

Minutes 3rd Meeting Southern Walking Forum

Craven Arms Community Centre
10am-12noon, Friday 22nd March 2013

Present:

Alan Kimber (AK)	Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Assoc, P3 & WfH
Chris Chillingworth (ChC)	P3 Ludlow
David Hardwick (DH)	Countryside Recreation Officer, Shropshire Council
Graeme Perks (GP)	Walkers are Welcome, Ludlow
Ian Pearmain (IP)	Walking Co-ordinator, Shropshire Council
John Woolmer (JW)	Walkers are Welcome, Church Stretton
Jim Stabler (JS)	Access Development Officer, Shropshire Council
Keith Pybus (KP): Chair	Shropshire Way Association
Les Lumsdon (LL)	Ludlow 21
Michael Holland (MH)	P3 Ludlow
Steven Levers (SL)	Clun Walking Group

Apologies:

Alan Garner	Secret Hills Walking
Angela Lindsay	Ludlow VIC
David Wilks	WfH Church Stretton
Dick Bailey	WaW & WfH Much Wenlock
Don Hale (DH)	Long Mynd Walking
Jodie Griffith	Shropshire Hills AONB
Joy Nisbet	South Shropshire Group of the Ramblers
Leanne Jones (LJ)	Shropshire Council
Marion Law	Rail Rambles
Mike & Pam Beazley	WfH Ludlow
Peter James	P3 Clun & Ramblers Footpath Secretary
Phil Sams (PS)	Ludlow 21
Rick Summers (RS)	P3 Ludlow & Whitcliffe Common
Steph Hayes	Shropshire Hills AONB
Sue Jones	Shropshire Area Ramblers
Trish Howard (TH)	WfH Church Stretton
Val Simpson	WaW Cleobury Mortimer

ACTION

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- The review of progress on Countryside Access Strategy had been postponed. It will now be completed in 2013.
- Projects Annex – working document begun.
It was agreed that IP should be the *gatekeeper* of the spread sheet. He will email the document regularly and mail it (for those without email) with the minutes.
Please email / send any amendments or contributions to IP for inclusion.
- Newsletter. IP / JS mentioned the Countryside Access newsletter that is planned, but there was some interest in doing a South Shropshire specific newsletter.
KP / IP will compile something – contributions from All, please.
JS reminded everyone about the Walking in Shropshire facebook page – a very good means of getting information out there, especially to a younger audience.
It is important to spread the word about events and other walking initiatives. We should be encouraging and using other organisations to pass on information, eg. AK said it was easy to get information put onto the CMFA (Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Association) website.

JS

IP

All

All

FORUM TOPIC: REVIEW OF LITERATURE / PRODUCING LEAFLETS

JW had collected promotional literature whilst in Wales. He felt by comparison South Shropshire comes up short both in quality and content. Some felt that the glossy walking brochures were not sufficiently practical. Material from Wales had benefited from subsidies which were not available to Shropshire.

Walking brings more income to Shropshire than anything else, as evidenced by the recent Arkenford study. LL said that whilst walking is a primary reason for visiting, the secondary reason “Sightseeing” is also inseparable from walking.

JW observed that Shropshire Tourism does not appear to see walking as bringing many visitors. More effort needed to be made to make them realise the economic importance. JS commented Shropshire Tourism is a commercial organisation, which concentrates on promoting businesses who pay for the service. He agreed that they have not seen walking as producing measurable income streams. This attitude is changing, whilst others offered examples of marketing:

- Shropshire Hills AONB employing a specialist PR company to get promotional articles and reports in the national media.
- Country Walking magazine – latest issue has lots on Shropshire.

JS felt this forum should not be looking at overall Shropshire tourism strategy – this is happening at a senior level through Shropshire Council. He would try and get someone from Shropshire Tourism to come to the next Forum.

JS

The forum should certainly look at local marketing. JS suggested that Country Walking magazine print about 20 walks in every monthly issue and pay £80 per walk – this is something we could all contribute to.

All

GP suggested tagging onto other events or festivals, as they are doing regularly in Ludlow,

eg. walks as part of Ludlow's Green Festival.

The market for walks literature can be segmented:

- The Clun walks book represents excellent value-for-money providing a large number of walks for a modest outlay. KP felt this is more attractive to the local whereas the visitor is conscious they may only achieve a small percentage of the walks during their stay.
It is selling very well and the Shropshire Hills AONB are taking on responsibility and arranging a new print run.
- Walks leaflets, such as the Ludlow Country Walks (9 circular walks ranging from ½ mile to 8½ miles) or the 24 Cleobury Mortimer walks, are highly practical and sell well. They can be bought individually or as packs.
- SL had collected examples of the Wye Valley AONB's walks under their *Overlooking the Wye* scheme e.g *Wordsworth Walk* [3 miles], *Head for the Hillforts* [7 miles] and *Picturesque Piercefield* [6miles]. KP felt these were a perfect illustration of catering for the visitor: LL's sightseeing segment. The navigational text is minimal which is compensated for by the richness of the interpretative material.

Ordnance Survey data is vital to producing decent maps. Council involvement in the production of literature permits the use of their OS licence.

JS: leaflets can and should all go on the Shropshire Walking website (www.shropshirewalking.co.uk), making them available for free download. There was some concern that people would then not buy the literature, but JS said that many visitors print out just the map and then buy the leaflet as a souvenir.

Ian Jones' Walking Booklets

KP's review of Ian Jones' Wainwright-style walking booklets is attached. They have been the definitive walking booklets for South Shropshire. They are now dated and will not be revised. This asset should not be lost but enhanced. The group was unanimous in agreeing that KP's proposals be taken forward.

It would be useful to produce a statement that JS could take to the DDP (Destination Development Partnership).

KP / IP

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Castle Connect

LL said that this service would start on Saturday 4th May between Ludlow and Bishops Castle, via Leintwardine, Bucknell, Knighton and Clun. The main promotion for the service is through walking. LL is tasked with working with as many people and groups as possible to use the bus for walking. A road show to promote the use of the bus, will be organised by Steph Hayes from Shropshire Hills AONB.

IP is going to work with LL and Ludlow 21 to develop some leaflets for linear walks using the new shuttle bus and other public transport services. These will be made available through www.shropshirewalking.co.uk.

IP

Footpath Addition Clun local enquiry 15th May 2013

KP explained how the usage case had been strengthened by contact with previous owners of The Hurst extending back to the 1940s. As landowners their evidence would weigh heavily. His key contact Commander W L T PEPPÉ OBE DL JP RN had been traced to the Isle of Skye. It showed how a case assembled by the Council would never unaided find such evidence without detailed help by locals in uncovering contacts.

Walking with Offa

LL said that this was a cross border project and it had a particular focus on increasing public transport use. He and Alison Caffyn have devised a programme of guided walks using public transport run by various walking groups in Mortimer Country and Radnorshire (Ludlow, Leominster, Kington, Knighton & Llandrindod Wells).

Walking for Health in Cleobury Mortimer

AK said he is still finding issues with landowners.

IP: Shona Butter (Access Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, Outdoor Recreation, Shropshire Council) is looking at how enforcement and maintenance work is prioritised for the network as part of her review of policies relating to how the Public Rights of Way network is managed.

JS said that issues should still be logged through the existing system. Greater input from local groups would be useful when prioritising maintenance and enforcement – for example, key local routes or Walking for Health routes could carry extra weighting.

All

There are continuing problems for walkers of litter and dog-fouling. Both also lead to landowner complaints and the wish to get rid of paths from their land. It was suggested that Shropshire Council do not want to enforce dog-fouling laws. JS suggested that the best course of action would be to write to local councillors. He would also take the issue to the LAF.

All

War Walks

As part of the county's World War One Anniversaries project JS and KP outlined plans to develop walks on World War One themes, from August 2014 to November 2018.

We need to distinguish clearly between commemoration and celebration. The right reverential note at county level might be struck from the start with a walk to Shrewsbury Cemetery to coincide with the outbreak of war.

Contact with generous authors of books about to be published had confirmed the rich potential. Some interesting stories and locations have already been revealed.

Locally in the Shropshire Hills AONB these have been identified

- from the war memorial lych gate at Halford to Old Bill in Stokesay
- in 2015 to coincide with the landings at Gallipoli from Stanton Lacy to Stokesay Court. William Williams VC born in Stanton Lacy [small plaque in the churchyard]. Stokesay Court was an Auxiliary Military Hospital. Caroline Magnus is planning a display/event.
- It seems possible that stone from the Clee Hill quarries was used to build military roads. Quarrymen were deferred call-up to enable output to be maintained. We

might walk from Downton Hall [Rouse-Boughton owned the mineral rights and his Trench Diaries are in Shropshire Archives] to Dhustone and Bedlam ...

Everyone should start thinking about anything pertinent, especially to do with the Home Front.

All

MEMBERS UPDATES

Ludlow 21 will be offering guided walks at almost every Ludlow event this year.

Date of Next Meeting

10am – 12noon, Thursday 23rd May 2013

Secret Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms

TOPIC: World War One