Preferred Options document for this development of 2500 homes for consultation in Oct/Nov. It will cover an area west of Bewbush along the A264 to Holmbush Farm and north over the railway, with BW 1550 (Kilnwood) as its northern and eastern boundary. HDC say most of the responses to the consultation were supportive and they are now working up a submission document for the Inspector, this will go for approval to HDC on 27th March and CBC on 9th April and be finally published in early May. It is felt this is an opportunity (and probably the only one) to obtain a grade separated crossing of the A264 for walkers, cyclists and equestrians and a bridge over the railway for BW 1550 to replace the present level crossing, which is generally considered unsafe.

Strategic Development West of Horsham: Consultation on the Preferred Option for this development of 2000 homes south of Broadbridge Heath took place in Sept/Oct. A new road is proposed offering access from the A24, with the possible downgrading of part of the present A264 from the Tesco roundabout. This development provides opportunities for the improvement of the local ROW network for all users. Following further work on the transport issues the final document will be published at the end of May.

BHS: Membership in West Sussex is now up to 1400. I am very pleased to say that we now have an Assistant Access & Bridleways Officer on the committee. Hilary Jubert learnt to ride as a child, but didn't have a horse of her own until 1992 following a move to West Sussex. Hilary has been hacking out, initially with her daughter, ever since and has seen the situation with BWs change over the years. Initially, there was very little funding or rider involvement and gradually that has changed. Hilary was a member of the North West Sussex Bridleways Group, has taken part in Le Trec competitions and became a member of the BHS, attending one or two AGMs. Her interest and involvement with access work has grown and Hilary has become a valued contact, so I am delighted that she has agreed to come on the committee. Hilary will initially cover the north west area of the county and I hope will gradually become involved in all aspects of access work.

The West Sussex BHS is now separating money raised specifically for access work from its general fund and would welcome any donations.

The Head Office Senior Access Executive, Henry Whittaker, has resigned. He is leaving to take charge of his family's business, although he will continue to do work for the BHS on a contracted-out basis. He will be at the AROW dept until 29th March, but the search for his successor is already in hand.