



# **SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK**

## **ACCESS MEETING**

**Location:** Coach House

**Date:** 18/12/12

**Time:** 1400

1. **Apologies;** Cllr Buckley, Sam Jones (HCC ROW), Spencer Huckstepp (Cycle Volunteer).
2. **Present;** Mike Ashton (CTC), Jim Edwards (Friends of Leigh Park), Sam Holly (Marketing SGSCP/QECP), Adam Maskill (SGSCP Ranger), Martin Healey (Countryside Manager EHDC), Simon James (FC Beat Forester), Sue Montila (HCC Access Forum Horse Riding Rep'), Gary Morton (Environment Dep't HBC), Tim Speller (Estates SGSCP/QECP), Tracey Viney (Portsmouth Water), Cath Hart (HCC Shipwrights Way).
3. **Meeting format and frequency;** following the initial informal meeting in September future meetings would be minuted and the attendees invited to attend quarterly with the aim of helping progress 'access' at Staunton Country Park and in the surrounding area.
4. **Progress report;** a recent successful grant bid to the Small Grants fund had led to a 13K project involving cash and 'help in kind' which was submitted by Portsmouth Water and supported by the FC and HCC. Portsmouth Water appointed the path contractor and also arranged for the existing perimeter fence to be moved back to make more space for the path. The ditch to the east side of the path was cleaned out to help improve drainage in the vicinity of the path.

To date 300 metres of the poorest surface along the Staunton Way had been replaced to a 2.5m width. A large amount of vegetation was removed by SG Rangers and volunteers, Portsmouth Water volunteers and TCV volunteers. An additional 300 metres of path on FC land will be scraped back and graded once the weather improves and the surface dries out.

A new bridle gate had been installed by SGSCP at the junction between Rowlands Castle bridleway 29 and the Staunton Way (see also item 12).

Mobility access is available to the improved path link via the FC car park. However, this the surface of this access track is in need of attention. (see item 10)

A separate project had just got underway along the Durrants Road, restoring the roadside pond and digging out all the field ditches on SGSCP land. Hampshire Highways were leading



on this work with the aim of reducing the risk of flooding. HH would also supply two new field gates, one to replace the old wooden gate at Witchers Gate. Once the new metal 7-bar farm gate had been replaced a recycled metal kissing gate, with a RADAR lock, would be installed alongside by SGSCP.

A bid had been made to Cllrs Buckley and Darrah for an unconfirmed £700 each. This funding would help balance the project budget. (Following the meeting this funding was confirmed).

5. **Horse access;** currently horse riders use bridleway 120/ Rowlands Castle 29 from the east or west, which links to Manor Lodge Road. They also have access to the north along the Staunton Way for a short distance as a permissive route which links to the FC car park and track network.

Historically the FC also gave horse riders permissive access to a wider linking ride to join Manor Lodge Road along the southern FC boundary.

Additionally, the Forestry Commission operates a riding permit system in Havant Thicket which is only used by a handful of people.

Sue M raised access issues involving some 50 horses which are kept along Prospect Lane and the problems of circumventing the two roundabouts at Witchers Gate. Horse riders would like to access the permissive link path at the roundabout. This land is owned by Portsmouth Water and there are concerns about the visibility and subsequent liabilities along the new section.

The situation would be monitored for 6 months to gauge the level of usage by all.

Sue.M would try and provide information on the potential number of riders that might want to use this access point.

A further discussion would then take place about whether it would be appropriate to allow permissive horse access . Sue indicated that the group would be happy to fund a new furnishing at this point.

Rowlands Castle Parish will be consulted with regard to his matter.

6. **SGSCP Park Map;** Sam H is putting together a new Welcome Leaflet for the site. This is essentially an advertising vehicle for the ornamental farm but would feature for the first time a map of Leigh Park Gardens, and subsequent map boards out on site. This initiative was welcomed by all.

Distribution would involve local tourist information centres, accommodation providers and attractions. The map would be 4DL in size and print run will be 250,000. A draft was given out for comments at the meeting (Tracey.V would book a separate meeting with Sam.H to discuss PW feedback).

One 7km FC Green rated cycle route would be created which runs all around the outside of the LPG/Portsmouth/Havant Thicket area. This would have an additional 3 km loop option. The three old walking routes (red, yellow and blue would remain in place but with minor changes to the route of the red trail).

Way marking would be completed by SGSCP before Easter 2013.

Marilyn Meeks (HCC) was the contact for the Staunton Way.



Mike A had made representation to HBC about the **Havant Cycle Map** to see if the next reprint in April 2013 could have some more local detail, and include Havant Thicket.

7. **Motorbikes**; continued problems with motorbikes were raised. Improved more durable signage would be investigated with ROW colleagues.

Residents would be encouraged to call 101 to report all anti-social behaviour.

Members of the 'Safer Havant Partnership' would be involved to ensure that the problem is tackled at all levels.

And finally, Richard Thompson, the local Police Sergeant, would be copied into the minutes and invited to attend the next meeting.

Mark Moss from HBC would be copied in to the minutes and invited to the next meeting.

8. **ROW Networking**; signage issues for the general ROW as well as the Staunton Way would be raised with Sam Jones.

The Park map would contain directional information to lead users to surrounding communities, and in the case of the Staunton Way, to QECP.

Havant 505 had been investigated where local opinion suggested that it continued north across Thicket/High Lawn. This is not on the Definitive ROW Map.

9. **Shipwrights Way**; A map would be attached to the minutes showing the route of the main route. A spur would run into the SSCP main facilities.

A proposal had been made to run a walking option down through Great Copse. A decision re this route was about to be made. Cath H would update.

10. **South Downs National Park**; Chris Paterson from the SDNPA had advised that there might be support for access improvements depending on exactly where the National Park boundary is. One key area identified as a future project was an all weather easy access path from the Havant Thicket car park to the Staunton Way. Currently this short length of trail is not suitable for battery powered vehicles.

(Following the meeting it was confirmed that Havant Thicket lies outside the National Park. However Nick Heasman the SDNP Western Area Manager confirmed that the area is close enough for a bid to be considered on its merits).

11. **East Hampshire land holding**; the district council had been surveying its boundaries and studying its old yew trees. The roadside trees would be thinned and a double hedge planted to improve safety.

12. **Site meeting**; after the meeting 6 people visited the project site. Jim Edwards drove there in his battery powered buggy, a feat that would have been impossible prior to the re-surfacing.

The new bridle gate was inspected and found to be 1.5 metres wide as required.

Some surfacing material would be introduced to the area between the bridleway gate and the two field gates. Additionally, plain strands of wire would be used on the fencing top strands adjacent to the bridle gate.

13. **Date of next meeting**; tba