

Shropshire Local Access Forum	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
4 February 2010	12	H
10.00 a.m.		

MINUTES OF THE WALKERS FORUM MEETING ON THURSDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2009 AT THE LANTERN, MEADOWFARM WAY, SHREWSBURY

PRESENT: Outdoor Recreation Service Deb Hughes, Kevin Jones, Terry Hughes, Jeff Forshaw, Jim Stabler, Shona Lewis

Walkers: John Newnham (Chair), Alison Parker, Marion Law (Secretary), Joy Nisbet, Susan Sharp, Roger Smith, Bob Alton, Michael Johnson, Trevor Allison, Chris Jenkins, Gerry Lawson, Bill Hodges, Tony Bradfield

APOLOGIES: Alan Garner, Neil Moore, Chris Tibbits, Chris Chillingworth, Peter James, Anne Holland, John Burgess, Richard Crowley

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Correction, Item 10, Any other business: Deb Hughes said that bids had been put in for £250,000 for the Parish Access Project and £200,000 for capital expenditure on bridges and other capital works, but there was no confirmation yet that this money would be forthcoming.

Matters arising:

Item 3, Plastic sheeting: Kevin Jones had found that other authorities dealt with this in their own way. Shropshire Council would look at individual cases and give one warning in the first instance.

Item 4: Shropshire Way at The Vinnals: Gerry Lawson said that the obstruction at this point was a continuing problem and passed a photograph to Kevin Jones and Deb Hughes. There was also a potential problem in that the farmer's stewardship grant might be affected. Deb would look into this.

Item 9, Path diversions: Deb Hughes reported that Andrew Ventin had been appointed to the Access Mapping Team to work on planning issues affecting rights of way and possible diversions. He should be contacted to discuss potential planning problems.

PLOUGHING AND CROPPING INITIATIVE

Kevin Jones reported that, following consultation with the Ramblers, there had been some improvements. 200 reports of obstruction had been inspected, of which 69 were reported not to be a problem, 51 no response, and 44 were outstanding. Of the latter 31 were resolved, that is 75%. The remainder were still being worked on, and reports were continuing outside the campaign and would be carried forward. Kevin suggested a further meeting of officers and Ramblers FP Secretaries.

Deb Hughes said that letters would be sent out to landowners next year, some landowners do not reinstate until they are reminded which was what we want to avoid but it was worth a go and would be monitored for effectiveness.

Joy Nisbet reported on behalf of two South Shropshire FP Secretaries that they became disheartened when there was no apparent progress. Peter James was still identifying problems with cross field paths throughout the year, but received no feedback and therefore had no indication of whether there was any progress. Kevin reiterated that the team had been one man down in South Shropshire.

DEFINITIVE MAP

Shona Lewis gave a presentation on the process of producing the definitive map to a scale of 1:10 000

consolidation at 1:100,000 scale.

The 'task and finish' group had agreed priority to be given to the north of the county. Some new councillors were interested in rights of way and training had been provided for members of the Area Regulatory Committees in respect of rights of way.

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Jim Stabler discussed his plans for the access strategy.

It was planned to extend improvement of the **Shropshire Way** in the north and central areas of the county, he hoped for a two year project if funding was approved, starting with the Much Wenlock area, to include 24 circular walks, a guidebook and a website. The Liaison Group created to consult on the south part of the Shropshire Way had been positively helpful and this now formed the basis of the Shropshire Way Association, this would be extended to cover North Shropshire.

Much Wenlock Quarries: The National Trust wanted to buy the redundant quarries, an ideal area for creating walks. He was working with Natural England to improve access, money was available, and he was targeting access to need and creating links to existing routes.

North Shropshire Rail Trail: This was a potential multi-user route from Market Drayton towards Telford.

Website development: He was developing connections between websites and improving mapped information, to be phased over time. An activities website was also planned, as well as one highlighting green infrastructure to connect all leisure activities available on one map.

Promote walking: over three years, to include two-page advertisements promoting Shropshire in walking magazines.

Walk doctor: Discovery Centre staff had been consulted and trained in advising potential walkers on existing walks, and matching ability to what was available. Information Centre staff were also to be similarly trained, and web based information to be included to identify walks for categories of walkers.

Easy access guide for people with mobility problems. There were 12 potential sites, plus the rest of the County in less detail. It was hoped to launch this in May 2010.

Offa's Dyke: There were six circular walks with podcasts. The midpoint in Shropshire was to be highlighted.

He also wanted to reduce pressure on key areas by promoting other areas of Shropshire to explore.

There was possible inclusion of historical sites. Existing ROWs would be shown.

A link into northeast Shropshire was a possibility.

ACCESS PROBLEMS – HORSE PADDOCKS AND PHEASANT SHOOTS

John Newnham reported that horse paddocks were becoming an increasing problem obstructing rights of way. He suggested guidance was needed to owners to encourage them to think about where they put the tape. And he asked whether landowners with pheasant shoots could be advised about rights of way crossing areas where shooting was taking place. Kevin Jones felt they needed to use more notices and marshals. Jeff Forshaw advised phoning the police if in a threatening situation, as firearms were involved. Not many actual problems reported to the Council on this.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To be arranged.