

SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING FORUM (SRCDF)

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8th February 2016, at 5.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

1. Attendance:

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chairman. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BW P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Mike & Jan Baldwin, Broseley Bridleways. Caroline Le Butt, Long Mynd Bridleways Assoc. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council. Clare Fildes, Shropshire Council.

Apologies:

Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Mark Weston, BHS. Gill Eyre, BHS South East Shropshire, Cleobury Mortimer. Wendy Beaumont, Bridgnorth. Anthony Francis Jones Telford LAF. Gaynor Evans, Broseley & District BWA. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA

Prior to the start of the meeting Clare Fildes, Development Team Leader, Outdoor Partnerships, demonstrated the new <http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/> Website. She explained that it replaced the three previous walking, riding and cycling websites, so the information was all in one place. All SC owned sites and promoted routes are on it, together with links to other providers, activities, and other relevant information, including links to legal information etc. on SC's website. She showed how each promoted riding route has its own page; with pdf's to print off routes; the information available on the new feature, the GIS based Interactive Mapping system, based on SC's mapping, and, as well as lots of other information, how all the different categories of Definitive Map ROW can be brought up separately or together, as well as UCR's, and how the base map can be changed to greyscale or to an aerial map; the later useful to see if the used line differs from the definitive. She showed how route reference numbers can be obtained, and explained other features of the site, such as Seasonal experiences and other outdoor Activities. She thanked Zia for her input for the website. The site is still under development; a next stage is to bring in partners information such as Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission and National Trust. The previous websites were managed by Tourism, but the new site is now done in house, and Clare welcomed any suggestions, items, or suitable links for inclusion. Viewing results for the new website have been excellent. Clare was thanked for her helpful presentation.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th October 2015 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

3. Shropshire Council's Big Conversation and Financial Strategy

Clare Fildes informed the Forum that Shropshire Council has published the Financial Strategy for 2017/18 and 2018/19, which see a number of services under threat due to the Government Spending review. This aspires to Local Authority funding being dependent on Council Tax and Business Rates by 2020/21. The Council has got big decisions to make. The majority of funding in the County is required to support Adult Social Care and Children's Services, so have to cut other services. The worst case scenario will be the closure of parks and open public spaces along with other services. Other services such as ROW are seen as mandatory. The staffing and budgets have been reduced by over 50% in the past five years.. The ROW management team's importance is acknowledged, but they will have to do more outside work to bring in income. They are investigating the legalities of sites, and ways of raising income, and the development of sites will be looked at, and the possibility of a new membership scheme and corporate sponsorship. Zia SRCDF MINUTES 8th February 2016 - 1 of 5

raised the importance of ROW and Countryside Sites to the rural economy, and the impact it had on a large number and variety of businesses, including many horse related ones, when ROW in Shropshire had to be closed because of Foot & Mouth. The Office of National Statistics 2015 quarterly review showed tourism to this country increased by 4.7%. World Heritage Sites encourage people into Shropshire and many came to enjoy the countryside. Cllr. Stuart West is the new portfolio holder, and the Director is George Candler. The Local MP is raising the issue of cutting funds with Parliament. The cuts will impact badly on Shropshire as it is such a rural area. Jan raised Statutory duties. These have to be maintained. Angela raised the increase in facilities for tourism, and bookings for them in the Ellesmere area. Shropshire is getting a lot of good publicity. We need visitors to bolster community services. Clare is looking at the pros and cons of charitable status and its potential.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Canal Towpaths

Zia reported that Wendy Capelle, Waterways Manager and Annie Sutton, Development & Engagement Manager, CART (Canal & River Trust), attended the last LAF meeting. They want to work with all users. Their presentation focused on walking, cycling etc. but did not mention horse riding. Mark Weston offered to be a contact for horse riding access. Angela raised the subject of filled in canals for riding routes. Zia confirmed that there is a section of filled in canal near Shrewsbury which is now a public bridleway.

(b) Deregulation Bill

It now seems likely that the regulations will not be out before July.

(c) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships annual public survey 2014-15

Members were reminded of the importance of filling in this year's survey and asking others to do likewise. The closing date is 21st March 2016.

(d) Solar Farm Applications

It was noted that the application for a Solar Park on land to the North of Moor Farm, Baschurch was granted.

(e) Level Crossings Review

The extract from the report in LAF News No 7 is noted together with the link to check local level crossings. Network Rail is to do a presentation to LAF on 11th February 2016. Members were asked to check any local crossings. It is noted that the rail crossing at Hanwood is a UCR leading to a BW, but it is not recognised as such by Network Rail

(f) Helicopters

It was noted that the BHS at their annual awards gave RAF Shawbury the Tarquin Award for making a significant contribution to equestrian safety. The Group agreed a letter of congratulations be sent from the Forum. High Vis Items could be ordered on the RAF website as more funding is due for 2016. It is important that we keep up the liaison as our big concern has been over landing sites which they agreed to consult on. John reported a big increase this year of complaints over helicopters by BDS members nationally, with the most in the Wiltshire and Somerset area

(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda

There were no other matters arising.

5. Shropshire Council

(a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships

Shona reported that her team has produced a 12 page A5 booklet 'Guide for Landowners' available as a PDF and an A5 booklet will also soon be available. It is supported by the CLA and NFU who
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will distribute copies electronically. It is a good clear document. There is a link to it, and to the Countryside Code, on the new www.shropshiregreatoutdoors website. They would like to do a similar one for users. They will get letters out earlier over cropping and ploughing. It is important that incidents are reported. If not complied with, they can go in and charge for clearing work. It was also raised that for a field edge bridleway, 3m of useable width should be left unploughed. Rural Payments Agency should be notified of bad offenders. Angela put forward that landowners should have the Landowner Guide information when filling in their forms.

(b) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Implementation Team

Following the very wet and windy conditions, Richard Knight's team has been very quick to respond to incidents of dangerous suspended and fallen trees, and large branches, both in the Nesscliffe Country Park area and Flanders Ford area at Adcote. The route problems on the Portway have been resolved with a link now cut through to the BW to Ratlinghope: it is not known if the part of the bridleway to Ratlinghope, which is on the wrong line is also to be moved by the National Trust. The current line has been in use for many years.

David Hardwick has reported that work is to be done on BW 104 for the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Project as it is included in a new walking leaflet, and on BW10B through the Nature Reserve. The work will have to be to bridleway status. This is Rosemary Pattenden's area. She still wishes to be involved, but is now unable to drive to our meetings. Tim Simmonds is doing work in South Shropshire in the Kingswood, Wyre Forest area, and covers Newport, Weston Park, Cosford, Claverley, Alveley, Clee Hill and Much Wenlock areas. John Sutton Chairs the Clee Hills Bridleway P3 Group whose main focus is the area to the NE of Titterstone Clee Hill. Mark Weston is looking to do a P3 group in Weston Park area. Andy Lipa covers the Oswestry Area. Old Moors Lane UCR is now a legal through route but it is blocked at the east end. St Martins Parish has a million pound Lottery Grant for work in that area, so it is hoped that this will be looked at for inclusion. Harvey Morgan covers North East Shropshire and also the Nesscliffe Hills Country Park. The team at Nills are now looking to obtain private work to bring in money to invest into the ROW network. P3 Groups will still be supported, and work will still be done on the network. Work has already been done on Offa's Dyke, and they have been involved in project work at Corndon and Poles Coppice. It maintains the skills set and money earned will be put back into ROW.

(c) Shropshire Council Planning

Concern was again raised over planning. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 allows Agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more with no public consultation. Development is not permitted within 25 m of the metal part of a trunk road or classified road, but there is no consideration of ROW. In Ruyton XI Towns a new farm building was given permission in a prominent position, right alongside a public bridleway with access up the bridleway, which even the Parish Council was unaware of. There are bridleways in Shropshire blocked due to farm buildings, and other buildings being built over them. It was felt that Applicants should show the rights of way on their application plans. Shona confirmed that a large proportion of applications do not declare rights of way. They do pick up a lot, but some get through and they only find out due to users alerting them. Members felt that applicants should have to submit their plans showing the definitive rights of way, so there is no doubt over Rights of Way that will be affected by the development. Shona said that there is a local checking process by the planning team which should include the question 'have you checked the Definitive Map to see if you have any Rights of Way?' It is agreed that Zia will follow this up.

<http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

(d) Shropshire Council Highways

It is confirmed that the old Highway maps are still with Highways. Shona reported that Lucy and Emily inspected them recently. Anita Corfield Jones who is with Highways Development Control, now works for Mouchel, but is still based in the Shirehall. She is very protective of the old maps, but there is concern if offices move, and staff change, that they could be misplaced, and there are

currently no other copies of them other than the photos that Zia has taken. The public can view them by appointment.

We are still waiting for the digitised list of UCR's that are now maintained by Rights of Way on behalf of Highways. They were conducting a 2nd survey of others. This is with Richard Knight. Zia to follow this up on behalf of the Forum.

Government's £3 million funded new digital road map OS ITN and Recording of White Roads by 30th March 2016.

Shona is concerned over where they are getting their information from. There are a large number of errors on this new mapping. The concern is over what they are intending it to be used for. It is unclear what is to happen to correct the errors. Some public roads are shown as private and there are a number of other mistakes.

6. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues

Llanyblodwel BW– Andy Lipa is doing work on the opening up of the confirmed route.

Shawbury Restricted Byway 1A – This is now confirmed, but waiting for an adjoining landowner, who is a carriage driver, to open up his section of the Restricted Byway route. Jan understood that he has had two years to do this. SC will have to serve notice if he does not comply. The route needs to be correctly signed.

Shirlett – Shona reported that there are still ongoing problems here. Trees have been cut down to block the track, and broken glass has been put on the track, at the north end, which volunteers have cleared. It needs Richard's team to go in and sort it all out. Volunteers have had their vehicle tyres slashed. It needs surveillance put in to apprehend the culprit. John Gibson reported that when Carriage Drivers had an obstruction problem with gates being locked, they were advised by the police to photograph the offender. Shona will contact the local police, and write a strong letter to all the landowners highlighting the situation.

Adcote Bridge BW – Richard is still leading on the issue of the collapsed bridge. Two bridge arches have now collapsed. Costings on the different options are still awaited. He now has all the land ownership details. The ford should be opened up as it states in the order that it is available for use. The bridge is not listed; it is privately owned, and has private vehicular rights over it.

Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane – Shona reported they have finally got agreement for the outlet. They are doing a Creation Order for the route available on the ground, and an extinguishment Order on the route originally claimed.

Oaks Wood – Still pending.

Frodesley Orders –Any rider evidence for the Frodesley Lodge claim should be sent to the Officers. They are currently working on the Statement of Case to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. It is important that horse riders attend the PI to back up their evidence. Bentley Ford Farm claim is mostly historic evidence.

Drumbles Wood – this is next on the list for Emily to address, after Frodesley has been sent off.

Sutton Mill – With Lucy McFarlane.

Hilton – This is still waiting to be published.

Melverley – No Change. This is still waiting for enforcement of the correct width.

Purslow BW addition – looking to work with the Forestry to divert BW 10 to a useable route to link through.

Worfield BW 36 – Shona reported that they have moved the line at the north end so you can get out now, and an application for a diversion at the southern end had been put in today.

7. Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Project

Concern was raised that the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Project, despite horse rider contact at an early stage, has produced routes for walkers and cyclists, which use a large proportion of bridleways, but with no inclusion of horse riders. Clare did not know why; she said it was funded by the Heritage Lottery and the access work was done by contract in the development phase and they are short on funding. Cross border routes were to be looked at. Zia confirmed that a linear SRCDF MINUTES 8th February 2016 - 4 of 5

route across Stapeley Common is being looked at but this is not a gain as this is already well used. Zia has some circular riding routes, but it is very late in the project. There are things that could be resolved to make good routes, such as the status of Poker Lane, a UCR to the Powys border, but which has recently been gated off. It was a through route that led originally to just one property, a Beer House called the Powis Arms. There is also a gap in the network onto Stapeley from Rorrington which it is hoped can be resolved with this project, by dedicating it, as it is used as a riding route, and another public route which needs opening up work by Wilmington which would link heritage features that people do not perhaps know about. Horses are part of the heritage of the area. The feedback is that they have already decided on what they are doing. Shona suggested asking Jo Penfold how he is getting on. Clare said he was under a lot of pressure of work. Zia will send details and mapping of the proposed routes to Shona and Clare.

8. HM Government – Sporting Future a New Strategy for an Active Nation

The Report is noted, and the extracts by the BHS which are of general interest, some of which may assist when seeking new routes.

9. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums

The minutes of the Local Access Forum Meeting held on 2nd July 2015 and meeting held on 15th October 2015 are noted, and that the next LAF meeting is on Thursday 11th February 2016 at 10am in the Shirehall. Agenda items include a presentation from British Rail, Southern Leader Programme on Rail Crossings, Bridges/large Structures on the Network, Landowner Leaflet. We have asked for Shooting over Rights of Way to be addressed by LAF and it is noted that an article on the Shropshire Star front page today states that Shropshire has more shoots per acre than any where else in the country. Landowners need reminding of the Shooting guidelines for ROW. The minutes of the Shropshire Hills Forum 9th October 2015, North Shropshire Walk Forum, 19th October 2015, and Central Walking Forum 27th November 2015 are noted, and that LAF Meeting papers are available on [Local Access Forum](#) go to 'browse meetings and agendas' for this committee. Cycle Forum - Zia had noted that in an email from SC notifying that the Cycle Forum was closing it told of a 'Countryside for all' 2 day event for the Corndon Hill Project which just said it was looking at walking and cycling routes. This could be why horse riding routes have not been addressed. A front page report in the Shropshire Star listed Nesscliffe Country Park as a good place for mountain bikers, but they are using routes there that are not legal routes for cycling, and are endangering other users. Concern was also raised by forum members over cyclists approaching horse riders from behind with no warning; some going past at speed. This is also a problem for walkers on tow paths. It is suggested that bells on bicycles would help. It just needs cyclists to call out 'Ok to come through' or even just 'Hallo' so that horse riders know they are there.

10. Any Other Business or items to Note

It is noted that BHS Access Week is 28th May – 5th June 2016.

It is noted that BHS Shropshire are holding a meeting on 'Claiming Lost Ways' at Dorrington Village Hall on Friday 11th March at 7pm when Mark Weston will be attending.

Angela raised the subject of roads shown with green dots, ORPA'S, and that there are Enclosure awards that confirm some of these are highways. Zia confirmed that all the ones she checked were UCR's, and many are shown on the 1929 Handover Map. Zia said some old roads were just scribbled out on Highways old maps. Shona confirmed that they are still legal routes unless there is evidence of a stopping up order.

11. Dates of the Next Meetings

The next meeting is to be held at the Shirehall on **Monday 6th June 2016 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm.**

The date of the following meeting is confirmed for **Monday 10th October 2016**