

# Southern Walking Forum

Minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting

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The Greene Room, Wistanstow Village Hall, Craven Arms

10 am – 12 noon, Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014

## Present:

Keith Pybus	KP Chair	Shropshire Way Association
Jim Stabler	JS	Access Development Officer, Shrop. Council
Dick Bailey	DB	Much Wenlock WAW
Val Simpson	VS	Cleobury Mortimer WAW
Michael Holland	MH	Ludlow P3 Group
Peter James	PJ	Clun P3 Coordinator, Ramblers F.P. Secretary & Clun WAW
Charles Edwards	CE	R.A./ Ludlow P3 / Discovery Centre
Chris Chillingworth	CP	Ludlow P3
Clare Fildes	CF	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Helen Beresford	HB	Shropshire Council
Richard Knight	RK	Shropshire Council
Marion Law	ML	Rail Rambles
Gill Mortimer	GM	South Shropshire Ramblers
Steven Levers	SL	Bishops Castle WAW and P3
Helen d'Albert	Hd'A	Walking Coordinator South Shropshire, Shropshire Council

## Apologies:

Simon Cooter	SC	Natural England
Merle Lippitt	ML	Rushbury WFH
Alan Garner	AG	Secret Hills Walking Holidays
Colin Carson	CC	Shrews. Hill Walking Club / HF hols.
Les Lumsden	LL	Ludlow 21/ Ludlow WAW bid project
Phil Sams	PS	Ludlow WAW bid project
Merinda Essex	ME	Craven Arms P3
Mike Beazley	MB	Ludlow WFH/ HF hols.
Alison Caffyn	AC	Ludlow WAW bid project
Sue Jones	SJ	Shropshire Area Ramblers
Chris Tibbits	CT	WFH Church Stretton
Ray Hughes	RH	Shropshire Council
Sue Jones	SJ	South Shropshire Ramblers/ AONB
Rick Summers	RS	Ludlow P3 & Whitcliffe Common
Mandy Smith	MS	Craven Arms WFH
Steph Hayes	SH	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

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<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Welcomed Helen Beresford who took up new post as Shropshire Outdoors Development Officer 2 ½ weeks ago.</p> <p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b> Minutes of last meeting were agreed.</p> <p><b>Forum Topic</b> P3 - Richard Knight, Outdoor Partnership Team Rights of Way Team Leader outlined the changes in the Team, team's main focus and the new roles. Name change to service -from Outdoor Recreation to <u>Outdoor Partnership Team</u>. RK explained that have been building relationships with Public Health and been successful in getting support form P.Health to develop the service. The focus is a lot stronger on Partnership with other organisations, local communities, P3, outdoor volunteering services. RK explained that they have to deliver outcomes to show the effects of improving ROW and managing sites on physical activity and health. The focus is more now about getting people active, looking at supporting site volunteers, management of committees, etc. Access to the countryside to get people more active. They will also continue to do their best to maintain the network of ROW. The focus is less about how many gates we have etc and more about how to get there and deliver access to enable physical activity. With the active volunteering focus has brought 2 new posts to the team, the first is Helen Beresford's post and her role is to focus on the P3 primarily and to link other groups in with the P3. There is a second post of Outdoor Partnership Officer which has not been filled as yet. RK explained that the staffing was reduced by 2 last year and in the restructure there will now be 4 area officers which will increase the support for the P3 groups. Probation Trust links have been made and groups of 8 offenders have been working 4 days a week on the council owned sites strimming to keep the sites tidy. The project has been successful and RK wants to develop this further and aims to offer this workforce as a labour force to other groups to help them with the work they are doing. He hopes to increase to a 2<sup>nd</sup> probation team so doubling the capacity, and so RK asked P3 groups to think of projects these groups can help with. Helen B to initially look at reinvigorating Shropshire Outdoors Groups-working with groups with Mental and Physical disabilities, so that these could then work with groups such as P3 as well, then the new officer will work on the support for this area when in post.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p>
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RK explained that extra support is being put into the budget for volunteers, the aim being to increase coverage and numbers. Focus at Nills is working more with the P3. Plan to ensure are well equipped so have what need to do the work. HB to encourage new groups via attendance at Parish meetings etc. RK will advise when the Countryside officers' areas are confirmed.

Brushcutter training been given, but thinking of introducing supervisory training course too, covering risk management and safety training.

SL very encouraged by above info from RK and said basic expenses for fuel would help.

ML asked for clarification on referral route for obstructions-

RK advised emails/ phonecalls and letters come to Lucy Stanley at Shirehall who contacts referrer for more details if needed. She logs it and creates a job sheet that goes to Nills / or to ROW if is an Enforcement or Obstruction issue.

They are prioritised by categories of paths at present, thought likely to in future get support if has a volunteering group in the area, i.e. if it can therefore be shown by this that there is the interest in the community to support this.

PJ expressed that they regard routes that they walk as individuals/ groups as a priority route if it is obstructed.

The need for feedback on reported issues was raised – RK said do try to feedback to who reported the issue where able, but acknowledged this system needs improving. Outcomes and feedback are very important as the service needs to prove to funders how increasing activity and improving access etc.

MH asked about access to info via CAMS by groups, RK stated trying to address but some difficulties in how and need to ensure data protection is maintained.

SL stated everyone needs to know who is doing what and where and when. CI asked if there was a web based way for P3 to access info and input ? Not yet available RK replied.

¼ ly feedback discussed- will be same, but are moving it to ensure get info more timely. So will run 1 month in arrears.

PJ asked that it was noted that not all groups have transport to get heavy stuff across several fields.

V.S. Cleobury area- explained that work done on cross border bridges with Worcestershire- Cleobury- Wyre forest. Asked would it help to be aware of outcomes for this? RK to discuss with Tim Simmons and asked VS to email info to Tim.

VS concerned if more P3 groups will it stretch support from Outdoor Partnerships Service? And said WAW also needs support.

SL said they want to draft something out to send to local land owners to remind them of their responsibilities. Plan to send a letter out as

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reminder then a thank you.

## **Walking for Health**

Hd'A updated group on WFH in area:

Briefly outlining changes happening with WFH – the criteria for WFH walks is changing and due to come in by end of the year. Walks covered by the scheme will be up to 90 min duration, those over this will no longer be within WFH, and instead the plan is to market these as progression walks and to insure under Council insurance. This is apart from the Footloose walks which are not locality based and Hd'A has met and spoken with leads for this group who are looking at the options open to them.

New groups and proposed groups- Hd'A feedback positive start to new group formed 01.04.14- need to encourage volunteers to train as walk leaders for this group, so can become community led. Kim Skinner Ludlow Foyer is interested in setting up a WFH Youth walk for residents – Hd'A has met to discuss ideas. S. Forum suggested could P3 link in with the young people from this walk?

Hd'A

## **WAW**

Hd'A feedback from her attendance at recent meeting - Ludlow plans to submit its bid for WAW status in June.

VS feedback that Spring Gathering conference went well. Good turn out and well received. Acknowledgement given by National WAW for the cluster groups support idea.

## **Jim Stabler – Outdoor Recreation Survey Report – feedback. Jim's leaving date and plans for O.R. Structure**

Due to time constraints of meeting it was decided for this feedback to be postponed.

Most of information about the new OR structure outlined at start of meeting by RK. JS reported he is pleased with the support for P3 groups in new structure. HB is part of JS team. JS advised the other role being advertised will work with less easy to reach groups and will be about more development of volunteering.

JS in revised role now, given restructuring and is retiring on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Clare Fildes to take over from JS- role to look at projects, development of P3 groups and Volunteering etc. Congratulations extended to CS on getting job, Clare starts in post on 1<sup>st</sup> July to allow overlap with Jim for transfer of information.

KP asked should we have a representative for P3 at all the 3 forums and who? All agreed this was needed. HB to overview countywide.

The question was raised is this the seed for P3 area meetings? JS said

HB

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he saw this meeting as being the forum for P3.

KP expressed that felt needs to show work is appreciated and noticed ad press coverage when project goes well, and to say thank you.

KP asked about distribution of the newsletter? And said should be communicating with P3 members.

RK reported a register of all P3 members has not been done up till now, doesn't want to increase admin for P3 volunteers but feels needs this – means every P3 vol will need to fill in a form and then only the new members to do in the future. Unable to guess how many members currently have. Plan is to separate between active and non-active and log info. RK will be putting this together and will circulate within the next year. This will then inform the service how many supervisors are needed per group etc. and to top up insurance (personal accident) to tighten that up. Part of that is email address and all email to all group / or post out paper copies. SL asked that as part of the process there should be an opt in/ opt out for email or not and review on annual basis those new and those who have left P3 to keep it up to date. Also need to record admin time too.

MH asked if can have some feedback in respect of the time put in.

ML expressed view that producing the glossy product of the O.R.

Volunteer newsletter is not best use of resources so would rather money went to footpaths, JS explained that the newsletter is produced on line.

JS explained that the ¼ ly report will now form the basis of an annual report and it is a ¼ ly issued newsletter.

VS felt it would help partnership approach if was flow of info via emails-collated in an email to send out to other P3 so cascaded in that way.

So have dialogue between groups. This was discussed with use of Facebook mentioned as one possibility so have one stop shop for posting things?

JS wants HB to look at Yammer – LAF, may be good for P3? Which may be better than Facebook?

JS / HB

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## **Helen Beresford, Shropshire Outdoor Development Officer Parish Path Partnerships – new role**

Helen introduced herself and outlined her background. She has worked at Nills for many years and so is very familiar with the practical nature of the work undertaken on footpath maintenance and access improvements both by the team at Nills and P3 groups across the county. She has been in post for 2 ½ weeks and it is a new role. The main focus of her role is on New Parish Path Partnership and volunteer development, working with the P3 groups supporting and encouraging development of new groups and increasing volunteer numbers to help with this valuable work.

## **Clee Hill Heritage Project- Feedback from Clare Fildes**

CF- LEADER meeting is on 7th May at 5.30pm. Discovery centre, C.Arms. Contact CF for info. Working on Leader funding- European funding for South Shrop area - economic growth and creation.

Shuttle Bus leaflets are out.

AONB feedback – moving into Outdoor Partnerships team (there are 5 teams in total, one of which is the AONB team.) OFFA conference held recently was success. Project ends later in year.

CF feedback about C.Hill Heritage project- and provided a sheet for members for further information- see attached copy with these minutes.

## **WW1 walks – update**

DB WW1 Much Wenlock is including walks in walking weekend- 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Sept, there will be 3 walks one in 2014, 2015, 2016. The first walk will focus on the impact on the railways and quarries and hospital in 1914/15. Will be a 1.5-2 hour amble through the town, will be guided with stories to illustrate it.

JS – JS and KP working on template for what self-guided walks leaflets are going to look like so have standard format for leaflet. To distribute these via AONB, VIC Shrewsbury.

Have lots of stories from across the county to illustrate the walks.

VS- Cleobury Mortimer had some money and one of the projects is a WW1 biographies booklet, retails at £2 plan is to provide every schoolchild with a copy. Could people take something away from our walks as commemoration of them? VS their role within this is about the people who survived and brought something as a result of it to a community. Simon Evans Walking weekend to be held in 2017 with WW1 songs.

PJ Recommended a set of the leaflets should be kept on display in Shrewsbury.

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KP talked about GPO link with C. Arms walk. The last post exhibition – about getting mail to / from the front, has now opened in Ironbridge for a year.

## **Funding and Potential Projects**

Nil discussed

## **Member's Updates**

Nil further discussed

## **AOB**

Nil raised

## **Next Meeting – Forum Topic/ Day/ Time/ Location:**

KP proposed that the next meeting should be an outdoor meeting given that we are a Walking forum. Details of this to be circulated in due course. Date proposed for meeting was 4<sup>th</sup> July.

KP / Hd'A