

# B

## NOTES FROM WALK FORUM, MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2014

Present:

Trevor Allison (Ramblers), Helen Beresford (SC), Peter Carr (*Ramblers*), Mark Cuthbert-Brown (P3), David Davies (W4H), Tony Eccleston (Wem Walkers), Liz Evans (W4H), Clare Fildes (SC), Ernie Heath (*Wem Walkers*), Jane Ing (P3), Andy Lipa (SC), Ian McKenzie (P3), Ann and Neil Moore (P3), Jim Stabler (SC), Barrie Stephens (W4H).

Nobody commented on the notes from July.

### **Walking for Health**

A new walk has just started in Gobowen on a Tuesday afternoon to replace the failing Gatacre Avenue walk in Oswestry. It is hoped a new area will attract some new walkers.

The trial at the orthopaedic hospital was fairly successful. The hospital staff came for walks on a lunchtime and evening over 6 weeks. The hospital has been provided with routes so the walks can continue and hopefully this will be monitored to see what uptake this has.

A new walk has also just started from Meadowbrook bungalows next to the orthopaedic hospital. The uptake so far has been quite good and it is hoped this will continue.

### **Walkers are Welcome**

The Oswestry Walkers are Welcome are doing an Armistice Walk on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 11am from Cae Glas park memorial. This will be very much a Wilfred Owen based walk.

The Whitchurch Walkers are Welcome are planning next year's festival which will be Friday 15<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Ludlow have just been given Walkers are Welcome status.

Walkers are Welcome have introduced a secret walker to observe how well accredited towns are doing.

### **Festival of Winter Walks**

If anyone is doing a walk over the Christmas and New Year period, perhaps they could let Liz know so it can be promoted through the Ramblers and Walking for Health network as part of the Ramblers Festival of Winter Walks.

## **Bluebell/Burns Wood Walk**

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September there was a celebratory walk for the re-opening of this footpath near Ellesmere. 25 people attended and all agreed it was a beautiful walk. Jim was thanked for the refreshments afterwards where everyone thought this sort of walk should become an annual event. The Oswestry Ramblers are doing a national rally next year, probably Oswald's Trail, and perhaps this could be the next one.

## **Oswald's Trail update**

The official launch of Oswald's trail took place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September. It was opened by Owen Patterson and representatives from the Council, Ramblers and Ramblers Holiday Trust. The walk has been very well received and had good press coverage. The free booklets were funded by sales of walking books and the Ramblers Holiday Trust. 2,000 were printed and there are plans for another 4,000. Barry Southwell from the Ramblers Holiday Trust has recommended the walk at national level and this will hopefully bring money into Oswestry by people coming to walk it. Together with the Shropshire Way, Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke, there is now a really good footpath network for walking in this area.

There was a brief discussion about the importance of networking with other agencies to promote this area. It was suggested the Destination Development Partnership could be used and Sam Philips from Walkers are Welcome is very good at talking to people about how towns benefit from Walkers are Welcome.

## **Ploughing and cropping etc.**

It was generally felt maize is the biggest problem and has been worse this year and the Council could do more, especially as they want Walkers are Welcome to promote walking. Flintshire and Cheshire send letters to landowners who do not leave a strip free along footpaths, and this does have results. Whilst not all farmers are guilty of this, all issues should be reported and there is a plan in place that a letter will be sent to the landowner who could also be charged if the Council has to do the work. If a couple of high profile cases are seen to be being done, word will get around.

## **WW1**

For next year, there will be a walk on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August at Whixhall Moss. The subject is the effect of war on the fens and mosses and it will be led by 2 very good speakers.....i.e. Jim and Roger Dunshea.

There is no date for another walk to go through Oswestry town up to the museum, hill fort and Park Hall camp.

### **Llanyblodwell Enquiry**

This is set for 10am on Tuesday December 16<sup>th</sup> at Porth-Y-Waen village hall. The enquiry is for 3 routes to be incorporated into the Rights of Way system where there are anomalies and mistakes from old maps.

### **To introduce herself**

Helen Beresford is the new Outdoor Development Officer. Her role is to promote active volunteering and she is currently organising a volunteer taster session in Ellesmere to recruit new volunteers. The Ramblers stand was offered to help promote P3 volunteers and it was suggested Helen contacted existing P3 groups.

### **To introduce herself**

Clare Fildes is the new Access Development Manager. Her role is to replace Jim's, but it has broader aims for volunteer development. Clare also is looking at branding for volunteers, leisure cycling, new website, developing Nesscliffe, training for volunteers etc. There is more emphasis now on health as Public Health are funding aspects of Outdoor Recreation such as Walking for Health.

### **Walking with Offa**

Clare handed out a draft business plan that has been developed by herself and Alison Caffin, a tourism expert. The idea is to promote the area and businesses along the whole border. It will pick up on heritage aspects, accessibility, food and drink, arts and crafts, pub walks, and the health agenda. If anybody has ideas for north Shropshire please let Clare know. Andy is working on replacing stiles with gates.

### **AOB**

Ann Moore wanted to know what 'greening measures' are. ( There are 3 greening rules farmers must satisfy – crop diversification, maintaining permanent pasture land and introducing areas to be left alone, i.e. strips of land along water courses etc.)

Trevor Allison informed everyone that there is a planning application for a solar farm at Gobowen which will cover 31 hectares and will put 66,000 panels on farm land. Please refer to Planning for further information.

### **Next meeting**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January, 7.30pm, Ellesmere Town Hall.