

# Shropshire Hills Walking Forum- Meeting notes

Education room, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms.

10 am – 12 noon, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**Attendees:** Helen d'Albert, Clare Fildes, Nigel McDonald, Shona Butter, Glyn Roberts, Steve Levers, Mike Beazley, Michael Holland, Charles Edwards, Chris Chillingworth.

**Apologies:** Ted Laidlar, Peter James, Dick Bailey, Catherine Collier, Alison Caffyn, Val Simpson, David Hardwick, Helen Beresford, Joy Nisbit, Susan Jones, Patrick Edwards, Keith Pybus, Rick Summers, Marion Law.

<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Feedback focusing on the 3 priorities</b> identified by members:</p> <p><u>Promoted routes:</u></p> <p><b>Shropshire Way</b> <i>Clare Fildes</i></p> <p>Public survey completed. 329 responses. 89% agreed main route should be developed. Appears that people were not entirely clear and thought, incorrectly that the plan is to start from fresh with an entirely new route. Most comments mentioned wish to showcase Shropshire across route. Figure of 8 route received most support as promoted main route, so has gone ahead as proposal by Shropshire Way Association (SWA). Details will be confirmed in due course.</p> <p>Issues raised by members at meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concern about lack of resources and time takes to re-waymark routes, and confusion this may cause. CF reported SWA has taken the mantle to ensure the old WM are taken down and the new ones replaced as timely as possible with P3 help. SW is on the electronic version of the OS mapping system- this route will not be wrong, nor will paper maps and the main linear route will be marked with new markers on the ground.</li><li>• 'Has OS got the capacity to recognise and differentiate between the old and new routes?' CF- no. We will need to decide whether OS should have the one main route or the SW network.</li><li>• Need for companion leaflet suggested to help inform tourists to the area about the route and changes.</li></ul> <p><b>War Walks</b> – feedback and plans.</p>	

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Funding application submitted to Big Lottery for 2 years funding cover. CC reported War walk to be held in May.

MH- path near Stanton Lacy badly overgrown, (Stanton Lacy to Onibury route – no. 10, part of the Ludlow Country Walks leaflets); P3 spent a long time clearing, but it has regrown again. P3 approached Plymouth Estate to ask if they are happy for weed killer to be used, but no response received. MH- reported to OP Maintenance team several months ago as also involves some bridge replacement and culvert work. SB- whole team involved in major resurfacing work elsewhere, she will find out update. MH- concerned not seen a council officer in Ludlow area for months. CF- unfortunately there are smaller numbers in the team to cover the county, but they do the best to come out when they can. Bishop's Castle P3 area thanked officers and Wild Team for their recent help. CF thanked MH for his work together with Ludlow P3 with the Ludlow Country walks leaflets.

SB / MH

## Volunteering updates:

SC Volunteer Celebration event: CF- The event was held at Nesscliffe this year, 80 volunteers attended and despite wet weather it was a very enjoyable event, with walks, activities and a folklore talk.

P3 – see update sent out with meeting notes.

Wild Team – Project generally going well across the county groups. There were 14 in the Craven Arms group until recently, but number has dropped to 5, however this is primarily due to positive outcomes as some have moved into work or moved town, and one or two have said they are going to college. Ludlow CMHT and the Foyer send a staff member each. Life Goals have said they will begin to refer people.

Walking for Health (*Helen d'Albert*): see update sent out with meeting notes.

National Trust: PE unable to attend today, but sent update to go out with these notes.

MB- mentioned the national organisation 'Association of Countryside volunteers'. Organisation largely unknown to Forum members.

<http://www.countrysidevolunteers.org.uk/j/>

The aim of the Association is to promote effective and enjoyable work by

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<p>volunteers throughout the countryside. The Association also aims to complement the work of the countryside volunteer's own "service" by bringing together those of similar interests, enabling information and experience to be shared, and by co-operating with the Authorities in promoting high standards within countryside services. It has reps from all the National Parks, some AONBs (but not the Shropshire Hills), the Woodland Trust, and various wildlife trusts and CVSs.</p> <p>MB is a member and aware there is no representative in South Shropshire – MB happy to put himself forward to represent the area, Forum in agreement.</p> <p>CF- 'Landau', organisation looks at alternatives to day services post school regarding mental and physical health initiatives and working with long term unemployed. They are looking for job coaches; particularly those involved with practical tasks outdoors (paid role £9.60 per hour). CF/HB to email the details to all P3.</p> <p><a href="http://www.landau.co.uk/">http://www.landau.co.uk/</a></p> <p><u>SHDC development as a walking hub - (Charles Edwards):</u></p> <p>2 successful bids EAED – 1. accessible path to Kingfisher corner (work taking place over the winter) 2. wild play area.</p> <p>Development as a walking hub is already in place, it is a gradual and evolving process. KP has led various themed walks. Still exploring funding options for refreshing and reprinting leaflets. CF recommended putting in another funding application to Tesco's plastic bag scheme.</p> <p>CE- school visits going well.</p> <p>GR – would like to explore options for encouraging younger people to enjoy playing in the outdoors in BC area – funding? CF- HB could help investigate funding options.</p> <p>Hd'A- mentioned new pilot project 'Healthy Outdoors for Schools'. Working with three schools, work commenced with Bridgnorth and Clun, supporting with initiatives including setting up the 'Daily Mile' and encouraging families to engage in activities / walks in their local community. Making links with P3, WFH, Parks and sites within this project.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>CF / HB</p> <p>GR / HB</p>
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## Other topics:

**'Don't lose your way'** (*Shona Butter ROW, Mapping and Enforcement Team Manager*):

SL had raised questions about routes that may get lost under the Deregulations Act 2015. Over 5600 km of paths in total. Presentation given by SB – (sent out with meeting notes) and Q&A session.

SB confirmed that the Formal application register is available on the Shropshire Council website under ROW which details where there are already claims for routes.

Concerns raised by Forum - how realistic is it for her team to process and reinstate all these routes? All agree it is not possible with the limited staff and resources. SL – could volunteers assist with the admin? SB – do have some volunteers from RA and horse riders.

MB – are FP's at risk of becoming bridleways and therefore used by bicycles? SB -to have FP's upgraded to Bridleways would need historical /user evidence to support this. FP's can be used by cyclists, but only with the landowner's permission; Long Mynd given as an example.

SL- ORPA's (Other Routes with Public Access) SB explained that in Shropshire these were mainly recorded as Unclassified County roads. There is a layer for County roads on SGO and Council websites. Highways are ultimately responsible for these. CF- wants to put an agreement together to work with Highways for our maintenance team to maintain the unsurfaced routes, with the transfer of funds for this, as feel our staff have the expertise to best achieve this.

## **Shropshire's Great Outdoors Membership scheme** (*Clare Fildes*):

CF- SGO membership scheme is about to be launched. £3 a month. For people who would like to support the work we do with the Parks and sites and ROW outside of the statutory. Plan to set up a charitable organisation. Membership benefits – one of these is free car parking. Charges to be set up at sites that do not already have this in place.

CF- Bringing in funding is a major priority. The income from this is ring fenced for our service.

CE- Who and how will it be decided how the monies generated will be

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spent and how are the priorities to be set? The priorities for the funding could be set by a restructured LAF. There are discussions underway for the LAF to become the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board to make it a more strategic body and link better with other agendas such as health and the economy. The exact responsibilities of the new Board have yet to be agreed. CE- idea of feeding back periodically what the membership funding has funded over a period of time, demonstrating what has been achieved.

## **Promotion of Walking Festivals** (*Glyn Roberts*):

BC walking festival in 17<sup>th</sup> year – would like help to promote the festivals for benefit of local walkers, visitors, local community - but does not want to encroach on the toes of other festivals in the county. Local businesses support some Walking Festivals, but BC does not have this opportunity as businesses already provide great support to plenty of other causes and the many other festivals in the local area.

NMcD- Council in process of applying to Defa for funding (£50,000) for a promotion and marketing programme for tourism, (walking festivals are within this theme). Bid due in this month and will run from next year if successful. NMcD explained the process. This will help us to showcase walking in general in Shropshire. GR since extending the duration of the WF, numbers have increase and thus the benefits to local businesses, but evidencing how this has resulted in an increase in jobs would be difficult to show.

Forum asked question: could WAW help coordinate the festivals?  
Shropshire Great Outdoors site – could there be a section on WF's?

NMcD reports met recently with VS, and they are trying to keep the momentum built up over the last few years with Shropshire Hills WAW, but finding this difficult. SGO – looking at developing a business network. Useful mechanism as could be linked up with this potentially to help support the WF's etc?

NMcD- there are lots of ways that we can link networks in to help support WF's etc. – websites / Facebook etc. need to be linked in some way. At present each is limited as they are reliant on local festivals sending items to all the websites. Recommended SGO / Virtual Shropshire and Shropshire Hills Tourism are the primary ones to promote WF through. NMcD would like to see people come together from all the walking

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festivals across the county to help provide mutual support.

CF- to speak to Mick Dunn about arranging a meeting with all those involved in WF's in the county to discuss issues and ideas. Idea suggested of having a Shropshire Walking Festival, as a whole with these taking place on different dates across the county?

CF/ MD

## **AONB:** *(Nigel McDonald)*

Independence of becoming a conservation board is in process- it has been put forward and they have been told that the outcome will be positive but they are awaiting ratification. Discussions to take place with Defra as to how this will work. Case to be put to Defra at the end of November, then if positive response from Defra the legal process will then commence. N.B since the meeting NMcD reported T&W approved AONB Conservation Board unanimously on 13.10.16 and case was to go to SC cabinet the following week.

## **AOB & reminder of next forum meeting date:**

SB – Annual ploughing and cropping campaign –persistent offenders and landowners/occupiers who have had reports of cropping or ploughing within the last year receive a letter. Results of the 2016 campaign revealed that the majority were in the North of the county. Out of over 120 initial letters, 89 were in the north of the county and following additional correspondence this resulted in 63 landowners complying and reinstating their Public Rights of Way. Overall this has been a successful campaign. Land ownership information found to not be wholly up to date- working on this for next year-so hoping to build on this success next year. The landowner guidance leaflet has been sent out with these letters to help reinforce landowner's responsibilities. To report a complaint- do as normal either via the outdoor rec generic email address or via the Council's website.

GR- 'Countryfile - Children in Need' walk 2 hour walk this Sunday in BC- 20 people came with wide age range - £115 raised through donations. Can we promote this as a county next year?

CF- Department's strategic documents are now on the SGO website for all to look at what the Outdoor Partnerships Service have been doing:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/outdoor-recreation/strategic-documents-for-outdoor-recreation/>

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NMcD- requested shuttle buses and Carding Mill valley are put on next meeting's agenda.

Date for next meeting agreed as 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. 2017; venue TBC.

Hd'A