

## SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING GROUPS (SRC DG)

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012, at 7.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

### 1. Attendance:

Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere, Chair. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG, Joint Secretary. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA, Joint Secretary. Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Helen Newton, Ludlow. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

### Apologies:

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Vice Chair. Dorothy Billings, Carriage Driving, Bridgnorth. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen & Dist. BWG. Anne Roberts, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Mark Weston BHS

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

John Gibson was confirmed as Vice Chair and Zia & Linda as Joint Secretaries. Angela expressed her wish to stand down as Chair. As heavy fog had restricted attendance, it was agreed that Angela would continue as Chair until the next meeting. The decision on the position of Chair, and the adding of the word Forum to the end of the Groups title would be postponed until then.

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Matters Arising

#### (a) Cycling

Zia's e-mail to David Cowell and his response dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 (paper B) are noted. Carol Williams reported that members from Long Mynd BW Assoc. attended the meeting to discuss the new cycle routes on the Long Mynd. They felt it was a constructive meeting. The diversion and creation proposals from the Long Mynd Gliding Club were discussed. Some local riders did not want changes to the routes. Responsibility for maintaining the new routes had also been raised. Zia confirmed that the routes linked and would give more circular ride options. The question of Health and Safety was raised. Sheep have been killed by the winch wire, and riders have had near misses. This was the reason the proposals have been put forward by the Gliding Club. Riders not familiar with the area would not realise that the winch wire can be across the bridgeway.

Zia confirmed that she had a good response when she spoke to Richard Harman, Shropshire Council Highways & Transport Street Works Engineer dealing with cycling projects. He confirmed that routes will be multi-user wherever possible. He thought that parts of the Minsterley to Pontesbury route may not be suitable for horse riders. We have helped to raise awareness of horse riders need to use routes, but better communication is needed when routes are being developed to avoid problems like those that have arisen with NCR Route 45 Coalport/Bridgnorth Area. Shona has had a meeting with the Broseley Bridleway group. The 3-month closure period has not been instigated to date. Notices only mentioned vehicles and did not stop horse riders. More user claim forms have been submitted. This is now being progressed.

**(b) Telford & Wrekin Local Access Forum**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September are not yet available. Zia has had problems in obtaining the minutes.

**(c) National Grid Power Lines**

It is noted that [www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection](http://www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection) has information on the project. Zia has had contact with a group fighting these proposals. National Grid has received over 6,500 responses, and they still welcome comments and feedback. Over 100 MP's have written to the Prime Minister. They are urging for cuts in the subsidies, which are currently £400 million for onshore wind turbines of which there are currently 3,000 current, with 4,500 more expected to be built, and for planning rules to be changed to give locals more say in what happens in our countryside communities. There have been incidents of wind pylons falling and of pylon blades falling off.

A feed back report is due out soon on the selection of the route corridor and sub-stations.

**Agreed** that Zia will follow up where necessary on this issue.

**(d) Public Forest Estate in England – Independent Panel on Forestry**

It is noted that up to date information is available on <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/> There is no equestrian representative on the Independent Panel. Zia reported that a National Stakeholder Workshop has been held, attended by Mark Weston, with some good points coming out, including the recognition of access to woodland including equestrian access, and its benefit to the rural economy. Sales of Forestry have been put on hold pending the Independent Panel's recommendation. Zia said that the last meeting of the Independent Panel, the 8<sup>th</sup>, did not make any mention of access, which is very worrying. The Final report is now due to be published in June 2012. Many woodland organisations are not supportive of equestrian access.

**(e) Draft National Planning Policy Framework Consultation**

Zia's response on behalf of the Group (paper C) is noted. There is great concern over this by many groups, including the Ramblers and CPRE. In one County 100 homes were granted, at appeal, on a locally defined area of particularly attractive countryside supposedly exempt, against local communities wishes, with the decision given by the Inspector because it conformed to Draft National Planning Policy Framework as being sustainable. There is currently no definition of 'sustainable' in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework.

**(f) Proposed Wind Turbines by Jack Mytton Way at Meadowley, Morville**

Judy reported she had done a site visit. A lot of people are objecting. The site is currently being monitored, including for noise. It is a joint project that Crida Community Wind are involved in. This is to be decided in June. Shona said that checks on planning applications are done, by area, weekly by staff in the Access Dept. Shropshire Council do not have a policy on wind farms but it is understood that they are to make a decision by March on the distance turbines should be away from any dwelling. The S.C. Access Department, when responding to planning, use the BHS recommendations. For a Ride UK route this is 4 times their height away from a dwelling.

Ann Durnell said there is a website where you can register your vote, get information or comment. [www.stopbridgnorthwindfarm.org](http://www.stopbridgnorthwindfarm.org)

**Agreed** - that when the planning application goes in Zia will respond on the Group's behalf.

**(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda –**

**Helicopter Meeting** - It is agreed that if this can be arranged with RAF Shawbury, the next meeting be held at 7pm before our next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

**Defra Stewardship Routes** - The end date for Rednal is now correctly shown as September 2020 and maps for Battlefield, Farley, and Hem Lane near Minsterley are now on the website. The field edge scheme at Lushcott, near Wenlock Edge, ends on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

**List of Streets** - Andrew said colour on an OS map is not an indication of a public road, but an indication of metalling. Andrew reported that there has been the Wiltshire/Fortune Case, which

involved the List of Streets, and recording of things on it, with 350 pages of judgement, which is subject to appeal due to be heard in the High Court starting 5<sup>th</sup> March, with 41 points to be clarified, a lot of which he understands are to do with the List of Streets. Judgements are usually only 20-30 pages. Defra has asked Andrew to chair the Group which will look at the results of this. Defra are imminently releasing the second consultation following the Lost Ways project and the Stakeholder Working Group recommendations. The cut off date cannot be implemented without a Statutory Instrument. Shona confirmed that the Council need an easier/simpler process of dealing with Rights of Way legislation. Andrew said that the Minister has indicated that easier quick win items will be taken on board.

## **5. Shropshire Council**

### **(a) Update on Staff, Restructuring, & Budgetary situation**

Shona reported that they are still going through a transition period. They are now also responsible for play areas. The team are divided into three, and the maintenance team is then divided four ways. Two posts, one in admin, and one in maintenance, are not yet filled. Sue Morris, formerly with Parks & Countryside, has joined the admin team. There will be no budget update until next year. They are working with limited resources, so prioritising has to take place.

### **(b) Shropshire Riding website**

Jim Stabler has told Zia that due to funding it is likely that the Shropshire cycling and Shropshire riding websites will be amalgamated. The current site does not get updated. Hopefully it will be when more funding is available, and will have an interactive map. Zia will liaise with Jim on this.

### **(c) Countryside Access Implementation Team**

Richard Knight has reported to Zia that his team now have responsibility for all Rights of Way and Council owned site maintenance work. There are three area officers and one roving officer covering all this work. Harvey Morgan covers North Shropshire (old districts of Oswestry and North Shropshire), Phil Betts covers the Central area (old district of Shrewsbury & Atcham plus half of South Shropshire District west of a line from Much Wenlock to Craven Arms) and Pete (Ped) Atkinson covers the South area (Bridgnorth district plus South Shropshire east of a line from Much Wenlock to Craven Arms). These Officers also assist existing P3 Groups in their areas with their maintenance activities. Paul Butter, the roving Officer, has responsibility for all promoted routes and larger projects, plus helping out where there is a need in other areas. They are currently carrying out site maintenance and hope to address access work after this. They are working with Shona's team to ensure a useable route for the Jack Mytton Way on Catherton Common following damage due to timber extraction. Gareth Eggar is the Site Officer for Nesscliffe Countryside Site, including the Rights of Way, with Harvey Morgan covering the maintenance. Clive Dean is the Site Officer for Lyth Hill Countryside Site with Phil Betts covering the maintenance. Richard reported that Ride UK routes have all been re-way marked, but still have a bit of work to be done on gate improvements. Problems in the Shadymoor area are being dealt with, and, following two Public Inquiries, the route at Craignant is open and clear through. The 1929 Handover Map link to the road by the old Chapel to the east, acknowledged at the Inquiry, still needs to be resolved.

Members agreed that it is important that routes that have been opened up are kept clear, and, that following Public Inquiries, the Inspectors' decisions are implemented without delay. The route width confirmed by the Inspector at Molverley has still not been enforced to date.

The importance of parking when planning rides out was highlighted. Zia said that Google maps/Google street are good for finding parking places, but to take care as it can be deceptive, and what looks like a wide flat area may be a steep bank! People need to have confidence to know that they can complete a ride, which is where Ride UK routes are good.

### **(d) Outdoor Recreation User Survey**

Ann Durnell reported that when she attempted to fill this in online it stated "This survey is currently closed". Shona will follow this up with Jim. It is done through 'Survey Monkey'. She

emphasised that it is important that people fill it in as it helps determine need, get funding etc. Like the previous paper ones, it is still very orientated towards walkers. There is concern that many riders will not be aware of it. **Agreed** that Members will inform other riders of the survey.

## 6. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues

Shona reported that they had received the final decisions on the Orders in Barrow & Broseley.

**Broseley** - BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane, BW addition Ironbridge Lane to Balls Lane and BW addition Cockshutt Lane to the Fish House have all been confirmed.

**Barrow** – Restricted Byway addition Lingham's Dingle, and 2 FP Upgrades to BW at Benthall Hall have been confirmed. Officers will go out to check them, then in mid February maintenance Officers will go out to assess works to be done, and get them opened up on the ground.

Shropshire has a good **Definitive Map**. The paper version is amended by hand. Jean Jones also updates the electronic version of the Definitive Map; this is backed up every night. It is available on Shropshire Council website on the 'Local View' Map. It has different layers of useful information and shows Rights of Way and Highways. When routes are highlighted it gives their route numbers, length, status etc. It also shows road closures and road works.

Shona confirmed that because routes are shown on the map, it does not mean that they are open, but that the maintenance team give priority to opening up confirmed Order routes, but that there can be enforcement issues that delay this. The Ordnance Survey is notified of all changes but these will not be shown until new maps are issued.

**F.P 65 Benthall Woods** - F.P. upgrade. This is part owned by Telford & Wrekin, the National Trust Severn Gorge, and an independent landowner. Following the Barrow & Broseley decisions, Lucy will now be going back to them to try and get agreement on this.

**Honeypot Route**. Broseley BW Group will talk to the estate direct now as the Tenant has left.

**Badger wood** - BW Dedication is being followed up by Lucy with the landowner.

**Badger Worfield** – BW addition has been sent to the Planning Inspectorate. Waiting for date.

**Culmington** – FP addition. This has been sent off to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Oaks Wood** - BW claim and line problems. One route was open but has now been locked again. There is an additional important BW link that was ridden, but was left off the Order. Shona hopes to get to these matters soon, and will consult with Linda and Zia.

**Frodesley** – Shona is hoping to have these sent to the Planning Inspectorate within this year.

**Drumbles** – BW addition. The Order for the east end is still waiting to be resolved.

**Stiperstones** - Deletion, Diversion & Creation. When the route to the top was deleted, they also deleted the short link from the new bridleway to the car park. This means that riders legally have to pass the gate out to the car park, go north, through a gate, then south and through another gate to get back to the car park. To avoid delays, Zia agreed to the diversion but on the understanding that a link would be maintained through, or near to the existing exit gate to the car park. This access is currently available to horse riders, but now needs to be officially confirmed/dedicated. Zia advised members to check diversions very carefully at consultation stage to avoid similar problems.

**The Vinnals** – Bridleway Dedication. Work has now been completed on this route. The final top section of the lane has recently been dedicated. It is an excellent route, and this result has been achieved by cooperation and excellent work by all the Outdoor Recreation team.

## 7. Route Development

- (a) **Humphrey Kynaston Way and new circular routes** – Zia reported on routes being developed for Ride Shropshire. She has been working on these for over 20 years, but three times funding has been cut. They include the linear Humphrey Kynaston Way from Carding Mill Valley via Church Pulverbatch, Pontesbury, and Ford to Nesscliffe, and the next stage via Baschurch to Grinshill, to link with the proposed Bishop Bennett Way back south to the Long Mynd. There are circular routes off from Lyth Hill, Montford and Nesscliffe Hill, with more to follow. It is hoped to get them on the [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk) website to download, then publish leaflets later if funding

becomes available. Finding parking and stop off points for the stages in the linear route is proving difficult, and pubs have closed. Zia has drafted out the directions. All the routes are currently open and way marked, but need specific way marking for the routes.

- (b) **“Paths for Communities”** – This is a 2 million pound grant scheme. Jim Stabler is to talk to Jo Penfold about how it is going to work. It is understood that these are intended to be multi user routes. Shona suggested getting support from Local Joint Committees and Parish Councils.

## 8. Highways

- (a) **Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders** – As agreed at the last meeting Zia had followed up on this and her e-mail to Ron Buzzacot dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012 (paper **D**) on provision for horse riders in TRO's is noted. Very few road closures restrict horse riders.
- (b) **Provision of a Definitive Map showing status of Shropshire Highways** – At the LAF sub-committee meeting, Highways agreed that all 1929 Handover Map routes were vehicular roads. Green lanes and sections of unsurfaced roads from tarmac roads to rights of way have, in the past, just been pencilled out, or left off Highway's maps as they had stopped maintaining them. Routes have also been left off when maps were updated, but they are still legal roads. Zia has worked in the past with Highways to try and resolve these. It is agreed that it is important that there is a Definitive Highways map showing status of Highways like that showing Public Rights of Way. Andrew confirmed that this has been discussed at the Highway Records Working Group for the country as a whole.  
**Agreed** that Zia will follow up on this and take it to the Local Access Forum

## 9. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums (not already covered)

The Minutes of the Local Access Forum Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 (paper **E**) are noted. The priorities for LAF are being discussed. Zia has put forward that: gaps in the network, Lost Ways, multi user routes, Unclassified County Roads, free access to Public Forestry, etc. are all important. She felt that play ground strategy should not be a LAF issue unless it involved access. There are some new members on LAF including Janet Mees-Robinson and two Councillors who are keen to get involved. There is to be an 'Away Day' at Plowden. The position of Area representative, currently Jim Stabler, is being cut. The Huddle website will then provide the link between LAFs.

## 10. Any other Business

**Hedge Removal on Bridleway Rock Hill Farm Greete** – Zia asked Shona about the legal position when a 3 metre field edge bridleway which cannot be ploughed has the hedge removed making it a cross field route as has happened following a planning application at Greete 11/05792/HRM for removal of 550metres of hedgerow. It was objected to by local ramblers, but planning permission was given. Shona said that the bridleway had been put on the definitive map following a public inquiry and would therefore have a definitive statement as to its width etc. She thought this would stand even if the hedge was removed. **Agreed** Shona to check.

**Titterstone Clee** – Gill Eyre has asked Lucy to look at FP's that are ridden, and which link bridleways, and to approach the Downton Estate to see if they can be dedicated as bridleways.

**BHS Access Week is from 18- 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

**Hoof project** – Zia had been approached by the BHS and suggested that they speak to the Long Mynd BW Association on this. Carol confirmed that Nigel Clements is looking into it.

**Dates of the Next Meetings** The next meeting, which will be preceded at 7.00 p.m. by the Helicopter Liaison Group Meeting, and will include the election of the Chair, is to be held on Monday the **11<sup>th</sup> June 2012**. The provisional date for the following meeting of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 is confirmed. Meetings to be held in the Shirehall at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 pm.