

# Central Shropshire Walking Forum

## Minutes of Meeting

2:00 to 4:00pm, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012

**Community Hall 1, The Lantern, Meadow Farm Drive, Shrewsbury**

### Attendees:

Barbara Martin, Pontesbury WfH  
Bill Hodges, Shrewsbury Rambler  
Brian Dale Patteson, Ramblers Association, U3A  
David Morgan, Longden P3  
Dick Bailey, Much Wenlock Walking for Health, Walkers are welcome  
Elaine Newton, Broseley Bridleways Ass  
Gerry Lawson, Ramblers association?  
Helen Rawlinson, SOS WfH TBA  
Hilary Davies, Bridgnorth Walking Club & Walking for Health  
Jan Bailey, Shawbury WfH  
Jim Stabler, Access Development Officer, Shropshire Council  
John Newnham, Chairman, Shropshire Ramblers  
Margaret Dutton Broseley Bridleways Ass  
Margaret & Tony Cook, Shawbury  
Michael Johnson, Telford & East Shropshire Ramblers  
Mick Dunn, Walking Co-ordinator, Shropshire Council  
Mike Brooks, Shrewsbury U3A  
Mike Richardson, Condover P3  
Ped Atkinson, Countryside Recreation Officer, Shropshire Council  
Phil Betts, Countryside Recreation Officer, Shropshire Council  
Russell Colard, Condover P3  
Steve Lowe, Mid Shropshire P3  
Susan Daykin, Marden Medical Practice WfH  
Sylvia Greenfield, Condover P3  
Trevor Allison, Shropshire Ramblers  
Valerie Collard, Condover P3

### Apologies:

Les Orrin, Pim Hill Parish P3  
Mike Watkins, Priest Weston P3  
Paul Wynn, Spike Outdoors

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Mick Dunn welcomed everyone to the forum and all attendees briefly introduced themselves.

### **2. Background to the Walking Forum**

Jim Stabler gave some background information on the reason for establishing the Walking Forum. He explained that forums for byway and bridleway users already exist

and whilst the Local Access Forum included walking representatives, the LAF mainly dealt with policy and procedures. The Walking Forum has therefore been established to contribute to the enhancement and promotion of walking. There will be three separate forums covering the north, central and south areas of the county.

### **3. A shared vision for walking in Shropshire**

Mick Dunn asked for any comments on the vision statement.

Whilst everyone agreed that working in partnership was important, there was some concern about how problems are reported, prioritised and dealt with. Problems can be reported by email to [outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk) or by completing the Outdoor Recreation Feedback form on the Council's website. You can also report problems by telephoning the Customer Service Centre on 0345 678 9000.

There was a discussion about how P3 groups could become more involved in dealing with issues. It was explained that due to potential confrontation, problem issues were better dealt with by Council officers. A suggestion was made that particular problem areas could be prioritised.

All attendees agreed on the content of the vision statement.

### **4. Aims of the Walking Forum**

Mick Dunn asked for any comments on the aims of the forum.

The issue of how information was shared was raised. This included awareness of what walks are taking place, where to find information, the contact details for walking groups and P3 groups, and what leaflets exist and who produces them.

There was a discussion about the Shropshire Walking website. The website is managed by Shropshire Council and the Council pays for Shropshire Tourism to administer the site. There have been problems with getting information included on the site. If anyone does have any problems, please let Jim or Mick know. It was suggested that a discussion of the Shropshire Walking website could be included as a future agenda item.

### **5. Walking in Shropshire**

Jim Stabler gave an update on various pieces of work.

- Work on promoting the Shropshire Way has been carried out in the South and North of the county, with work in the Whitchurch area starting this year.
- Whilst there are some problems with the Shropshire Walking website, there have been improvements. You can now search by map, rather than text alone. Improvements to the website are on-going as funding is made available.
- There is a project to promote access in the Meres and Mosses in the next 3 years.
- Projects have been submitted for funding through the Paths for Communities (Natural England) grant. These include a long distance bridleway, work at Much Wenlock, a Ramblers Association circular walk near Oswestry, and Shropshire Mind circular walks.

All of these projects involve joint/partnership working.

There was a discussion about the Council's online survey which received approximately 900 responses. In particular, the discussion focussed on the question of why people don't walk. One of the main reasons was a lack of signs/waymarks. There was a suggestion that most signing problems are due to intermediate signs along a route, rather than at the beginning or end. These signs do have to be agreed with the landowner. A suggestion was made that the top of posts could be painted white so that they are more visible from a distance. It was also suggested that the focus could be to get one or two walks within an area well-marked so that people can use them easily.

Jim Stabler suggested that the forum should have input to what questions are included in future surveys.

The issue of dog walkers and dog mess was discussed. This included which types of walks are affected, dog friendly stiles, keeping dogs on leads, and Neosporosis. It was suggested that dog-related issues could be included as a future agenda item.

## 6. Funding for potential projects

Jim Stabler discussed the various sources of funding.

- Paths for Communities: There have been some difficulties with getting projects accepted.
- Local funding: This is available for projects such as map boards and guides.
- Sustainable Transport Fund: This is available three years from now and is to improve access and transport links. It will be used for funding Walking for Health and general walking coordination. There is some money available each month for minor projects, such as leaflets and perhaps small maintenance works. A larger fund is also available for projects such as upgrading the network or producing guidebooks.
- A new Heritage Lottery Fund has just been announced. This funding is specifically for history and heritage. Jim Stabler will distribute the link to the website and he asked everyone to submit any project ideas to him. The link is: <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Allourstories.aspx>

## 7. Discussion Groups

As various discussions had already taken place, Mick Dunn thought it would be more beneficial to spend this part of the meeting deciding on the key issues for inclusion in the next meeting's agenda. The suggestions were as follows:

### Dogs

A discussion of how the forum can improve awareness of the various issues, including signing and publicity.

### Parking/transport

The issue of planning walks around car park locations. Could a list of car parks be produced to include village halls and sustainable transport options? It was suggested that a Travel Shropshire representative could attend the next meeting.

### Circulation of information

To include how relevant groups are notified about problems, and information about walk promotion. Jim Stabler agreed to look at options of how information can be shared and what technologies are available to help with this.

### Age profile of walkers

Ideas on capturing walk statistics for the 30-55 year age group and how the forum can promote/encourage walking within this age range.

### P3 groups

How existing active groups could carry out works in neighbouring parishes where no group operates, or whether a 'flying group' could be established to target specific areas across the county as required.

### Prioritising of routes

Whether this needs revising and how can this be done.

### Suggestions for mini projects

For organisations to put forward any ideas for small projects to promote or encourage walking.

### Doctor referrals

To have a discussion about suggestions for how these can be increased.

## **8. Other partners to be invited to future forums**

Jim Stabler asked whether any organisations were missing from the forum. It was suggested that perhaps youth organisations and a Shropshire Tourism representative should attend. The attendees and time of meeting will be discussed further at the next forum.

## **9. Group updates**

Mick Dunn informed everyone that he has created a new Facebook page to promote new routes, charity walks and other events. You can email Mick details of events to be included on the site, but you can also update it yourself. Suggestions for information to be included were links to walk programmes and contact details. The link is:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Walking-in-Shropshire-Website/354059134660132>

Jim Stabler introduced the new Travel Shropshire website which will soon be live. This site is about getting to and around Shropshire, and it links to the walking website.

## **10. Any Other Business**

It was noted that over the last few years there have been improvements in how horse riders and walkers have been working together. It was also noted that some attendees had not been able to clearly hear all of today's meeting.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

The forum will meet quarterly with the next meeting taking place in the first week of October. The details of the next meeting will be confirmed.