

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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014, at 7.45pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**1. Attendance:**

Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG. Joint Secretary. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Gaynor Evans & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

**Apologies:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chair. Anthony Francis-Jones, Telford BWA, Vice Chair. Andrew Kelly, Vrnwy & Dist. BWA. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Jan Baldwin, Broseley Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA. Mark Weston, BHS

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair it was agreed that Zia would Chair the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters Arising****(a) Wind Turbines – update on applications.**

The response on behalf of the Forum to Planning application 13/04250/FUL at Wigmarsh, West Felton, (paper B) is noted. The proposed turbine is within fall over distance of the bridleway. The existence of the bridleway was not mentioned in the application. Mat Stephens has done a response to Planning, highlighting the Recreation Team's concerns over the impact on the public bridleway. Zia emailed Forum members today with her response to an application at Conover that will impact on a country lane used by horse riders, as it is closer than the BHS recommended separation distance. If wind turbines are placed close to roads, horse riders have to contend with traffic, as well as any impact from a wind turbine, putting them in a more vulnerable position. The proposed wind turbine at Conover will also impact on tourism, as it will be right in front of Lyth Hill. This is where one of the Humphrey Kynaston Circular routes starts and finishes. RAF Shawbury has objected to the application, as it will impact on their radar. There are a large number of Wind Turbines already granted, and planned, in North Shropshire. These could turn the area into one large wind farm.

**(b) 'Paths for Communities' – P4C**

Zia reported that there is a deadline of the end of February to complete all the works. She and her husband have nearly finished way marking all the routes, but they are waiting for tall waymark posts to come in. The weather has not helped as the ground in many places is waterlogged. The new route at Preston Montford is now opened up with new gates. It goes through the fields with lovely views. It then goes along the bottom of the embankment, through the A5 rest area with a café and toilets, up the slip road, and across a field to Montford Bridge. The Highways Agency has been very difficult holding everything up. They wanted full risk assessments, detailed specifications, and traffic management schemes etc., for putting in three bridleway gates that were not even on the road and two horse-warning signs on the slip road. They wanted to treat everything as though it was on the main A5. It kept being passed from one person to another, with no one prepared to make decisions, or to sign the documents. It took Jim, Richard K, Zia and help from

Mark Weston to eventually resolve it. The Countryside Recreation Team has been fantastic with their support over the whole project. A lot of work is being done to improve gates along the routes. A big complaint from horse riders has been about the stick up handles on self-closing gates as reins and even bit rings have got caught on them, and the stick out bolts which can rip a rider's leg or a horse's side. New low handles are being tried on the self-closing gates: these come to just below the top bar and are stock proof, so the gates, which have 'D' loops around the closing bolt, have nothing protruding to get caught on. On field gates, low pull bars are being replaced with higher easier to reach latches with 'D' loops. As well as the 8 sections of the linear route, there are 4 main circular routes, two smaller circular ones highlighted in the linear leaflets, and link routes. The plan is to build on this and add more routes in the future. The leaflets for the 8 linear and 4 main circular routes will all be on the [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk) website which is being upgraded as part of the Project.

**(c) Helicopter Liaison Meeting**

The meeting held prior to this meeting attended by the New Station Commander, Group Captain Smith, the new Corporate Relations Officer, Squadron Leader Kim Leach, and Squadron Leader Garry James, Station Flight Safety Officer, RAF Shawbury is noted.

**(d) National Grid Power Lines - [www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection](http://www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection)**

Zia attended the consultation meeting held at West Felton Village Hall and put forward her concerns over the impact of the route on public bridleways and tourism. She also attended a meeting at The Venue, Oswestry, called by Keith Barrow of Shropshire Council, and attended by Owen Patterson MP. Concerns were raised on the blight put on properties and businesses, and its impact on tourism. Shona and Matt have had a meeting on the proposals and how they affect Rights of Way.

**(e) Dog Incidents**

It is reported that there are a growing number of reports of incidents with dogs chasing horse riders on public bridleways, and attacking horses. Dogs should be under close control on a Public Right of Way. Serious incidents should be reported to the Police, and it is really important that people report incidents to the BHS accident website [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk). It is suggested that equestrian yards put notices up advising that incidents be reported.

**(f) BHS Access Conference**

Angela, Zia and Jan attended the Conference held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013. It had a very well balanced Agenda, with excellent speakers on a good range of subjects, including The Woodland Trust on providing horse access, Common Land, P4C, Wind farms and horses, and a presentation on submitting Definitive Map Modification Orders. Mark Weston was recently on the One Show meeting a landowner following seven claims put in by the speaker for bridleways in Somerset.

**(g) Any other Matters arising not on the Agenda**

**Chinese Lanterns** – It is understood that Tesco is no longer selling these.

**4. Shropshire Council**

**(a) Cuts and reorganization within Shropshire Council**

Shona reported that a 30day consultation on proposed reorganisation of Outdoor Recreation is on going. Funding has been obtained from Public Health, as getting out into the countryside is recognised as vital to people's mental and physical health. This will give them two years of stability, but they will have to make changes and work more with the community and volunteers.

**(b) Outdoor Recreation Implementation Team**

Currently the staffing levels remain stable but there will be changes to the way they work. They will be working with the Probation Service. They will also look to other ways of bringing money in such as tree planting. They are currently working on the Shropshire Way, and on the Humphrey

Kynaston Way P4C project, and with volunteers The storms brought lots of trees and debris down on ROW, and lots of volunteers had been involved in clearing these. Adcote Bridge suffered damage with a supporting pier damaged and the bridge sinking in the middle. It is currently closed as unsafe. The adjoining ford is still open, but the Adcote river bank has been built up by the landowner making access that side difficult.

The Team are currently working on clearing overgrowth on the BOATS at Hinton/Polemere so the contractors can get in to work on the surface, which is currently waterlogged. Carol reported that there are three trees down on the bridleway from Lea Cross, which joins these 3 BOATS.

#### **(c) Shropshire Council online Rights of Way User Survey 2014**

Everyone said that they had completed it. There has been a disappointing response this year. This may be because people do not realise this is an annual survey, and may think having filled in one before, they do not need to do another. It is agreed that the information given at the beginning, of work done and the status of routes, was good. The 2014 survey was not so walker focussed. It gave more opportunity for horse riders, and others to answer questions. A few questions still proved difficult to answer. Zia was told that some questions are standard ones, and so cannot be changed. Zia asked members to remind their groups and others to fill it in. The results are important as they can influence future work. The need for circular rides had been highlighted in previous surveys.

#### **(d) Shropshire Council Planning**

Shona has followed up on this again. If we are to be consulted on planning applications this will have to include all applications affecting ROW, as footpaths may hold higher rights. Planning applications are shown on the Council's planning website, and some members already check these. Jan checks Telford ones, and Zia regularly checks the Shropshire weekly lists but may not recognise the importance of applications outside areas she knows. It would be a lot for Linda to be sent the whole of Shropshire, and it was asked if it was possible to break it down into areas. There is concern that most Planning decisions are now made by Planning Officers under delegated powers, with not even those with many objections, including objections by Parish Councils, going to Committee, and the Officers just saying that they have mitigated the objections, with no way for the public, or Parish Councils to respond to these.

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

**Adcote Bridge** – A temporary closure notice has had to be issued due to flood damage. The bridge is in private ownership. Responsibility for its repair is being investigated. It is an important link route from Adcote to Baschurch. The closure does not apply to the ford adjacent to the bridge.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane.** There has been no movement on the anomaly. This involves the Willey Estate, and proof is needed that they moved the fence. The land ownership needs resolving. They have authority to publish an order.

**Benthall Woods FP65 upgrade** – A Telford contractor is going to do the gates. One is needed at the end of the railway line, and other gates may be put up to the side to keep horse riders to the line. It is agreed that members will follow this up with Andrew Carless.

**Badger Wood** – Lucy is in touch with the new landowner. The meadow has two new gates across.

**Oaks Wood** – Shona will liaise with Linda on this to resolve the line issue.

**Frodesley** – Shona is dealing with this now. The Orders still have to be sent off.

**Drumbles Wood** – This is still with Mat Stephens.

**Sutton Mill** - Shona confirmed that this is still with Mat.

**Brogyntyn** – We had been consulted on the wrong line, which they had cleared. The correct line shown on the order is now being sorted out, but involves a Tree Preservation Order

**Llanyblodwel** – Lucy has written the detailed evidence statements. Statements of Case can be sent in advance to save time. There are 3 issues. The Order has only been part confirmed but O.S. has put all the routes on their maps.

**Old Moors Lane** – Zia will follow up on this with Mat. It is important that it is resolved.

**Hilton** – The order will have to be published without an outlet.

**Market Drayton** – Following the recent Inquiry the route has been confirmed as a bridleway.

**Lea Hall Quarry** – Lucy is still following up on access there.

**Melverley** – The width confirmed by the Inspector has still not been enforced.

**Duck Lane, Little Ryton to Ryton** - No claim has been submitted yet.

**Welshampton FP addition** - Lucy is dealing with this. There was good local support with evidence given at the Public Inquiry. There are possible higher rights there, and a potential outlet.

**Pontesford Hill** – Zia responded to the planning application, as it will impact on the Humphrey Kynaston Way linear route. The new owner has a 999year lease. Nearly 100 evidence-of-use forms have been submitted for rights of way there. These were Crown lands. The Wildlife Trust has objected to the planning application on future management issues.

**Shirlett/Fish House Wood** – It keeps being blocked. Complaints had held things up. It just needs one gate to be put in, and the corral to be removed. A Legal notice has been served which will be enforced. The team have been told to get on with clearing it.

Shona emphasised the importance of resolving issues quickly when notices have been served.

## **6. Draft Deregulation Bill**

The Committee stage is on the 24<sup>th</sup> February. It has to go through the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It goes through first and second readings, but it is at the Committee stage that they actually debate it in more detail. Concern was expressed over the possibility of gates being put on Byways that had been open for centuries making it difficult for carriage drivers. The section on this was not very clear. Shona understood that it only says that you will be able to authorize gates. Zia said that it does seem to only apply to open land. Lanes should not be gated as this would encourage animals to be grazed on a lane, which would be dangerous to users.

## **7. Highways**

### **Provision of a Definitive Map showing status of Shropshire Highways**

There has been no progress on the report Zia did to Shropshire Council Highways on the 1929 Handover Map road errors and omissions. It is important that the old highway maps are all digitised, but that the original maps are kept. It is important that original documents are kept as copies can be corrupted and then information would be lost forever. Documents should only be copied as a back up. It is important that the original documents are safeguarded as colour and details can be lost when digitising.

## **8. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums (not already covered)**

The minutes of the Local Access Forum held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and the Minutes of the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013 are available on <http://bit.ly/XNng7vP>. Zia reported that the relevant issues raised at the 6<sup>th</sup> February LAF have been included in our agenda. She raised the impact of National Grid Power Lines, and Wind Turbines and Planning, and updated LAF on the Humphrey Kynaston Way. It is noted that the next LAF meeting will be on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014 at 10am in the Shirehall

**9. Any Other Business** – There was no other business

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

Shona read a letter with regard to closing of the Shirehall at 8pm. Bookings for meetings are being accepted up to December 2015. Meetings after those currently booked will need to finish by 7.30pm. The meeting at the Shirehall on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at 7pm for 7.30pm is confirmed, and that is secure, but any subsequent meetings will either have to start earlier or be held elsewhere. It is agreed that we will hold the following meeting on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014** and will need to meet at **5.00pm and start the meeting promptly at 5.30 pm.**

**TO NOTE:** All papers for SR&CDF meetings are now sent out by email.