

Walking Environment Officer's Report for West Berks Ramblers AGM 01Nov2023

My main interest is in facilitating urban walking / active travel. I therefore am pleased to be able to report that West Berks Council has finally agreed that the Public Spaces Protection Order in Speen preventing general public use of the route connecting Speen Lane and the A4 Bath Road opposite Brummell Road can no longer be justified. The locked gate on the access from Bath Road to Speen Lodge Court (in place since 2008) is due to be removed on or before 21st October. The assistance of members of the Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum (LAF) and of the current West Berks Council ward members for Speen in achieving this outcome is acknowledged.

Another matter that is regularly on my radar is the lack of a safe road crossing at the Hambridge Road canal bridge (where towpath users have to cross both the road and the canal). This is on National Cycle Network Route 4 and Sustrans is now understood to be looking into options for resolving the problem.

The function of 'Walking Environment Officer' also covers the countryside (the job title used to be 'Countryside Secretary'), and in particular the effects of development within it. The Group pays a subscription to CPRE (the Campaign to Protect Rural England) and I generally take the view that they are better resourced to handle countryside protection issues.

GVS, October 2023