

<p><b><u>Committee and Date</u></b></p> <p>Shropshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>9 July 2012</p> <p>10.00 am</p>	<p><b><u>Item</u></b></p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Public</b></p>
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM  
HELD ON 1 MAY 2012 AT 10.00 A.M. IN THE SHREWSBURY ROOM,  
SHIREHALL, SHREWSBURY**

**10.00 am – 12.38 PM**

**Responsible Officer**

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**PRESENT:**

Mrs Jane Ing (Chair)

Mr Stephen Bell, Mr Peter Carr, Mr Richard Cotham, Mr David Cowell, Mrs Margaret Markland, Mrs Janet Mees-Robinson, Mr Stuart Morgan, Dr Jane Morris, Mrs Alison Parker, Mr Roger Plowden, Mrs Zia Robins, Mrs M Shington, Mr Mark Weston and Mr Paul Wynn.

**OFFICERS:**

Ms Deb Hughes, Outdoor Recreation Manager

Mr Jim Stabler, Countryside Access Development Officer

Ms Emma Smith, Economic Research Officer

Ms Alison Kennedy, Transport Planner

Mrs Linda Jeavons, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance: Alex Carson-Taylor (observing with a view to membership)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Members - Mr Gareth Boxley, Mr Chris Chillingworth, and Mrs Pauline Dee.

Officers - Mr Richard Harman, Engineer Cycling.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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### 3. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 January 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was **AGREED**: that item No. 5 – Value of Walking to the Local Economy be considered as the next item of business, followed by Matters Arising from the meeting held on 23 January 2012.

### 4. VALUE OF WALKING TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Emma Smith, Economic Research Officer, was in attendance and gave a presentation on “The Economic Value of Walking”. This data would inform the Countryside Access Strategy.

A copy of the presentation would be appended to the signed minutes.

As an amendment, Emma Smith reported that five towns had “Walkers are Welcome” status, and not four as stated on slide four of the presentation. With reference to slide seven, she explained that the figure of £450 million was the value of tourism for this local authority area and did not include Telford and Wrekin – likewise, figures quoted in the pending Economic Impact Assessment would also represent the value for this local authority area only. In response to questions, she explained that the figure quoted for money spent by tourists on leisure was a general figure, and the Natural England survey provided a breakdown of what money was actually spent on leisure equipment; figures quoted included the cost of travelling into the County; and consideration would be given to undertaking a similar exercise to assess the value of cycling and equestrianism on the economy.

Deb Hughes thanked Emma for her work to date and suggested that, following receipt of further visitor information and revised tourism data, an updated report be brought back to a future meeting of this Forum.

### 5. MATTERS ARISING

Arising on the minutes:

#### 5.1 Walking Forums (Paragraph 3.2)

Jim Stabler reported that three Walking Forums had been established – one Forum would be based in each of the following locations and on the following dates:

**Oswestry** - 18 June in the evening – venue tbc

**Shrewsbury** - 12 June at 2.00 pm in the Lantern, Sundorne

**Ludlow** - Membership and remit would be considered at the Walking in Shropshire Hills meeting scheduled for 5th July.

Membership of the Forums had not been determined, but would likely include walking groups, ramblers, P3 groups, and anyone with an interest in walking.

## **5.2 Yammer / Huddle (Paragraph 3.3)**

### Yammer

Jim Stabler reported that almost everyone on the Local Access Forum had signed up to Yammer. This was a useful site for disseminating significant information from bodies such as Natural England. He would provide 1-2-1 training for anyone who requested it; and he would re-send the invite to join.

### Huddle

Jim Stabler reported that it had been agreed that the Regional Co-ordinators for the West Midlands Region would continue for a further year. The aim was to have 3/5 people from each Local Access Forum on Huddle and this would be the primary means of consulting, communicating and disseminating information. With reference to a live link to the site, he provided Members with an overview of the site.

Jim Stabler encouraged all to forward any items of interest to him for inclusion on Yammer.

## **5.3 Definitive Map of Highways (Paragraph 12.1)**

Jim Stabler reported that a paper definitive map was maintained by the Highways Department; and there was an electronic version of the Definitive Map which should reflect the paper version. In addition, there was also a list of streets, which listed all the highways maintained at public expense, including footpaths.

A Member referred to the Fortune Case, which made reference to what constituted a List of Streets, and what onus was placed on a Council to provide this list along with the availability of it for public inspection. Deb Hughes explained that this probably referred to the map of highways, which was not the definitive map of Rights of Way that the Outdoor Recreation service had responsibility for and suggested that a copy of it be forwarded to the appropriate person in Highways for them to comment.

### **AGREED:**

- (i) that a copy of the Fortune Case be forwarded to Deb Hughes, Outdoor Recreation Manager, for it to be forwarded to the appropriate person in Highways for comment.
- (ii) that an appropriate person from Highways attend the next Local Access Forum to provide an update on the availability, accuracy and relevance of the highways, eg paper definitive map.

## 5.4 Traffic Regulation Orders

A Member referred to a newspaper article which made reference to proposals to remove the requirement for traffic orders to be published in local newspapers, following a consultation exercise undertaken by the Department of Transport. She expressed concern that the deadline for comments had passed and this Local Access Forum had not been consulted. Jim Stabler explained that he had not been made aware of this consultation, and this lack of consultation had been raised many times on Huddle and at conferences. Natural England was doing everything it could to ensure that they and LAFs were consulted appropriately, and hopefully things would improve in the future.

## 5.5 Other Matters Arising

- (i) Madge Shingleton updated the meeting on Place Plans and explained that over the last three years Shropshire Council had been bringing together the different Local Plan documents from across the County, which had now culminated in a document entitled the “Core Strategy”. This would be the basic planning document on which Shropshire would move forward until 2026. Coupled with that, was a document called SAMDev, which listed strategic sites on which every Town & Parish Council would be consulted. Place Plans would identify local requirements, and inform the infrastructure and development of a local area.

Further information on Place Plans could be found on the Shropshire Council website, via the following link:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/4F5D054030CE1CE680257922004CC91C>

- (iii) With reference to Shared Use Tracks, Alison Kennedy, Transport Planner, explained that Shropshire Council did not have a stated policy but followed national guidance. She explained the following:

### **Cycle tracks**

Where cycling was permitted adjacent to the road as an extension to or part of a Footway, these were defined as 'Cycle Tracks' by the Cycle Tracks Act 1984 "which defined a cycle track as a way over which the public had a right of way on pedal cycles with or without a right of way on foot". Consequently, cycle tracks adjacent to the road were not allowed to be used by equestrians as currently defined by legislation and therefore national policy.

### **Other cycle routes**

When Shropshire Council was planning multi-user tracks away from the road (i.e. those routes that are not defined within highway law), where

these routes are suitable we would allow equestrian usage. However, factors which could preclude the use of such routes by equestrians may include: unsuitable width, headroom or structures, objection from landowners, lack of linkage with other routes, local considerations such as proximity to railway lines etc... Any such issues would generally be communicated and discussed during a public consultation for any such project.

(iv) **Community Car Clubs**

Alison Kennedy explained that Shropshire Council was currently assessing demand for Community Car Clubs. These clubs aimed to provide access to a car as and when one was needed, and surveys were underway to assess interest in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Bishops Castle. Further information could be accessed via the following link: <http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/drive/car-clubs>.

**6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

**7. LOCAL ACCESS FORUM PRIORITIES**

Jim Stabler gave a verbal update following the Working Group held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 to consider the Local Access Forum priorities (notes attached at Appendix A).

A Member commented on the wealth of qualified and insured instructors within the County and suggested that this could be coupled with an initiative to get young people out walking in the Shropshire Hills. In the ensuing discussion, Members commented and agreed on the importance of getting young children involved at an early age, and referred to the activities provided by other initiatives provided by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust initiative "50 things to do before you are 11 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Forest Schools promoted by the Woodland Trust, and the national Play Strategy which all encouraged young people to undertake activities outdoors and were very successful. A Member expressed concern that a multiplicity of projects would be very confusing and best value would be achieved by working in partnerships.

In response, Jim Stabler stressed the importance of getting young children interested in the outdoors at a very early age. This also encouraged parents to get out and about, and referred to the Shropshire Way project in Oswestry, which aimed to promote geocaching in schools. Geocaching was an activity that children enjoyed, and provided a geography lesson and promoted the use of IT.

Deb Hughes explained that as a service there was no core support which could be offered to support stand alone County-wide initiatives, and external funding would have to be sought if implemented on a County basis. However,

on a project-by-project basis the aim was to build-in educational ideas and link in with schools, eg geocaching.

**RESOLVED:** that the Countryside Access Development Officer prepare a final report to be presented to a future meeting.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND / WALKING FORUMS**

Jim Stabler explained that the three regional walking co-ordinators would be part funded from the Sustainable Transport Fund until the end of the existing external funding in 2015. Further money had been identified from other budgets and allocated to the co-ordinators to be spent on local projects, eg enhancing and promotion of local walks, and/or to provide/improve furniture on routes.

## **9. AWAY DAY – VISIT TO PLOWDEN HALL**

Members noted the arrangements for the visit to Plowden Hall on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Roger Plowden explained that the visit would provide an insight into the influences behind the running of the farm and management of the countryside.

Tim King, Tourism Officer, would also be attending to provide a presentation on “How Shropshire supports and promotes tourism in the area”.

Jim Stabler to organise the shared transport arrangements.

## **10. RESULTS OF THE OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY**

Jim Stabler gave a presentation entitled “Outdoor Recreation User Survey – Survey Results April 2012”. A copy of the presentation and the questions would be appended to the signed minutes. He explained that 980 responses had been received. The survey requested users to input their postcodes, and this would be used to identify socio-economic groupings. This was an overview of the results and a more detailed analysis would follow.

In response to comments, Deb Hughes explained that more could be done to promote the survey, but, nearly 1,000 responses was an excellent result. In the main, this had been completed by Shropshire residents, but they would look to attract more responses from those living outside of the county next year.

## **11. NATIONAL LOCAL ACCESS FORUM CONFERENCE**

Madge Shingleton provided an update on the National Local Access Forum held on 6 March 2012 in Bristol, and as detailed at Appendix 10 circulated at the meeting.

## **12. FEEDBACK FROM OTHER FORUMS AND ITEMS FOR NOTING**

### **12.1 Paths for Communities Fund**

Jim Stabler explained that any expressions of interest should be emailed to him outlining the project(s) and detailing any benefits. Funding for the schemes had not yet been finalised, but it was likely that those that received the backing of Local Access Forums would stand a far better chance of approval, and it was unlikely that groups would have to pay up front and claim the money back at a later date.

### **12.2 National Trails**

Jim Stabler reported that Natural England was still reviewing National Trails and considering whether or not to promote or maintain them.

### **12.3 Pontesbury / Minsterley**

Market Towns money would be used to fund a series of circular walks and links between the two market towns.

### **12.4 Bettisfield / Whixhall**

Following a review work had ceased at the Bettisfield site because the ground was collapsing and/or shrinking. Work at the Whixhall site was ongoing and should be completed late July.

### **12.5 Dates for Diaries**

Shropshire Way Loop Launch – 12/15 May  
Launch of the Shropshire Way – Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> October

### **12.6 Independent Panel on Forestry Policy in England - Noted**

### **12.7 Natural Environment White Paper Implementation Update - Noted**

### **12.8 Wat's Dyke Way Association - Update - Noted**

**12.9** The following minutes/papers were noted:

- (a) Shropshire Cycle Forum – 6 December 2011
- (b) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Groups – 3 October 2011

**12.10 Chairman and Vice Chairman – 2012/13**

Members noted the current Chairman’s willingness to stand for a further 12 months if Members so wished. The election of Chairman and Vice Chairman would take place at the next meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

**12.11 Planning Application – Foxholes, Little Ness**

A Member informed the meeting that a further planning application for three poultry sheds at Foxholes Buildings, Little Ness, Shrewsbury had been submitted and was currently out for consultation.

**13. NEXT MEETING / FUTURE MEETINGS**

- (a) The next meeting would be held at 10.00 am on Monday, 9 July at Acton Scott Working farm.
- (b) The following items were suggested as topics for future meetings:

Clearer definition for control of dogs and speed limits on bridleways/byways.

Shona Butter to attend a future meeting to outline procedures and requirements for registering claims for Lost Ways. (Information circulated by Stuart Morgan prior to the meeting relating to Lost Ways to be uploaded onto Yammer and/or emailed to all Members.)

A Member of the Planning Department to attend and offer an explanation of RoW and the planning process.

Update on Walking for Health

- (c) Future Dates for 2012/13 were noted:

**2012**

Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> October

**2013**

Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> January

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....