

Chairman's Update – May 2016

Following on from the Annual Assembly, the main action in my diary has been to attend the Railway Action Group and deal with a number of general issues which have been brought to my attention.

The Railway Action Group met at the start of May to discuss progress made by Network Rail in addressing the gantries installed on the Great Western Main Line through the area of AONB. The good news here is that progress is being made with a public consultation set to continue later in the year. Having walked the Thames Path between Goring and Pangbourne yesterday, I have to say that it would be great if a more visually acceptable solution could be found, especially across the open valley floor and by Basildon Bridge, which despite being listed does not look like it has received any particular care when being fitted with gantries. If you'd like to read more on the progress of 'RAG', please click on the link found under 'Latest Announcements' on the home page of the parish council website.

Away from the railways, there has been good news on the bus front with West Berkshire Council confirming that the service will effectively continue to run in its current form for the next year or so at least. This has followed considerable lobbying both on the part of the parish council and equally from the Women's Institute who should be commended for their considerable efforts. What we have going forward will be a link to Pangbourne, Whitchurch and Reading which represents the best possible outcome for the parish. At this point I feel it sensible to refer to Alan Law's 'use it or lose it comment' - if you value the bus service please make the most of it otherwise we will no doubt find ourselves in this position again. Moving on, having secured this service our next task is to examine the options available to us for Lower Basildon and this will be discussed at future council meetings.

Having talked trains and buses, let me update you on the state of our footpaths and where we are going with a couple of projects. Firstly, let's talk overall condition:

As of the middle of May we have a fully functional footpath network. Footpaths 7 (Drift Farm) and 17 (Rushdown Farm) have been cut back to allow easy access and footpath 5 (Emery Acres to Bethesda Street) will be receiving a trim soon. We have no open cases for fly tipping or access issues on any of our paths and having walked the majority of them in recent weeks I can confirm that only footpath 10 (behind Harley House towards Lower Basildon) has a problem – in this case a very muddy section where wellies are a necessity.

On the footpath projects front, we continue to push for the work to be completed on footpath 5 and having agreed the specification of the path (tidied and push chair friendly) we await the start of the work. Further along footpath 5 we have access issues around the school gate where access is via old steps or a slippery unofficial ramp. We are working with the school on a solution and hope to make progress here very shortly.

On a final note, on the 5th June we will be holding a litter picking day across the parish, please keep an eye on our website for further details.

Until next month, enjoy the sunshine and our lovely parish.

Robert Greasley, Chairman