

Place Overview Committee

03 September 2020

Member Question and Response

From: Councillor Ruth Houghton

Since lockdown has eased across the Country we are experiencing a large number of visitors to beauty spots in Shropshire by people who appear keen to enjoy and experience our lovely countryside. Whilst visitors are very welcome and essential to our local economy, the impact, unfortunately, in some areas of the County has been tarnished by litter, damage to verges and paths, parking in field gateways preventing farmer access and dogs off leads around livestock.

How will Shropshire Council and partner agencies (including the NFU, National Trust, Natural England, Visit Shropshire and the AONB among others) address these issues and enforce relevant legislation to reduce this adverse impact and at the same time allocate a budget for a publicity and promotion campaign of the countryside code whilst also welcoming responsible tourists?

Response:

There has been an ongoing campaign on social media to help encourage responsible use of the countryside by visitors and to adhere to the Countryside Code. Our Visitor Economy Officer is reviewing a range of on line communication to monitor the promotion of visitor activity in Shropshire. I would be happy to discuss with Cllr Houghton how this could be enhanced.

Whilst we understand the concerns and inconvenience caused to landowners, it is not clear how the issues might be addressed. The Countryside Code is advisory rather than statutory and enforcement of many of the recommendations is not possible. The Rights of Way network must be accessible and, with 6,500 km in Shropshire (which in a straight line would span the Atlantic from Shrewsbury to New York), policing it is not practicable. Laminated posters explaining the Countryside Code, such as the one attached or similar to the CLA campaign, could be made available. Any ideas about other practical action that could be taken would be welcomed.