



# Minutes

Meeting held on 18 March 2025 at 18.30 at Borough Hall.

## Members present:

Bob Wallace (BW) – Chair of the meeting  
David Mitchell (DM)  
Nigel Jacobs (NJ)  
Barry Ingram (BI)  
Cllr Martin Towler (MT)

## In attendance/Observers:

April Quinn – Bedford Borough Council  
Andrew Prigmore – Bedford Borough Council  
John Mabblerley (JM) – Ravensden PC  
Lesley Carvell (LC) – Ravensden PC  
Alison Myers (AM) – Ravensden PC  
Mark Fitzpatrick (MF) – Brickhill PC

## Apologies received:

Ann Kennedy (AK)  
Mark Poxton  
James Russell

## Clerk:

Georgina McDade

## 1. Welcome by the Chairman

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes from October were agreed and signed. Previous agenda item Structures & Barriers to be added as agenda item for June meeting.

Apologies received as above.

## 2. East West Rail

It was agreed by all present that the consultation is an opportunity to seek improvements to affected paths and not as a way to object to the proposal in its entirety. Improvements

should focus on benefits for residents, users of the RoW network such as wheelers, walkers, cyclists and equestrians.

BW confirmed that AK had taken lead on behalf of the LAF and a Team's meeting has been scheduled for 23 April with representatives of EWR with a face to face meeting likely to be arranged following the Teams meeting. Other LAF members and representatives of Parish Councils are encouraged to join. JM requested that EWR provide details of person/s specifically responsible for the RoW network for this area.

AM highlighted that the consultation does not appear to consider routes that would be considered "priority routes" for areas- lacks specific detail.

MF confirmed the above. Advised that a previous site meeting with 2 representatives of EWR demonstrated their lack of knowledge of the area and affected RoW.

AQ confirmed that the Authority responded to consultation in December and highlighted that the proposal should adhere to the aims of Borough Council's ROWIP, Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework. Confirmed that the RoW team have already pulled together a list of the affected RoW, which will allow for a more detailed response to be made at the next consultation.

All present agreed that a logical approach should be taken by EWR that could lessen objections to the whole proposal eg two paths that run in close proximity to one another that are affected by the line could be consolidated to one path, with possible upgrade in status.

It was agreed that:-

- There should be focus on the entire route of EWR through Bedford Borough together with detailed focus on specific routes.
- A multiuser path should be created adjacent to the line, but not as a replacement for all other affected paths, it is an addition to the network and would be considered an improvement (S.106 monies or compulsory purchase and dedication of the route could be used. This would assist in the creation of a route and contribute for surfacing and maintenance of the path)
- The proposal must provide low financial costs with high benefit for the wellbeing and health for residents.
- The proposal must be more consistent with in depth details relating to RoW as with the processes engaged by national service providers on road network
- Further response from the LAF will include potential access opportunities for more RoW to connect to the path adjacent to the "track" increasing access for users of the network

AK has agreed to draft a further response from BOBLAF to EWR including some statement of principle and policy relating to PROW and specific comments based on BOBLAF's views on the various suggestions and comments included in the responses from the Parish Councils and BHS. Specifically, the bullet points above would be included.

### **3. Funded Opportunities**

#### **a. UK shared Prosperity Fund**

#### **b. Active Rural Grant**

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund** - Members were advised that AnP had confirmed that the neighbourhood walks project was unable to be completed within the current financial year and funding cannot be carried over to the next financial year. The funding is no longer available, however she will continue to develop the walks. She will endeavour to identify suitable funding opportunities, if further funding becomes available.

**Active Rural Grant** - AQ confirmed that allocated funding for improvement works had been used and works completed on 3 paths in; Wootton, Wyboston and Pedley Way in Renhold.

**AQ to circulate details of improvements to members.**

### **4. LCWIP & NCN51**

AP confirmed NCN51 is progressing. Design work has commenced and construction is likely to commence at the end of 2025.

**GM to obtain update from Peter Simons. Completed.**

Peter Simons advised on 19/03/25;-

“We have advised our Councillors that - subject to the completion of the online consultation system that we have set up specially for this kind of engagement - we expect to consult before Easter.

It could be sooner, but we’re reliant on our contractors and in-house survey teams in actually setting up and launching the survey. The process to procure them has been longer than we expected but we now have a team onboard and working on it.”

**GM will circulate further details to members once available.**

Ongoing agenda item.

### **5. ROWIP & Case updates**

AQ & AP confirmed that the ROWIP was published in January 2025 and is available via the Council website.

### **6. Volunteering**

Up to date volunteering list circulated to members prior to meeting.

BW confirmed that the volunteering works will be advertised on the Ivel Valley website to demonstrate the importance of the volunteering works carried out for the Council.

## 7. AOB, Buffalo, Boundary Walk

AP advised that the complainant regarding the buffalo incident, referred the Council to the Legal Ombudsman. The Ombudsman found in favour of the Council finding that the Authority conducted itself within the remits of the law and had exhausted all available actions to deal with the issue.

BHS' guidance states that if approached by buffalo, to retreat quietly. However, video evidence supplied by the complainant showed that this guidance was not followed.

No update on the Boundary Walk.

BW advised that the Ramblers have provided funds to replace signs along the North Bedfordshire Heritage Trail. **BW to circulate details.**

AQ confirmed that a new inspector for the ROW had been appointed.

## 8. Governance


BW confirmed stepping down as chair. Advised AK had agreed to take over as chair. All members present voted unanimously for AK to become chair and for BW to become vice chair. As AK was not present, this will be confirmed officially at the start of the next meeting.

**The LAF would like to take this opportunity to thank Bob for his time and support during his time as chair.**

Confirmed agenda items for next meeting; Structures & barriers, Solar Farm on Bedfordia Land.

Next meeting date confirmed for 17 June 2025.

Meeting concluded 20.55

Signed: 

Dated: 17 June 2025