

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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010, at 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. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Jan Baldwin & Gaynor Evans, Broseley BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist.BWA. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist BWA. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen & Dist. BWG. Jan Mees-Robinson, Telford Bridleways Jim Stabler S.C.

### **Apologies:**

Helen Foster, Long Mynd & Dist. BWA. Elaine Newton, Broseley BWA. Anne Roberts, Vyrnwy & Dist.BWA. Mark Weston, BHS.

Zia represented SRCDG at Dennis Nisbet's funeral on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

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

There being no other nominees, Angela was proposed by Zia and seconded by Gill as Chair, John was proposed by Andrew and seconded by Gill as Vice-Chair. Linda was proposed by Zia and seconded by Rosemary as Joint Secretary and Zia was proposed by Linda and seconded by Angela as Joint Secretary. All were unanimously adopted.

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

Following correction to 4. (c) Line 13 to read .. 'of Cheshire East Council is Chairman of the Highways Records Working Group'. The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were then adopted.

### **4. Matters Arising**

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

The website where the minutes of the Stakeholder Working Group Meeting notes are available is noted. The Stakeholder Working Group has produced a Draft, and the final document is due out early this year.

#### **(b) Natural England Stewardship**

The update marked B is noted. Jim Stabler confirmed that SC has been consulted on the two proposed new schemes at Rednal and near Attingham.

#### **(c) Helicopters**

The date of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010, at 13.30 hours was confirmed for the meeting at RAF Shawbury. Angela, Zia, Gill, Sue, Rosemary, John, and Jim confirmed that they will attend, and Linda hoped to. Jim will inform Lyn Stabler of the meeting. Zia has spare copies of maps of landing

sites for anyone needing them. She asked the helicopter group members to study their copies of the landing sites and to let her know of any routes on or close to the sites so she can mark up a master copy to give to RAF Shawbury. The RAF has given us a number of florescent tabards to give out to riders in Shropshire. We should try and target those who hack and do not wear florescent clothing. Members took some to hand out. Wing Commander R.D. ( Spike) Grimshaw has taken over from Wing Commander Tim Owens who has now left. The Community Relations Officer is Neil Hope who will meet us at the car park at 13.30 hours prompt.

**(d) Stiperstones & Tugford diversion consultations**

These are still being progressed. It is understood that Tom Wall of English Nature is retiring soon.

**(e) Countryside Access Team Staff updates**

Pippa is returning at the end of April. Due to staff changes with Mat Stephens currently standing in for Shona, the Oswestry Rural review is further delayed.

The new Enforcement Officer's name is Geoff Forshaw, not Foreshore. 'Spell check' changed it!

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

**Forestry Commission** – John reported that the Mortimer Forest permissive driving (days) routes agreement runs out this August. Mortimer Forest is being taken away from them. Sue Evans reported that TROT has taken over in the Wyre Forest, half of which is in Shropshire and half in Worcestershire, divided by the Dowles Brook. TROT has put their big yellow signs over Forestry and BW markers. Sue said there are no Public Bridleway signs to be seen now on the Worcestershire side and also possibly on the Shropshire side. A Public bridleway follows the Shropshire bank of the Dowles Brook. Jim will check this out and notify Worcestershire Council. The National Cycle Route 45 goes through the Forest and follows the old railway line. The English Nature owned part has 'No Horses' signs; this should all be multi-use. The restricted section is no different to the rest of the route. You do not have to pay to ride in Mortimer Forest.

**Telford & Wrekin LAF** - The minutes from the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2010 meeting are not yet available. Jan Mees-Robinson (formerly Pritchard) is now on the Forum as Carriage Driving representative, taking over from Mike Dalton.

**Budget Consultation** – It had been decided not to attend the Council's Budget meetings this year following Angela's experience at previous meetings which she felt were a waste of time, as they were just 'pressing buttons' to set questions, and no opportunity for informed response. It appeared to be just structured to get the statistics they want.

**5. Countryside Access Implementation Team**

The report marked C is noted.

**6. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues**

**Weston Rhyn Public Inquiry** - Zia reported that she and Angela gave evidence at the Inquiry into the FP50 Upgrade to Bridleway at Craignant Order. It was a long drawn out affair over two days, 26<sup>th</sup> November and 25<sup>th</sup> January, with very intense questioning. We now await the decision.

**Barrow and Broseley Public Inquiry** is on 11-19 May. There are 4 Bridleway additions. Mat Stephens is dealing with Fish House; Andrew Venting, Chapel Lane; and Lucy McFarlane, Benthall Hall and Shirlett to Muckley.

**Greenfields BW claim** – Shrewsbury Town Council have agreed to dedicate FP115 Greenfields as a Bridleway. This is excellent news. This has recently been resurfaced for a Cycle Route.

**Petton BW 1** - The downgrade appeal decision is still awaited from Defra.

**Claverley/Worfield Bridleway Addition Appeal** – a decision is awaited from DEFRA. It has been sent to the Planning Inspectorate for their opinion.

**Westbury BW Addition** - The through lane, north off the Long Mountain road, at Winnington is confirmed as a Bridleway.

#### **Awaiting Publication of Orders**

**Llanyblodwell Review** – this includes one bridleway addition.

**Frodesley BW additions**

**Pennerley BOAT addition** – by the Chapel

#### **Formal Applications**

**Sutton Mill Lane FP addition** – has been published, and has received two objections from landowners.

**Badger FP upgrade to BW** – has been published. and has received three objections, two from landowners and one from the Parish Council.

**Purslow Woods** – East of Clun - is under investigation.

**Culmington FP Addition** – has been published, and has received 66 objections. The BHS has objected saying it should be a BW.

**Oaks Wood** – Bridleway claim and other issues on route lines etc are still under investigation.

**FP 65 Barrow upgrade to BW** – There are ongoing negotiations with Severn Valley Countryside Trust, National Trust and other landowners. The majority are in agreement to dedicate.

## **7. Definitive Map Priorities Statement and forward programme of work, and Task and Finish Group.**

The Report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 on the ‘Rights of Way and Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 – Task and Finish Group’ and Zia response dated 14<sup>th</sup> January are noted. Angela complimented Zia on her letter on behalf of us. It raised important points. There is concern that the “Task and Finish Group” will take staff away from other work. Consultation took place in preparation and prior to Shropshire confirming its Countryside Access Strategy. It is important that work to implement it is not delayed any more. Due to a number of staff changes, review work has been held up: it is important that there are adequate staffing levels to carry out this important work. Jim reported that there has to be a User Survey every year, which takes up staff time. Forms for this year’s survey will come out in the autumn. There was concern that people who have already done these will not think it is necessary to fill in another one. It is important that horse riders complete these, as by doing so, they identify need.

## **8. List of Streets and UCRs**

The 4<sup>th</sup> February LAF Update Report on Unsurfaced County Highways/White roads (**E**) is noted. The paper by Andrew, discussed at our last meeting, was circulated to LAF along with the update report.

Jim Stabler reported that things are moving on very well. More survey work is planned this year, with white roads to be looked at next year. There is no cut-off date for public roads. Highways are happy to pass responsibility for green lanes, which form part of the leisure network, to the Countryside Access Team. They will be opened up for use and marked with a black arrow to denote that they are public roads. They will be shown as green lanes on maps and maintain their

status as County Roads. It has not been decided where work in the County will start. Tarmaced UCR's will stay with Highways. The 1932 date in the LAF report for the Handover Map is an error: it should be 1929.

Andrew updated us. There had been a good response to the Questionnaire sent to 144 Authorities with 70% returned, but this included only 2 of the 22 sent to Authorities in Wales. Shropshire has failed to return theirs. The responses are now being analysed. The 30 questions included ones on charges, including whether VAT is charged, and what improvements they would like to see to the List of Streets and Highway records. He pointed out that it is not accurate to scale off OS maps, as they cannot be relied on for scale. There can be discrepancies of plus or minus 4 metres. It needs three satellites for an accurate measurement. John said that maps engraved on copper could expand. Highway width is also being discussed. Shropshire has a Definitive map of Rights of Way and a paper Definitive Maps of Highways but does not have statements on all its Rights Of Way. Shropmap and the list of Streets only shows the maintenance responsibility for roads. The Group decided that they would like Andrew Savage to submit the Questionnaire on behalf of Shropshire. Jim was asked to follow up on this.

## **9. Cycling**

The minutes of the Shropshire Cycle Forum Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 and Item 2 of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Meeting Minutes dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009 marked **F** are noted.

It is felt that cycle routes, where possible, should be multi-user. Zia pointed out that with permissive routes it is up to the landowner, and they could put restrictions on use. Step in and out Boxes and kissing gates have been put on the railway line at Coalport. There is a "horse riders dismount" sign by the Wooden Bridge. Severn Gorge has done this as a safety issue. Members felt that if a cycle route is created on routes such as the Shrewsbury to Minsterley Railway line they should be multi-user. Market Drayton Group is looking at a route on the old Telford to Shrewsbury railway. There is also a proposal to look at the old Railway line from Shrewsbury out to Acton Burnell. We need to act or these could become routes just for cyclists. John Gibson confirmed that Bratton is in use. Signing of bridleways for cycle routes is also an issue, with some routes having bridleway signs missing and nothing on Cycle fingerposts to indicate the bridleway status of routes. Route 81, the Old Canal cycle route in Shrewsbury and Route 45 cycle route by Chelmarsh are examples of this. Both of these bridleways were also hard surfaced for the cycle route. Many cyclists do not want urbanisation of rural routes. Zia has raised cycling issues at LAF, and has asked for someone from cycling to address issues at LAF. Jim confirmed that it is to be on the next LAF agenda.

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

The minutes of the Local Access Forum Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009 marked **G**, and Minutes of the Walkers Forum Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 marked **H** are noted. The minutes of the LAF meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were not available for circulation, as they were not adopted when our papers went out. They were adopted at the meeting last week on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The 27<sup>th</sup> April LAF meeting is now to be an away day and the next meeting, the AGM, is to be held at 10am on 15<sup>th</sup> July at the Craven Arms Community Centre. We are behind in our minutes to LAF due to the close proximity of the meetings, but Zia does a verbal update, and makes sure that we are up to date with LAF papers and other Groups' minutes. Members said that the unadopted minutes could go to LAF, but Zia said this could be a problem. The Groups had been against this in the past because if the minutes are later corrected before being adopted

they are already out in the public domain. Jim reported that The English Access Forum is fed up with the lack of support from Natural England. They have asked for support from LAF and sub-groups. Jim confirmed that points raised do go all the way up. It is agreed by the Groups that it is essential that the English Access Forum continues to be supported.

#### **11. Other matters to note**

The sale of 'Bridle Rides' to Redland Equestrian is noted.

The petition to the Government on 'Rethink the horse tax' on No 10 website is noted.

The BHS Forestry Campaign is noted.

To note: - 'Countryfile' on BBC1 on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February features Shropshire, including the Long Mynd and the Shropshire Way.

#### **12. Any Other Business**

**UK Coal Mining, Little Wenlock Area** - Jan Mees-Robinson reported excellent news. There were 13 objections to proposed closures of Rights of Way due to mining, and now new routes, including 2,000 metres of Byways and 900metres of Bridleways are to be created along with some permissive routes around the sides, and on fields, whilst the mining is being carried out.

**Bird Scarers** - There is concern as these are being put behind hedges alongside public roads and public bridleways. This is potentially very dangerous. Defra and the NFU should be written to. Ramblers have recently raised concerns in the Shropshire Star over shooting by, and over, Public Rights of Way.

**Parish Access Project, Beccbury** – Sue Evans reported that work done for the project, replacing furniture, signs and negotiating with landowners on improvements to the network, was a job well done and was much appreciated.

**Horse owners contribution to Shropshire's economy** - Zia reported on a front-page article in the Shrewsbury Chronicle on 28<sup>th</sup> January, that highlighted the importance of Tourism to the Shropshire economy, and stating that it brings in £561 million a year, and directly or indirectly provides jobs for 12,000 people around the county. She pointed out that Horse owners contribute considerable, on a daily basis, to the local rural economy supporting vets, farriers, feed, forage, tack and equipment suppliers, and many others, and that as well as riding routes to support tourism it is also very important that there are routes to support the stables, livery yards and horses kept in Shropshire.

#### **Dates of Next Meetings**

**The date for the next meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010, is confirmed.**

It is agreed that, to allow time from our meeting, to input to the LAF meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2010, that our following meeting be moved back from the proposed date of 11<sup>th</sup> October to the **4<sup>th</sup> October 2010** and this is **confirmed**. The Meetings to be held at the Shirehall.