

<p><b><u>Committee and Date</u></b></p> <p>Shropshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>18 October 2012</p> <p>10.00 am</p>	<p><b><u>Item</u></b></p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Public</b></p>
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM HELD ON 9 JULY 2012 AT 10.00 A.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, ACTON SCOTT HISTORIC WORKING FARM, ACTON SCOTT, CHURCH STRETTON, SHROPSHIRE, SY6 6QN**

**10.00 am – 12.20 PM**

**Responsible Officer**

Linda Jeavons

Email:

Linda.jeavons@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01743 252738

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**PRESENT:**

Stephen Bell, Gareph Boxley, Peter Carr, Richard Cotham, Pauline Dee, Jane Ing, Margaret Markland, Janet Mees-Robinson, Stuart Morgan, Dr Jane Morris, Alison Parker, Zia Robins, Mark Weston and Paul Wynn.

**OFFICERS:**

Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader  
Peter Dunhill, Shropshire Way Project Officer  
Deb Hughes, Outdoor Recreation Manager  
Linda Jeavons, Committee Officer  
Andy Savage, Highways Development Control Manager

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Jane Ing be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from:

**Members:**

Chris Chillingworth, David Cowell, Roger Plowden, and Mrs Madge Shingleton.

**Officers:**

Mick Dunn, Walking Co-Ordinator (Central Area)  
Tim King, Tourism Officer  
Jim Stabler, Countryside Access Development Officer

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### 3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED:** That Mark Weston be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

### 4. MINUTES

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 1 May 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Arising on the minutes:

#### 4.1 Paths for Communities Fund

In the absence of Jim Stabler, Members received, noted and considered the written update, as detailed on the agenda, and the four Expressions of Interest (EOI), as detailed at Appendix 4A (attached to the agenda). The meeting received a précis of each EOI from appropriate Members of the Forum.

It was **AGREED:** that the four Expressions of Interest for the following projects be noted and approved:

- (i) Jack Mytton Way Extension (Humphrey Kynaston Way)
- (ii) Much Wenlock Railway Walk
- (iii) "On the Way"
- (iv) Oswestry Ring

In response to a general question, Deb Hughes explained that Shropshire Council would work with any landowners to ensure they were in agreement before progressing with any changes to access that crossed their land. In some cases, land was owned by Shropshire Council and agreement had been obtained. It was envisaged that all projects would develop and enhance the network of Public Rights of Way.

#### 4.2 National Trails

In the absence of Jim Stabler, Members noted that, given the time constraints, a Working Group had been set up following the last meeting, which had met on 1 May 2012 to consider this Forum's response to the Natural England's Review of the Management of National Trails. As part of this review, Natural England had launched a targeted consultation, which ran from 10<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Members noted the written update, as detailed on the Agenda, and the response, as detailed at Appendix 4B (attached to the Agenda).

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that a statement had been received from Mr Andrew Kelly in relation to the List of Streets as follows:

“I am here as the Chairman of the Highway Records Working Group. I have seen there is an item on today’s agenda to discuss the List of Streets and other highway records. The group I chair currently has 92 Highway Authority members distributed throughout Great Britain including Scotland and has a considerable wealth of experience.

From a personal perspective I have 22 and a half years experience in interpreting historical records in highways and public rights of way too. Over that period of time I have discovered that there is a wide variation in how Highway Authorities interpret highway records. To some extent this was the starting point as to how the Highway Records Working Group came into existence so as to get some consistency in the approach to historical documentation relating to highway records.

Taking account of my experience I would like to ask the members of the Shropshire Local Access Forum if it would welcome my involvement from the Highway Records Working Group towards any of the work that Shropshire Council intends to do as from today looking at historical records as to be discussed further in Item 7 on today’s agenda? Clearly I don’t know what is going to be said in Item 7 but I would like to offer my expertise to both the Council and the Local Access Forum in their work into historical records relating to highways.

Thank you.”

The Chairman advised the meeting that consideration of this statement would be considered at an appropriate point during the meeting.

## 6. AWAY DAY – PLOWDEN HALL (14 JUNE 2012) – FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

All Members of the Forum expressed their appreciation and wished to thank Roger Plowden for his hospitality during what was a very enjoyable and informative day.

It was **AGREED**: That a letter of thanks expressing this Forum’s appreciation be written to Roger Plowden.

## 7. AVAILABILITY, ACCURACY AND RELEVANCE OF THE HIGHWAYS

Andy Savage, Highways Development Control Manager, Shropshire Council was in attendance and updated the meeting on the status of the highways, as follows:

Initially, he informed the meeting that Shropshire is a Member of the Highways Records Working Group and he had worked with Andrew Kelly for over 12 months looking at best practice for recording and researching highway records.

Paper Definitive Map – This map was based on the professional interpretation (unless covered by a legal agreement) of evidence collected over many years. The Map was available to view at Shirehall on an appointment basis.

Electronic Definitive Map (GIS) – Shropshire Council was currently in the process of transferring data from the coloured-up paper plans to this interactive GIS mapping service; however, as yet, it was not always 100% accurate, but was there as a tool to be used as a good starting point for research purposes.

Gazeteer - This was Shropshire Council's asset management database. There was also a national policy for a gazetteer (LSG), and all Highways linked into this via a specific USRN No. This provided up-to-date information on current roadworks countrywide. Shropshire Council also subscribed to Elgin, a national web based GIS mapping system which collected data from the street works register and allowed users to view the latest roadworks.

List of Streets – A list of adoptable highways available in both paper and electronic format, which provided a list of lengths and grid references detailed in parish order. There were two lists (one listing roads/streets and one listing Rights of Way). Section 36(6) of the Highways Act referred.

The 1929 Handover Map – A set of coloured-up maps based on evidence provided by parishes.

In response to questions and comments, AS responded as follows:

Under Section 38, Highways Act 1980, and previously Section 40, Highways Act 1959, an Authority could enter into a legal agreement with anyone to adopt a road and take control and maintain it thereafter.

The current List of Streets listed highways with vehicular rights and was as accurate as Shropshire Council could make it given the evidence available to them. The Gazetteer provided a maintenance record and this helped to inform the information detailed in the List of Streets, with Officers doing their best to fill in any gaps. At the moment the two systems worked separately and were dealt with by separate teams; however, Shropshire Council was currently in

the process of combining both sets of data. He reiterated that, at this point in time, the List of Streets was as accurate as they could get it.

The List of Streets included and listed all routes with vehicular rights, and the Definitive Map provided a separate list of non-vehicular routes.

Preservation of Records – To assuage concerns that user groups had reported that roads had in the past been removed from the List of Streets, Andy assured everyone that, at this point in time, nothing was being deleted. The list was added to on a daily basis; and although they did not currently have the resources to scrutinise every map per se, as issues arose they would be investigated and acted upon accordingly. The only roads that would now be deleted would be those covered by a legal order.

Members of the Forum commented that Shropshire Council currently held four main maps, all of which contained errors and omissions. It was essential that Shropshire had a Right of Way Definitive Map and there was a co-ordinated approach to management of all highways, including UCRs. In response, AS explained that Shropshire Council was currently concentrating on examining and updating the maps for one parish, which hopefully, would remain stable when completed. This would act as a benchmark for the completion of other parishes, and he was hopeful that, given the current resource implications, a large proportion of the remaining parishes would be completed within 2-3 years.

The question of signing UCRs was also raised by Members of the Forum, and this was an issue they would like to see resolved. Roads and sections of roads, which were still legal highways, had been crossed off in the past and missed off when maps were updated. It was noted that records of highways were and continued to be held at Kew, and Lost Ways had researched these for North Shropshire.

The Chair acknowledged that problems associated with UCRs was a national problem and not just a problem for this County. She undertook to email Jim Stabler, Countryside Access Development Officer, to request that this be discussed at the next meeting of the Area Local Access Forum.

**AGREED:**

- (i) That the LAF be kept informed and the Highways Development Control Officer return in approximately 6 months' time to provide an update on work to date.**
- (ii) That the Chair email the Countryside Access Development Officer to request that the problems associated with UCRs be discussed at the next meeting of the Area Local Access forum.**

The meeting adjourned at 10.55 am and reconvened at 11.00 am.

## 8. SHROPSHIRE WAY PROJECT

Peter Dunhill, Shropshire Way Project Officer, Shropshire Council, was in attendance and provided an update on the Shropshire Way project in the north of the County. A copy of the presentation would be appended to the signed minutes. An electronic version could be found on Shropshire Council's website appended to the committee papers for this meeting.

## 9. LOST WAYS

Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, Shropshire Council, was in attendance and outlined the procedures and requirements for registering claims for Lost Ways.

She drew Members' attention to the DEFRA consultation entitled "Improvements to the policy and legal framework for public rights of way – consultation", and this Forum's response - copy attached to the signed minutes.

She explained that currently map modification orders were made under Schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The DEFRA consultation aimed to seek the views of consultees on a proposed package of changes to the processes for recording, diverting and extinguishing public rights of way. This would inform Government decisions on whether and how to implement the various proposals. The consultation would conclude on 7 August and a summary of responses would be made available around October/November time. It was important that highways were clarified to avoid unnecessary work on claims for routes that should be on the highways map.

A question and answer session followed, during which the Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader provided clarification on the way forward and the process for progressing and registering Lost Ways. She explained that:

- It was important that Shropshire Council processed those claims that would make a difference;
- Under the Countryside Rights of Way Act, the Government had made it a legal duty for Councils to publish a list of claims for Rights of Way;
- The consultation covered all user groups, including horse riders and carriage drivers;
- A Member commented that routes could potentially be gated if a claim was made but not progressed. In response, she commented that, in the past, Shropshire Council carried out regular parish reviews, and did not purely rely on claims being made. However, because of the lack of resources this was not now possible, but it was also important that those key routes were not forgotten; and, in order that information was not duplicated, Shropshire Council had to give consideration to

how information was processed, published and retained in the future;  
and

- There were lots of errors, which involved a long drawn out legal process to put them right.

In response to comments, the Outdoor Recreation Manager explained that she was currently reviewing how Lost Ways would be prioritised and progressed. Shropshire Council held a lot of information and it was important that consideration should be given to those routes that would add value to the recreational network. There were issues with regard to resources and she was currently working with the Highways Development Control Manager to identify ways in which claims could be handled efficiently and in a way that could potentially improve the Highways register. Following a prioritisation programme, the information would be shared with this Forum in order that any gaps could be identified.

## **10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

With reference to Minute No. 5 (Public Question Time), the Chair thanked Mr Kelly for his attendance and explained that Shropshire Council would retain his letter on file for future reference, and would contact him if it was felt his services would be required.

## **11. STIPERSTONES AND CORNDON HILL COUNTRY LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE**

Clare Fildes, Development Officer (AONB), Shropshire Council, was in attendance and provided an update on the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership. The scheme, as well as conserving and enhancing the landscape, would bring people together, providing a better understanding of their heritage and their part in it. This work had been largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the key objectives were to:

- Conserve or restore the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character;
- Increase community participation in local heritage;
- Increase access to and learn about the landscape and its heritage; and
- Increase training opportunities in local heritage skills.

## **12. WALKING FORUMS**

In the absence of Mick Dunn, Walking Co-ordinator for the Central Area, Deb Hughes provided an update on the work and the aspirations of the Walking Forums to date. She reported that both the Central and North Walking Forums had met and had been well attended (27 and 13 attendees

respectively), and had included representatives from Walking for Health, various rambler groups, Parish Paths Partnerships, independent walking groups, and Bridleway Associations. Key issues raised had included:

- Need to make the Shropshire Walking Website (SWW) more user-friendly;
- Provision of a link to a dedicated page on the SWW promoting all walks in the area; and
- Need to encourage and promote walking for the younger age range.

Items for future consideration had included;

- Need to put in strategies to encourage the 35-50 year age groups;
- Need to give consideration to the introduction of a roving P3 group, which could operate in areas where no group existed;
- Need to improve awareness and encourage responsible dog ownership;
- Parking and Transport - To consider planning walks around car park locations. Deb drew attention to the new 'Travel Shropshire' website, and suggested that the possibility of linking into this site should be researched, which in turn would promote the use of public transport; and
- Need to put in strategies to ensure information was circulated as widely as possible.

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

#### **13.1 Countryside Rights of Way Act – consultation response from the Shropshire Local Access Forum**

Members noted the response of this Forum (copy attached to the signed minutes).

#### **13.2 Control of Dogs**

Members noted the information provided in the extract attached as Appendix 12 to the report.

With reference to the comments made at Minute 11, Members commented on the issue of dogs and the growing problems of irresponsible dog owners.

#### **13.3 Minutes / Papers**

Members noted the following minutes / papers, which were circulated with the agenda for information:

- (i) North Shropshire Walkers Forum Summary – Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012



- (ii) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Groups – Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2012.
- (iii) Shropshire Cycle Forum – Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012.
- (iv) Central Shropshire Walking Forum – Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

## **14. NEXT MEETING / FUTURE MEETINGS**

**14.1** The following agenda items were suggested for forthcoming meetings:

- (i) Availability, Accuracy and Relevance of the Highways - It was agreed that this item be revisited in six months time to receive an update on progress.
- (ii) A Member of the Planning Department to attend and offer an explanation of how the planning process impacts on Rights of Way.
- (iii) Safety issues arising from cyclists using footpaths as downhill bike tracks.  
(A representative from the Cycling Forum to attend the next meeting)
- (iv) Independent Panel on Forestry Report.
- (v) Safety Issues relating generally to Rights of Way and the multi-use of BOATS

**14.2** The following dates for future meetings for 2012/13 were noted:

### **2012**

Thursday, 18 October

### **2013**

Wednesday, 30 January

Tuesday, 14 May

The meetings scheduled for 2013 were subject to change to accommodate work commitments of some Members.

All meetings would commence at 10.00 am and would be held at Shirehall unless stated otherwise.