

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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014, at 5.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

### **1. Attendance:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chair. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG, Joint Secretary. Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Gaynor Evans, Jan Baldwin & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

### **Apologies:**

Anthony Francis-Jones, Telford BWA, Vice Chair. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Pam Youille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Mark Weston, BHS

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Wind Turbines – update on applications.**

It is noted that, as agreed at the last meeting, a response was put in, following BHS guidelines, on the application for a 327ft (99.7m) wind turbine near Tetchill, Ellesmere. Highways objected due to its possible impact on users of the main road. The blades would be heated to stop ice forming. There have been reports of normally bombproof horses bolting when turbines start up. There has not been a decision yet on this application.

#### **(b) Shropshire Highways**

It is reported that there is still no news on progress on the digitizing of the old Shropshire Highway Maps. There are great concerns over this, as these old paper maps are the only copies. Anita Corfield Jones is currently looking after these. There have been staff changes at Development Control. There are just 3 Area Managers, Mark Wooton covers the north, Richard Harman, Central and Gemma Lawley the south. Andy Savage has been seconded, and is not being replaced. There is no Team Leader, as they took voluntary redundancy. It is thought that there are plans to outsource next year. A previous outsourcing of work had left too many omissions, with Zia being told then, that a percentage of errors is acceptable, but, with highways, it is important that every road is properly recorded and registered.

#### **(c) Canal Towpath Consultation**

It is noted that the new 'Towpath Guide' is due to be launched in Autumn 2014, and that a summary of responses to The Canal & River Trust 'Sharing Towpaths' Consultation is available at:- <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/consultations/completed-consultations>. Zia reported that

she has responded, and that there are lots of other responses saying that horses should be included on tow paths. Mark Weston, BHS, is due to attend a meeting, and requested to be informed of any evidence of canal towpaths that are, or were ridden to be sent to him at [M.Weston@bhs.org.uk](mailto:M.Weston@bhs.org.uk). The BHS have noted some sections on the Shropshire Union Canal and the Llangollen Canal. Zia reported that Shrewsbury to Uffington is now a public bridleway and that the Queens Head via Maesbury to Pant towpath was ridden. The consultation states that 'towpaths although built for horses are now predominately used by people and except where designated as bridleways, use for horse riding requires special permission'. John said that a lot of tow paths could not be used by ridden horses due to low bridges. Members said this was not a problem as they just ducked under them or dismounted. It is still legal to tow boats with horses and tow horses were often ridden.

#### **(d) Draft Deregulation Bill**

It is noted that the amendments were withdrawn, and there is nothing to report at present as the section of the Bill dealing with access is currently waiting to be discussed in Parliament.

#### **(e) Natural England Higher Access**

It is noted that Mark Weston, Director of Access, BHS has asked for any routes suitable for higher access on Natural England land in Shropshire, which includes the Meres and Mosses, Stiperstones and part of the Wyre Forest, to be sent to him as soon as possible to [M.Weston@bhs.org.uk](mailto:M.Weston@bhs.org.uk). John reported that he had given a map of routes at Whixall to Jim Stabler. Angela reported that there is an enclosure order for that area. It was asked if Natural England owned the Railway Line. On the Stiperstones, Rosemary reported that wire netting has been put on a very steep bridleway at Mytton Dingle, she used to go up with horses. Shona needs the details and the route number. Carol will ask Sue Lee to check this, and also see if she knows of any other ridden routes that should be recorded. Zia put in a route she rides that branches NE off the BW up Perkins Beach to the ridge, it is a wide track used by vehicles. The route to the top, exchanged for the loop around the south, should be reinstated, and a possible link on the eastern boundary investigated. Shona said the area is Open Access land. If there are needed higher status routes NE can dedicate them. Information needs to go to Mark as soon as possible.

#### **(f) Any other Matters arising not on the Agenda**

**Helicopters** – Zia, and the owner of the horse she rides, took part in a photography session on the Long Mynd, for an RAF Shawbury planned high-viz campaign, but the MOD would not allow helicopters to be used to take the photos. There is no news on this at present.

**Equestrian head height for underbridges** - Shona reported that she had been contacted from Staffordshire with regard to the recommended head height for a bridge. John said the old BHS height recommendation was 10ft 6". Zia said that for overhanging foliage it is a minimum of 10ft, but it is best to clear to 12ft to allow for lower branches when wet and for growth, but that height should not be a restriction to use of a route, as riders could dismount to pass under.

*(BHS guidelines for subways and underbridges give 3.7m (12ft) as desirable with a minimum of 3.4m (11ft), though in exceptional circumstances a lower height may be acceptable. Clearance of overhanging branches should be to a minimum of 3m (9.84ft) with 3.7m (12ft) preferable.)*

## **4. Shropshire Council**

### **(a) 'Countryside Recreation' title change to 'Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships'**

The change of title is noted. This change is to highlight the new focus of health and volunteering. Deb Hughes heads the team. Clare Fildes, who was with the ANOB, has taken over Jim Stabler's role on his retirement, but with more of a focus on securing and increasing Volunteering across Shropshire. On her team to help with this are Helen Beresford, who has moved from Richard's team to the Shirehall, and Simon Brown who will work with the mental and physical difficulties

volunteers. Funding has come from the Health Department to get people out and about, active and healthy. Clare also oversees the 3 Walking for Health Coordinators, Helen D'Albert who covers the south, Mick Dunn the central area, and Liz Evans the Oswestry to Market Drayton area. The Ramblers and Macmillan now support Walking for Health.

Richard Knight's team has 5 area Officers who deal with ROW in their areas, support P3 Groups and help secure funding. Harvey Morgan works Monday to Wednesday and covers the NE, and Andy Lipa works the other half of the week and covers the NW. They job share, with Andy Lipa spending one day a week on Offa's Dyke. David Hardwick covers the Central area, Paul Butter the SW, and Tim Simmons the SE. 4 Maintenance Officers support them on the physical work.

On Shona's team, following Mat Stephens leaving in July, Emily Harrison has been appointed for two years from October to cover the North to East. Shona covers the Central Area and South West and Lucy McFarlane the South East. Lucy Stanley logs all the complaints etc. and Jean Jones covers Orders, searches, planning etc.

Mark Blount heads the other team covering Country Parks, play areas, greens, commons etc. There are about 120 green spaces. Ed Andrews covers the Severn Valley Country Park and the sites in the south; Clive Dean covers Nesscliffe and mainly the north, Shaun Burkey deals with the Northern Oswestry area, with Wendy Salter at the Mere, Ellesmere. Mark is currently in the process of recruiting a new team member to replace Amy Davies who covered all the play areas, and sites in the Bridgnorth area. Contracts are currently only for a maximum of 2 years. There is no news on the planned sell off of the Shirehall.

#### **(b) Outdoor Partnerships Implementation Team**

Richard Knight reports that Steven Caldwell has now started in their team to replace Helen Beresford, so they are now back to 4 Maintenance Officers. They have 5 area ROW Officers (*listed in 4(a)*) who deal with ROW in their areas and support P3 Groups.

The Brogyntyn diversion work is now completed. There is one extra temporary gate by the parking area. This will be in place for a maximum of 2 years whilst work is done to reinstate the area back to pasture. The new route is to be way marked with diversion discs as a Restricted Byway. There are now building proposals at the west end. It is not known yet how this will impact on the RB.

Hinton /Polemere Byways improvement is completed. This is part of the HKWay. The routes were overgrown, muddy, rutted, and subject to bad flooding. Carol said that the repairs are fantastic.

There are still some ongoing works on the Humphrey Kynaston Way routes, which David Hardwick is dealing with, including works on the overgrown section of BW25 Ford Heath past Boons, which, now the nesting season is over, is to be cleared, and ditching work then done. Zia reported that the work done, and support from Richard's Team for the route has been fantastic.

Kerry Ridgeway UCR The second phase of work on this is complete, but plans to do more work with Powys on the BOAT is on hold, as Powys did not come up with contributory funding.

The Probation Trust Working with them is going very well. Future work is likely to include more work done in Nesscliffe Country Park organised by Clive Dean, cutting back edges etc.

Annual Summer cutting was done but, due to being one member of staff down, and time restriction, they were not able to get to some routes, mostly in the south east area. Shona confirmed that this year has been exceptionally bad, with lots of complaints of overgrowth on routes.

Fish House Wood, Broseley Opening up work is all done, and the route is now available for use.

Acton Round, Shirlett, still has issues as someone is cutting down trees and putting glass on the route. The south end is now fine, but there are now problems with the Muckley Cross end. Shona confirmed that they are going to keep a watch on this when all the clearance and opening up work is complete. Mike Baldwin has asked for his thanks to be passed on to the local volunteer group who are working on this, and who cleared the glass.

Bridleway gates The new stock proof ones, in the fixed metal frame, with the handle just below the top bar, and nothing to get caught on, have been well received. They can be opened with one hand, and can replace the gates with the latch on the closing post, which require one hand to lift the latch and one to open the gate.

### **(c) Shropshire Council Planning**

Shona reported that Jean Jones publishes the legal orders, and she and Lucy McFarlane deal with the planning consultations. They are supposed to be consulted on any planning application that either directly affects a ROW, or has a right of way adjacent to it, but this does not always happen. Issues are width, surfacing and access. They can put forward objections, but these are not always addressed. A big concern at the moment is where access to a proposed site is along a Right of Way where the applicant has no legal right to vehicular access. They notify planning of this, and inform them that they will be committing an offence under the Road Traffic Act if they drive on the route, but Planning can still be granted. It is up to the applicant to prove that they have a legal right of access. This can cause extra work for Shona's department if a route is damaged, as they are responsible for the surface of rights of way. There are incidences where planning has been granted for buildings across Rights of Way, and they have been built without addressing the ROW. There is an example of this where an extension obstructs BW 0431/90 south of Hanwood. Linda raised concern over permitted development where barns are just built with no consultations.

The BHS have an advice leaflet on Town & Country Planning affecting Riders & Carriage Drivers  
Due to Shropshire not having their SAM DEV in place Planning applications are being granted in areas that have been turned down as unsuitable in the past. This is having a great impact on lanes, and off road routes. Shona reported that Condition 29 search forms included highways, but not ROW. Changes are imminent following a Law Society consultation, with questions to be added including does the planning application affect a ROW, are there any claims in for a ROW, have there been any diversion to ROW etc. Shona is not sure when this is to be implemented.

Planning Applications are listed on: <http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>.

### **(d) Shropshire Riding Website**

Zia reported that further updating of the [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk) website has not taken place, as Jim has said that it is planned to do a new map based website to include walking, cycling and horse riding. Only Shropshire Council promoted routes are currently shown on the Shropshire riding home page 'map of routes' link on the left. You click on a route on the map to get up the route leaflets etc. Full details of the Humphrey Kynaston Way can also be obtained via a link down on the left, and for the Jack Mytton Way via 'featured route', but the Kerry Ridgeway and Sabrina Way are not mentioned, nor is carriage driving. Permissive routes, and other information is out of date and Zia is hoping to get this resolved. The site only shows 'Horses Welcome' establishments and there are very few registered in Shropshire. It is intended that the new site map will be linked to Shropshire Council's local map so definitive routes can be brought up. Zia needs to know what information people think should be included on the new site. Jim has mentioned a March deadline for the project. Clare Fildes will be taking this project on when he leaves.

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

**Preston Montford** - Zia reported that the map orders for creating the new through bridleway from Preston Montford to Montford Bridge, which is part of the Humphrey Kynaston Way bridleway, and for deleting the line of the old footpath, have all now been confirmed, with no objections.

Shona gave the following updates:-

**Hughley towards Gippols BW** – Pam Y. has served a section 130 notice for obstruction on a highway, but served the notice on a non-definitive route which connects the bridleway to The Gippols. This has been used by riders since the 1950's. It is not the through line claimed in the 1950's, which follows the bridleway from Hughley, but then a section of footpath with a stile. Angela has looked at old maps and this line is shown as a white road. Shona has done a site visit. The Landowner is understood to have given permission to some local riders, to use the through track, but has now locked the gate due to the numbers using it. The used route link can be claimed, but only with evidence of ridden use without permission.

**Clun/Offas Dyke** – Zia has been contacted by a representative of the Ramblers with regard to BW12 Clun which is overgrown, and stops at Offa's Dyke on the parish boundary with no legal connection to the bridleway 100 yards to the south. He would like support to resolve this anomaly. Shona will raise this with Lucy. We do not have anyone covering that area since Anita left.

**Adcote Bridge BW** – There are still legal issues to resolve in order to get the privately owned bridge, which has collapsed due to flooding, repaired. The temporary closure notice only applies to the bridleway over the bridge and does not include the ford adjacent to the bridge.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane.** Shona will try and look at this.

**Badger Wood** – This is still ongoing.

**Oaks Wood** - This is still ongoing

**Frodesley** – Shona hopes to be able to get the orders sent off, whilst witnesses are still around.

**Drumbles Wood** – Shona will try and get this order resolved.

**Sutton Mill** – The Order need to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Llanyblodwel** – The part confirmed order was sent to the OS, but they have put all the routes on. The Public Inquiry is on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December and includes one BW. The objectors have not yet done any Statements of Case. Anthony has been very helpful on the bridleway claim.

**Old Moors Lane** – Shona will try and address this now Mat has left. It is shown as a through road on the 1929 highway maps.

**Hilton** – This is still waiting to be published.

**Lea Hall Quarry** – This is still ongoing.

**Melverley** – This is still waiting for the width confirmed by the Inspector to be enforced. Shona explained that if they move an obstruction they have no powers to put anything in its place.

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

**Pontesford Hill** – Awaiting the public Inquiry in November on claimed footpaths on the hill. This will be interesting as it involves an argument around Crown land.

Shona explained that when they start something, they have to make sure that they have the ability to carry it through.

Diversions, currently mostly footpaths, are an important part of their work as they bring in income.

## **6. Solar Farm Applications**

The big concern with these is the security fencing, especially when put up alongside or on both sides of a public right of way for horse riders. It is agreed that we need to make sure that the fencing is safe and that adequate extra width is allowed between the right of way and the fencing, especially for previously unfenced routes, and that it does not impact on access through. Shona reported that they have had no guidance on this, but that the underground cables are also an issue, as well as proper reinstatement of the surface. It was put forward that safety rails should be provided as a barrier between any proposed security fencing and a right of way, especially if the fencing has spikes or a similar topping to prevent it being climbed.

It is noted that the British Horse Society have advice on Solar Panels on [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

## **7. Public Access under Stewardship Schemes**

Zia reported that there are 17 schemes still operating in Shropshire, some to 2020. There is concern that new EFA regulations may lead landowners to withdraw schemes. Shona will check on this.

*The remaining 17 schemes are downloadable on <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk/walk-ride>*

## **8. Items to Note**

The British Horse Industry Confederation 'Equine Sector 2015 .General Election Manifesto for the Horse' attached to the Agenda is noted. The statistics contained in this could be useful. Sport and

Tourism are very important to Shropshire's economy. Tourism generates over £561million a year for Shropshire.

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

The minutes of the Local Access Forum held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, attached to the Agenda, are noted. The meeting held at Preston Montford Field Studies Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014, included a presentation by Adrian Pickles on The Field Studies Council and its work at Preston Montford, and how Shropshire Council and LAF could work with them, and an update on Shropshire Council's Parks and Countryside sites by Mark Blount with discussion on working together and on how the role of volunteering could be encouraged.

It is noted that the next LAF meeting is on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and that, and the following meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015 will be held at 10am in the Shirehall.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

**Newport Cycle Path** – It was asked if this 14 mile route from Newport to Gnosall, along a wide old railway line, is open to horse riders. (*Part of National Cycle Network NCN 55*). Concern was raised that whilst cyclists used any bridleways that are claimed or created, horse riders are often not being included on new cycling routes.

**Wenlock Edge Cycle Path** – Zia reported an article in the Shropshire Star about a fundraising drive by the National Trust for £4,000 to create two family friendly cycling routes of 4 miles and 7.5 miles along Wenlock Edge. Shona thought that Richard Knight had been contacted on this. The Jack Mytton Way runs along Wenlock Edge using part of the railway line and this is already open to cyclists. There is concern that they may want to change the surface. Shona confirmed that they would not be able to alter the surface of the bridleway without permission.

**Minsterley to Pontesbury new off road Cycle Path** – Rosemary asked if horse riders could get permission to use this new route. We had asked for this to be multi user, but were told that it would only be open to walkers and cyclists. It is reported that horse riders are using it, as it is a needed route.

**British Horse Society Access Conference Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2014** – Jan Mees Robinson and Zia are booked in to attend. Gill and Angela may also attend.

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

It was noted that the date of the next meeting is **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30. The meeting must close at 7.30pm** due to evening closure of the Shirehall.

It is confirmed that the following meeting will be held on **8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 5 for a prompt start at 5.30pm**

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