

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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 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. Gill Eyre, BHS South East Shropshire, Cleobury Mortimer. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Caroline Le Butt, Long Mynd Bridleways Assoc. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

### **Apologies:**

Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Wendy Beaumont, Bridgnorth. Anthony Francis Jones Telford LAF. Gaynor Evans & Mike & Jan Baldwin, Broseley & District. BWA. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Mark Weston, BHS.

### **2. Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Officers**

As no nominations were received, and John, Zia and Linda are willing to stand, **it is agreed** by members that they be adopted en bloc. **It is agreed** by members that Angela should be asked if she will be willing to stand as Vice Chair.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) [www.shropshiregreatoutdoors](http://www.shropshiregreatoutdoors) website - Update**

Zia reported that following Clare Fildes' presentation to us at our last meeting, she has notified that they are in the process of adding a plug in to the website to create a proper events calendar. Zia asked if they could list horse friendly pubs, of which there are a lot in Shropshire, and what facilities they provide for horses, but was told that they are not keen to add businesses to the site as they do not have the resources to update. Steve said it is very traditional that pubs are horse friendly. John reported that on organised events, when using facilities, risk assessments have to be produced, and that insurance can be an issue.

Zia reported that she has helped with the website providing the text for a large number of the 'Other Activities'. For Archery, Golf, Running etc. she did a list of clubs, but she recognised that it could be difficult with pubs as the site would have to list all of them, with the facilities for walkers, cyclists etc as well as horse riders. A lot of route leaflets on the site do list local pubs close to the routes, and a number of pubs provide parking for routes. Zia is hoping to expand the 'Carriage Driving' entry under the 'Other Activities' button, but she has been very busy.

**(b) Council's Big Conversation and Financial Strategy.**

The document on the Country Parks and Heritage Sites is noted. Shona confirmed that these are to be nil funded. The Council are looking to protect these within the Council, and safeguarding the sites for the future, by looking at ways of generating income, including parking, membership schemes, charitable and external funding, wood processing etc. and working towards a cost neutral position. A lot of money needs to be raised to maintain them. £115k by 2017-18 and £173k by 2019/20. They will be looking to ask Parish Councils to take some of these on.

**(c) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships 2014-2015 annual public survey**

The analysis of this has not been finalised, but there were only 493 responses. Most respondents stated they used outdoor facilities to improve their health and for exercise, and the responses showed that, a very large variety of different activities took place in addition to walking, horse riding and cycling, including:- running, photography, history, volunteering, climbing, nature study, bird watching, conservation, archaeology, archery, power gliding, guide dog training, fungi hunting etc. There were no responses from carriage drivers. The responses came from all over Shropshire and from members of lots of different groups and organisations, as well as individuals and visitors to the County. Reasons for use included for peace and quiet, and to explore wildlife and nature. The biggest off putting factor was vegetation, also intimidating live stock, lack of signs, ploughing and cropping, obstructions, stiles, dog mess, lack of parking, bad road crossings, lack of maintenance etc. Bridleways that end in footpaths were raised and also inconsiderate cyclists were raised by walkers and horse riders, and the lack of warning of their approach. A lot of respondents wanted circular walks and circular bridleways. 62% used Country Parks and Sites. The frequency of use has increased with many using at least once a week, with daily use increasing, and also 78% of respondents used for two hours or more.

John said that he understood that BDS members had not responded as it was felt that there were only a small number of people who responded to the surveys, and Carriage Driving involved the public roads more than other sports. John said that a horse drawn vehicle does not have to have to give an audible warning of approach unless it is a mail coach.

It was felt that the surveys are still not user friendly for horse riders to fill in.

Zia felt that with the survey being open from 2014 to 2015 people became confused as to whether they had already done a survey for that year if they had responded to the previous one in January, February or March 2014.

Shona said the survey is very important to their service to show both what the public wants and their concerns, and what their service should be focusing on.

**(d) Level Crossings Review**

Shona reported that they had been out with Network Rail to look at crossings, frequency of use, etc, but she has not had any recent contact on this. She understood that they do not want to close any in Shropshire, but do want to amalgamate or divert some crossings. Andrew Bound, the Route Level Crossing Manager for our area, did a presentation to the last LAF meeting. There are issues with crossings which Zia has raised with him, including provision for horse riders. Zia handed round photos of a bad crossing at Yockleton with self-closing gates with high handles to open them, very close to the line, and with poor sight lines. The BHS has recommendations that gates should be set back from the line and should not be self closing nor have high handles. Tack etc. can get caught on these trapping riders on the line. 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's website: only cyclists and pedestrians are acknowledged with signing, the main gates appear electric, but are locked, the side crossing is not suitable for horses riders, being narrow with side gates not well positioned for horse riders to open. There is a telephone there but it is not easy to operate on horseback. Andrew has asked Zia or the ROW team to send him any issues or comments with regard to rail crossings, but states that it can take a long time to improve their assets due to funding/resources.

### **(e) Helicopters**

**It is noted** that as agreed at our last meeting congratulations on receiving the BHS Tarquin Award were sent to the RAF on behalf of the Forum. Kim Leach has sent an update to say that their recent Rider Awareness Day was attended by about 25 people including BHS representatives. Our Forum had not been notified of the Day. Zia was only contacted at the last moment as they were short on rider numbers, but members had other commitments. Kim said that it was clear from feedback on the day how much easier it was to see riders wearing high viz, as this was demonstrated by pilots wearing high viz on bicycles. Kim has given talks at Dolfor Riding Club and Country Treks Stottesdon, and just about all the hi viz kit ordered for 2016/17 is now spoken for. Linda reported she had heard Chinooks would be operating from Shawbury. Concern was raised that the RAF focus now seems to be on riders wearing high vis, but it is important that they still consult on landing sites and are aware of Public Rights of Way when carrying our airborne manoeuvres and landing. John is involved with the BDS on helicopters.

**It is agreed** it is important that we keep up the liaison, and invite the RAF to update us at 5.15pm prior to our October meeting.

### **(f) Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Project**

Zia reported that she has now mapped out some routes for horse riders which she has sent to Joe Penfold and copied to Shona and Clare Fildes. These included a circular route used by riders via Rorrington to Stapeley Common, which needs a short section resolved. She is still waiting to hear back from Joe on any decisions on these routes. The Project has so far only published walking and cycling route leaflets which include a large percentage of bridleways, but with no mention of horse riding. An 'Aim' of The Project was to include access to and learning about heritage, and the access should also include horse riding routes which, with gates, can also be used by the disabled. Zia had requested to be involved on behalf of horse riders from the beginning, as had Sue Lee, on behalf of the Long Mynd BW Group, and Zia is liaising with Sue. Zia has been told that they are planning to do improvement works on bridleways for the walking routes, including surface work at Pontesford Hill, where bridleway gates are to be changed to oak ones, surface work at Poles Coppice, and gate improvements near Hogstow Hall where there is also a bridge safety issue which Zia reported years ago.

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

#### **Cycling warnings**

Members recently raised concerns over ongoing problems with cyclists not being heard when approaching horse riders from behind. A recent letter in the Shropshire Star highlighted that pedestrians encounter the same problem. We have in the past raised this with cycling organisations, suggesting they ask their members that, for the safety of the overtaking cyclist, as well as the horse rider being overtaken, they slow down and give an audible warning, such as calling out 'coming through'. John asked if there was no longer a legal requirement for cyclists to give an audible warning of their approach such as with a bell.

Another concern raised was that of the noiseless approach from behind of electric cars.

#### **Natural England Dedication of Higher Access – Stiperstones**

Nothing has been heard on the proposed dedication of Higher Access rights on the route up from Perkins Beach which branches north from the bridleway to the ridge route shown on CROW Section 16 Dedications Stiperstones NNR Higher Rights Map 10. Shona will follow up on this with Natural England.

## **5. Shropshire Council**

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

**It is noted** that the 'Outdoor Partnerships Service Structure July 2016' document, sent by Clare Fildes, has been circulated by email to forum members today, and that Deb Hughes will be

retiring on 1<sup>st</sup> July, from which date Clare is appointed Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager, and will act as a direct report to the Team Managers. Clare will also continue to manage the Health & Economy Team and provide a link between the Teams and the rest of the Commissioning Directorate. Paul Butter is now Contracts Development Officer involved in getting outside contracts for the Implementation Team, the funds from which will be used to supplement the ROW budget, His remit also includes looking after the Shropshire Way, Jack Mytton Way etc. Helen Beresford now looks after the P3 Groups.

**It is noted** that the Countryside Access Strategy for Shropshire 2008-2018 is due for renewal in 2018. Shona reported that she will be asking for views on it. There will need to be a number of updates.

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

Shona reported that the main focus of her team recently has been on ploughing and cropping. Initial letters are sent out, then inspections done, and follow up letters are sent out. If works to reinstate are still not carried out then they will serve legal notice on the landowner. If the routes are still not reinstated, the team can go in and do the work, and charge the landowner. There have been some who have reinstated the wrong line, or not reinstated a useable surface, which then has to be resolved, but overall, feedback and compliance has been good with landowners. Shona reported that her team is also preparing for the revision of the Definitive Map. Revisions have not been formally done since 1<sup>st</sup> September 1965. This is a big undertaking.

Richard Knight has reported that his team are now doing summer clearing, and topping of some routes. News from P3 Groups:- The Long Mynd BW Group now has 2 strimmers, and Linda reported her group may soon have one, and that they have done work on gates and tree clearance. The Clee Hills Group is doing drainage work at Detton. The Tong group, which Mark Weston is involved with, had a meeting to look at sorting out drainage on a track. The Broseley BW Group is still involved with the Shirlett route. It is understood that the Volunteer Event will be held at Nesscliffe in September.

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

It was not known what the current situation is with regard to Planning and SAM Dev, as a Developer has now challenged SAM Dev on a planning application at Back Lane Ford. This application, if overturned, will impact on the Humphrey Kynaston routes at Ford.

Concern was raised over a Shropshire Star report that Government plans to fast track applications to help the planning process, with developers able to choose whether to submit their plans to the local authority, a rival council, or separate Government approved body, who will handle the administrative side of the application and the compiling of reports, but with the final decision still to be made by the local authority.

An Inspector has turned down an appeal on a site for two houses and a farm access up Bridleway 7 in Ford, part of the Humphrey Kynaston Way, over which the Applicant does not have any vehicular rights of access. The Inspector highlighting the impact on the views from the bridleway and the change of surroundings from open countryside to “a more urban appearance” and the “more frequent comings and goings of vehicular traffic along the bridleway likely to be associated with the introduction of two dwellings” also “walkers and riders are likely to be particularly appreciative of the existing rural character of this approach to the village which would be diminished by the appeal scheme”. This is a landmark planning decision as it recognises the importance of off road public riding routes.

It was reported that a planning application has been put in for holiday pods, toilet block and parking which will impact on public bridleways, and the Hill Fort at Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park. It is agreed that whilst holiday accommodation is important it should not impact on what visitors come to see.

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

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

The subject of Quiet Lanes was raised. There are a number of these to the south of Shrewsbury, but Shropshire Council has said they are unable to take forward recent requests for them in Shropshire, including in the Nesscliffe area. It is noted that Telford & Wrekin are still putting these in as there was a recent newspaper report of one to be designated in Little Wenlock.

Zia reported that Peter Mackay, a member of LAF has put forward to The Local Access Forums a 'Blue Book for Roads' similar to the Blue Book for Rights of Way done some years ago and updated. It is important that white roads, dual registered roads etc are properly recorded.

Zia has followed up on when the digitised list of UCR's that are now maintained by Rights of Way on behalf of Highways will be available. Richard Knight reported that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Survey is done, but he has still to list them.

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

**Llanyblodwel BW** – Andy Lipa is still doing work on this.

**Shawbury Restricted Byway 1A** – The opening up of the confirmed route was being progressed, with signing, and the whole through route, including the forestry section, is being addressed.

**Shirlett** – Shona reported that here are still ongoing problems here, grass is being put on the surface, and the surface will need scraping to remove it, and private trees are being cut down to block the route. They are trying to get a security camera and may have to go to the police to resolve this. The southern end had been resolved, but then problems started at the northern end,

**Adcote Bridge BW** – Richard Knight has said that he does not want to open up the ford until he has resolved the issues on the bridge repair, but the Order states that the ford is open for use. This route is needed. It is understood RK has a meeting with Councillors over the bridge works.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane** – Shona reported that this is now all done, including the gates.

**Oaks Wood** – This is still pending. Linda said they put this in 20 years ago in 1996.

**Frodesley Orders** – is now with the Planning Inspectorate and they are awaiting a date for the Inquiry. It will be important to get people to the Inquiry to give their evidence of use of the claimed Frodesley Lodge BW route. It will help if they do a statement that they can present at the Inquiry. The definitive route runs right through Frodesley Lodge. Bentley Ford Farm upgrade of FP7 to BW is mostly Historical, but both routes interlink.

**Drumbles Wood** – will be addressed after Frodesley.

**Weston Woods** – The bridleway claims there are being addressed.

**Sutton Mill** – Lucy McFarlane is working on this.

**Hilton** – This is currently on hold. The outlet needs to be resolved.

**Melverley** – This is still waiting for enforcement of the correct width, when there is staff available to deal with it.

**Purslow BW addition** – The Order to divert BW 10 to a useable route to link through is ready to be published.

**Worfield BW 36** – Shona reported that this is now ready to be published.

**Montford outlet to BW** – The Order to divert routes to enable the current permissive link to be dedicated as a Public Bridleway is next on the list to be done. Consultation has taken place.

#### **7. Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme – Restoring Marches Mosses**

Luke Neal of the Wildlife Trust has approached Zia with regard to a proposed bid for HLF, which would include a ROW audit and evaluation of paths that could be upgraded to create

circular off-road riding routes around the mosses, and they wish to include horse riding groups. It was agreed that the Forum support this. When we previously addressed this for Natural England's dedication of higher access, information on riding and carriage driving routes was passed to Jim Stabler. It is not known where this now is. Shona said her contact at NE on Higher Level will know. She said Jim definitely put something in for this. Zia has passed the Wildlife Trusts request on to other parties including Andrew Kelly who may be able to help on the cross border routes, as the Meres and Mosses include parts of Wrexham County.

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

**It is noted** that the Local Access Forum Meeting to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> February was postponed until 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and the minutes are not yet available. Zia reported that the last LAF meeting addressed Rail Crossings, The National LAF Conferences, which Mark Weston and Jan Mees Robinson attended, Bridges and Bridge Repairs, with a report by Richard Knight which included mention of Adcote Bridge, and an update from Outdoor Partnerships.

The minutes of the North Shropshire Walk Forum, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the Shropshire Hills (walking) Forum 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016, and Central Walking Forum 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 are noted, and that LAF Meeting papers are available on [Local Access Forum](#) go to 'browse meetings and agendas' for this committee. There were no matters arising from these minutes that have not been addressed by our Forum.

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

**It is noted** - That BHS Shropshire held a meeting on 'Claiming Lost Ways' at Dorrington Village Hall on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm which Mark Weston attended.

**It is Noted** – That a follow up Seminar 'Have you lost your Way?' is to be held at Berriwood Farm, Condover, Shrewsbury SY5 7NN on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 7.30pm. People will be there to help and guide those attending as to the process for getting routes correctly recorded.

**Dog attacks** - these have been increasing, with many reports in the Shropshire Star of attacks on people as well as livestock. There has been a big problem on the Long Mynd with notices now put up there to warn dog owners following attacks on sheep. Horse riders are experiencing problems with loose dogs going for horses, and riders being injured.

### **A Bridleway is a Public Highway**

Sue Evans had reported a dangerous incident between two riders and a vehicle driver with a trailer on a public bridleway, and queried what rights riders had whilst riding on a bridleway. Zia responded that a bridleway is a public highway, and recommended they contact Mark Weston of the BHS to get advice on the legal side.

Zia read from a newspaper report stating that a Horse Rider was awarded £12k compensation for injuries from the Motor Insurance Bureau after a motorbike with L plates, on a bridleway caused her horse to bolt. The case, and decision to award compensation, highlighted the fact that a bridleway is a public highway, and a public place.

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

The next meeting is to be held at the Shirehall on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm. To Note** -The RAF may attend at 5.15pm  
The date of the following meeting is confirmed for **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017**