

## **Mike Chislett – Areas of Responsibility – report for 13<sup>th</sup> July Lacock Parish Council**

### **Responsible Finance Officer**

#### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

(As mentioned previously) *The completed Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return should be on our website by the following **suggested** dates: Monday 17 June – Friday 26 July 2019. (The latest possible dates that comply with the statutory requirements are Monday 1 July – Friday 9 August 2019).*

Our clerk has all this hand (**thank, you, Lana**) and at a (suitably socially-distanced) meeting last week took me through the final version of the accountability return. After sign-off by our chair, the relevant papers will be displayed on the parish web-site to meet the statutory requirement. I did not identify any contentious issues or concerns.

#### **Memorials Insurance**

Perhaps prompted by the removal of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol, LPC was contacted by 'BHIB Councils Insurance' enquiring whether we are adequately insured. Lana has checked the policy and we have £36K worth of cover for our two memorials.

#### **Flood**

- Nothing new to report – I have not checked whether the tree mention in June (south of Abbey Bridge) has been cleared.

#### **Grit Bins**

- Nothing to report – Naish Hill lower is still not replaced.

#### **Footpaths**

Issues relating to LACO19 (raised at last meeting) have been logged on 'My Wiltshire' \_

#### **Wick Solar Farm**

At the June meeting – I shared comment on rights of way and aspirations for their exhancement through Wick Solar Farm (should it proceed). This was subsequently shared with Pegasus (the promoters).

#### **Improving accessibility to RoWs in LPC**

Following the item in my last report about stiles and accessibility, I now have (thank you to NW Wilts Ramblers) information about BS5709 – the relevant British Standard. This covers:

*'gaps, pedestrian gates, bridle gates, kissing gates, dog gates, horse stiles of two kinds, kent carriage gaps, and step over and flat top pedestrian stiles.*

*The explanatory pages cover ten 'rules' applicable to all compliant structures. Examples are then given of a gap, a bridle/pedestrian gate, three kissing gates and two stiles. Rules specific to each structure type are shown beside them. The standard also includes horse stiles, other bridle gates, dog gates, horse step through gates and the kent carriage gap. '*

I have appended a basic summary below of just the first three 'rules' below – as this standard should represent our minimum expectations when any work is done on rights of way and access to them.

Mike Chislett  
9<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **Some main points of BS5709**

### **RULE 1: LEAST RESTRICTIVE OPTION FOR THE LAND MANAGEMENT NEEDS**

Least restrictive option must be chosen. The standard's words are: The selection of a gap, gate or stile, which permits people to use a path crossing a boundary such as a hedge fence or stone wall, shall meet the needs of the land manager and shall cause as little restriction as possible for all lawful users.

[4.1] On public paths lawful users includes people of all ages and abilities, including users of mobility vehicles (wheelchairs and pushchairs) etc and dogs. There will be very few paths on which these users, including those with mobility vehicles, would not be able to travel, were it not for impassable structures.

Just because other parts of the path are impassable to mobility vehicles perhaps because of existing stiles, does not, under this standard [4.4], allow stiles or non-mobility-vehicle-passable gates to be put elsewhere on the path. To do so would be to make it harder in future to give access for all. This is especially true of structures at the start of paths, where they leave a road. Some people with disabilities may get no further than the first field in the short term, but that is so much better than not getting anywhere at all.

The standard [Tables 1 and 2] lists various types of structure in order of accessibility for users, for footpaths that is basically Gap, Gate, Kissing Gate for mobility vehicles, plain Kissing Gate, Stile but is dependent on latching arrangements. So where something beyond a gap is needed then a two-way-opening self-closing gate is the preferred option (except adjoining roads where safety and vehicle exclusion may indicate a kissing gate suitable for mobility vehicles). Ideally the least restrictive is no structure at all and where there might be some other measure that would remove the need for any structure then that measure should be taken. An example would be where some side fencing or rerouting of cattle paths might allow elimination of the need for any cattle barriers

at all on the path [4.3 c) Note 2].

Stiles. The standard also says new structures on public paths shall not be stiles other than in exceptional circumstances [7.1].

**RULE 2: MANOEUVRING SPACE.** [eg 5.2 Note 2] This is the space needed to be kept clear so as to allow users to get into position to open, pass through, and close a gate or to negotiate a fixed structure. This is something that is a requirement of the standard but was found too difficult by the writers of that standard to specify clearly. A great deal more space is needed than is commonly assumed. One-way opening gates need more manoeuvring space than two-way opening ones and some horses and mobility vehicles (wheel or pushchairs) may need a three metre diameter space [6.3.8 Note]. Horse stiles need a 4 metre long space to meet the standard [6.5.j)]. It is desirable that those involved have some training involving users with wheelchairs, pushchairs or horses as appropriate. Best to get it right before installation, since just one or two potential users who are unable to manoeuvre through the structure might serve to prove non-compliance.

**RULE 3: LOCATION OF STRUCTURES.** At vehicular roads, structures other than gaps must be set back at least four metres (some footpaths two metres) from the (usually metalled) carriageway. [5.6]