

# Shropshire Local Access Forum

Date: Wednesday, 7 October 2015

## Shropshire Local Access Forum

**Date:** Thursday, 15 October 2015  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Venue:** Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.  
The Agenda is attached

Linda Jeavons  
Secretary to the Forum

### Members of The Forum

<b>Name</b>	<b>Fields of Interest</b>
Trevor Allison	Walking/Tourism
Stephen Bell	Walking/Conservation Wildlife/Disabled Acces
Gareph Boxley	Motorised Vehicular Use/Conservation Wildlife/Disabled Access
Peter Carr	Walking/Canals
Alex Carson-Taylor	Rural Business/Land Owning/Farming/Conservation/Wildlife
Will Chambers	Cycling
Lee Chapman	Shropshire Council
Chris Chillingworth	Walking/Voluntary Activities/Community
Pauline Dee	Scouts and Brownies
Janet Mees-Robinson	Carriage Driving/Disabled Access/Tourism
Stewart Pickering	Motorised Vehicular Use/Countryside Volunteer/Walking
Roger Plowden (Chairman)	Landowner/Conservation Wildlife/Farming
Zia Robins	Horse Riding
Mark Weston (Vice Chairman)	Horseriding/Carriage Driving/Voluntary Activities
Leslie Winwood	Shropshire Council

Your Committee Officer is:

**Linda Jeavons** Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257716

Email: [linda.jeavons@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:linda.jeavons@shropshire.gov.uk)

# **AGENDA**

**1 Elect a Chairman**

**2 Welcome and Introductions**

**3 Apologies for Absence**

**4 Appoint a Vice Chairman**

**5 Minutes and any matters arising (Pages 1 - 50)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 6 February 2014.

**6 Public Question Time**

To receive any questions, statements or petitions of which notice has been received from members

**7 Declarations of Interest**

**8 Canals and River Trust**

Wendy Capelle, Waterway Manager, and Ani Sutton, Development & Engagement Manager, will be in attendance and will speak on the work of the Canals and River Trust.

**9 Lost Ways / Deregulation Bill**

Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, and Mark Weston to provide an update.

**10 Shropshire Great Outdoors Website - Launch**

Clare Fildes, Outdoor Partnerships Development Team Leader, to present.

## **11 Corporate Sponsorship**

Alex Carson-Taylor will be in attendance and provide an update on the developments that have taken place with regard to corporate sponsorship.

## **12 Feedback from other Forums and items for noting (Pages 51 - 84)**

### 13.1 Items for Noting

13.2 The following minutes/papers are provided as updates for members:

- (a) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 26 January 2015
- (b) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 27 April 2015
- (c) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum – 8 June 2015
- (d) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 20 July 2015
- (e) Central Shropshire Walking Forum – 26 August 2015

### 13.3 Future Meetings

(a) Members are asked to suggest agenda items for the next meeting.

(b) Future dates for 2014/15 starting at 10.00 a.m. are as follows:

Thursday, 11 February 2016

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## Shropshire Local Access Forum

<b><u>Committee and Date</u></b>
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Shropshire Local Access Forum
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15 October 2015
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**MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 2  
JULY 2015  
10.00 AM - 1.01 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Linda Jeavons  
Email: linda.jeavons@shropshire.gov.uk    Tel: 01743 257716

**Present**

Roger Plowden (Chairman)  
Trevor Allison, Stephen Bell, Gareph Boxley, Peter Carr, Alex Carson-Taylor,  
Lee Chapman, Chris Chillingworth, Janet Mees-Robinson, Steward Pickering, Zia Robins  
and Mark Weston (Vice Chairman)

**30 Welcome, Introductions and Membership**

The Chairman introduced the new members and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**31 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Pauline Dee and Les Winwood.

**32 Minutes and any matters arising**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 5 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters Arising

With reference to Minute No. 28, Shona Butter reported that a representative of the Canals and River Trust (CART) would be in attendance at the meeting scheduled for 15 October 2015.

**33 Public Question Time**

It was reported that a public question (a copy of which along with the response would be attached to the signed minutes) relating to the Lost Ways of Shropshire had been received from Mr Stuart Morgan. Mr Morgan was invited to read out his question to which the Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader had provided a response but due to the complex matter of the topic, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That,

- (i) A copy of the question and the response from the Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader be circulated to all members of this Forum forthwith; and
- (ii) The Lost Ways of Shropshire be an agenda item and discussed at the next meeting of this Forum.

Arising from a discussion, Mark Weston reported that, given that all under-recorded and unrecorded rights of way/bridleways might be extinguished come 2026, the British Horse Society and The Ramblers had arranged for a series of training days entitled "2026 : Restoring the Record Training" to take place in August in an effort to empower rights of way researchers to make definitive map modification order applications to ensure that routes that would be extinguished in 2026 would be saved from the cut-off date. He also provided an update on the position to date with regard to the Deregulation Bill.

It was **AGREED**: That web links to the appropriate British Horse Society webpages and a briefing note providing an update on the Deregulation Bill be forwarded to all members of this Forum following this meeting.

#### 34 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 35 **Feedback on Annual Performance and User Surveys**

Clare Fildes, Outdoor Partnerships Development Team Leader, provided feedback and circulated a summary of the results following the recent annual Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships user satisfaction survey. A copy of the summary would be appended to the signed minutes.

CF also provided feedback and circulated an overview of the outcomes and trends of the annual performance monitoring for 2014/15, a copy of which would be appended to the signed minutes.

In response to comments, Shona Butter explained that:

- A recently published leaflet will remind landowners of their responsibilities and what they could or could not do with regard to the rights of way network:
- All diversions are logged and available to view on Shropshire Council's website along with Public Path Orders, guidance notes, temporary closures; and
- The majority of landowners/farmers ensure rights of way are maintained, kept free of obstruction and of the correct width. However, repeat offenders would and will continue to be prosecuted or alternatively, work could be undertaken by Shropshire Council and the landowner charged.

From the floor, members of the Forum expressed the view that the following were important:

- Good way marking and signage;
- Links to public transport; and

- Printed leaflets - although much information was available on-line, many people still preferred the printed form.

### 36 Access Strategy - 5-Year Review

Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, provided feedback on the 5 Year Review of the Access Strategy by way of a presentation, a copy of which would be appended to the signed minutes, and answered questions from the floor.

From the floor, members of the Forum raised concern regarding the incorrect use of coloured way markings, and the use of kissing gates which could restrict disabled access and also have an impact on pushchairs users etc.

### 37 Team Plan for 15/16 Overview

Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, provided an overview of the Team Plan for 15/16. The plan set out the team's aims and priorities and demonstrated that customers were being listened to. The following points were highlighted:

**Priorities** – To improve people's health and wellbeing and to support local communities to get active outdoors. The team would support the natural environment and tourism economy, through the management and development of recreational access in Shropshire. This would be done via the public rights of way network, countryside parks and sites, green spaces and play areas and open access land.

#### **This would be achieved by:**

- Increasing active participation for all in a broad range of outdoor recreational activities and community volunteering to maximise health benefit:
  - Actions
    - Continued support to existing groups;
    - Grow current volunteering across the service; and
    - Develop a programme of new volunteering opportunities within the service
- Developing and supporting local partnership approaches to the management, development and enhancement of local rights of way networks, countryside sites, greenspaces and the natural/historic heritage of Shropshire:
  - Actions
    - Develop a series of external funding bids to support growth of local partnerships;
    - Establish local priorities for rights of way improvements and developments through discussions with P3 groups; and
    - Continue to develop local partnerships with Parish and Town Councils in the management of greenspaces in urban areas.

- Maintaining the infrastructure that underpins all types of recreational access and ensuring that the Council's statutory duties in relation to them are complied with:
  - Actions
    - Rights of Way networks maintained;
    - Country Parks, Sites and Greenspaces maintained; and
    - Play infrastructure maintained.
- Continuing to listen to local communities and ensuring that we meet community need in developing community recreational opportunities and externally funded projects:
  - Actions
    - Continue to listen and respond to our customers and locally identified need; and
    - Engage and support local communities and active volunteer groups on projects and external funding bids to develop and improve local access routes.
- Working in partnership with statutory and non-statutory bodies in the management of access and special habitats in Shropshire to ensure that our rich and varied landscapes, and access to them, are protected and enhanced:
  - Actions
    - Deliver agreed actions within the Meres and Mosses HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme and NIA project; and
    - Deliver agreed actions within the Stiperstones and Corndon HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- Ensuring that Shropshire's reputation as a great place to live, and visit is widely recognised and promoted and work to link different areas in such a way that they provide coordinated opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding as well as 'green corridors' for wildlife;
  - Actions
    - Shropshire is promoted as a welcoming destination and local businesses are supported;
    - Develop, brand and promote a number of new short circular walks and rides to increase people's use of the rights of way network; and
    - Development of the Shropshire's Great Outdoors website to promote and co-ordinate all outdoor activity and opportunities.
- Providing specialist and technical advice to conserve rights of way access, landscape features and wildlife habitats;
  - Actions
    - Ensure that the Definitive Map is accurate and up-to-date; and
    - Ensure that the Council's statutory duties are carried out in relation to the public rights of way – issue resolution & enforcement.
- Continuing to deliver good quality, value for money services aligned to Shropshire Council's new model of delivery:
  - Actions
    - Business planning preparation for Outdoor Partnerships Service operation within a Commissioning Council.



SB and CF answered questions from the floor. Arising from the ensuing discussion, CF would contact Alex Carson-Taylor to discuss corporate volunteering and sponsorship.

Suggestions put forward to improve the development of recreational access and exercise included the provision of higher impact play areas to encourage teenagers and exercise areas for older people. The importance of access for health benefits, rural economy and tourism and the need for more linked-up promoted routes was emphasised.

### 38 **New Ways of Working - ROW Maintenance**

Richard Knight, Rights of Way Team Leader, provided an overview of the position to date with regard to the new ways of working within the Rights of Way Maintenance Team. The following points were highlighted:

- He reiterated that the Outdoor Partnerships service was under huge pressure to make savings and do things differently – as was the whole of Shropshire Council;
- The RoW Team had restructured in 2011/12 as a result of the loss of substantial capital funding which supported both RoW management and site management. This had resulted in the loss of some staff and a larger revenue budget to be used to try to manage larger structures on the network which had previously been managed and funded through capital funds;
- The service had been further restructured to reflect the support from Public Health funding;
- In an attempt to gauge the extent of the structures issue, a biannual survey of larger structures had been undertaken by the Highways bridge inspecting contractor. The result of this survey (of only the largest 50 structures) had indicated that an estimated cost of £330,000 for repairs/replacement of varying priority was required. Bridges not included in this survey and other surfacing and draining issues would also incur costs and amounted to possibly double this figure;
- An agreed Business Plan would now enable the service to extend its income generating work beyond that already needed to support budgets (£16k this financial year). Skills would now be used to generate income which would be put into reserves and used to tackle some of the bigger issues;
- Projects completed to date included:
  - The repair of Offa's Dyke Monument – which had been funded by Natural England and English Heritage;
  - Access improvement work to hill forts, castles and other places of interest for Shropshire Council Landscape Partnerships Programme; and
  - Various improvements funded by the Sustainable Transport Fund.
- Upcoming projects included:
  - More SCLPS projects;

- Work with NE and EH on specialised projects;
- Access improvements for communities; and
- Memorial gates (Church Stretton Pilot).
- The intention would be to build up a reserve of money which could be invested in the repair/replacement of larger high cost items.

Since the commencement of this process a capital allocation of £100k for this year and hopefully for a further two years has been received. This had been allocated to help to reduce the £330k needed for repairs and Shropshire Council was currently working with Mouchel to implement prioritised repairs.

It was imperative that this work was carried out without detriment to the team's core work and so far the team had been able to complete more individual improvements to the RoW network than the previous year and had achieved this alongside the income generating work. This had been achieved through the investment of new machinery and would be closely monitored to ensure both areas of work continued without any adverse effect on the other.

Members of the Forum congratulated the team on their achievements but raised concerns with regard to the reserved funding and they hoped that the ring-fenced funding would be protected and not lost in the future.

### 39 Shropshire UCRs

Richard Knight, Rights of Way Team Leader, provided an overview of the position to date. The following points were highlighted:

- Following a survey of routes, it was agreed that the Outdoor Partnerships team would manage some of the UCR routes where good links could be achieved within the existing RoW network;
- Routes that had a sealed tarmaced surface or the presence of large structures would remain within the remit of the highways network managers along with any necessary legal work or enforcement;
- As a result of a survey (phase 1) undertaken in 2008/09, it was agreed that the management of 95 UCRs (65km) would be undertaken by the RoW team and this would be funded by Highways via an annual payment of £35,000. To date money had been spent on resurfacing of the worst routes, clearance and signage and had focussed on those routes that would give the most public benefit and had good links with the RoW network;
- A further 133 UCRs had been surveyed in phase 2 of the survey. This represented those routes that had not fallen into the criteria for the first survey although issues to how the routes had been labelled had been identified;
- Currently, it is being recommended that 34 of these routes (totalling 29km) should be adopted by the Outdoor Partnerships team or a shared responsibility was being considered as some routes were part tarmac and part natural. Also a number of status issues had been identified where recorded roads did not link with the surrounding access; and
- A decision on phase 2 had yet to be made. However, when a decision was made and in order to achieve clarity on which team was managing what, the

intention was to request that those routes that had been passed to the Outdoor Partnerships team be reclassified by Highways.

A Member of the Forum expressed concern that the Government funded OS mapping layer available on the Shropshire Council local map contained many errors, particularly with regard to the status of UCRs.

#### 40 **Shropshire Great Outdoors Website and Branding**

Clare Fildes, Outdoor Partnerships Development Team Leader, provided an overview and the position to date with regard to the new branding and the Shropshire Great Outdoors website ([www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk)) where you could find further information on the following:

- Volunteering;
- Parish Paths Partnership;
- Outdoor Play Spaces;
- Wild Teams;
- Promoted Routes;
- Walking for Health;
- Outdoor Partnerships;
- Volunteer Rangers;
- Rights of Way; and
- Parks, Countryside Sites and Greenspaces.

The site had been search engine proofed and would be linked to external sites.

From the floor, Members of the Forum suggested information relating to the categorisation of waymarking, use of bird scarers and shooting by or near to rights of way should be included.

CF also circulated a copy of the leaflet entitled "Volunteering in Shropshire's Great Outdoors".

#### 41 **Parish Paths Partnerships**

Helen Beresford, Shropshire Outdoor Development Officer, provided an overview of the position to date with regard to Parish Paths Partnership (P3), which had been running for over 20 years in Shropshire. The following points were highlighted:

- The scheme encouraged local groups of volunteers to help manage and maintain their local rights of way network;
- The Outdoor Partnerships Team supported the scheme through the provision of tools, training, materials, expert advice and small grants;
- The Area Rights of Way Officers provided support to the groups within their areas;
- The development of new groups and the reinvigoration of existing groups was a shared role between the Area Rights of Way Officers within the Rights of Way Maintenance Team and the Shropshire Outdoors Development Officer; and

- There were currently 62 P3 Groups, 21 Parish Path Warden schemes and approximately 285 P3 volunteers across the County.

### **Key achievements 2014**

- The number of groups had increased from 56 to 62;
- Reinvigorated and now active groups had been re-established in Kinnerley, Long Mynd Bridleways, Market Drayton and Bishop's Castle;
- The PPW groups in Stoke-on-Term and Beckbury had been upgraded to full groups;
- Volunteer hours had increased from 6393 to 6788;
- 619 individual furniture improvements had been achieved and many stiles had been replaced with gates to create easier access; and
- The volunteer work for 2014 equated to £56,622.

### **Future ambitions/benefits**

- Ongoing support of the scheme would help to maintain the rights of way network;
- Identification of local priorities through P3 groups would ensure that the limited resources could be directed accordingly and effectively;
- Continued promotion of the open and usable rights of way helped to improve tourism and economic benefits;
- Continued promotion of the benefits that access to the countryside brings to both mental and physical health;
- Funding could be sourced at a local level, eg Local Joint Committees;
- The aim was to achieve 90% coverage of Shropshire by 2020;
- Currently of the 202 parishes, 62 participated in the scheme and geographically this equated to and covered 66% of the County;
- Aim to provide more training and to extend the range of activity volunteers could undertake; and
- Priority areas for 2015 included Ellesmere, Wem, Sellatyn & Gobowen, Chelmarsh, Worthen & Shelve, Rushbury, Cardington and Mainstone.

### **Promoting the initiative and recruitment**

- Parish Plans, parish meetings, parish newsletters/notices on notice boards, "Do It" database, word of mouth, take on board the comments made on the on-line survey, new branding would help to promote events, new website would have a dedicated area to promote volunteering opportunities and taster days.

## **42 Ramblers Big Pathwatch**

Peter Carr provided an update on the Ramblers Big Pathwatch which would be launched on 13 July 2015. The aim of the initiative was to encourage communities to explore and survey rights of way in England and Wales and report back their findings via a purpose-built App or the Ramblers' website. Each participant would be invited to choose one or more 1 km grid squares as used by Ordnance Survey maps and walk all the paths in that square and report back their findings. The contact for Shropshire Council would be Shona Butter. Trevor Allison offered his services, particularly as he had walked and surveyed all the rights of way in Shropshire.

From the floor, Members commented on the importance of the survey to identify the condition/suitability of all routes for all users and not just walkers.

**43 Feedback from other Forums and items for noting**

**Items for Noting**

29 July 2015 **Volunteer Celebration Day** at Wistanstow Village Hall – 10.00 am – 4.00 pm

**Minutes / Papers:**

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

- (i) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum – 7 October 2014
- (ii) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum – 16 February 2015
- (iii) Shropshire Cycle Forum – 10 February 2015 (The meeting noted that this would be the last meeting of the Shropshire Cycle Forum.)
- (iv) Central Shropshire Walking Forum – 18 February 2015
- (v) Central Shropshire Walking Forum – 15 May 2015
- (vi) Southern Walking Forum (now known as Shropshire Hills Forum) – 21 April 2015

**Future meetings:**

The following agenda items were suggested for consideration at a future meeting:

- The Use of Towpaths (CART)
- Lost Ways in Shropshire

Future meeting dates:

Thursday, 15 October 2015

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**AGENDA ITEM 4**

**QUESTION:**

**MR STUART MORGAN** will ask the following question:

**A plea for the Lost Ways of Shropshire**

“Why does the council not take a pro-active position in placing lost ways that clearly would add to the effectiveness of the access network on the Formal Application Register, so that they will not be lost automatically post 2026?”

Whilst I was a member of this forum, I learnt about the Formal Application Register, I checked this out and had I attended the cancelled April meeting would have brought to the attention of this forum my concern regarding the low number of applications that could have significant strategic impact on an access network that will meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But there are 2 applications which possible should be discussed because of the wider strategic benefit.

No study has been made into cause and effect of lostways, merely a very expensive exercise by Natural England that seems to be an evaluation for the legal recovery of lost ways across a sample number of parishes.

This was followed up by "Stepping Forward" which appears to be a promise to accelerate the legal process. If left to individuals with no legal training how are we going to rescue ways that were lost through mal administration of the 1949 act. Misplaced political influence that that would not be allowed today and possibly corruption.

The War Office took over land during the 2<sup>nd</sup> WW, but never re-instated rights of way when this land was returned to agriculture.

Shrewsbury is clearly shut off from much of the surrounding countryside. The chairman of the Shrewsbury and Atcham RDC at the time of the compilation of the Definitive Map was estate agent for 7 estates around Shrewsbury.

The heirs of the Chairman of Shropshire County Council in the 1960's have inherited an estate without a single right of way on it in an area that falls well short of the national average.

One example from Natural England's lost way project showed a mile length of lost way that was measured as highly probable to be successfully re-instated, that mile is in an area of nearly 8000 acres without RoW.

Would it be better to get information out that all can benefit from an access network that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rather waiting for 2026 and keeping our fingers crossed that a wave of public revulsion at the lost opportunity to improve a national asset? The evidence that this could hit Shropshire hard is there to be seen on any copy of an Ordnance Survey map. Without study we cannot know if ways used by our ancestors can be used to repair, improve and unlock some of the routes needed by todays society.

If the evidence is collected, it will show that there are enough examples, like lost pieces of a jigsaw, so many that we do not get the full picture, when the full picture is revealed would it show that the Council must act in a proactive way.”

**SHONA BUTTER OR ROGER PLOWDEN**, will reply as follows:

*Why does the council not take a pro-active position in placing lost ways that clearly would add to the effectiveness of the access network on the Formal Application Register, so that they will not be lost automatically post 2026?*

**This has been considered by the Stakeholder Working Group who were looking at improvements and simplification of Rights of Way legislation and is now part of the Deregulation Act 2015. This Act will provide surveying authorities with the ability to register useful or potential useful routes during a period post cut-off. Any such applications will be subject to the same tests and transparency as any other application.**

**The primary legislation, secondary legislation and guidance for all the proposals affecting Public Rights of Way contained within the Deregulation Act is due to come into force at the same time. This is anticipated to be around April 2016.**

*Whilst I was a member of this forum, I learnt about the Formal Application Register, I checked this out and had I attended the cancelled April meeting would have brought to the attention of this forum my concern regarding the low number of applications that could have significant strategic impact on an access network that will meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But there are 2 applications which possible should be discussed because of the wider strategic benefit.*

**The access mapping and enforcement team who deal with such applications are happy for Mr Morgan to highlight those existing applications which he considers to be of strategic importance.**

*No study has been made into cause and effect of lostways, merely a very expensive exercise by Natural England that seems to be an evaluation for the legal recovery of lost ways across a sample number of parishes.*

**Whilst the Discovering Lost Ways project was not progressed, Shropshire is in a better position than other authorities. As Shropshire was one of the Pathfinder Projects run as part of this project a lot of work was done on potential lost ways in the North of the County. In addition officers within the mapping & Enforcement Team also undertook their own mapping exercise to identify potential lost ways. We therefore have a good overview of potential key routes.**

*This was followed up by "Stepping Forward" which appears to be a promise to accelerate the legal process. If left to individuals with no legal training how are we going to rescue ways that were lost through mal administration of the 1949 act. Misplaced political influence that that would not be allowed today and possibly corruption.*

**The Deregulation Act has effectively progressed the proposals put forward in the Stepping Forward Report and should improve the legal process and ability of authorities to deal with Public Rights of Way matters.**

*The War Office took over land during the 2<sup>nd</sup> WW, but never re-instated rights of way when this land was returned to agriculture.*

**Shropshire has a couple of locations where this is the case and proposals have been put forward in the past to try to resolve these. Unfortunately these were not successful due to land being sold and objections being raised. Officers are aware of these matters and have and will continue to look at resolving the Public Rights of Way network in these areas. It should be noted that this work**



**service as there is a depleted team dealing with all legal orders, enforcement and management of the Rights of Way network.**

*Shrewsbury is clearly shut off from much of the surrounding countryside. The chairman of the Shrewsbury and Atcham RDC at the time of the compilation of the Definitive Map was estate agent for 7 estates around Shrewsbury.*

*The heirs of the Chairman of Shropshire County Council in the 1960's have inherited an estate without a single right of way on it in an area that falls well short of the national average.*

*One example from Natural England's lost way project showed a mile length of lost way that was measured as highly probable to be successfully re-instated, that mile is in an area of nearly 8000 acres without RoW.*

*Would it be better to get information out that all can benefit from an access network that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rather waiting for 2026 and keeping our fingers crossed that a wave of public revulsion at the lost opportunity to improve a national asset? The evidence that this could hit Shropshire hard is there to be seen on any copy of an Ordnance Survey map.*

*Without study we cannot know if ways used by our ancestors can be used to repair, improve and unlock some of the routes needed by today's society.*

*If the evidence is collected, it will show that there are enough examples, like lost pieces of a jigsaw, so many that we do not get the full picture, when the full picture is revealed would it show that the Council must act in a proactive way.*

**It is agreed that there are clearly areas which lack Public Rights of Way and areas which could benefit from some key connections. Whilst historic cut off may prompt claims for some of these routes a large number would be for preferential routes which often have no evidence and therefore have to be negotiated and hopefully provided through dedication. Some of the proposals contained within the Deregulation Act should assist in this instance.**

**Wherever possible officers will try to resolve matters including those relating to lost links or beneficial routes however, there are many factors which simply would not allow us to undertake a full scale investigation of all potential lost ways, mainly due to the existing workload to try to ensure that the existing network is open and available and the existing demand for legal changes.**

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## **Online Annual User Survey- Outdoor Partnerships 2014/15**

### **The purpose of the survey**

The survey has been produced to establish:

- Which of our Outdoor Recreation resources are being used
- For what reasons they are being used
- The frequency and duration of use
- The reasons which detract from use and how improvements could be made
- The willingness of our users to participate in active volunteering

### **Results**

There were 342 responses to the online survey in 2014/15, down from 668 responses in 2013/14.

98% of these people use footpaths, bridleways or other RoW, 67% use countryside sites and 40% use town parks

85% of people use the outdoors to improve their health and for exercise, 78% for walking, 68% to experience nature and wildlife and 59% for the peace and quiet.

Things that put people off enjoying the outdoors include overgrown vegetation (53%), intimidating livestock (42%), lack of signposting/ waymarking (35%) and ploughing and cropping issues (34%).

Most people like to use circular walks (82%), long distance promoted walking routes (51%), countryside parks and site walks (48%) and linear walks (47%).

77% of people use outdoor assets at least once per week, with 18% using them daily. 62% use them for 2 hours or more. They are mostly using them with friends and family (over 37%), 24% are with a dog and 22% are with an organised group.

For those who are out with an organised group, 54% are with a local walking group, 34% with the Ramblers Association and 30% with Walking for Health. Only 5% are with a cycling group. People were involved with a wide range of different groups.

People joined groups to learn new walks, make friends and get fitter (54-61%).

Most people had seen little improvement in their level of activity over the past 12 months, although there were slightly fewer inactive and moderately inactive people.

Where activity levels had decreased, 65% said this was due to ill health.

Almost 50% of people are satisfied with the RoW network, 46% have noted improvements over the past 12 months and 54% in the last 3 years.

Over 50% of people were satisfied with parks and sites in their areas, with 26% noticing an improvement in the past 12 months and 30% in the past 3 years.

94% of people felt better for taking some exercise and 92% enjoyed being out and wanted to do more.

Over 50% found out something new whilst they were out, with 42% finding out more about their community.

The following were the most popular improvements that could be made:

- Nearly 50% of people wanted to see more circular walks
- 37% better signage
- 33% more walks with gates instead of stiles
- 29% more online guides and interpretation
- 27% more walk linked to public transport
- 26% more dog friendly walks

Most people use printed leaflet and guide books (57%) to find out what is available and going on in the outdoors, with 35% using local papers, 32% using local websites, 32% organised groups and 30% the Shropshire Walking website.

86% of people living close to our facilities thought it had a positive or very positive impact on their quality of life.

Over 70% said they lived 'close' although for some people this meant 30-45 minute walk.

62% did not want to get involved with volunteering. Of those that did, RoW surveys and P3 groups were the most popular.

### **General comments**

Many people were alarmed by the lack of funding for RoW maintenance in the future, for example:

"It is ESSENTIAL THAT THE POWERS THAT BE at County Hall RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING - and increasing - the RoW maintenance budgets when bearing in mind the importance of HEALTHY EXERCISE and the contribution of WALKING TOURISM TO THE RURAL ECONOMY, and to COUNTER OBESITY."

### **Respondents**

- 58% female
- 84% over 45
- 98% White British
- 13% had long standing illnesses

## Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Performance Monitoring 2014/15 and trends

Owner	Number of volunteers involved in Outdoor Recreation development and delivery	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	Comments
auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>633</b>	545 Volunteers from AONB recorded Q4. Other volunteer numbers down due to loss of staff support, especially for Parks and Greenspace.

Owner	Number of volunteer hours each quarter (including W4H walk leaders but not walkers)	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	Hours per volunteer have gone up from 21 to 56 reflecting the dedication of those volunteers to making improvements and supporting the service. This increase will be benefiting their health and wellbeing
auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11324</b>	<b>11384</b>	<b>10898</b>	<b>14,828</b>	<b>48,732</b>	<b>31,032</b>	<b>30,792</b>	<b>13,252</b>	
auto	Value of volunteering hours £	87761	88226	84460	132,981	351,874	223,430	221,701	92,764	
	Hours per volunteer					32	23	19	21	

Owner	Number of people receiving a service from Outdoor Recreation Services that supports them to live independently	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
auto	Walking for Health	1133	130	113	246	1,622	1,623	1,278	1,074	The Walking for Health schemes have grown considerable over the past few years. The Coordinators have been focusing on creating Level 1 and 2 walks over the past 12 months; targeting the inactive. This is more time consuming and difficult than growing attendance on other walks and this is reflected in the figures.
	any other projects	100				100				
	any other projects	35				35				
	any other projects			12	17	29				
	any other projects									
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>1,623</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>1,074</b>	

### Level Two - Learning and culture indicators -

Owner	No. of unique virtual users to web sites	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
Clare	SC OR pages	18544	18933	13140	10,954	61,571	46,950	41,357	44,744	
Clare	Walking website	7152	6890	4451	6,194	24,687	40,534	39,618	43,603	The launch of the new Shropshire's Great Outdoors website will be accompanied with a promotional campaign to encourage more people to use this to find activities
Clare	Riding website	1128	951	526	1,006	3,611	3,006	4,335	4,874	

Phil	Shropshire Hills AONB website				43,678	<b>43,678</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26824</b>	<b>26774</b>	<b>18117</b>	<b>61,832</b>	<b>133,547</b>	<b>90,490</b>	<b>85,310</b>	<b>93,221</b>	

Owner	Number of Facebook likes	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
MickD	Shropshire Walking	478	43	79	76	<b>676</b>	414	291		Facebook has grown significantly and has become more important as a method of communication. This will be exploited more in 2015/16, with the development of
EdA	SVCP	186	56	48	43	<b>333</b>	419	195		
Phil	Shropshire Hills AONB				1,027	<b>1,027</b>				
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>2,036</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>486</b>		

Owner	Number of visitors to Country Parks, sites and play areas	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
Auto	Adults	70290	80789	56611	372,432	<b>580,122</b>	<b>447,835</b>	<b>416,042</b>	n/a	Visitor numbers are up. In line with other research, this demonstrates that people are using local, free facilities more.
Auto	Children	710	476	99	60	<b>1,345</b>				

Owner	No. of people attending events, courses and activities (participation each Q)	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
auto	Walking for Health	6543	7338	7514	6,493	<b>27,888</b>	24,248	22,769		Walking for Health continues to grow. These figures show that the individuals involved are walking more regularly than they were.
auto	Adults	1523	7561	996	2,090	<b>12,170</b>	1,216	4,551		The sudden jump in events attendance figures reflects the addition of the AONB figures and the attendance of Outdoor Partnerships at some of the bigger local events such as Ellesmere Regatta and Carnival and Merefest.
auto	Children	1983	2633	498	799	<b>5,913</b>	922	478		
auto	No of schoolchildren taking part in educational visits	710	476	99	751	<b>2,036</b>	1,081	3,140		Includes 691 from AONB activity
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10759</b>	<b>18008</b>	<b>9107</b>	<b>10,133</b>	<b>48,007</b>	<b>27,467</b>	<b>30,938</b>	<b>19,509</b>	

Owner	Number of externally funded and Community projects supported	Q1 Number	Q2 Number	Q3 Number	Q4 Number	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>112</b>	With reductions in staff numbers, the ability to support new projects is limited. The new Development Officer will be working with P3 groups and other volunteers to develop small scale projects in 2015/16, whilst a number of large scale

Owner	value of externally funded projects	Q1 £ Value	Q2 £ Value	Q3 £ Value	Q4 £ Value	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	

auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43,671</b>	<b>115,000</b>	<b>109,890</b>	<b>1,062,660</b>	<b>1,331,221</b>	<b>971,993</b>	<b>757,075</b>	<b>514,608</b>	This includes a couple of large scale AONB projects e.g. The Stiperstones and Comdon Hill Country LPS
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Owner	PROW, Parks & Site maintenance & improvements	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
RichardK	no of improvements to PROW network	13	22	42	34	111				
RichardK	no of Parks & Site improvements	0	0	0	0	0				
Mark B	no improvements by probationers	0	0	0	0	0				
RichardK	no of maintenance task on ROW	142	153	225	218	738				
RichardK	no of maintenance tasks on sites	12	2	10	18	42				
Mark B	no of improvments to Parks & Sites				149	149				
Mark B	no of maintenance tasks by probationers	50	52			102				
auto	Number of H&S site inspections	0	357	0	676	1,033				
auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>2,175</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>700</b>	?

Owner	PROW Reported problems	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	This demonstrates the impact of significantly reducing the no of staff in the Mapping and Enforcement team.
ShonaB	Enforcement reported	61	62	65	52	240	357	305	745	
ShonaB	Enforcement resolved	8	4	26	32	70		101	146	

Owner	No of improvements to Definitive Map accuracy annually	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar	Annual total	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	This demonstrates the impact of significantly reducing the no of staff in the Mapping and Enforcement team.
ShonaB	WCA orders	0	1	1	1	3	6	5	13	
ShonaB	Highways act	3	7	3	2	15	12	18	22	
ShonaB	TCPA	0	3	0	1	4	3	4	4	
Auto	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	

Owner	BVPI 178 - ease of use of public rights of way					Annual	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	This is unlikley to be significantly different as the survey is based on a random sample or RoW.
ShonaB	Survey					73	72	66	n/a	

Owner	% of customers satisfied or very satisfied with the service we provide					Annual %	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
Auto						95	72	0	97	

Owner						Annual %	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
Auto	% of people who say they have increased their knowledge, skills or confidence as a result of their experience of or involvement with Outdoor Recreation					82	58	65	80	
	% of people who say they have increased their knowledge, skills or confidence as a result of their experience of or involvement with the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership					89				
						85	58	65	80	

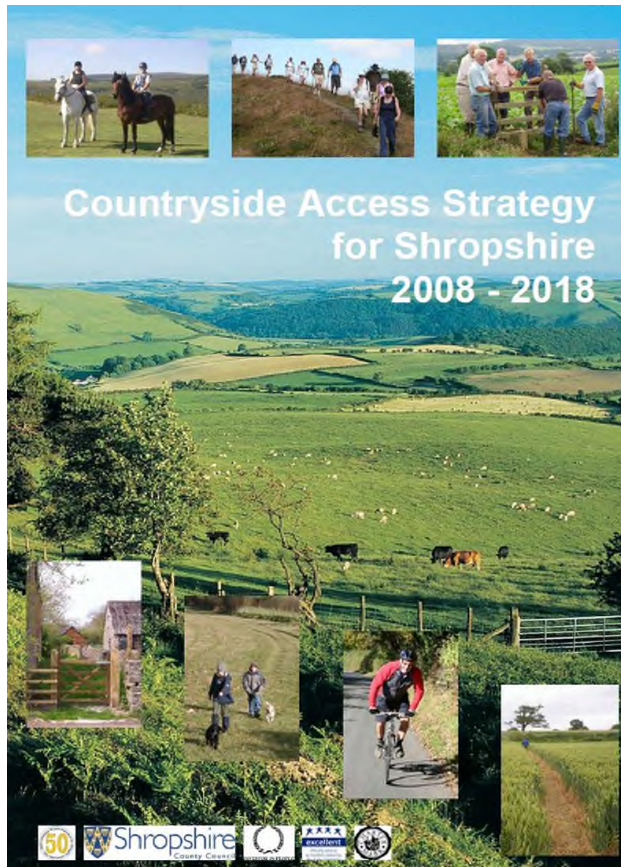
Owner					Annual %	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
auto	% of people who say they have an increased sense of mental wellbeing as a result of their experience of or involvement with Outdoor Recreation				97	94	99	94	
	% of people who say they have an increased sense of mental wellbeing as a result of their experience of or involvement with Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership				92				
					95	94	99	94	

Owner					Annual %	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
	% of people who say they have an increased sense of physical wellbeing as a result of their experience of or involvement with Outdoor Recreation				99	93	98	95	
	% of people who say they have an increased sense of physical wellbeing as a result of their experience of or involvement with Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership				84				
					91	93	98	95	

Owner					Annual %	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	
	% of people who say they feel part of their community as a result of their experience of or involvement with Outdoor Recreation				85	57	58	82	
	% of people who say they feel part of their community as a result of their experience of or involvement with Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership				83				
					84	57	58	82	



# Shropshire Council Countryside Access Strategy for Shropshire 2008-2018 5 Year Review 2014



# Themes

- **Working with Communities**
- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Access for Everyone**
- **Making Local Journeys**
- **High Quality Network**

## The Review - What was looked at?

- What has been achieved?
- Problems encountered
- Key future actions for 2014 – 2018 – Prioritisation and delivery

# Working with Communities

We will:

Continue to listen to our customers through:

- Annual online surveys, User forums & Problem reports
- be flexible in terms of responding to customer needs
- Work to establish local ROW priorities and ensure that these priorities are reflected in any direct delivery at a local level as well as ensuring that we work in partnership to make things happen at a local level – this may be through externally funded project or other place based initiatives.

# Working with Communities

- Maintain support to existing Parish Path Partnership groups and Parish Paths Wardens and support new local groups to develop where there are gaps. We will work towards a longer term vision to have countywide geographical coverage for the partnerships.
- Support Parish Path Partnership groups alongside Town and Parish Councils to set their own local priorities for ROW improvements and developments as well supporting an area wide approach to active volunteering partnership's – linking people and groups together.

# Working with Communities

- Provide more training to extend the range of activity volunteers can undertake.
- Work to link to existing volunteer groups to other active volunteering groups locally and encourage sharing of resources, training and best practice.



**Installing a stile**





**Training P3 Volunteers**





**Installing a kissing gate**

# Health and Well Being

We will:

- Increase the number of volunteers involved in existing groups and increase the number of new volunteer groups – Parish Path Partnerships, Walking for Health, Shropshire Outdoors and from our Countryside Sites and Greenspaces

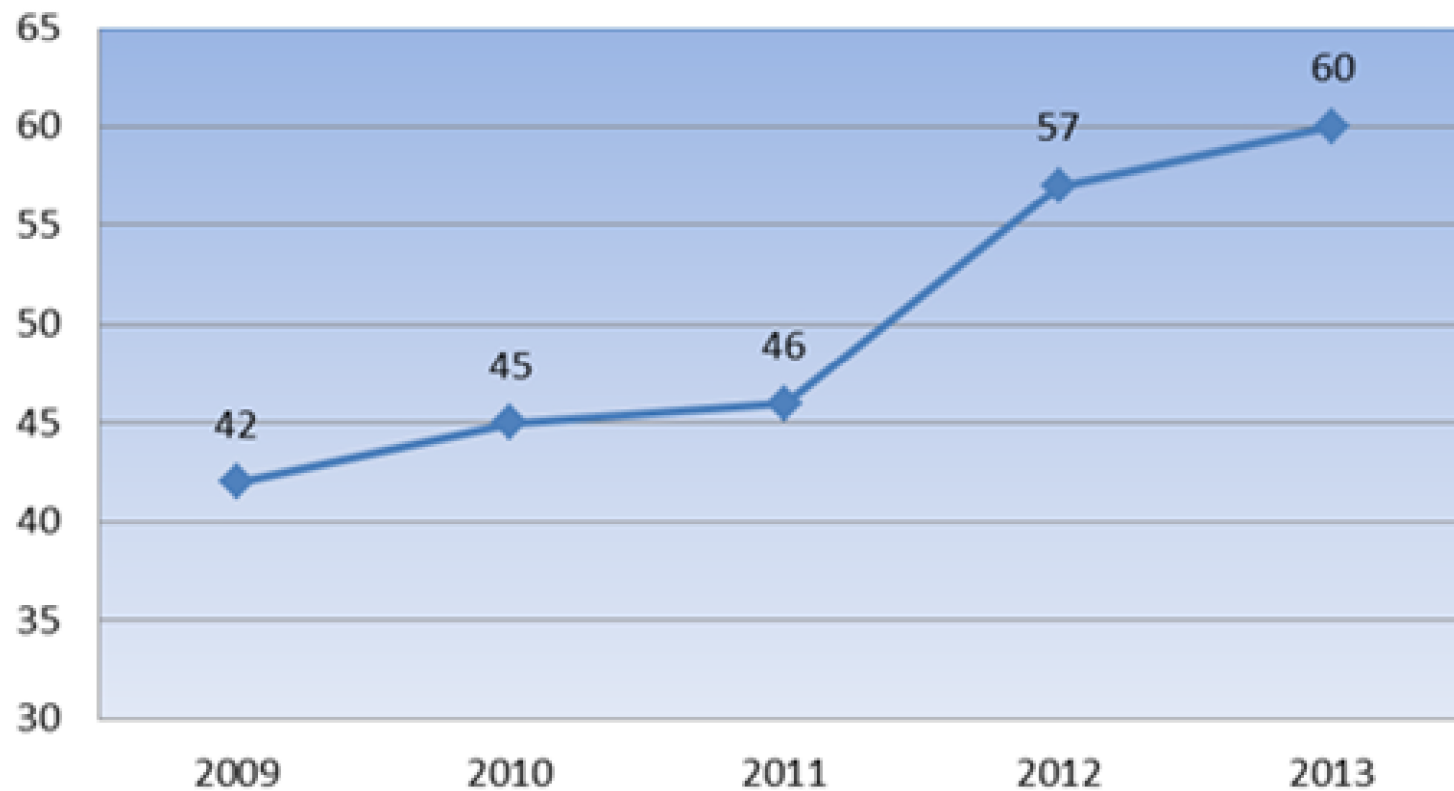
# Health and Well Being

- Promote volunteer opportunities better and more effectively, in partnership with other organisations
- Increase self-supervised volunteer activity, with the suitable paperwork, training and equipment
- Develop a number of 'A Teams' of volunteers who can be called on to tackle more complex jobs

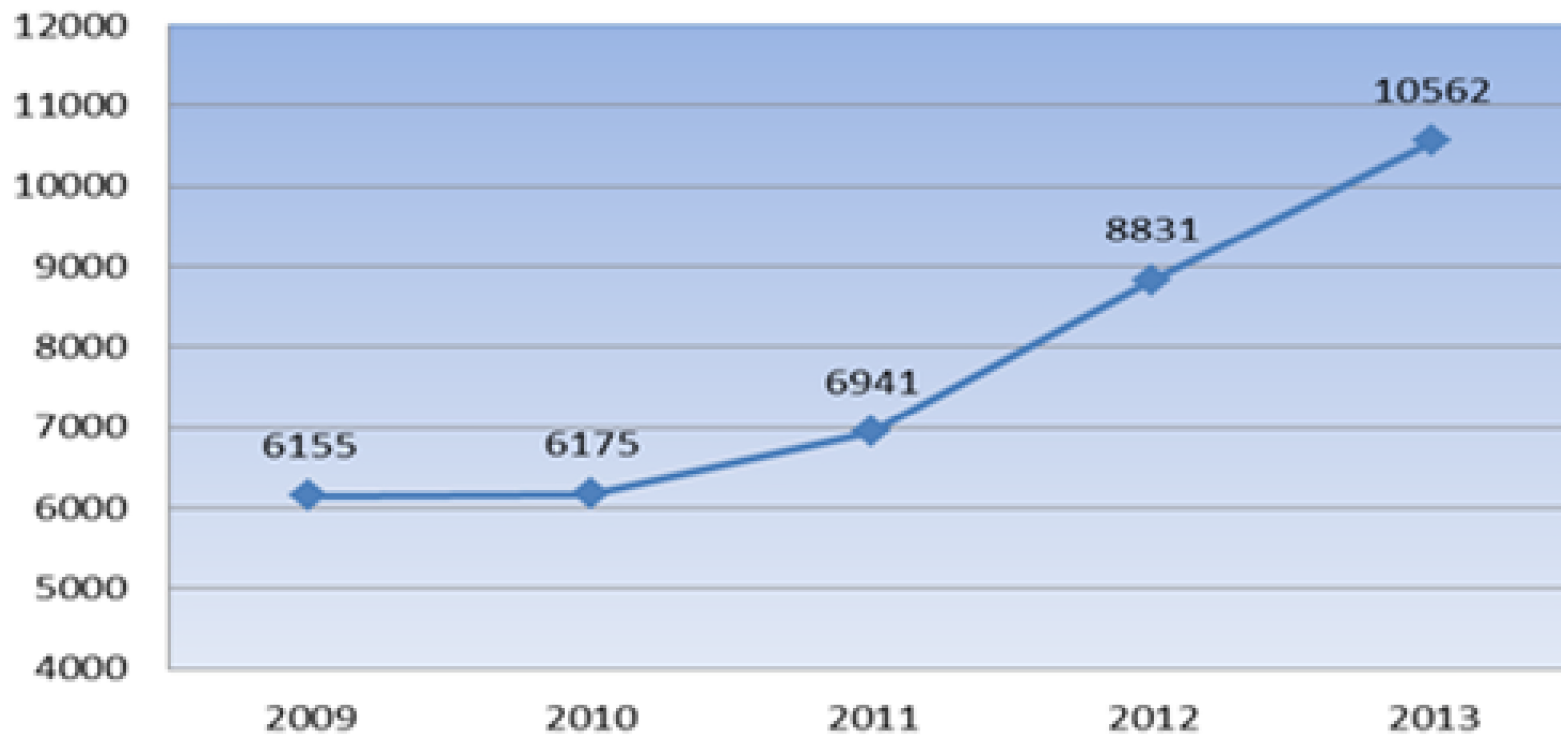
# Health and Well Being

- Increase business involvement through corporate volunteering
- Create volunteering opportunities around non-physical work such as website or event management
- Increase the number of young people involved in Outdoor Partnerships volunteering

### Number of Walking for Health schemes



**Number of walk leader volunteer hours per year**



# Access For Everyone

- We will continue to:
- Engage with hard-to-reach groups to understand their barriers to access



# Access For Everyone

- Understand the needs and interest of people with learning difficulties, mental health problems and sensory impairment and make it easier for them to participate in countryside activities.
- Reintroduce the ‘Shropshire Outdoors’ approach to encourage such groups to engage more in the Shropshire countryside specifically by continuing to support this approach to active volunteering



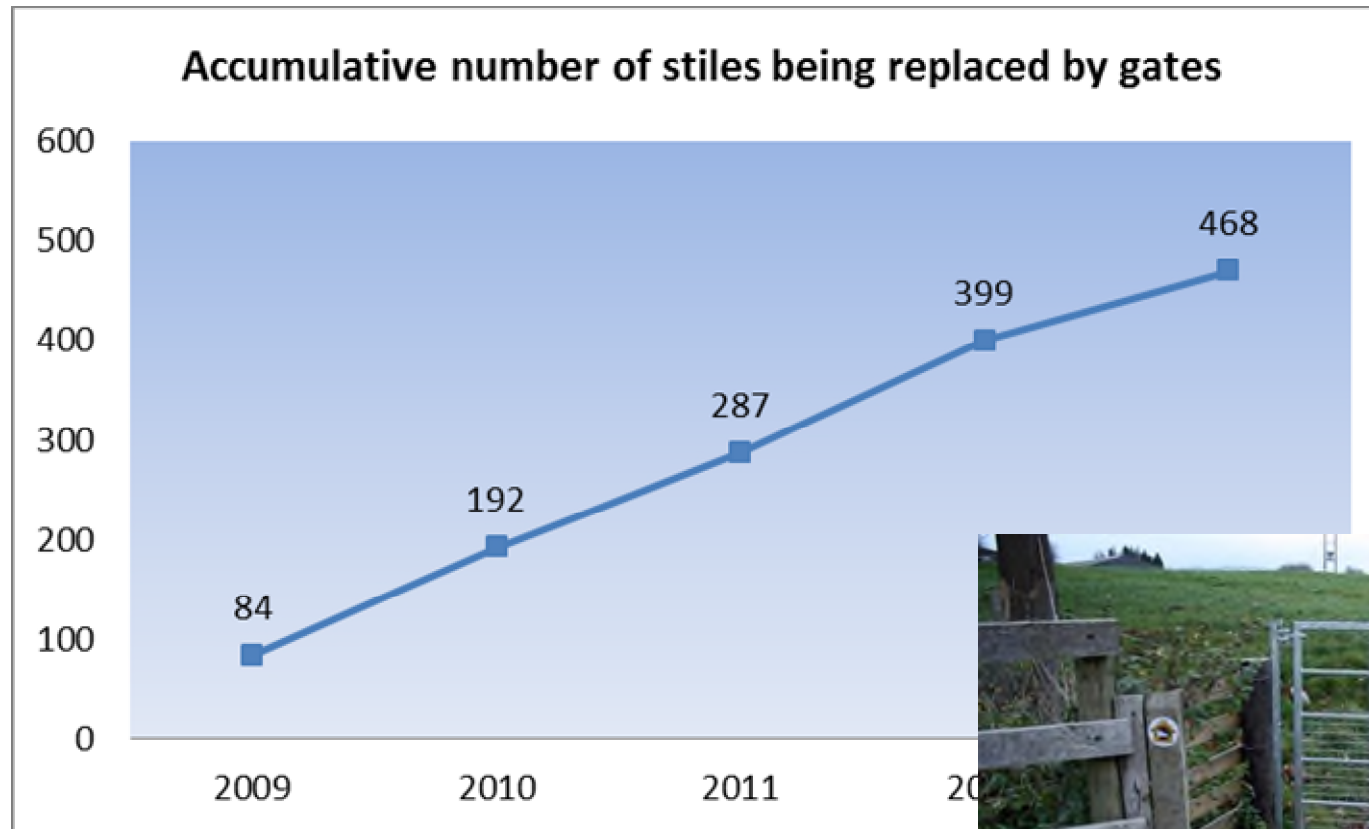
# Access For Everyone

- Work to ensure that the Shropshire countryside is more accessible for everyone implementing the 'least restrictive' principle on the ground - replacing stiles with gates where ever we can.
- Continue to promote easier access and provide wherever opportunities present themselves
- Work towards providing a range of volunteering opportunities for young people
  - Youth Rangers.

# Better Signage



# Least Restricted Principle





# Easy Access



The image shows the cover of a brochure titled "Easy access in Shropshire". The background is a photograph of a family walking on a path in a wooded area with autumn foliage. A man with a red backpack, a woman, and a child in a blue jacket pushing a stroller are walking away from the camera. In the distance, another person is visible on the path. The brochure has a blue header with the Shropshire Council logo. On the left side, there is a vertical blue bar with four white icons: a person in a wheelchair, a person pushing a stroller, a person with a white cane, and a person in a wheelchair. The main text on the brochure includes contact information for the Countryside Access Team, a "walking for life!" logo, and the title "Easy access in Shropshire" with four accessibility icons below it. At the bottom, it says "12 places for you to explore" and "Discover Shropshire".

Shropshire Council

For more information about countryside activities contact

**walking for life!**

**Easy access in Shropshire**

**Easy access in Shropshire**

Countryside Access Team  
Shropshire Council,  
Shirehall, Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

0345 6789000  
countryside.access@shropshire.gov.uk  
www.discovershropshire.org.uk

Walks researched by [www.NoNonsense-Interpretation.co.uk](http://www.NoNonsense-Interpretation.co.uk)  
Artwork by [www.MACreative.co.uk](http://www.MACreative.co.uk)  
Photography by [Picture Works](http://Picture Works) unless stated otherwise

**12 places for you to explore**  
Discover Shropshire

# New all ability Trails

- Much Wenlock
- Bettisfield
- Colemere
- Whixall



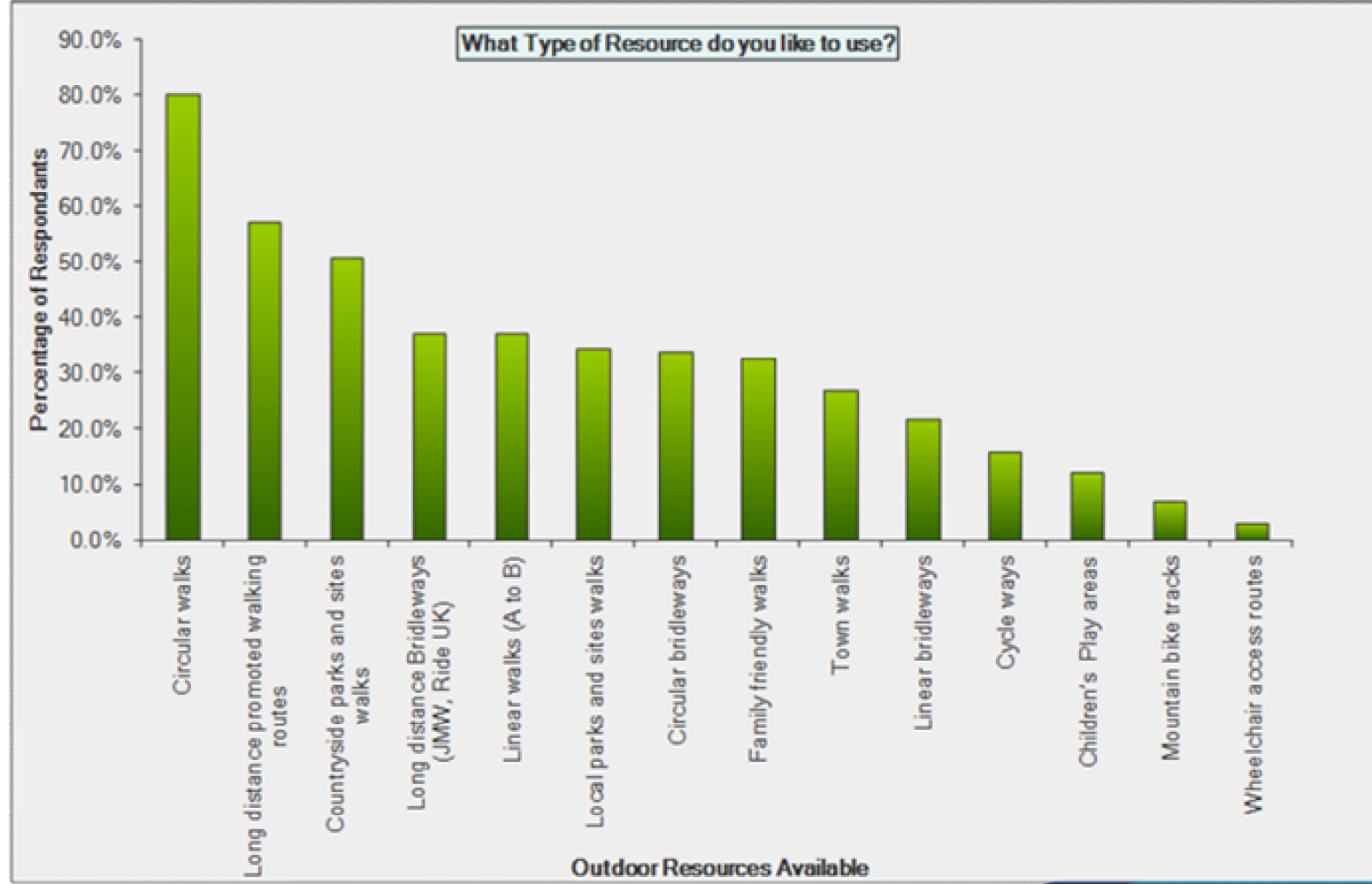




# Making Local Journeys

We will:

- Work with Parish and Town Councils to promote walking as a way of getting around local areas.
- Continue to seek out external funding to support such initiatives.
- Incorporate the walking and cycling active travel content of the Travel Shropshire website onto the new Shropshire Outdoors website.







# A High Quality Network

We will: work to secure external funding to:

- Upgrade the Shropshire Way in the Shrewsbury and surrounding area and create a number of shorter circular walks, town heritage trails.
- Provide updated guides, web information and digital apps to allow more people to link to the wonderful heritage that this area has to offer with walks on the ground.
- Work with the local community to secure “walkers are welcome” status for the town.

# A High Quality Network

- Provide more support for local volunteer groups such as the Parish Paths Partnerships to minimise costs to the Council and maximise work on the ground.
- Finalise work on the Shropshire Way links to Shrewsbury and Market Drayton
- Work to improve the Severn Way and develop local circuits

# New Waymarking

St. Winefride Pilgrimage Trail Logo

1. 75mm



2. 37mm





# Resurfacing





# Local Benefit

Page 50



## NOTES FROM NORTH SHROPSHIRE WALK FORUM MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015

**Present:** Trevor Allison(Ramblers), Peter Carr(Ramblers), Mark Cuthbert-Brown(P3), Tony Eccleston(Wem Walkers), Liz Evans(W4H), Clare Fildes(Outdoor Partnerships), Ernie Heath(Wem Walkers), Jane Ing(P3), Andy Lipa(Outdoor Partnerships), Ann Moore(P3), Neil Moore(P3).

### **Notes from the last meeting:**

Llanyblodwell enquiry – Trevor reported that all 3 routes had been approved, subject to the owner's appealing.

Oswald's Trail – Wat's Dyke is partly incorporated into this. There is now a website where people can put comments on. There have been 2 negative reports which Jane and Trevor are going to check. There is an AGM for the Wat's Dyke group in a couple of weeks.

Bluebell Walk – Alison and Jane are going to repeat their September walk in bluebell time so people can see it at its best. Date to be advised.

### **Walkers are Welcome**

Oswestry are doing 4 seasonal walks again. The first walk, the snowdrop walk is on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, leaving the Heritage Centre at 10am. Full programme is attached.

Whitchurch walking festival – programme is nearing finalisation and will be distributed as soon as possible.

Liz is attending a workshop day in Talgarth which aims to come with ideas to promote walkers are welcome locally.

Sam Phillips is the new chairman for Walkers are Welcome.

### **Walking for Health**

Shawbury, Hadnall, Ellesmere, Whitchurch and Baschurch are all doing well.

Market Drayton has had 6 new walkers this year which has doubled the size of the group and made it more sustainable.

Wem, West Felton and Oswestry continue to struggle with numbers.

The next volunteer training day is Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February in Shirehall.

### **WW1 Walks**

Liz is taking over the WW1 walks from Jim. The ones for 2015 relevant to north Shropshire are:

Walk around Whixhall moss on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August by Jim

Leaflet for walk around Oswestry talking about Wilfred Owen and training at Park Hall camp.

Walk based at Harper Adams – to be confirmed.

### **Letter to landowners from footpath groups**

Liz distributed a template that the Hodnet footpath group are going to send to local landowners. Some people felt that a letter from Shropshire Council would have more effect, but some that this, more friendly approach might be worth a go in the first instance.

Shona said a generic letter will be sent out in May to landowners known not to comply, but all felt April would be better.

Neil is monitoring Budney Farm which has had issues requiring letters from Shropshire Council.

### **Council matters**

Clare said that there are major cutbacks in council funding.

As such we all will have to:

- Focus on statutory duties
- Generating income – for example rights of way team work for other agencies
- Think carefully about promoted routes as may have to reduce these
- Need to prioritise what people want

There was a discussion about how important rights of way is for leisure, health and income. Attached are links for the recent MENE survey, and a report on the economic and social value of walking.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/survey-reveals-importance-of-outdoor-visits-in-england>

Clare would like the next walk forum meeting to focus on priorities.

### **Any other Business**

Alison was concerned about the plans in Ellesmere for new houses which will cover a public footpath behind Lakelands School down to the canal. Liz to check if Shona is aware and if any action is required.

Peter Carr said the Ramblers are doing a survey of Britain's footpaths which will enable them to compare how different counties are doing

The Oswestry group of Ramblers are having a talk on outdoor equipment on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 7.30pm at Trefonen village hall, by Peter Moss from Cotswold Outdoors. £2 entry to cover cost of hiring hall



# NOTES FROM NORTH SHROPSHIRE WALK FORUM

## MONDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2015

**Present:** Trevor Allison(Ramblers), Colin Chandler(Ramblers), Mark Cuthbert-Brown(P3), Tony Eccleston(Wem Walkers), Liz Evans(W4H), Clare Fildes(Outdoor Partnerships), Ernie Heath(Wem Walkers), Jane Ing(P3), Andy Lipa(Outdoor Partnerships), Ann Moore(P3), Neil Moore(P3) Alison Parker(Ramblers), Barrie Stephens(W4H).

### **Meres and Mosses**

Luke Neal is always interested to hear from groups who might want to apply for community grants. This could be for leaflets, but could also be for walk leader training, a series of funded walks, footpath improvements/audits, or anything else he has not thought of yet that increases awareness and access to the area.

### **Bluebell walk update – Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May**

There are 5 spaces left if anyone wants to book. Alison thanked everyone who helped her organise and publicise this walk. She mentioned there was barbed wire on a gate, but as this does not actually prevent anyone going through, just not over, it was felt no action is required.

### **Trevor's Trek**

Trevor has now finished walking the footpaths of Shropshire. He clocked up 10,000km, or 6,000 miles. He is thinking of doing Telford and Wrekin next. He will re-visit paths that were a particular problem to see what could be done about them, and has discovered ones he did not know existed!

### **Geo cache routes**

There was a discussion about the possibility of using this as a way of encouraging more walking and new walkers to the area. Neil is going to research [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) and talk to Meres and Mosses about using it as a possible project.

### **Villa Farm Progress Report**

Whilst there is agreement from the landowner to the work, the rights of way team are still waiting for other landowners for permission to access their land. It was felt this was no progress as this has been the case for some years.

## **Walking for Health**

Liz reported that walking for health still has many fewer walkers in north Shropshire compared to the rest of the county. Ellesmere, Shawbury and Hadnall remain the most successful groups with a core of excellent leaders. Baschurch is also doing well but is short of walk leaders. Market Drayton has taken on a life of its own this year and is now doing quite well. West Felton remains a small group, but now has a walk leader to look after it. Oswestry and Wem remain very low in numbers despite all attempts to publicise them. There is a new group in Harmer Hill on a Tuesday evening which will probably run throughout the summer. There is a monthly group from Meadowbrook sheltered housing in Gobowen which is unlikely to proceed due to low numbers unless walk leaders take it on. If anybody has any ideas for a new group or helping an existing one, please contact Liz.

## **Walkers are Welcome**

Liz reported that Walkers are Welcome in Oswestry have a walk on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May and will be doing the south west part of Oswald's Trail. It is a beautiful walk, and will take about 4 hours, so please bring provisions if you want to come. It starts at 10am from the Visitor Centre in Oswestry.

Walkers are Welcome in Whitchurch would like to remind everyone that their walking festival is the weekend of 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17 May, so please have a look at their brochure to see the variety of walks and activities available, and support them.

It was felt the pictures in the new Walkers are Welcome booklet for Whitchurch were not very appealing. Nothing can be done about this print run, but if anyone has any better pictures they can be put on the online version.

## **Trefonen Hillwalk Weekend**

This is from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>h</sup> May 2015. If interested please check out their website [info@trefonen-hillwalk.com](mailto:info@trefonen-hillwalk.com)

## **WW1 Walks**

This is an ongoing project for the whole of Shropshire. There have been 4 leaflets done last year and 4 guided walks. This year will be the same. Jim Stabler will lead a walk on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August around Whixall moss.

## **Update and Chair**

Clare confirmed funding from Public Health for another year, but this still requires more savings of £262,000 next year, and £58,000 the year after.

There is a new branding for volunteers to help with marketing. The Shropshire Great Outdoors logo will hopefully encourage new people to volunteering in our area.

There is a lottery application in progress for the heritage side, to develop both Nescliffe and the Cliffe, and another for East Oswestry.

The Pilgrimage Way is in progress and will use existing promoted routes.

Clare still needs to analyse the annual survey results, of which there was a disappointing 350 replies.

Clare requested a Chair be appointed for this meeting in future to allow Liz time to take notes.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be about prioritising issues that could be addressed in north Shropshire.

### **In Addition**

Trevor mentioned a Ramblers initiative called Big Path Watch which will happen over a 3 month period, where people can register online to survey a km<sup>2</sup> and send the result back.

Trevor and Peter Carr are going to do BVPI (best value performance indicator) training, so they can survey footpaths. If anyone is interested please contact Trevor. The results for last year were 73% good quality which surprised everyone.

### **Next Meeting**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm, Ellesmere Town Hall.

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## **SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING FORUM (SRCDF)**

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, at 5.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

### **1. Attendance:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chair. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG, Joint Secretary. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Wendy Beaumont, Bridgnorth. Gaynor Evans, Broseley Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council

### **Apologies:**

Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Jan Baldwin & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Mark Weston, BHS. .

As there were no nomination for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, and no resignations, it was unanimously agreed that they should continue in office.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Wind Turbines**

It is noted that the application 13/04250/FUL for a 77m wind turbine to be sited approx. 60m from Bridleway 11 at Wigmarsh has been withdrawn.

It is noted that, as agreed, a response was sent on behalf of the Forum to the application for one 77m wind turbine at Criddon, along similar lines to the one done for the two turbines. Ann D. also responded to the application. It is agreed that we should continue to object to any applications that fall within the BHS guidelines.

#### **(b) Canal Towpaths**

It is noted that the last LAF meeting, which it was hoped the CART representative would attend, following their non attendance at the February LAF meeting, was cancelled. Shona reported that they hoped to attend the next LAF meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015. There was a good response to the Canal & River Trust's 'Sharing Towpaths' Consultation: - <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/consultations/completed-consultations> by horse riders. Shona reported that the document was quite positive. The BHS did a good response. Members confirmed that many canal towpaths were, and are, ridden. The old canal towpath from Shrewsbury to Uffington is now a public bridleway. Zia reported that Anne Roberts has sent details to Mark Weston of riding use of the Canal in the Maesbury Marsh area. As towpaths were built for horses to tow boats, and tow horses were often ridden whilst towing, it was asked why riding is not permitted on all tow paths. Horses are to be included in the Tow path 'Code of Conduct'. Zia reminded members that Mark Weston had reported that there are to be three pilot areas for horse riding use of towpaths.

### **(c) Deregulation Bill**

Shona reported that they are waiting for the regulations. John thought this would be by next year. Andrew K, with his apologies, wrote that he is watching the detail very closely on two very important points. Firstly, the detail of the cut-off date, and, if 2026 is still the chosen date, whether an extension will be given, or if it may be dropped altogether: the best solution all round. Secondly, what, if anything, will be said about the future of MPV's, and their access to the countryside. Following on from the amendments put forward, but not taken forward, on vehicular use of green lanes, the CLA has been surveying members on usage and problems. Shona reported on how they manage problems on routes with maintenance work. Zia reported that where green lanes have been repaired, this does seem to put off inappropriate vehicle use. There are current problems in the Alveley area.

Documents can be viewed on [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) by putting 'Deregulation Bill' in 'search'

### **(d) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships annual public survey 2014-15**

Zia only received a long document giving the results this afternoon. There were only 342 responses down from 688 last year. It is disappointing that not many horse riders had responded. We need to get the survey out to more horse riders, and impress on them the importance of responding to every survey. The questions are still very biased towards walking, so riders could not respond on some. Also riders walk as well as ride, but some questions did not allow responses to reflect both uses, as they only allowed one item to be ticked. We have put forward our concern over this before, and a few changes were made, but the Forum agreed that we should respond again to point out that the questions are still not permitting riders to respond as they wish to some questions. Shona reported that the results are important as they guide what they do. She will feed back our concerns to Clare Fildes.

### **(e) Helicopters**

The RAF has had a huge response for high-viz garments from their recent campaign, and have featured it on their website. They launched the campaign at their Landowner's Day, and Zia attended, and had been interviewed by the Press. The BHS had come in to help sponsor it. John reported that they have had no complaints recently from carriage drivers regarding helicopters. A date has not yet been set for a future meeting. Zia reported that it is important the liaison is kept up as RAF personnel change frequently, often every two years. Linda asked if they were updating their landing sites, and consulting on new ones, as these had caused concerns. Zia has raised this with them. Shona's department has not been consulted on any recently.

[RAF Shawbury - High Visibility Campaign](#)

### **(f) Shropshire Level Crossings Review**

Shona reported that Officers have been out with people from Network Rail to look at particular crossings with regard to usage and any issues. All the ones she has looked at were footpath crossings. Emily has looked at footpath ones in the north, and Lucy McF looked at footpaths in the south. The four being looked at for diversions are all footpaths. They are waiting for them to come back on the Shrewsbury Area. John had been told that there were 87 crossings, but it depends on what you class as level crossings. Zia raised a BW crossing at Yockleton where the gates have been replaced with self closing ones: one is set back from the track, but the other gate riders have to open and negotiate whilst right by the line. The BHS have guidelines for crossings. Steve put forward the suggestion of an electronic count down to show when the next train was due. It was pointed out that devices can still go wrong. John reported that the British Driving Society is doing a big survey with Network Rail in East Anglia on crossings.

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

**BHS Access Week** – To raise money for Access week, Zia gave a talk for BHS Shropshire 'Exploring Shropshire on Horseback' including the Humphrey Kynaston Way at the Preston Montford Field Studies Centre. They very kindly donated the venue. She also took out two guided rides along the Humphrey Kynaston Way taking in the circular rides at Montford and at Nesscliffe.

All the money raised went to the BHS 'Paths for Communities' fund. The BHS hope to create new bridleways using this fund. If any one knows of a suitable route to put forward for this funding, they should contact the BHS.

**Solar Farm Applications** – Zia raised concerns over traffic being brought onto narrow lanes due to applications. One recently applied for near Baschurch, in an area with few bridleways, will be accessed via a narrow well ridden lane, where horse riders have no off road alternative. It is agreed that in schemes where proposed new fencing adjoins bridleways at field edge there should be a wider margin of 4-5 metres left with a maintenance agreement. If a riding route passes through a proposed Solar Farm, then the width through should be 5 metres. Forum members were also concerned over the type of fencing. There should not be any spiked fencing near riding routes. It is agreed that the Forum respond to express concern over the application near Baschurch.

**Shropshire Riding Website** – Zia has got errors on the current website corrected. The information from the [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk) and the [www.shropshirewalking.co.uk](http://www.shropshirewalking.co.uk) websites is now in the process of being transferred to a new joint site. There will be a map search facility which it is hoped will be easier to use for visitors and for locals. Phase 1, the promoted route layer, has been completed, but there are omissions that they are addressing. The existing sites were managed by Shropshire Tourism, but Shona reported that Outdoor Partnerships will now be able to modify and make correction on the new site, which will make things much easier.

#### **4. Shropshire Council**

##### **(a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships**

Zia read from a report on Tourism from Steve Charmley, Shropshire Council's Deputy Leader, which included that Shropshire Council would continue to invest in the tourism sector, that Outdoor Recreation Services will continue as they form a vital part of visitor's experience to Shropshire, and that Tourism is a significant part of the Shropshire Economy. Shona reported that they are still looking for savings and to outsource as many functions as they possibly can. Health funding is only in place until the end of the year. Concern was raised over funding for ROW furniture. Shona confirmed that Shropshire Council are responsible for fingerposts off public roads, and that Landowners are responsible for gates and stiles on ROW, but that Shropshire Council has a legal obligation under the Highways Act to contribute 25% towards them. The Council provide stile kits, but if the Landowner agrees to a gate then Outdoor Partnerships may put it in as an incentive to get the network more open, and to provide easier access. Shona reported that the system they use works well.

##### **(b) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Implementation Team**

Richard Knight's team are doing summer topping. They have been working on Offa's Dyke which has brought money in. The Spring Newsletter reported they had made 738 improvements on the network, worked on 111 gates, and done surface works. This included works on the new Humphrey Kynaston Way long distance bridleway. They now have better equipment to carry out clearance work. They now have 62 Parish Paths volunteer groups. Work is ongoing on improving the drainage on BW25 Ford Heath past the now closed Boons's Abbatoir following the clearance work done earlier in the year to open up the width. Llanablodwell is due to be opened up soon.

Some big trees have come down, one blocking the Sabrina Way at Apley Park off the side of the old railway line by Linley Station which has been reported, and Apley Park are going to look if they can clear it. Others are at Shirlett, St Mary's Cottage by Cross Lane Head, Kingsley Park Farm, and another at Frog Mill. Shona asked for reports on these, with route numbers, if they are not cleared. Gaynor has tried to resolve a problem with a black iron kissing gate with sharp prongs put beside the field gate on a bridleway at The Haycock, Broseley which is dangerous, with a horse injured on it. If a stock proof gate is required Zia reported on a better alternative to the gate with the latch on the gate post, which is the gate used on the HKW new section, which opens with one hand, with a pull handle just below the top bar, and a 'D' loop, so nothing to get caught up on. Zia also reported on the Shropshire Great Outdoors, Nesscliffe Hills & The Cliffe Heritage Project survey that is being carried out. Claire Fildes and Clive Dean are involved with this.

### **(c) Shropshire Council Planning**

It is noted that the application for 30 houses off Back Lane, Ford, on the Circular HKW route, has been refused. Concern was expressed that developments like this can have a great impact on country lane riding routes. Also of concern was the development of all the small pony paddocks in and around villages. Zia reported applications for a number of houses on small plots of land, and gardens, which will impact on the Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park. The time being taken to make decisions was also raised. It is thought that this could be due to 106 agreements and not enough staff to deal with them. The Sam Dev Inspector clarified the position with regard to holiday lets, stating that they should not be converted into housing. Concern was expressed over the lack of consultation by planning Officers when applications impacted on Rights Of Way.

The planning application which proposed changing Cwms Lane, a County Road at Church Stretton, into a footpath has still not been resolved. <http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

### **(d) Shropshire Council Highways**

**Digitising of Shropshire Highway Maps.** Shropshire Council has still not digitised the older Highway Maps, so Zia has now taken photographs of them all. She is concerned as to what will happen to them now that the staff who look after them are employed by Mouchel. These are important documents.

**Government's £3 million funded new digital road map OS ITN and Recording of White Roads by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016.** This map contains many errors with even public roads shown as private. This map is currently available on SC Local Map under 'more maps' 'outdoor partnerships' but can take time to load. It shows public roads, alleys, private roads restricted access, and private roads publically accessible. Shona agreed that it is all very worrying: who is checking it? When roads get taken off, it can then leave anomolous rights of way. It is not understood how highways can just remove routes from their maps or change their status, when Rights of Way changes have to go through such long processes.

**Update on Unsurfaced UCR's** and the proposed layer on SC mapping to show those now maintained by Outdoor Partnerships. Shona reported that Richard needs to do work on clarifying which ones they now look after, and then someone will need to digitise them all.

Concern was raised over damage done by quad bikes to the surface of rights of way. John said if classified for road use, then the police can be involved but many are not registered.

## **5. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues**

**Llanyblodwel BW**– This now confirmed bridleway is waiting to be opened up

**Shirlett** – It was reported that the glass has now been removed. Shona will do a blanket letter to everyone to try and resolve the incidents occurring there. They will remove the two trees down, do the ditches, and check the through route.

**Clun/Offa Dyke – BW Gap on the Parish boundary** – Shona said that she did the review of that parish and that the BW just stops on the parish boundary. Lucy will look at the routes there as there is another route near there that is partly permissive that need resolving.

**Adcote Bridge BW** – The options for the collapsed bridge are being looked at. The middle section has now gone leaving a gap. There are private access routes across it, as well as the bridleway. Both parish councils are prepared to attend a meeting with other interested parties to discuss the way forward, but Richard is still waiting for the costings on the different options.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane** – Shona reported they have received correspondence on this to say that the boundary dispute has been resolved. They will look to see if they can now get this resolved by dedication.

**Oaks Wood** - Lucy went out and found the route has been flattened out making it now a more useable route. They hope to get in and resolve this.

**Frodesley Orders** – They are hoping to send this off soon, together with the Statement of Case. They have written to all the objectors to see if they have anything to add.



**Drumbles Wood** – This is now with Emily to do.

**Sutton Mill** – This is now with Lucy to do as she has the background knowledge.

**Old Moors Lane** – Zia reported that she has spoken to Andy Savage to say we need to get this route resolved. It is shown as a through public road on their old highway maps.

**Hilton** – this is still waiting to be published.

**Melverley** – The enforcement of the width is now with Emily.

**Pontesford Hill** – This is now owned by the Wildlife Trust. Zia hoped that the possibility for higher status routes there will be looked at

**Purslow BW addition** – This is now with the Planning Inspectorate. The appellants will be fighting the case. If granted this will leave a 15m section of BW with no outlet. There is a line issue nearby so it will all have to be looked at.

**Gippols route near Highley** – the used line there was by permission of the landowner, but when use increased they locked the gate. The historic route is on a different line.

## **6. Cycling and Rights of Way**

The minutes of the Shropshire Cycling Forum dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015 are noted. This was the last meeting of the Forum. Funding for staff involved with cycling has been cut.

**National Trust Cycle routes on Wenlock Edge.** It is not known what routes they are referring to. It is thought a survey was done in 2013 for the National cycle network.

## **7. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums**

It is noted that the Local Access Forum Meeting to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 was cancelled, so the minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015 meeting are not yet confirmed and that the next LAF meeting is on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015.

The minutes of the Southern Walking Forum dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015 are noted, and that they include, on p2-3, a list of new P3 Volunteer Groups. It is also noted that the forum may split into 3 groups.

LAF meeting papers are available on a new website link: [Local Access Forum](#) go to ‘Browse meetings and agendas for this committee’. The Southern Walking Forum Minutes referred to along with other Forum Minutes, are near the end of Item 29. Additional documents. The Cycle Forum Minutes are also in Item 29 under the link ‘Feedback from other forums and items for noting

## **8. Any Other Business or items to Note**

**Ramblers Big Path Watch** – The [www.ramblers.org.uk/BigPathwatch](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/BigPathwatch) has been launched, and they want people to go on line, download the app, and survey one or more 1km squares.

**Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Project** – Joe Penfold did a presentation to LAF on this. A meeting was held which Zia could not attend. All the reports from that meeting only addressed all ability trails and not multi user trails, although they included discussions on the bridleway around Pontesford Hill. There are used routes by horse riders on Stapeley Common that are not recorded.

## **9. Dates of the Next Meetings**

The next meeting is to be held at the Shirehall on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm.**

The date of the next meeting is confirmed for **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

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# NOTES FROM NORTH SHROPSHIRE WALK FORUM

## MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015

**Present:** Trevor Allison(Ramblers), Peter Carr (Ramblers), Mark Cuthbert-Brown(P3), Keith Dunning (Market Drayton Ramblers), Tony Eccleston(Wem Walkers), Liz Evans(W4H), Clare Fildes(Outdoor Partnerships), Ernie Heath(Wem Walkers), Jane Ing(P3), Andy Lipa(Outdoor Partnerships), Neil Moore(P3), Gerald Moss(P3).

### **Walking for Health**

The next volunteer walk leader's training is on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August at Shirehall. If you know anyone who is interested please contact Liz Evans.

### **Walkers are Welcome**

The Whitchurch Walking Festival was a great success, with around 200 participants.

The next Oswestry walk is the north-east of Oswald's Trail on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 10.00am, from Gatacre Avenue Sports Pavillion. If you are interested please contact Liz Evans.

### **P3**

There is a new P3 group starting in Trefonen

### **WW1 walks**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, Simon Evans walk, Cleobury Mortimer

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August, Whixall walk

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September, Wilfred Owen walk, Shrewsbury.

Please contact Liz Evans for more details if interested in any of these.

### **Big Pathwatch**

If anyone is interested in helping the Ramblers with this, please contact Trevor Allison directly at [eta-06@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:eta-06@tiscali.co.uk)

### **Workshop**

Please see attached

### **Next meeting**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm, Ellesmere town hall.



## Central Shropshire Walking Forum

### Notes of Meeting

2pm, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015

The Wilfred Owen Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury

#### Attendees:

John Newnham (Chair)  
Audrey Menhinick  
Dick Bailey  
Bob Coalbran  
Bill Hodges  
Trevor Allinson  
Clare Fildes  
Mick Dunn  
Helen Beresford  
David Hardwick

#### Apologies:

Susan Daykin

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

John opened the meeting at 2pm

#### 2. Feedback/Action from Previous Meeting

There was no actions from the previous meeting

#### 3. Group Updates

**a. Bob Coalbran (Walk about Wrekin & Wellington Walkers are Welcome)** – The footpath group has been very active, holding 2 sessions a month mainly clearing paths and way marking. The Shropshire Way routes 16 & 17 have been completed and printed.

The Wellington Walking festival will take place between the 14<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Sep 2015. Publicity events have been held in Morrison's etc. and have proved to be very successful. There has also been an interview on Radio Shropshire. <http://www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk/Festival.html>

**b. John Newnham (Shrewsbury Ramblers)** – The Shrewsbury Ramblers P3 group has been very active especially maintaining routes included in the "20 Walks in and around Shrewsbury" guide book and on the Severn Way. The guidance notes for Ramblers walk leaders has been updated and issued to walk leaders.

#### **c. David Hardwick (Shropshire Council)**

- Improved 2 circular walks for the Corndon and Stiperstones Landscape Partnership Project. These are a 6.6 mile circular walk starting at Wentnor to Norbury including Linley Beeches and Linley Hill. The other was a 7.5 mile circular walk between Bentlawnt and Stiperstones village including Hope Valley. 11 stiles have been changed for kissing gates, and numerous other stiles, sleeper bridges and way marking improved. Leaflets are to be produced for promoting these routes.
- Volunteer groups have been very active especially Pontesbury, Shrewsbury Ramblers, Bishops Castle P3 groups and Shropshire Wild team.
- Started working on rights of way improvements with new P3 groups at Harley, Uffington and Worthen.

**d. Dick Bailey (Much Wenlock Walking for Health & Walkers are Welcome)** – Walking for Health in much Wenlock continues to be well attended during the summer months. The group is currently getting all walkers to complete the new registration form so details can be updated. They have been liaising with the local GP surgery to become part of the "Sit less, move more" campaign and will act as ambassadors to encourage more people to be more active.

The Walk Leaders carry out regular inspections of the Footpaths around Much Wenlock and pass on the details of any issues to the P3 group.

The Much Wenlock Walking weekend takes place from the 4-7 September. The walking weekend has been sponsored by local traders which helped to pay printing costs etc.

#### **e. Helen Beresford (Outdoor Partnership Development Officer)**

##### 2014/15 Overview

- Volunteer hours have increased from 6393 to 6788 (Moderate 6% increase but an increase nonetheless and we know not all hours are recorded)
- 619 individual furniture improvements on the network comparable to what the maintenance team achieved, many gates to replace stiles for easier access.
- 2563 vegetation clearance hours
- The volunteer work for 2014 was valued at £56,622

##### 2015/16 so far.....

- Volunteer hours – 2570
- 102 individual improvements
- 582 hours of vegetation clearance
- 45 hours of surfacing works
- 283 hours of surveying paths
- 27 guided walks
- 41 fund raising hours
- Total value of P3 volunteering - £15,480

##### Priority areas 2015/16

- Ellesmere
- Wem
- Sellatyn & Gobowen
- Chelmarsh
- Worthen & Shelve
- Rushbury
- Cardington
- Mainstone (BC interested)

Identified as having the most outstanding issues in each of the Officer Areas.

##### New groups establishing

- Worthen & Shelve
- Farlow (footpaths group)
- Culmington
- Trefonen
- Little Ness

We have had interest from Hanwood and Westbury. Uffington are losing their co-ordinator but a replacement has been found already.

##### Long term goal

We aim to have at least 90% of Shropshire covered by the scheme by 2020 (Access strategy).

Geographical area covered by a scheme at present is 66% but this doesn't take into account our roving P3 groups like Pontesbury and Shrewsbury Ramblers who work in many parishes around the County.

#### **4. Walking Coordinator Update**

##### **a. Ploughing and Cropping Interim Summary 26/8/15**

85 letters were sent out in April 2015 to known offenders. This resulted in 5 responses from landowners who assured us they cleared through the crops or there was no crop. No further action was taken on these routes.

80 paths were checked in the period mid-June to end of July. 10 no longer had an arable crop. Of the remaining 70 paths, around 50% of had been cleared. Landowners who had not cleared the path received an additional letter and out of these 75% responded citing crops being harvested as their reason for not reinstating now. Those who have now harvested but clearly did not reinstate the path have received a letter informing them that action will be taken next time if they do not comply.

There is a wide geographical variation e.g. in south Shropshire over 80% of paths were cleared. Whilst in North Shropshire this was considerably less.

#### **b. PROW Guidance Notes**

Shona Butter has produced a set of PROW guidance notes for Farmers and Landowners. The leaflet has been produced to provide an easy guide to some of the common issues and queries relating to Public Rights of Way and the legislation that governs them.

Whilst primarily written to assist farmers and landowners, the guide should be beneficial to everyone who enjoys getting out in the countryside. The leaflet has been endorsed by the Country Land and Business Association and will hopefully be endorsed by the NFU once a few points have been clarified. There are still more in depth guidance notes on the council website which can be found at

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/outdoor-recreation/countryside-access-and-public-rights-of-way/countryside-access-and-public-rights-of-way-guidance-notes/>

#### **c. Shropshire Way**

A meeting was held in July to discuss a single, promoted, long distance Shropshire Way route. In attendance were, John Newnham, Audrey Menhinick, Deb Hughes and Mick Dunn. It is hoped to devote a page on the new website to promote this route. Further discussion is required to finalise the details of the route, way marking etc.

### **5. Shropshire Outdoor Partnership Updates – Clare gave the following updates:**

#### **a. LEADER Funding**

New programme due to start early 2016 for southern Shropshire (south of M54 due west).

Total funding= 2,540,000 Euros (approx. £2,032,000) from 2016-2020

Priorities:

- Helping businesses thrive in southern Shropshire
- Exploring opportunities for growth and addressing market failure
- Building the resilience of local communities
- Nurturing southern Shropshire's local distinctiveness

Business grants 40% intervention, community infrastructure and heritage development will be higher.

Local Action Group being formed to oversee delivery of the programme and to make funding decisions.

#### **b. Web Site Update**

New website is now live, although not yet finished. The site covers:

- Walking, cycling, horse riding and other outdoor activities
- Parks and countryside heritage sites
- Play areas

Parks and sites information being uploaded within next week, followed by Outdoor Experiences. Longer term aspiration is to include other publically owned sites; Forestry Commission, Natural England, National Trust and Wildlife Trust. The new website can be found at

[www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk) attendees are encouraged to have a look at the website and pass any comments to Clare.

#### **c. Project Development**

##### **SVCP project**

Currently working on Accessing Nature bid to SITA to be submitted end September. Focus on developing the centre at a hub for outdoor activities that get you closer to nature- improvements to walking, cycling and riding routes, Nordic walking equipment, wildlife interpretation, cameras and screens for watching wildlife, replacement of pond dipping platform and habitat management.

A much larger project to make the SVCP the gateway to the Severn Valley is being developed that will be submitted to HLF under the Parks for People fund in February. This will include improvement to the centre, possible new classroom/ meeting room, interpretation plan and marketing. It will look to place the SVCP at the centre of the wider visitor offer for the Severn Valley from Ironbridge to Bewdley.

### Irresistible Offa

Looking at an Inttereg bid for the development of sustainable tourism and community involvement in outdoor activities, especially walking and cycling.

Shropshire Wild Teams

Submitted and Expression of Interest to work on a consortium bid for ERDF/ Big Lottery funding to continue Wild Teams until 2020.

#### d. Southern And Northern Walking Forums

Clare gave a brief overview of the outcomes of the Southern & Northern Walking forums Workshops.

#### 6. The Big Path Watch

John reported that due to problems with the App the Big Path watch had not been as successful as originally hoped. Johns advised the forum that the data can still be used but it is better to use the Web Version rather than the smart phone App. You can register and access the web version here

[www.ramblers.org.uk/bigpathwatch](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/bigpathwatch) John and Trevor are confident that the 200 grid squares allocated in Shropshire will be completed.

#### 7. Walking Forum Workshop

Clare gave a quick presentation to set the scene for the workshop (presentation attached).

The Walking Forum members were asked to consider future priorities that could be delivered to benefit the Central Shropshire area by discussing these in two groups and then swapping to see what the other group had written and adding any more they felt were relevant. They then each prioritised the top three by allocating sticky dots. The results, including the number of dots for each one are listed below. Where appropriate, priorities have been grouped together.

Priorities for future delivery by the Walking Forum

Priority	Priority
Lost Ways project- support volunteers to research archives/ maps. Deadline 2026	8
Upgrading/ revamping Severn Way	7
Increase volunteering	5
Ploughing and cropping	3
Shropshire Way as a main circular route around the county	2
P3 roving groups/ overlapping boundaries in remote areas or where there isn't a P3 group	1
Promotion of routes from cafes and pubs	1
Parking in honeypot areas	1
Replacing stiles for gates	1
Targeted approach in neglected areas e.g. Long Mountain, Westbury, Worthen and Shelve	1
Opening up more Walking for Health routes	
Historic routes e.g. Roman roads	
Better links with public transport and promoted routes	
Encouraging village halls to allow parking in the day	
Paperwork provided for accurate recording of volunteer hours- group and individual	
Restoring routes where busy roads e.g. A5 make crossing difficult	

Next steps

Delivery of the top priorities needs to be considered at the next meeting. These appear to be:

- Lost Ways project development- suggest a smaller group is put together to lead on this
- Upgrading the Severn Way- Hopefully Jim Stabler will get involved with this, with some help from Forum members



- Increase volunteering- we can discuss how to do this at the next meeting

**8. AOB**

- a. Trevor informed the Forum that St Winifred's walk (Pilgrimage from Shrewsbury abbey to Holywell) will take place in June 2016
- b. Bob informed the forum that the National Walkers are welcome AGM will be taking place in Whitchurch on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 14:00 – 16:00**

**Oswestry Room**

**Shirehall**

**Shrewsbury**

**SY26ND**

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# **Central Shropshire Walking Forum**

## **Workshop on local priorities**

**26<sup>th</sup> August 2015**

# Central Shropshire Walking Forum

- Background
- Context:
  - Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships
  - Countryside Access Strategy
  - Shrewsbury Tourism Strategy
- Summary of challenges
- Proposals for development
- Workshops



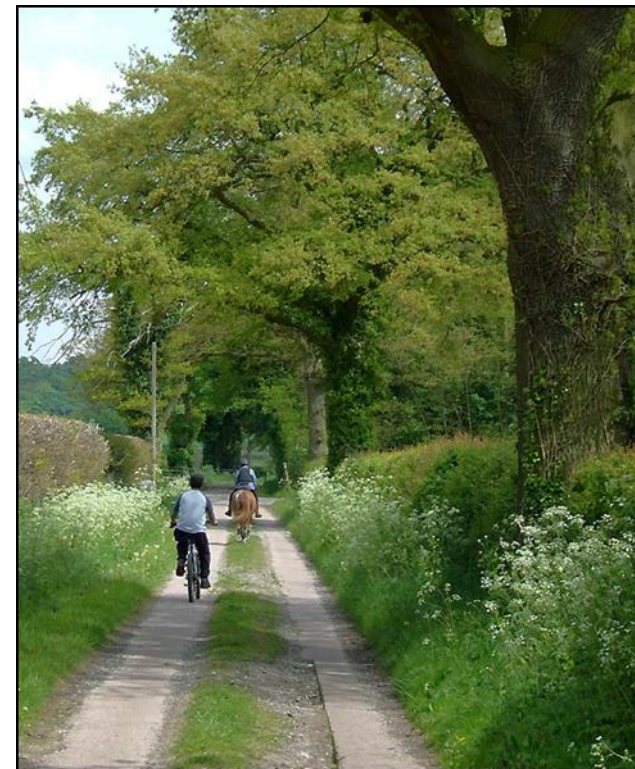
# Background- Walking Forum Terms of Reference

## VISION:

Develop and improve the walking infrastructure and opportunities in the Shropshire countryside

## AIMS:

1. To represent and improve all forms of walking for everyone
2. To support the legally-protected Rights of Way network and help to make sure it is well maintained
3. To develop and promote walking
4. To support and encourage walking for the promotion of health and wellbeing within the county
5. To reduce car use
6. To provide feedback to the LAF (Local Access Forum)



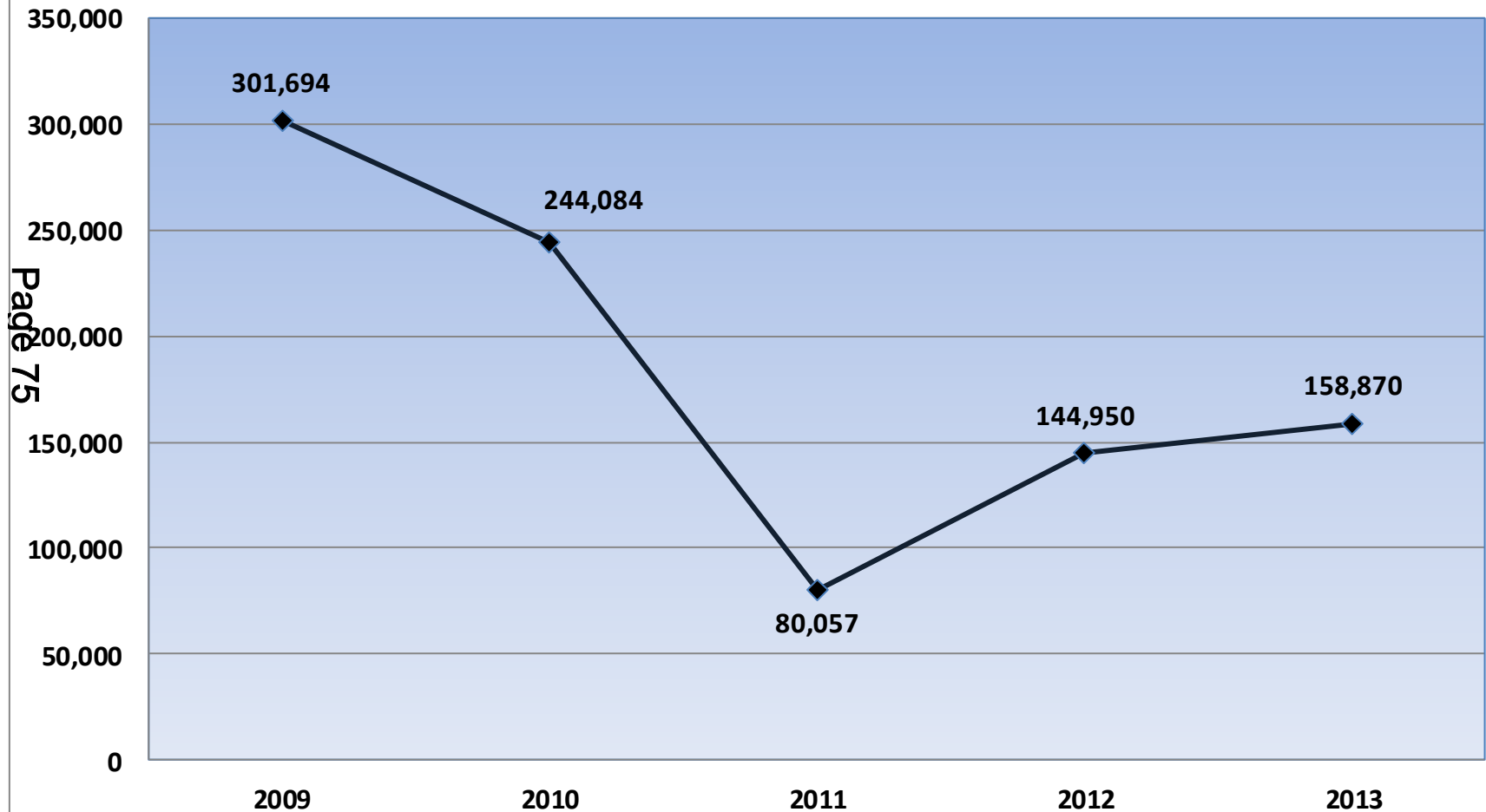


# Context

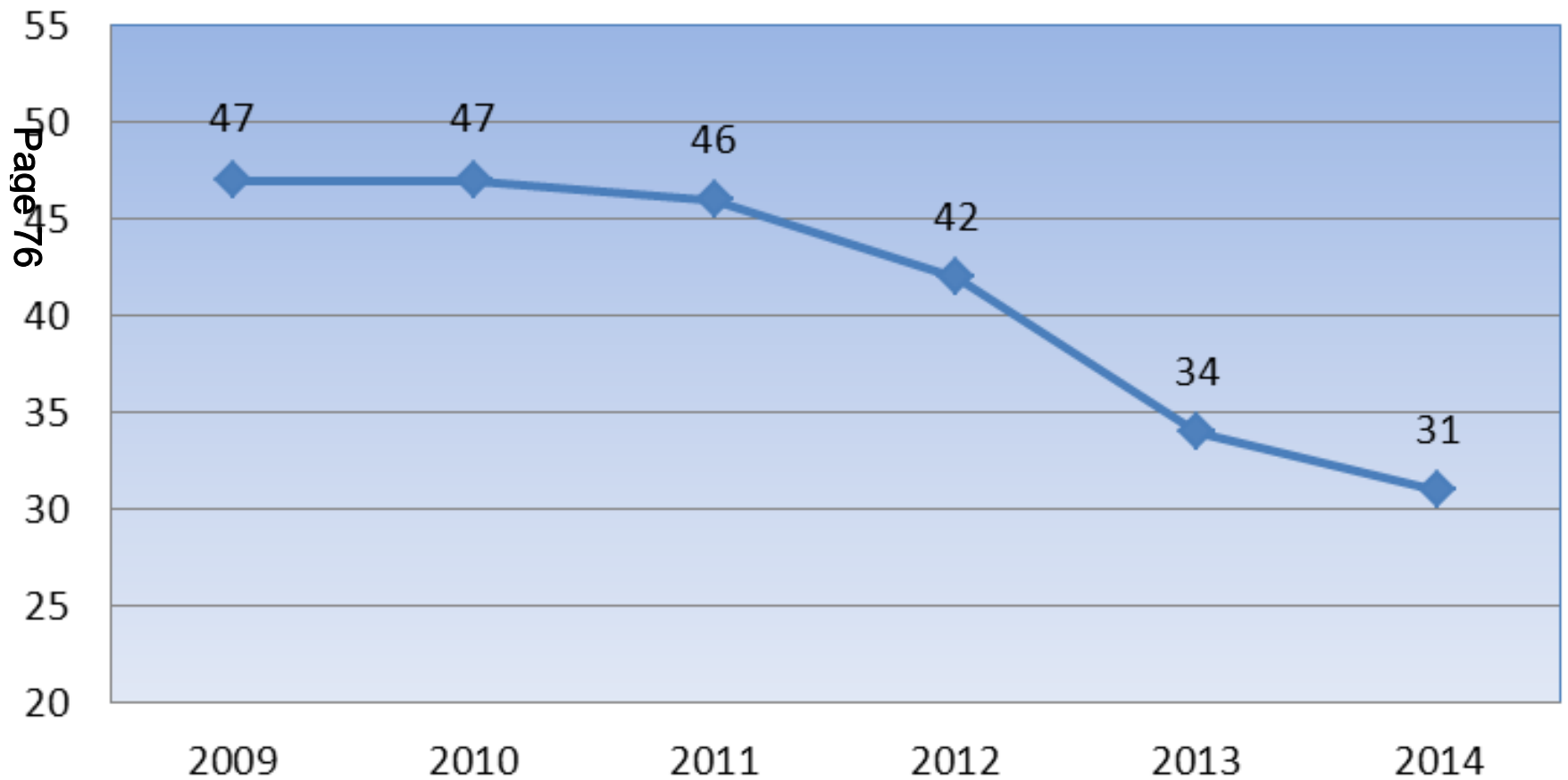
- Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships:
  - RoW
  - Mapping and enforcement
  - Parks and greenspaces
  - Development- Shropshire Wild Teams, P3, Volunteer Rangers
  - Hosts the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
- Government Policy
  - Public sector cuts
  - Focus on economic regeneration
  - Localism agenda



## Funding available for RoW maintenance and improvements

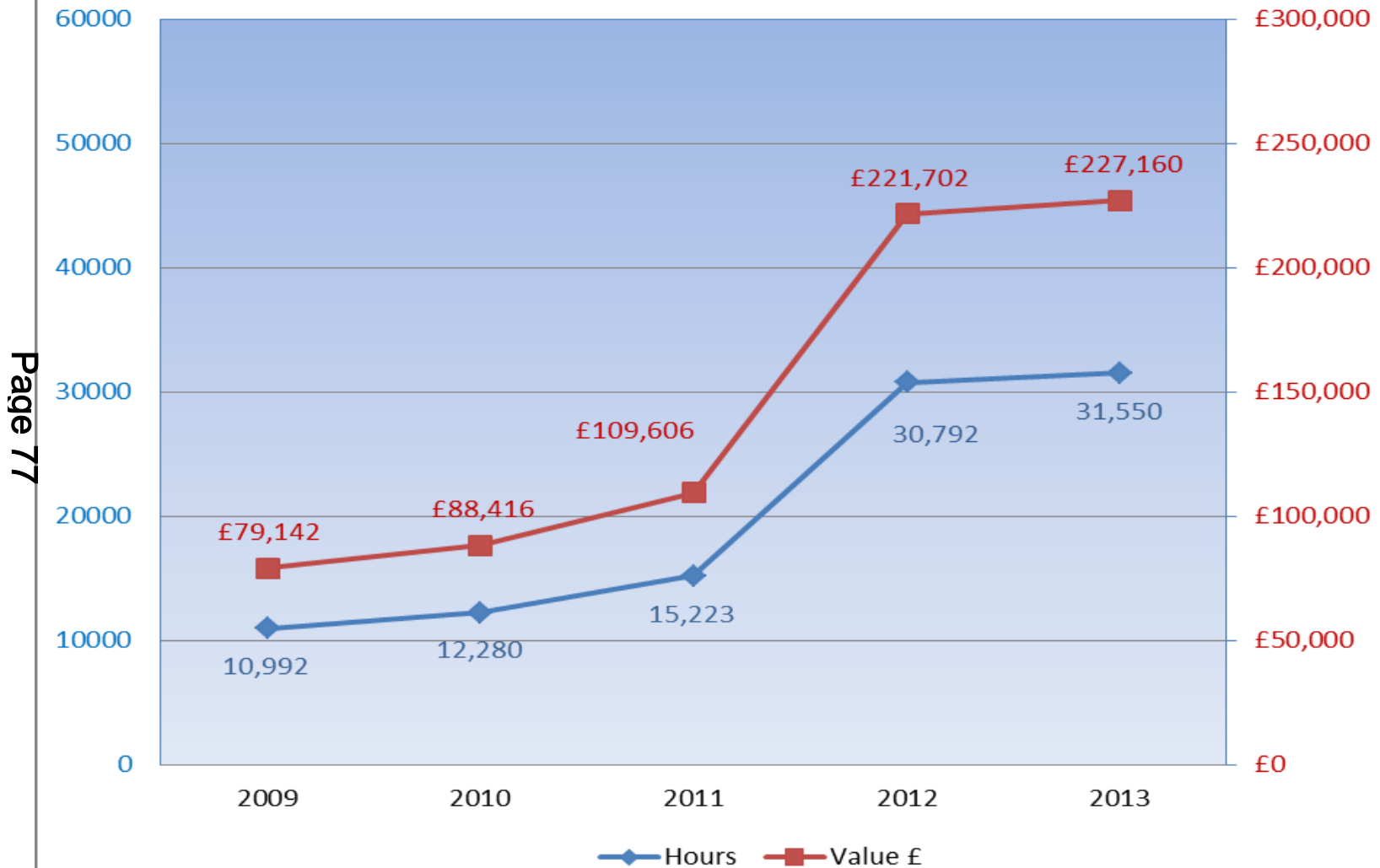


## Manpower levels in Outdoor Recreation

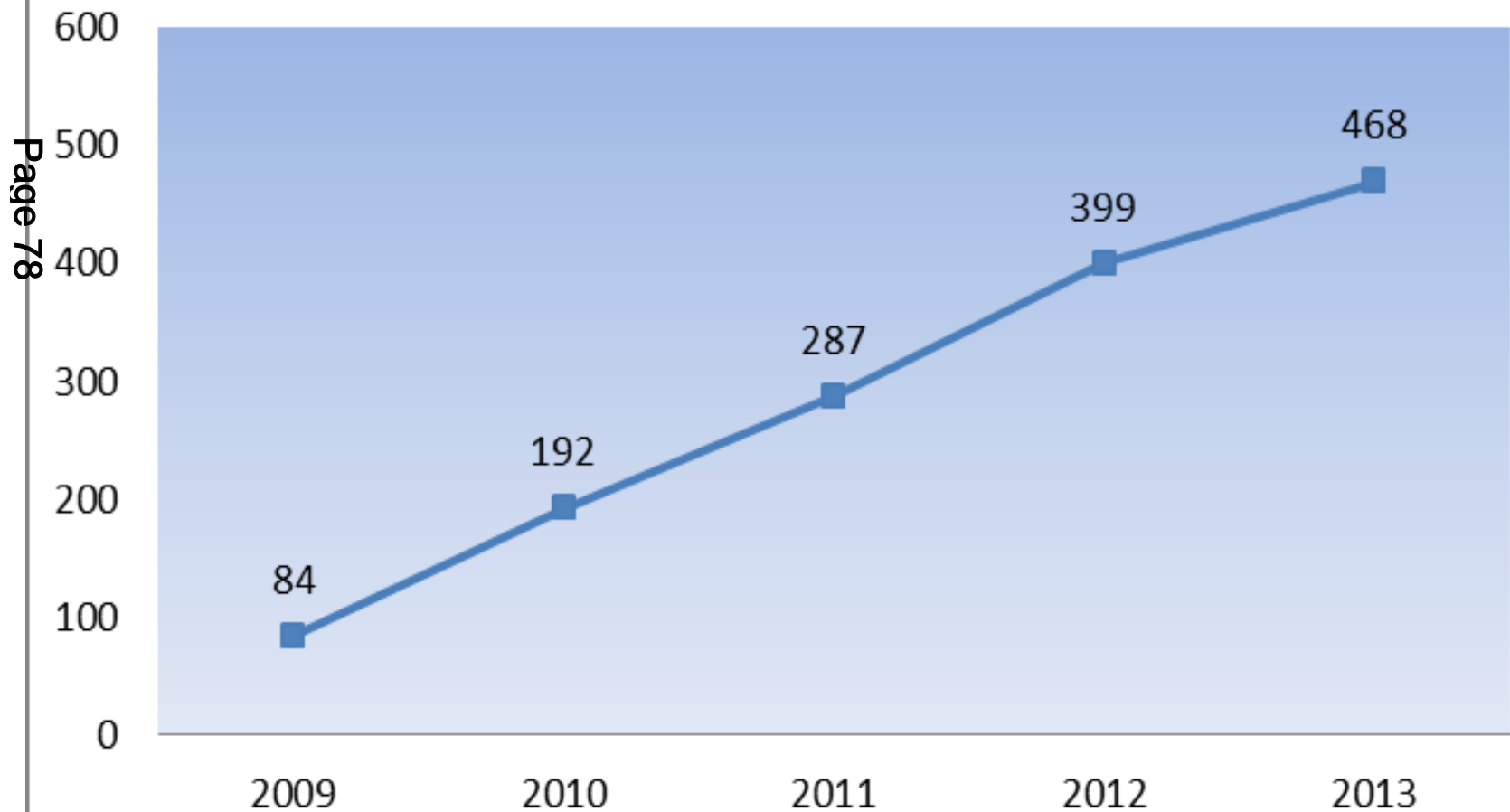




### Total hours worked by Volunteers and the Value of the Work



### Accumulative number of stiles being replaced by gates



# Countryside Access Strategy Review.

## Priorities for 2014-18

- User Forums
- Establish local RoW priorities
- Work in partnership
- Support new and existing P3
- Increase active volunteering, including corporate
- Activities for young people e.g. John Muir Award, Youth Rangers
- Shropshire Wild Teams
- Improve accessibility for all
- Promote walking as a way of getting around
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors website
- Walkers Are Welcome

# Shrewsbury Visitor Economy Strategy

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- Expand upon and deliver our unique visitor experience- historic town, boutique retailing, river loop, in the heart of Shropshire
- Increase income to Shrewsbury from the visitor economy
- Develop Shrewsbury as a quintessentially English historic town that is nationally recognised as a visitor destination

## Other initiatives

- Walkers Are Welcome- Much Wenlock, Wellington, Ironbridge
- Walking Festivals and events
- Walking for Health
- Big Pathwatch
- Volunteer Rangers
- Heritage Open Days
- Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country LPS
- Pontesford Hill
- Shropshire Wild Teams
- Montgomeryshire Canal
- Neighbourhood Planning
- John Muir Award
- Youth Rangers



# Challenges

- Page 82
- Declining resources
  - Communication locally and countywide
  - Setting local priorities in a coherent geography
  - Enjoyment of outdoors generally
  - Making sure it is worthwhile
  - Effective delivery of priorities
  - Easy to focus on what can't be done





# Proposals for development

- Co-ordinated approach with partners
- Development of volunteering
- Better communication
- Agreed local priorities
- Walking plus
- Focus on 2-3 positive, achievable actions
- Economic benefits



# Workshop

- 2 groups considering local priorities for action:
- Listed on flip chart paper
  - Everyone has 3 coloured dots to allocate to top three priorities

