

Shropshire Local Access Forum	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
21 October 2010	14	F
10.00 a.m.		

SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING GROUPS (SRCDG)

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 7th June 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. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen & Dist. BWG. Elaine Newton, Broseley BWA . Jim Stabler S.C. Lyn Stabler Natural England.

Apologies:

Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist BWA. Elaine Thomas & Jan Mees-Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Jan Baldwin & Gaynor Evans, Broseley BWA. Helen Foster, Long Mynd & Dist. BWA. Mark Weston, BHS.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2010 were adopted.

Item 5. was taken first.

5. Natural England Stewardship

Lyn Stabler reported that the existing schemes at Rednal and Lea Hall Farm/Ash Fields Farm, Whitchurch would continue under Higher Level Stewardship with the exception of the small area at The Buildings, Rednal. The possible new scheme to the north of Rednal has not been confirmed; agreements are difficult to reach. The new Bridleway scheme at Uckington, Atcham, with parking, is awaiting mapboards, and it is hoped to be on the website soon.

Angela asked if any schemes were coming up near Ellesmere as this area lacked off-road riding. She thought there were landowners who might be interested. Zia commented that the possibility of putting in access, and the fact that this could be done as a single issue where need is identified, was not advertised well in documents. Lyn confirmed that they can do single issue agreements, but only if it is a particularly good case, but the landowner has to be in agreement. Some landowners do not want Higher Level Stewardship.

Zia raised the issue of hedge cutting where stewardship agreements are in place. Some landowners misunderstand the regulations and believe they will lose payments if they cut their hedges adjoining Rights of Way. Zia has encountered two cases where hedges alongside green lane bridleways had been left uncut, making the route difficult to use, due to this misunderstanding. Hedges on narrow lane bridleways or byways are often cut from the field side, and if hedge tops are left to grow under stewardship agreements, it makes it impossible to do this. It was asked who is responsible if a rider gets injured due to uncut hedges. Jim said that Kevin Jones should be contacted, as he is the Enforcement Officer.

Lyn agreed to follow up on this and ensure that landowners understood their legal obligations to keep hedges alongside Rights of Way from obstructing the route.

Linda reported that Lower Netley Farm, Dorrington was still not useable, and the access not sorted out. (Lyn Stabler, Natural England, left the meeting following this item)

3. Matters Arising

(a) Discovering Lost Ways

The press release marked **(B)** and the report from the Stakeholder Working Group entitled "Stepping Forward" available on the Natural England website, are noted. Jim did not have any

update. Zia highlighted the main points from the summary in the document. (Summary attached to minutes) It is not known how the change of Government will affect the progress of the document.

Zia is concerned over Proposal 32, which deals with the possibility of erecting new gates on restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. Proposal 31 proposes a review of how routes for cyclists could provide for usage by all non-motorised users. It is disappointing that there appears to be no way determined for fast tracking routes that were legally set out in documents such as quarter sessions.

(b) Helicopters

The postponement of the meeting at RAF Shawbury on Thursday 20th May 2010 is noted. The meeting, with Wing Commander Spike Grimshaw of RAF Shawbury attending, was held at 7pm tonight, prior to our meeting.

(c) Stiperstones & Tugford diversion consultations, and other consultations

There has been no progress on these since our last meeting, due to staff changes. Jim reported that Simon Cooter has now taken over from Tom Wall of English Nature. Members confirmed that riders like to go to the top of the Stiperstones for the views. Rosemary said that the route used to go right along the top. As it is walking use that is damaging the bridleway, this route should be retained and the proposed diversion added as a definitive route. There was concern over width for a definitive bridleway, as the proposed route was very narrow in the Black Ditch area. Rosemary said quite deep French drains have been dug across routes on the Stiperstones, she also mentioned a route she has used for 30 years as an alternative to using Jacobs's Ladder. Jim asked her to let him have a map of the proposed addition. It was reported that the cottages are being restored at Blakemore Gate.

(d) Countryside Access Team Staff updates

It is noted that Kate Nore is currently on maternity leave, and that Karen Wilson is covering her job. It is also noted that Geoff Forshaw left after only 6 months, and that the Enforcement team are now short staffed, with only Kevin to inspect problems, as Terry Hughes is currently desk bound. It is hoped that Shona will be returning in September.

(e) Forestry Commission – Sue updated on the Wyre Forest. She has a contact at Natural England. She is putting a route together which she will pass to Jim. Cycling routes should be multi user. Sue had ridden there since she was a child. Sustrans has agreed to no horses there. It was agreed that if it is considered acceptable for cyclists to use bridleways for their routes, then why is shared use in the Wyre Forest not acceptable? Jim confirmed that cycling would be dealt with at the next LAF.

(f) Telford & Wrekin LAF – The minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2010, marked C, are noted, and the date of the next meeting on 7th September 2010.

(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda

Bird Scarers Sue said that Judy Dickenson had looked into this, but had only come up with the NFU guidelines that we are already aware of. (*The NFU guidelines were sent out with the February 2009 Agenda as paper (i)*). The question of barbed wire was raised. Zia said that there are laws relating to the use of barbed wire alongside a Highway if it is deemed to be a danger or nuisance to users. (*Highways Act 1980 s164*)

4. Cycling

The extracts from the minutes of the Shropshire Cycle Forum dated 10th March 2010 are noted. Jim had been unable to get a cycling representative to our meeting, but confirmed that it would be on the next LAF Agenda. Zia pointed out that the proposed Rea Valley leisure trail, along the old railway line between Hanwood and Minsterley, links to bridleways and lanes, and the feasibility study introduction identifies an opportunity to establish a new leisure trail for cycling,

walking and potentially horse riding. The report highlights the opportunity for diversification of farms into B&B, horse riding and livery stables, but the rest of the report then only mentions walking and cycling. The Group is in agreement that all cycle routes should be multi-user, and asked Jim to get a Policy Statement on this. The Dorset Pools Route 81 in the cycling minutes is the old canal bridleway to Haughmond, another part of which had tarmac put on it for the National Cycle Network.

6. Countryside Access Implementation Team

The report marked **E** is noted. The survey of the whole network, which is due to start soon, is a huge task.

Gate Latches – Zia pointed out the various problems with different types of gates, and opening gates with the low down lift up latches. She showed a photo of a lift up latch with an extension handle on a gate on BW 107 Worthen with Shelve. She had found a company who sold a similar Auto Gate Latch for £2.50.

7. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues

Public Inquiries

Barrow & Broseley Public Inquiry. This took place over 8 days. There was lots of support and Angela, Jan and Bernie attended. It had been quite intense with heavy questioning. Some very elderly ladies were put through very gruelling questioning. Elaine had to put up with some incredible comments. There were some excellent witnesses who stood up well to the onslaught, but this type of intimidating questioning puts witnesses off coming forward to give evidence. There was support from non-riders. Elaine thanked everyone for their support. It is emphasised how important it is to remember that all evidence must be in by the cut off date so everyone can evaluate it. Decision is now awaited on the 4 Bridleway additions/upgrades.

Weston Rhyn Public Inquiry - FP50 Upgrade to Bridleway at Craignant Order. The Inspector confirmed the Order, but with modifications to the width, and to make part of the route a Restricted Byway. These had to be advertised. There has been an objection to the modifications, which is being considered by the Inspector.

Appeals

Petton BW 1 - The downgrade appeal decision is due from DEFRA in September.

Claverley/Worfield Bridleway Addition Appeal – a decision is due from DEFRA by the 31st August.

Recently Published Orders

Llanyblodwell – this includes one bridleway addition, and two bridleway line amendments.

Frodesley BW additions – Eight objections have been received.

Pennerley BOAT addition Worthen with Shelve - No objections have been received to date for the route.

Orders to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

Sutton Mill Lane FP addition

Badger FP upgrade to BW

Culmington FP Addition

Under investigation

Shrewsbury Review – The last batch of orders should include 2 Bridleway upgrade/additions; the western end of FP108, and the old Severn Valley railway line at Sutton Farm.

Greenfields BW claim – awaiting return of signed dedication agreement.

FP65 Barrow upgrade to Bridleway – negotiations are ongoing

Oaks Wood, Pontesbury/Longden – No progress has been made on this due to staffing shortages.

Purslow Woods – East of Clun - still under investigation.

8. Minutes and feedback from LAFs and other Forums

The minutes of the Local Access Forum held on 20th October 2009 marked **F** are noted, together with the next LAF dates:- AGM 15th July at Craven Arms & 21st October, Shirehall. Meeting start 10am.

Zia did a verbal update on the 4th February 2010 LAF meeting, as the Minutes are not yet approved. Deb Hughes responded to a question from Zia on Shropshire Council's ability to deal with reviews and claims before the proposed cut-off date of 2026. She confirmed that no evaluation had been carried out on this, but they had agreed a forward programme for the review, and drafted an Asset Management Plan. The funding bid for the Shropshire Way North had not been successful; this bid included Zia's Humphrey Kynaston Route from the Long Mynd via Nesscliffe Hills to Grinshill and the route back on the proposed Bishop Bennet Way to the Long Mynd. Carolyn Healey did a presentation on the Parks and Countryside Sites, and confirmed that she was keen to create circular links between sites. Zia has tried to contact her since on this subject without success. Andrew Ventin highlighted the problems created due to planning not taking into account Rights of Way in the past, which was now costing the Council time and money to resolve. It is hoped to address a dead end Bridleway west of Oswestry. He emphasised the importance of pre planning application consultation. Deb Hughes updated on UCR's/White Roads. 67 Kilometres of un-surfaced UCR's had been identified as suitable to be maintained from a recreational perspective, and it would take 4-5 years to restore access to these routes. They would be marked as Green Lanes on Highways GIS database and maintained to BOAT status. It was confirmed that Highways would deal with enforcement issues and the cost of maintenance works on such routes. Kate Nore did a presentation on Highways Act Diversions of Public Rights of Way. Deb Hughes confirmed that the Access Team was always looking to see where improvements could be made to the network.

9. List of Streets and UCRs

Andrew is unable to attend tonight and has not sent an update. UCR's were covered in the previous Agenda item under the verbal update from LAF.

10. Other Matters to note

The note for the Long Mynd & District Bridleway Association newsletter, The Portway, is noted.

11. Any Other Business

North West Relief Road – Zia reported that she had followed up at the consultation. The plans include a bridleway route alongside the proposed new road, apart from on the bridge, where riders would have to use the road. She had suggested that riders could dismount to use the planned parallel cycling route on the bridge as they do for the Alveley Bridge. She also highlighted other issues, which were noted, including a bridleway link missing at the proposed Shelton roundabout. This scheme is likely to be put on hold.

Cleobury North through Ditton Priors – This route, using an old railway line, is being progressed with Lord Boyne. Members confirmed that it is a wonderful route.

Long Mynd Cycling - Jim reported that a mountain bike business is opening up at Marshbrook. He handed round copies of a map of the Long Mynd area with the bike routes marked on it.

Much Wenlock Quarry – Jim reported that he is involved in the planning of routes, including bridleways here. The site was visited as part of the April Local Access Forum outing.

12. Dates of Next Meetings The dates for the next meetings at the Shirehall, of 4th October 2010 in the Wenlock Room, and the AGM on 7th February 2011 are noted.

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