

Shropshire Local Access Forum	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
17 July 2009	<b>12</b>	<b>E</b>
10.00 am		

## **SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING GROUPS (SRCDG)**

Minutes of meeting, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009, 7pm for 7.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.  
Postponed from 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009 due to adverse weather conditions.

Prior to the meeting members were informed of the death on 11<sup>th</sup> February of Donald Pearce the former BHS Shropshire CABO. Zia and Angela will represent the Groups and BHS Access Shropshire at the funeral on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February. It was also reported to the meeting that Judy Dickinson's husband had also sadly passed away, and that Zia sent a card on the Groups' behalf.

### **1. Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Officers**

Karen Wilson took the Chair for the election of Officers. There being no other nominations, Angela Williams was proposed by Karen and seconded by Ann D as Chair. John Gibson was proposed by Karen and seconded by Zia as Vice Chair. Linda Russell was proposed by Karen and seconded by Rosemary, and Zia Robins was proposed by Linda and seconded by John, as Joint Secretaries. All were adopted.

### **2. 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. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Ann Durnell & Idonia Pickering, Bridgnorth BWA. Jan Baldwin & Gaynor Evans, Broseley BWA. Mike Bowen, Long Mynd & District BWA. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen & Dist. BWG. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA. Karen Wilson S.C.C. Jan Pritchard, Telford Bridleways. Anne Roberts, Vrynwy & Dist. BWA

#### **Apologies:**

Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist BWA. Elaine Newton, Broseley & Dist. BWA, Mark Weston BHS. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Judy Dickinson, Church Preen & Dist.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008 were taken as read and adopted.

### **4. Matters Arising**

Karen updated the meeting on a number of definitive map issues – see under Agenda Item 5.  
Karen updated the meeting on maintenance of rights of way – see under 4(j).

#### **(a) Discovering Lost Ways**

Zia reported that no further minutes of the Stakeholder Working Group were yet available, but that she had found a notice on a website asking for information to help the SWG. They are keen to hear from anyone with first hand experience in amending the Definitive Map, and are particularly keen to find specific examples of problematic situations, in order to determine examples of best practice in resolving these situations. The information will be used, with other knowledge amassed, to inform the work of the Group. The closing date to send to swg@naturalengland.org.uk is 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009

#### **(b) Defra Stewardship**

Zia reported that the Country Walks & Rides website has been updated to put 'Natural England' on all the site maps, but the accompanying pages are still headed Country Walks. Few of the problems reported have yet been resolved. Some schemes are nearing their end date. Natural England have said they will do all they can to continue these routes under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS), but it will depend on the landowner. There are currently no new agreements. Landowners can just do access outside target areas under HLS Theme 8 where it can be shown that there is an identified demand or need, where it will link people with place, or where it will enhance existing networks. Natural England will look at need and consult with SCC. Karen reported that she had a meeting last week with Natural

England, and they had discussed this. They are looking for 200 to 300 schemes, and have got £3.9million for the region. Karen has asked that they consult earlier in a scheme.

**(c) Ride UK and Horses Welcome**

Zia has received an email from Mark Weston to say that the BHS website is due to be updated very soon. The Shropshire establishments signed up for Horses Welcome are all on the BHS site, but only Tugford, Thresholds and Dinney are on the link from the Shropshireriding website, with Church Bank and Earnstree Hill House omitted. Zia asked Karen if SCC could put a link from their site to the BHS 'Horses Welcome' site. Shropshire Tourism only permits BHS accredited accommodation on their sites.

**(d) List of Streets and UCRs**

Members noted the minutes of the meeting attached to the Agenda marked **B**. Work is still on going on this. Andrew sent his apologies. He will be updating us on his meetings.

**(e) Wind farms**

A wind farm near Knighton has been agreed with Hereford CC but the Powys application has not. John Gibson reported that they have been asked to respond on this. RAF Chiefs have criticised a wind turbines plan near Market Drayton. Ministry of Defence bosses say that the four 410 foot turbines on the Maer Hills at Blackbrook would pose a flying hazard to pilots from RAF Shawbury. There are also claims that Jodrell Bank would be affected. The BHS new guidelines leaflet on wind farms is noted.

**(f) Blue Remembered Hills**

Karen reported that no date has yet been fixed for the launch. This will be arranged with Stef Hayes from Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Karen confirmed that the leaflets are ready, and that the routes are all marked up and open for use, and can be ridden, but they are still waiting for an agreement to be signed before they can have the official launch.

**(g) Cycling**

The letters attached to the Agenda marked **C** are noted. Zia read out the response from Georgina Sharp. John Gibson said that the Carriage Drivers took responsibility for way marking their routes. Group members confirmed that Eastridge was not being ridden as much now due to concern over cyclists.

Electric bicycles are now being hired out in Church Stretton. Zia had checked out the legality of these being used on bridleways and had been advised that as long as electrically assisted pedal cycles have useable pedals and comply with certain criteria, they are considered bikes and can be used on bridleways. The Government has allowed this to encourage cycling. Go-Peds, Buzzboards, Powerboards, Gas/Electric Scooters, Mini Motorcycles and Scramblers cannot legally be used on bridleways.

**(h) Helicopter**

The date of this year's meeting of Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009 at 14.00 hours was noted. Zia, Rosemary, Angela, Gill and Linda confirmed they would attend. Ann could also attend if short on numbers. It was also understood that Sue would attend. Karen will represent SCC. John confirmed that either he or Mike Dutton would attend. The recent landing of helicopters in the Beckbury area will be raised. A representative from Natural England will attend if any issues arise on their sites prior to the meeting.

**(i) Way marking**

The letters attached to the Agenda marked **D** were noted. Zia read the response from Tom Wall of Natural England to the suggestion of way mark arrows on rocks. He wrote, "The Stiperstones is one of the wildest areas of Shropshire. Even here there are various intrusions, but it is as near as one gets to 'the wild' in this part of the world and we try, as far as we can, to keep it that way. As you will be aware, there are way-markers at all of the various points where bridleways enter the open hill ground but we feel that 'labels' on the hill itself, even if tastefully presented, would reduce the wild feel of the place."

In response to our letter, John Woolmer of Church Stretton Walkers Welcome telephoned Zia to say that they had consulted with AONB, NT and SCC. He said that the colours they used to way mark were not identical colours to the rights of way colours as their arrows were a different shade, and that users could read on them that they were walking routes so the colour did not matter. It is understood that only initial consultations took place with SCC. They plan to do more walking routes.

**(j) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda**

Karen reported that she and Kate Nore would be going out to look at the proposed diversion for part of the Jack Mytton Way near Tugford and Heath. Surveying of Jack Mytton Way – Karen is still looking for people to help and apologised for not getting maps to Gill Eyre. Gaynor reported that they did a

section. Ann Durnell reported that the signs they had spent three hours doing, mainly in the Old Willey to Barrow area, have been removed. This was mainly on the Willey Estate. Zia has put in some written reports to SCC on problems in this area. Stiperstones - proposed bridleway changes and permissive route – Helen Foster and Sue Lee will be meeting with Tom Wall of N.E. on the alternatives and route.

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

Karen updated Groups.

Hopesay RB addition – This has been confirmed by the Inspector.

BW addition Parishes of Claverley and Worfield – Route to Hilton. This was turned down by Committee against Officer recommendation, so will come back to the next ROW Committee meeting.

BW33/33A Extinguishment, Hilton, Worfield Parish - Following objections this was going to a Hearing on 21<sup>st</sup> April. The closing date for statements is 24<sup>th</sup> February.

Upgrade FP95/FP3 to BW and BW addition at Ackleton, Parishes of Worfield & Badger – This is going back to Committee.

BW30 and BW31 Bettws-y-Crwyn, Newcastle Farm, Black Mountain – The Diversion Order is confirmed.

BW1 Petton downgrade to footpath – Committee agreed not to publish. The landowner is appealing.

Melverley RB – This is going to written representation.

Barrow & Broseley – has yet to go to the Planning Inspectorate. There are encouraging signs re dedication on Barrow FP65. Gaynor said that the railway line from the car park from Ironbridge towards Coalport has a very rickety bridge, and riders have to dismount, as there is also a height issue. Broseley has a meeting on Wednesday. The Severn Valley way exit has been improved. Karen reported that a lot has been done through negotiation.

Shrewsbury Review – The next batch of orders are about to be published but this does not include any bridleways. The Greenfields/Spring Gardens BW claim will be in the following batch in a few weeks time.

Weston Rhyn Upgrade FP50 to BW at Cragnant – is to go to Planning Inspectorate in the near future.

BW1 Petton downgrade to FP – The formal application to downgrade the Bridleway was turned down by SCC ROW Committee. The landowner is appealing.

Purslow Wood – new application for a BW addition. It is down Clun way near the Ash Beds.

Pennerley – BOAT application for the track by the Chapel that forms a triangle with other routes, is currently being investigated. BOAT's can still be added, if motor vehicles use is proved.

## **6. Feedback from LAF and other Forums**

The Minutes attached marked **E, F & G** are noted. Jan asked if the minutes of the Telford Access Forum could be circulated. Andrew Carless runs this. This should be emailed to Linda.

Local Access Forum Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009 Verbal Report. Countryside Access Team Budgets for 2009/10 - The Budget is to go to Cabinet next week. Karen reported that this included year six funding for the Parish Access Project. Capital is to be cut, but they should be better off if it all goes through. ROW Survey - Customer Care Report. Karen presented a report on the response to the survey that our Group had contributed to. Most people had seen an improvement, but they want feedback to complaints on path issues. This took staff from other work, but procedures are being looked at. Review of Trails and Routes - Natural England consultation National Trails, such as Offa's Dyke path, have different criteria to County routes and have to be to a set standard. There is concern that if too rigid standards are set, this could limit the addition of new routes. Guidelines would be better. Shropshire Council With the new Unitary Authority the Planning and ROW Committees will be abolished. There will be two interim meetings, then 16 councillors will form Area Regulatory Committees, which will meet at different venues around the County. Karen said that diversions and formal applications will still have to go to Committee, but there will be more delegated powers. Members were concerned as to how we will find out about issues if they don't go to Committee. LAF UCR Working Group see **4(d)**. Shropshire Way There is concern that with most of the north of Shropshire not having been reviewed, that higher status use, not yet recorded, could be compromised by works on this route. Higher status use must be considered when improving routes. Karen said that canal paths could be brought in. Routes on railways and towpaths should be multi use. Permissive access is being pursued for the dangerous road section at Plowden. This is also part of the Jack Mytton Way and will benefit horse riders and walkers. Highways could be approached about placing mirrors

## **7. Shropshire County Council**

Staff changes – Kate Green is now Kate Nore following her recent marriage. Pippa Murphy will soon be on pregnancy leave. There are several employees on contracts who will have to reapply for their jobs. Chris Bagley, the Parish Paths Project co-ordinator has taken early retirement due to ill health.

**(a) [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk).** Karen confirmed that it is up to horse riders to provide information to Pippa for the site, as there is no one appointed to manage it. Shropshire Tourism does not like links to accommodation that's not accredited, so will only put on 'Horses Welcome' establishments. Zia suggested listing details of horse friendly pubs. It would be up to us to provide the information. The cycling website gets updated as there is a Cycling Officer in Highways who manages the site.

**(b) Maintenance of Rights of Way** – The new BHS guidelines leaflets available on [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk), are noted. Karen dealt with the JMW update in **4(j)** Other Matters Arising from the Minutes.

**(c) Local Transport Plan – Draft Progress Report 2008 Consultation** – Paper **H** is noted. It is very disappointing that after all our previous input and the recognition of horse riders needs for which Zia had put SCC Highways forward for a BHS award, that nearly all references are now to walking and cycling which are very well catered for. Horse riders seem yet again to be largely ignored; this is highlighted by the extract from 3.1 key issues on p73/74. SCC have Anna Morris and Sarah Kennedy to represent cyclists but no one allocated to horse riding issues or to update the Shropshireriding website etc. It is understood that Jan Cook is on maternity leave so Liz Rose is currently dealing with LTP issues.

Zia reported that the Mendip Cross Trails Trust (MCTT), are an organisation that promotes multi-user trails, and are they looking to expand. BHS Cornwall have an excellent website with details and maps of all the Bridleways.

**(d) Planning Policy Local Development Framework** - The document is very wordy. Zia was invited to a Shropshire Core Strategy Issues and Options Environmental Stakeholder consultation Event today. She read out the e-mail she sent highlighting planning issues, as she was unable to attend.

**(e) SCC Budget** – Angela attended a consultation meeting on Groups' behalf. She reported that they were spoken to by the Head of the Council, Malcolm Pate, and by SCC Director of Resources, Laura Rowley, who both put forward Shropshire's views. The attendees had electronic panels that they had to press to answer certain questions, but were not able to express any opinions. It was consulting for consultings sake! There was no opportunity to talk. Just 'pat' responses to set questions. It was not worth going to.

## **8. Bird scarers by Rights of Way and Highways**

The NFU guidelines attached to the Agenda marked I are noted. A number of members reported having problems in their areas with bird scarers placed close to Bridleways. Some had been positioned right behind the hedge alongside. This is extremely dangerous and was stopping some riders from using routes. It was reported that Radio 4 recently had reports on the use of bird scarers. SCC can legally only take action on them under the Highways Act if they are actually obstructing a right of way. Causing a nuisance could come under Environmental Health. The NFU guidelines state that they should not be positioned near a Highway or Right of Way. The guidance warns landowners if they do not comply, laws may have to be brought in to control birdscarers use. Zia reported that a new shooting guideline leaflet has been produced for landowners.

## **9. Higher access rights on COMMONS, Section 15 CROW**

Members noted the extracts attached to the Agenda marked J. Tim Ward keeps the SCC Commons Register. It is agreed that members will check Common land in their areas and usage, and report back to the next meeting.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Ragwort - The MP for Shrewsbury & Atcham has highlighted ragwort on Highway Agency verges.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The provisional dates for the next meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> June and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 are confirmed.