

## **SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING FORUM (SRCDF)**

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013, at 7.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

### **1. Attendance:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chair. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG. Joint Secretary. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Gaynor Evans, Jan Baldwin & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Pam Youille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

### **Apologies:**

Anthony Francis-Jones, Telford BWA, Vice Chair. Andrew Kelly, Vrnwy & Dist. BWA. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Pamela Jordan, Long Mynd BWA. Mark Weston, BHS

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Cycling**

**Pontesbury to Minsterley roadside cycle path** – Shona confirmed that this route, which was put in under the Tranche 2 Government funding, is only for cyclists and walkers, and is not going to be multi-user, so not open to horse riders.

**ReaVan - Rea Valley Multi User Trail.** – This has not moved forward. It is understood that the initial report was put out without first consulting landowners.

Zia reported that the Shropshire Cycle Forum minutes for 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013 do not have anything particularly relevant to our Group.

#### **(b) Proposed wind turbines**

The response on behalf of SRCDF to the proposed 2 wind turbines at Criddon Farm, Criddon, near Bridgnorth (Paper B) is noted. A draft was sent to local members for comments before this was submitted, and a similar response was put in on SRCDF's behalf to the proposed 1 wind turbine at The Hills, The Down, Bridgnorth 13/02194/FUL. To date, supporters and objectors have sent in a total of 804 responses for Criddon Farm, and 230 for The Hills, to SC Planning Website. The majority of the supporters are not local residents. Decisions on both are still pending. It was confirmed that Zia will respond on members' behalf to planning applications, brought to her attention, for wind turbines that do not comply with BHS guidelines.

#### **(c) "Paths for Communities"**

Zia reported that, following the approval of the 'Humphrey Kynaston Way with Circular Routes off' Project by Natural England, a report on it has appeared in the National Newsletter for P4C. The Highways Agency agreed some time ago to the section that passes over their land, at Montford Bridge, becoming a public bridleway, but have still not signed the legal document. There are ongoing problems due to regulations and procedures for working on their land that is holding the whole project up. It is hoped to resolve this soon as the Project has to be completed by the end of February or the funding is lost. The other landowners have all signed. Helen Foster has kindly offered to try out some of the routes with the maps and instructions.

This is now the only P4C Project going ahead in Shropshire. Only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the P4C funding has currently been allocated with £ $\frac{1}{2}$  million still available, but this may be because the application process has all been so complicated, believed to be partly due to it being European funding.

#### **(d) Helicopter Liaison Meeting**

It is noted that the new RAF Shawbury Community Relations Officer is to be Squadron Leader Kim Leach. She does not take up her post until 14<sup>th</sup> October. It is agreed that the new Station Commander, Group Captain Smith and Squadron Leader Leach attend at 7pm, prior to our meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014, to introduce themselves and to address any issues. It is agreed that we keep up the liaison as RAF personnel change regularly. There is now a better understanding by pilots, and of the need not to make sudden changes in direction. Members are not aware of any recent issues. Grid references where there is a lot of horse activity can be registered with Shawbury, but they have to limit the number of avoids. It is important that equestrians wear fluorescent items.

#### **(e) National Grid Power Lines - [www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection](http://www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection)**

It is noted that the proposed route for the 'Mid Wales Connection Project' has now been announced and that meetings on this are to be held in Llanymynech Community Centre from 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. and West Felton Village Hall on 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Nov, with consultation up to 29<sup>th</sup> Nov. Zia will attend one of these. Shona reported that they had received 2 very large maps of the north of the County. They have highlighted all the ROW, and what National Grid have to do if any are affected, and they will track any applications. It is understood that none of the Shropshire section is due to be put underground, so will impact on tourism. The website has up to date information.

#### **(f) Commons – Clarity of Access**

It is reported that Shropshire Council do not have a digital register of Commons and Village Greens. Paper copies are kept in 5 ring binders, which also include information on Pounds, Pinfolds, Marls, Quarries and other Wastes, and the public can make an appointment to see them. The Archives on everything on them since they were claimed, is held in the basement at the Shirehall. Natural England's surveying of them for Open Access was not thorough or complete. Tim Ward, of Shropshire Council, currently looks after these records. There is no system in place for him to report errors or omissions. There was a pilot project to review these, but this has not been rolled out across the rest of the country, and, with cost cutting, seems unlikely to happen. The entry register should include a description of the land, who has rights over it, and what those rights are, who owns it, and who owned it when first registered. Information on Commons can be obtained at <https://www.gov.uk/common-land-management-protection-and-registering-to-use>.

Shona reported that there is no overview of what access is permitted on the different sites, unless they have had to look at them for a specific reason, like at Nesscliffe and The Cliffe, and Clee Hill. It requires looking at the documents for each individual one.

Public Rights of Way can be claimed over a Common if they have been used as through routes, and not just for air and exercise. There are 86 registered sites in Shropshire.

This subject was not addressed at the last LAF as Jim Stabler was unable to attend.

#### **(g) Chinese Lanterns**

Following the huge fire caused by a Chinese Lantern, it is understood that the Government has decided not to do anything about banning them. The CLA have reported that DEFRA only regard them as a minimal danger to aircraft, and the risk they pose to livestock as low. Angela had a cow that suffered for weeks due to ingesting wire. Horses have been reported very distressed where these have landed near them. The NFU are campaigning to get them banned. It is important that people report any incidents to the BHS [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk) website

#### **(h) Growth & Infrastructure Act 2013**

Shona reported that as at 1<sup>st</sup> October, for a fee, landowners can register for 20 years to protect themselves from any claims for Access over their land, including commons and greens, and

Shropshire Council have to keep a register that is open to the public. Information will also be available on the web.

**(i) Any other Matters arising not on the Agenda**

**Dog Incidents** – Zia reported that she has is getting more reports on problems with dogs chasing and attacking horses, and has experienced dogs out of control on Public Rights of Way and attacking ridden horses, with the owners, when they appeared, having difficulty in catching the dogs. She has also received reports on, and has experienced loose dogs on PROW going on to adjoining properties and attacking and killing chickens. Members were again reminded that any incidents with dogs should be reported to the BHS Accident Website: - [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk). Dogs should be kept under close control on a Public Right of Way.

**4. Shropshire Council**

**(a) Possible cuts and reorganization within Shropshire Council**

Zia attended a meeting ‘Join in the Conversation’ on the possible cuts, which was held at the Walker Theatre, and chaired by Radio Shropshire’s Eric Smith. In response to a question from the Ramblers as to what would happen if Shropshire did not meet their targets, Keith Barrow responded that the Government would just send in someone to do it, and there would be no choice. One of the main things that kept being raised were the problems of poor health and obesity, especially with regard to young children, and the importance of exercise in all age groups. Towards the end, Zia raised the point that the meeting had highlighted the problems with health, obesity and fitness, and she pointed out that the Shropshire Countryside was free to use and the importance of maintaining access and the ROW infrastructure. Also, Shropshire was only just recovering from 50 years of neglect of its ROW, and that if they did not continue to support people like the Parish Paths Groups and volunteers they could lose that important contribution to keeping the countryside open.

Tourism brings lots of money into Shropshire. In 2005 this was 561 million (Shropshire Tourism). Shona reported that £8 million has to be saved, and that how the way the department worked has been looked at. Savings have to be made. Some staff members will be leaving under the voluntary redundancy scheme. It is all very disruptive at present. A member raised the Council’s statutory obligations, and how these would be affected. If notice is served on the Council it has a legal duty to respond, but these take up staff time, which means that less gets done. Pam Youille raised problems with a number of blocked bridleways in her area. If it is just clearing, then volunteers can help. For other problems, it is important that as much information as possible, landowners etc., is provided, but pressure of work restricts how many of these can be resolved by Shropshire Council. Photos help. Reports should be sent to [outdoorrecreation@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:outdoorrecreation@shropshire.gov.uk)

**(b) Outdoor Recreation Implementation Team**

Richard Knight has reported that the summer clearance work has been completed, and they are now doing tree clearance. A large number of their workforce have recently been involved in clearing BW UN1 Acton Round, and they now have the drainage and gates to do. Shona reported ongoing problems there with gates going missing and damage, but said that they are persevering and will complete it. Two Recreation Officers on Richard Knight’s team who have left are now, due to the cutbacks, not to be replaced. Tim Simmonds, who was one of the clearing teams, has taken on Ped Atkinson’s job. Interviews took place for the other replacements but the freeze in recruitment meant that they were not appointed. They are now two short on the groundwork team. Gareth Eggar has now left the sites team based in Ellesmere. Mark Blount still runs the sites team.

Gill Eyre has written that the Wheathill P3 Group has been formed, with local volunteers to help clear FPs and BWs in the parish.. The Secretary is Tina Ramsden, of Upper Bromdon, near Burwarton. Shona highlighted the value of volunteers and how much their contribution was appreciated. Zia’s Nesscliffe Hills P3 Bridleway Group has done a lot of clearing work on the

Nesscliffe Country Park. There is no longer a Ranger there. It is important that everyone helps in keeping the countryside open in these difficult times.

#### **(c) Shropshire Council online Rights of Way User Survey 2013**

Jim Stabler is currently off work, so the detailed analysis of the results is not yet available. There were many questions that horse riders could not answer as these questions were aimed at walkers. It is important that next year's survey is more inclusive of horse riders. The survey highlighted the many varied uses of ROW which included fell running, orienteering, and photography.

#### **(d) Shropshire Council Planning**

Shona has been investigating consultation on planning applications that affect a public right of way used by horse riders. It had been suggested that members could cover different areas. The response she eventually got today was that they receive between 5,000 and 6,000 planning applications a year, and that the British Horse Society is not a statutory consultee; she will go back to them. Zia raised the fact that the Planning Departments consult the Ramblers on planning applications affecting Bridleways but not the horse rider's representatives. On legal Orders they have to consult, but it would be more cost effective to consult on planning affecting a public riding route at an early stage to avoid any problems. It will be necessary to look at all orders as higher rights may apply. Zia used to be consulted on all the Shrewsbury & Atcham applications on behalf of the BHS, but now gets nothing. Planning applications are shown on the Council's planning website.

### **5. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues**

**Definitive Map** - Shona reported that the Council's legal document is dated the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1965. There have been a number of legal orders since that date, and the Definitive Map needs to be consolidated to bring it up to date. They have a working copy that is updated, a paper copy, and OS are updated when every order is confirmed, but Shropshire Council need to have an up to date legal document. She asked for the Groups support for this. Members thought that this was already done as orders were granted. **The Group fully supported this consolidation.** If members find errors on new O.S. maps, they should report these to Jean Jones at Outdoor Recreation.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane.** Shona reported that they are talking to the Willey Estate to try and sort the anomaly out, but that if that is not successful an Order will have to be published to resolve this.

**Benthall Woods FP65 upgrade** – Shona reported the excellent news that after 10 years all the landowners have now signed their agreements. A contractor will be going to put the gates in.

**Badger Wood** – Sue has done the formal application for this and Lucy is in contact with the new landowner. They are looking at a possible dedication there.

**Oaks Wood** – Shona confirmed that, as a lot of time has passed, she has re-consulted on this line amendment, and had positive results, so this is now with Jean Jones to publish an order. Linda asked to be consulted on this route, which is in her area, as there may still be issues on the line. Zia confirmed that the definitive line outlet goes through two gates, whereas the used BW gate outlet goes directly into the field.

**Frodesley** – The Orders still have to be sent off. A member raised the delay in dealing with these orders.

**Drumbles Wood** – Shona confirmed that she wants to get this old order done.

**Sutton Mill** - Shona confirmed that she also wants to get this done.

**Brogynryn** – Mat and Richard are going out this week to check the line of the diversion.

**Llanyblodwel** – Lucy is checking through this again before it is sent off, due to the time taken.

**Old Moors Lane** – This is shown as a through road on the 1929 Handover Map. Issues like this should be resolved by Highways and not take up the Outdoor Recreation teams time. Mat has not been able to address it as yet, due to other Inquiry work.

**Hilton** – Shona reported that this is another issue still waiting to be resolved, but there is still the problem here with the outlet.

**Market Drayton** – The recent Inquiry went well with good witness representation. It is possible that this Bridleway claim may be modified to a Restricted Byway. This is another old road.

**Lea Hall Quarry** – Lucy is still working on the question of access there, but Bridleway access looks unlikely.

**Melverley** – Zia has recently inspected this RB, and reported back, and asked when the width encroachment of this Restricted Byway, which had been resolved by the Inspector, would be implemented. Shona said to push Mat to get this resolved.

**Boraston** – Gill Eyre has reported that thanks to Lucy McFarlane's efforts the blocked BW has been reopened by the farmer and a better permissive route instated.

**Duck Lane, Little Ryton to Ryton** - there is possibly going to be a claim submitted for this. This is another old road that has been ridden for years.

**Jack Mytton Way** – It was reported that this was blocked at Marsh Lane, Glazeley, O.S.704 886, by an electric fence. It has also been ploughed up. This is a repeat offender and has been reported.

Other bridleway issues were raised. Shona confirmed that Health and Safety issues take precedence. Also promoted routes, or if reported by a Parish Council, it gives complaints a higher priority. The enforcement team try and work together with the maintenance team to resolve issues in an area.

## 6. Highways

(a) **Highway Verges** – The Letter from the Chair of the LAF to Shropshire Council Highways on verge encroachment (paper D) is noted. It is reported that the obstructions on Kenley Common are still there. (NOTE:-Obstruction of the highway is dealt with in Highways Act 1980 sections 137,143,148 & 149. It is an offence to deposit anything on the full width of a highway, including footways, which “interrupts” a person using it.)

### (b) Provision of a Definitive Map showing status of Shropshire Highways

Zia did a report to Shropshire Council Highways on the 1929 Handover Map road errors and omissions, but with all the staff changes it is not currently known who deals with what, so it is felt we should wait until things are more settled before following this up.

Andrew Kelly, when he gave his apologies, said that the Highway Records Working Group is still working with Defra. He also said that what is on the new Streets Works Register (See Department of Transport New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/street-works-co-ordination/cop3rdedition.pdf>) is not a record of what is maintainable at public expense. It is not a legal record, but it could be. People think it replaced the List of Streets, but it does not. He will be contacting Andy Savage with regard to the unsurfaced roads Herefordshire document. (see 6(c) ) Zia pointed out that one of the points raised in the Herefordshire report is that when a public footpath runs parallel to an old road, it is pretty good evidence that it is a public road. The BW claim for the lane to Bentley Ford Farm, near Frodesley, is an example of where a parallel footpath ran alongside the lane, but is now shown on the definitive map running down the lane. Hem Lane, Westbury is another example. There should be a definitive map/statement of rights of access on all highways, and LAF's should pursue this.

(c) **Unsurfaced Roads** The report on [www.hrmg.talktalk.net](http://www.hrmg.talktalk.net) on how unsurfaced roads have been recorded and considering how they ought to be recorded, with reference to current legislation, and using Herefordshire records as examples, is noted.

## 7. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums (not already covered)

The minutes of the Local Access Forum held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013 (paper E) are noted. Agenda items discussed at the LAF meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 included the suggestion of a 'Walking Champion' for Shropshire. LAF agreed that this was a good idea but that it should be an 'Access

Champion'. Some Agenda items were deferred as Jim Stabler was unable to attend. Also discussed were the update of Shropshire Council website, and dog control Orders. The Deregulation Bill is on the 17<sup>th</sup> October LAF Agenda. There is concern over proposals in this. Our next meeting is too late to discuss it, so it is important that members look at the Ramblers summary attached to the LAF papers.

Zia asked members for any items they felt should be raised at LAF.

The Notes from the North Shropshire Walking Forum held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 (paper F) are noted.

**It is noted** that future LAF meetings are on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014 at the Shirehall. All meetings start at 10am, and are open to the public to attend.

LAF papers are available under the 'Agenda' on <http://bit.ly/XNg7vP> Go to 'archived list of all previous meetings' click on 'Agenda' and they are attached at the bottom.

## **8. Items to Note**

### **Department for Transport policy circular 02/2013 'The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development'**

Information on this revised policy is on

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development) See nos 11, 12, 15, 19, & Annex A: Wind Turbines A 8-17.

Zia apologised if the document failed to open, it did before. You can find it on Google.

**The BHS Access Conference 2013** is to be held at BHS HQ on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October. Zia and Angela are booked to attend this. A member asked if Chinese Lanterns could be raised at the Access Conference. It is felt that it would be more appropriate to raise it at the Safety Conference.

**The Paralympic Legacy Access Project** was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Zia reported that there had been a report in the papers that Hampshire Council has formed a Horse Posse, of 10 mounted volunteer horse riders, to patrol the lanes, bridleways and country roads, reporting on crimes. They have been provided with tabards etc.

## **11. Dates of the Next Meetings**

The next meeting is to be on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The Helicopter Liaison Meeting will start at 7pm prompt, with the meeting at 7.30pm. The provisional date for the following meeting of Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014, at 7.00 for 7.30pm, is confirmed. Both meetings to be held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**TO NOTE:** All papers for SR&CDF meetings will be sent out by email.