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| Shropshire Local Access Forum | <u>Item</u> | <u>Paper</u> |
| 30 April 2009 | 10 | E |
| 10.00 am | | |

SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING GROUPS (SRC DG)

Minutes of meeting, Monday 13th October 2008, 7pm for 7.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

1. Attendance:

Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere, Chair. John Gibson, British Driving Society, Vice Chair. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG, Joint Secretary. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA, Joint Secretary. Judy Dickinson, Church Preen & Dist. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Ann Durnell Bridgnorth BWA. Mike Bowen, Long Mynd & District BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA. Karen Wilson S.C.C.

Apologies:

Tina Baran & Catriona Shaw, Oswestry Riding Club. Jan Baldwin, Broseley BWA. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen & Dist. BWG. Dorothy Vincent, Claverley.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2008 were taken as read and accepted.

3. Matters Arising

(a) Discovering Lost Ways

Karen reported that the Shropshire data has been received on disc. The information cannot be disclosed yet, as it is Natural England's property. The historical for North Shropshire has been finished and two parishes, Ellesmere and Stanton on Hine Heath, were used for the pilot.

(b) Defra Stewardship

It is believed that landowners are not allowing horse riders to go on their stubble fields etc., for fear of losing their stewardship payments. It was emphasised that landowners would not be penalised for allowing horse riders informal access, such as riding on stubble, as horse riding is a permitted activity on stewardship land, but only, of course, with the landowners permission. Zia reported that there are still outstanding issues on permissive stewardship routes. Pansons Farm is now on the website, but there are still problems. A new route has recently been added at Burlington Farm, Shifnal. There are a large number of permissive routes around Shifnal. Karen said that this is an area where there is a high percentage of horse owners. There is a possibility of one stewardship route being downgraded to footpath as a number of complaints have been received regarding condition etc. It forms an important link between rights of way, and Zia is arguing the point on this. Landowners put the routes forward and are paid for their use, and it is important that routes are safely open and usable. Users should not have to be concerned that if they complain about condition etc. that they could lose the route.

(c) Ride UK and Horses Welcome

The site is still mainly focused on Scotland, but the five Shropshire establishments are now listed under the heading "Yorkshire and Shropshire". SCC's website www.shropshireriding.co.uk only lists a couple. Karen said that this would be updated when the information is supplied. Judy D reported that they were difficult to find on the website.

(d) List of Streets and UCRs

Karen reported that following Zia's presentation to LAF, a meeting of the LAF working group, countryside staff and highways, to discuss UCR's had taken place. The survey undertaken of some categories of UCR's and forward progress, was discussed at this meeting. The Countryside Service are looking at the possibility of taking over the maintenance of some UCR's of high recreational benefit, in return Highways would provide the funding and officially maintain some urban tarmac rights of way. There are also signage issues. Some UCR's that start as tarmac routes are currently signed as cul-de-sac roads, when in fact they carry on as unsurfaced highways or lead to byways, footpaths or bridleways. Some UCR's are signed as footpaths. One possibility is to sign them as "Unclassified

County Road leading to...” It is important that users know what they will encounter, to avoid a situation such as a carriage driver going down a UCR leading only to a FP, and not being able to turn round. Karen reported that the Highways Department have acknowledged that the roads shown on the 1929 Handover Map onwards are public roads. This is an excellent result. Zia, John and Karen agreed that it was a good meeting. Andy Lipka has done a very thorough job surveying routes, with measurements, photographs and reports. The group are now looking at a second tier survey. The next meeting will focus on looking for missing gaps, which routes form a useful purpose, etc. The north of the county is to be prioritised as the Access Strategy has identified a lack of routes there. Karen agreed to forward a copy of the minutes of the meeting to Andrew Kelly as he is attending a meeting in London of the County Surveyors Society. Andrew said they were working with Cambridgeshire. Clare Harrison and Andy Savage of SCC were looking at the Standard Operation Procedures (SOPS). There will be another LAF working group meeting, possibly in January 2009.

(e) Wind farms

There have been articles in the Shropshire Star following the appeal by Nuon Renewables. Members of NSDC’s Development Control Committee turned down their application for seven 110m wind turbines at Lower Farm in Bearstone, near Market Drayton. Angela’s letter of objection is attached to the Agenda marked C.

(f) Blue Remembered Hills

Karen reported that the official launch of this route is postponed until the spring. The AONB has had a very busy year with celebrations, including the 50th anniversary of the definitive map. The guide is printed in the same format as the Ride Shropshire routes, and the routes are rideable. Karen said that she would ask about the possibility of members test riding the route.

(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda

Following on from the decision taken at our last meeting, Linda read out the letter she had written to Alison Kennedy, asking for consideration of horse riders needs when promoting cycle routes.

Zia raised ongoing problems in Eastridge Woods. Pam had encountered tapes put across the Ride Shropshire route. The map of Eastridge Woods on the www.shropshirecycling.co.uk website makes no mention of horse riders, nor the fact that there are promoted riding routes through the Woods, showing routes only as colour marked cycle trails. The Forestry Commission website states that horse riding is welcome on forest roads and bridleways. Zia read from a mountain bike website www.mrbr.com, which states under ‘Trail description’: - “The woods are forestry commission, and have been badged “cycle trails” even on OS maps. This means very few walkers and very few horses. There are NPS races here, downhill courses and cross-country. Plus many miles of quiet hilly bridleway locally” This is very worrying. It was agreed that a letter expressing concern be written to Georgina Sharp at Marches Office, who is also the web-site compiler.

Zia reported that she had written an e-mail to Richard Knight highlighting concern over the use of red way mark arrows on bridleways for Church Stretton “walkers welcome” routes. He had confirmed that the red, blue and orange colours for the walks were chosen, and the way marks put up without consultation with SCC Countryside Service. It was agreed that a letter be written to John Woolmer expressing the Groups concern.

Zia confirmed that the SCC website page on General information about Public Rights of Way now includes the colours of the waymark arrows for routes. Karen was asked to thank Pippa on behalf of Groups.

Zia confirmed that the RAF low flying help line was closed some time ago due to lack of use. This was confirmed at our spring meeting with RAF Shawbury.

4. Public Inquiries & Definitive Map Issues

Karen updated Groups on BW/RB issues currently being dealt with by the Access Mapping Team.

Hopesay RB addition – The Public Inquiry into the Proposed Restricted Byway Addition is to be held on 3rd December 2008.

BW33/33A Extinguishment, Hilton, Worfield Parish - The Order has been forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate following objections.

BW addition Winnington, Westbury Parish – The Modification Order is waiting to be published.

Upgrade FP95/FP3 to BW and BW addition at Ackleton, Parishes of Worfield & Badger – The Modification Order is waiting to be published. SCC has prioritised this order, as this route was used by horse riders, but SCC put kissing gates in the openings at the landowner’s request.

BW30 and BW31 Bettws-y-Crwyn, Newcastle Farm, Black Mountain – The Diversion Order is waiting to be published.

BW UN1/35 and BW35 Clungunford and Clunbury, Coston Manor – The Diversion Order is waiting to be published. – Gill Eyre’s area.

BW 94 Bitterley - Ann will check. Bitterley is a large parish.

BW addition, Oaks Wood, Parishes of Longden and Church Pulverbatch - The formal application is currently being investigated.

BW addition Uckington, Parishes of Wroxeter and Uppington – This is currently being investigated and may be progressed by way of a diversion in the interests of the public.

BW addition Parishes of Claverley and Worfield – Route to Hilton. This is currently being investigated.

BW1 Petton downgrade to FP – The formal application to downgrade the bridleway is currently under investigation. Angela is going to respond to this on behalf of the BHS.

Cow Lane, Parish of Great Ness – The Inspector reversed his decision, following the 1st Inquiry, that the route was a through bridleway but on an amended line. His decision, following the 2nd Inquiry, set the date of challenge as 1995, rendering the user evidence invalid, as the route was blocked to horse riders in 1984, when the gate at the west end was locked.

Melverley RB – Following the publication of the Inspector’s modifications, Mr Alan Kind of the Byways and Bridleways Trust has objected to the Inspector’s modification to the width. Zia reported that the enclosure award only applies to the north end of the route. The width at the north end is now wider than 40ft and the Inspector, by setting the width as that shown on the Order Map, addressed the enclosure award width, and encroachment on another section of the route.

Oswestry Urban Parish Review – this is still being progressed.

Shrewsbury Review – The remaining claims are to be published in the near future.

Angela said that Aberystwyth holds national information on old records.

5. Feedback from LAF and other Forums

Zia reported that the July meeting had been cancelled, and that the April meeting had included an update from Jonathon Felton on Discovering Lost Ways. Deb Hughes reported that SCC had informed Natural England that additional staffing and other resources would be needed as DLW could not be accommodated under current staffing levels. Jonathon also gave an overview on Natural England Recreational Access. One member of LAF pointed out that only 40% of farmers were taking up higher-level stewardship schemes and that public access needed to be included in the lower tier schemes and then landowners would take it up. Richard Knight reported on the flood damage. Zia did a report on UCR’s, highlighting areas of concern. A follow up meeting on UCR’s was agreed.

6. Shropshire County Council

(a) Access Strategy – Karen has copies available. A lot of work had been put into this and everyone was pleased with the results. The strategy has been put forward as one of the best in the country, but Natural England now needs to get on and provide grants to implement this strategy. The Group congratulated SCC & Karen for an excellent document.

(b) Staff Changes – Karen updated on staff changes.

Jo Penfold has taken on the Shropshire Outdoors Project that looks at improving, and encouraging access for people with learning or physical disabilities and those with mental health problems.

Paul Daly has taken over from Matt Stephens as Parish Access Project Officer.

Matt Stephens has taken over as Review Officer following Susan Stott leaving.

Helen Beresford has been appointed as one of the Asst. Access Maintenance Officers.

The enforcement team remains the same: Kevin Jones, Terry Hughes and Phil Betts.

Pippa Evison has married and is now Pippa Murphy; as Mapping and Information Officer, she looks after the website, deals with GIS mapping issues and CAMs database.

Anna Morris, who is part of the Transport Planning Team, is a Cycling Officer.

(c) Revised Priority Matrix - It was emphasised that complaints brought by a Parish Council, and Health & Safety issues get the highest priority.

(d) Rights of Way survey - Last year surveys were carried out at sites. This year Karen was concentrating on the rights of way network, and would be contacting P3 Groups, user access forum members, LAF etc. Forms were also going to people from the Draft Access Strategy consultation who

said they would be happy to be consulted on access issues in the future. Results will be used to show value for money, need etc and feed into the Access Strategy action plans.

7. Maintenance of Rights of Way

Jack Mytton Way – Repairs are currently under way on parts damaged by flooding. BW153 Broseley, and Highley, Billingsley issues are now with contractors. The latest flooding has further damaged parts of the route near Tugford which has been closed. The ford between Broncroft and Tugford is impassable, and there is a 3ft hole in the hedged lane. A possible diversion is proposed for a section of the J M Way between Tugford and Heath. The Group agreed in principle to a diversion, but that this should be off road as much as possible. Gill Eyre is to liaise with Karen. The current condition and signage of parts of the Jack Mytton Way is of concern. Karen asked members to assist in surveying the route. Zia has already put in reports of problems on the Chelmarsh to Much Wenlock section. Ped Atkinson has looked at some of the issues near Barrow Church. The Much Wenlock old railway line section is overgrown with trees leaning across the route. Karen asked for people to e-mail her before the end of the month with the sections they could survey. Angela reported that the feedback she has had is that this is a lovely route, but that there is too much roadwork.

Stiperstones - Natural England in the past would not way mark on the Stiperstones as they said it did not fit in with the wild nature of the area. It is agreed that Zia should write to Natural England with the example she has found of a way mark cut in stone.

Karen reported on another area where changes were proposed. This is at the south end of the Stiperstones. English Nature want to downgrade, to footpath, the cul-de-sac Bridleway from the car park up to Cranberry Rocks, in exchange for a route linking from the car park, around the south of the Stiperstones, to the Black Ditch path on the south west side, thus avoiding road work. It is also proposed that a permissive route be created to link from near Hill Cottage parallel to the road down to the Bog car park

8. Guidance on gates and surfaces

Karen is waiting for guidance on gates and surfaces; Mark Weston is looking into this. Anyone with preferences on gates should send them to Zia who is compiling information with photos on different gates and problems. It was asked if highways could provide scalping from road works. Karen said that this scalping is classed as waste.

9. Any Other Business

Personal Locator Beacons – Zia reported that she had received an e-mail from the Prime Minister's Office stating that the Government recognises the value of Personal Locator Beacons in saving lives in the maritime and aeronautical sectors. The UK Search and Rescue Strategic Committee is set to consider their use on land, and the arrangements for registration and response to them.

Horse power may be making a comeback – an article in The Independent reported on the increased use of horses in London for shopping, dropping children off at school and even to commute.

One Council for Shropshire - Zia has received a letter, since the last meeting, on the Local Development Framework for Shropshire. The regulations for consulting on planning which effects a public right of way is to change.

Japanese Knotweed – It is important that any growing on highways or rights of way is reported as this is a notifiable obnoxious weed.

Zia congratulated the Telford Area riders following a newspaper article reporting on a petition signed by 600 people headed "Horse riders call for safe route network."

10. Date of Next Meeting

The provisional date should read Monday 9th February 2009; Zia apologised for her error! Date confirmed.

For apologies or queries contact:

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Shrewsbury. SY5 8BZ. Tel: 01743 718409**