

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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015, 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. Wendy Beaumont, Bridgnorth. Gaynor Evans & Jan Baldwin, Broseley Bridleways. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club.

### **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. Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Mark Weston, BHS. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council, had to cancel late, but she has sent reports.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair. John commended Zia on the minutes.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Wind Turbines**

It is noted that the application for a 327ft (99.7m) wind turbine near Tetchill has been turned down, but that the application 13/04250/FUL for a 77m wind turbine to be sited approx. 60m from Bridleway 11 at Wigmarsh is still awaiting a decision. Turbines have gone out of control and shed blades in fine weather. A repositioned turbine has recently been granted near the Long Mountain, and the Planning Committee agreed at the meeting that any now granted should be more suitably coloured, non-reflective and not white, as many of the existing ones are, as they show up in the landscape. John reported that in Italy they are not so noticeable as they are green or grey. It is agreed that we should continue to object to any applications that fall within the BHS guidelines.

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

There is still no news on progress on the digitizing of the old Shropshire Highway Maps. The subject was raised again at the last LAF meeting. A number of roads shown on the 1929 Handover Map were left off later maps. Old Moors Lane near Saint Martins is still to be resolved. The Order for it to be registered as a bridleway was withdrawn, as it is an Unsurfaced Unclassified County Road. John reported that he was told that there were a lot of maps at Bridgnorth. Zia reported that Divisions held their own maps which were often different to Central Highway's maps. On earlier Highways maps a number of green lanes, and unsurfaced ends to lanes, were just rubbed out. A later set of Highways maps were damaged by water and errors were also made when copying these by hand to new maps. Shona has reported that, following surveying, their department had agreed to

take on the maintenance of a number of key unsurfaced UCR's which link with the ROW network. They are discussing the possibility of creating a map layer so we all know which routes these are.

**(c) Canal Towpaths**

This item was put on the agenda following the The Canal & River Trust's 'Sharing Towpaths' Consultation: - <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/consultations/completed-consultations>, and the expected attendance of a representative to address the last LAF meeting, but they failed to turn up. Shona is hoping to get a representative from CART to the next LAF meeting. The responses to the consultation included a question asking 'Is anything missing from the nine principles of towpath use'. 59% responded 'yes, horse riding'. Zia reported that tow paths were ridden in the Maesbury Marsh area, and John that ones were ridden in Essex. Mark Weston has reported that 3 Pilot routes with horse riding access are being looked at in Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Herefordshire. Members are reminded to report any canal towpaths that are, or were ridden to Mark Weston on [M.Weston@bhs.org.uk](mailto:M.Weston@bhs.org.uk).

**(d) Deregulation Bill**

It is noted that the Report Stage – line by line examination of the Bill – was started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February, and that this will be followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading; 4<sup>th</sup> March; Consideration of Amendments; then Royal Assent. The Deregulation Bill documents can be viewed on [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) by putting 'Deregulation Bill' in 'search'. It is understood that the CLA was trying to stop motorised vehicle use of some routes. Some amendments were withdrawn, and others were not moved. The outcome is now awaited.

**(e) Natural England Higher Access**

Routes were put forward for the Stiperstones area, including the omission of the new link bridleway to the south. A suggested link on the east side was rejected due to ground conditions. It is noted that Mark Weston, BHS Director of Access, has reported that he is waiting to hear back from Natural England on the used branch route up from Perkins Beach. Nothing has been heard on the old railway line link in the Wyre Forest. Dedication of higher status routes in the Meres and Mosses area, will be coming soon, but may be a problem, as they cross the border into Wales and Natural England can only dedicate higher access in England. Wales would have to agree. John reported that the North Wales carriage drivers are getting together with Area 27 Shropshire, to look at, and re-drive all the routes. They have evidence of over 20 years use, but some links may be permissive. There are a number of legally dead end definitive equestrian routes, but which are well used as through routes, on both sides of the border in the Whixall Moss and Fenn's Moss area, some linking to the old railway line, which is in Wales. Angela reported that there is an enclosure award in this area, and that Andrew Kelly looked into equestrian use in this area.

**(f) Natural England Permissive Access**

It is not thought that any permissive access has been affected yet by changes in legislation, but Judy reported that farmers have to apply every year for their entry level stewardship. Shona has reported that she had not heard any news on the new regulations relating to stewardship. There is money available for infrastructure, such as gates, for permissive routes, but no payments for any new routes, or for the renewal of existing access routes. A number of now ended routes provided good links with definitive routes. It is noted that of the remaining 17 schemes with bridleway access, none are due to end in 2015, 4 end in 2016, 1 in 2017, 1 in 2018, 5 in 2019 and 6 in 2020. *These 17 remaining schemes are downloadable on <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk/walk-ride>*

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

**(i) Helicopters** – Zia reported that the RAF Shawbury High Viz campaign, which Zia and her riding companion have done filming for, is to be launched in May at RAF Shawbury's Landowner's Day. There is information on RAF Shawbury's website. They will be supplying High Viz items to riders. It is understood that the BHS are now involved with this. It is agreed that it is important that younger riders are made aware of the importance of wearing High Viz items.

**(ii) Solar Farm Applications** – A number of sites have been applied for and granted. The Meadowley site involves the diversion of a bridleway from cross field to field edge. Local riders have not objected to this, but there is concern as to how horse riding may be affected. It is agreed that a field edge route is preferable to a double high fenced route through the solar panels. Zia reported that the BHS have an advice leaflet on Solar Panels on their website. [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk) The security fencing can be a problem. It is important that when equestrian routes are fenced for the security of these sites, preferably 5m of useable width is provided, with a minimum of 4m. 3m is only suitable for an unfenced field edge bridleway. Fencing must be suitable, and safe, if in close proximity to an equestrian route. High fenced corridors can be intimidating, and sharp pales are not safe, as a rider could be thrown onto them. There must also be good, safe drainage.

#### **4. Shropshire Council**

##### **(a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships**

Shona has reported that the Council still has to make savings, and that their service is no different from others, in that they have identified further savings for next year, and more are likely the year after. It is hoped that there will be no further staffing losses, but this will depend on continued funding by Health, and if additional savings have to be found. Emily Harrison is now settling in, having taken on Mat Stephen's areas. Lucy Stanley has recently left. She logged complaints and dealt with a lot of the admin. It is understood that she is not being replaced. They have to look at doing work to bring money into the department. Dealing with the increase in planning application has put extra pressure on them. There is concern that reported issues will not be dealt with due to the limited number of staff members, but it is very important that problems etc. still get reported.

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

It is hoped to resolve the ongoing problems at Acton Round/Shirlett by putting up cameras. They will then get the team to clear the route and monitor the situation.

Hinton /Polemere Byways Zia reported the fantastic work done on these routes which are now a pleasure to ride. Good surfaced routes discourage mud plugging by 4x4's.

David Hardwick is still working on resolving problems on some of the Humphrey Kynaston Way routes. The overgrown section of BW25 on Ford Heath has now been cleared and the ditching will be done after April when it has dried out a bit. Now Boons Abattoir has closed the air is much pleasanter there! These routes have been improved, and more gate improvements etc. done and planned, as part of the work on the Humphrey Kynaston Way. This benefits local users as well as those doing the linear and circular routes. Richard reported that they are now back to two teams of two for topping, clearing etc, but that funding for providing infrastructure will be a problem. They are planning to do work with the Long Mynd Bridleway Group on the Minton Ride. More P3 Groups have been formed and volunteers are helping to improve routes.

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

It is noted that the planning application for two houses and an Agricultural field access up the narrow green lane BW 7 in Ford, where the applicant has no vehicular rights of access, has been rejected. The application for 30 houses in a field off the quiet Back Lane section of the Humphrey Kynaston Way Ford circular ride has been turned down by the Planning Committee. Shona reported that all of the Officers within her team respond to any applications that affect, or could affect Rights Of Way. Maps are included showing the routes, and the appropriate advice is given dependent upon the situation. Where there is an issue with private access rights it is made clear that if there are none, and the route is a PROW, then they would be committing an offence, and the onus is on the owner to prove private rights. Zia said that Planning can be granted even when there is doubt over the access. Ian Kilby, Planning Service Manager, gave LAF an overview of how access is incorporated and considered in the planning process, and the impact of SAMDev. Planning Applications are listed on: <http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>.

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

Zia has helped with some updating of the [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk) website. Out of date Defra information has been removed and a link put to the Defra Permissive Routes. Plans are being put in place for a new combined website for all types of access, with interactive mapping. Jim had asked Zia to collect details of pubs, businesses etc on the promoted routes, to link to from the mapping, but this could prove difficult to keep up to date so this has now been dropped. Clare Fildes is now dealing with the update of the websites, and tenders are currently being evaluated. They will be using the Shropshire Council mapping which shows the definitive routes. Angela has looked at the travel cycle website which she said has yellow dots which when clicked shows photos along the routes. It was pointed out that cycling has lots of funding.

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

There was a discussion on the importance of recording routes before the proposed 2026 deadline. How this is proceeded on will depend on the regulations that come with the Deregulation Bill. Under this Bill the Council, not the applicants, will have to notify landowners of claims. Also the Council would be able to make applications within a specified timescale to preserve key routes. Shona has reported that she could see an increased pressure on their team, and potentially very tight timescales to determine issues based on the Basic evidential test, but there are no details yet on what this might be. It would help considerable if the highways record was correctly recorded. Members agreed that we need to be prepared, but should wait for the Deregulation Bill regulations before putting in claims. It is hoped that approving the regulations will not take too long. Angela said it will resolve the problem of putting in claims when the claimant is known to the landowner.

**Consultation on National Grid Mid Wales Connection Routes** – Shona has reported that individual LAF members have sent their comments direct, and that she would be coordinating a formal response from LAF once she had contacted members for their input. She was having a meeting with National Grid next week. It is understood that Shropshire Council and LAF are objecting to this. Zia walked the bridleway that will be affected by the currently planned line, to discover the bridleway has been obstructed by the landowner putting in an extra narrow gate with a plank nailed across the top. The proposed power line will run parallel to the bridleway with a pylon right beside the metal bridleway gate off the road. It is agreed that passing quickly under is acceptable, but not negotiating metal gates under it, or riding parallel, as power cables produce a fizzing type effect, especially in wet weather, which can agitate the horse, and can be felt by the rider.

**Llanyblodwel Public Inquiry** The bridleway claim was confirmed by the Inspector, but Shona has reported that it is being re-advertised, at their request, due to an alteration to the line of the footpath addition. The whole order has to be advertised, but responses can only be made on the modification to the footpath.

**Clun/Offas Dyke – BW gap on the parish boundary.** Shona reported that they will be checking the historic evidence, but it looks as if this is a natural anomaly as per the Inclosure Award.

**Adcote Bridge BW** – A decision is awaited on how to proceed with the collapsed bridge. Richard Knight is dealing with this. The ford alongside the bridge is still legally open.

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

**Badger Wood** – This has now been sold so no progress. This route will now have to be claimed.

**Oaks Wood** - Shona reported that Linda has informed them of the line change on the ground so they will need to contact the owners re the preferred line for the diversion, and to discuss the associated Formal Application.

**Frodesley** – Shona reported that they will review the files and then send the order off to the PI.

**Drumbles Wood** – This unresolved Order will now need to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

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

**Old Moors Lane** – This UCR has still not been addressed by Highways. Zia will contact them.

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

**Melverley** – This is still waiting for the width confirmed by the Inspector to be enforced.

**Pontesford Hill** – Shona reported that the Inquiry was started, but then adjourned until April as they understand that the residents are trying to buy the land.

**Purslow BW addition** – Shona reported that they had rejected the application, but the applicants appealed. They were then directed to make an order for a very short section of BW. An objection was received to the order, so this has now been sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Gippols route near Hughley**- Judy raised this. It needs to be looked into, as to the route to be claimed, the historic route, or the later used route.

We need a representative from the Clun/Knighton area. Anita used to cover that area but she left.

## **6. Cycling and Rights of Way**

The CTC (Cycling Touring Club) Campaigns Briefing to Local Access Forums (Attached to the Agenda) is noted. Shropshire LAF is looking at off road representative, and interest in joining by an on road cycling representative. They are looking at LAF membership generally to ensure a balance. The CTC document raised use of bridleways; Amendments to the Definitive Map in a timely fashion, to benefit off road cycling; Proper maintenance of byways, bridleways & unsurfaced UCR's; and, removal of obstructions. Shona reported that they would like to have all issues resolved, but do not have the staff to deal with them, therefore actions have to be prioritised. The Cycle Forum minutes, available on the website link, are noted. There is concern that recently created cycle ways such as the Pontesbury to Minsterley off road Cycle Route do not include horse riding. Horse riders are using it because it is a needed route. It is not known what the plans are for the NEN45 extension in Bridgnorth, John said that he knows the Newport route 75, which is being extended along the old railway line, and which newspaper reports describe as a walking and cycling route. It should be a multi user route. Judy has ridden it. John said he has driven it; it joins to Telford routes and crosses by Donnington Depot, but he did not know where it went from there. Members are concerned that bridleways are being taken over and surfaced for cycling routes, but that new cycle routes are not being made available to horse riders. Angela asked if Mark Weston could be asked to intervene on our behalf, and talk to Sustrans. Concern was also raised over off-road bikers, especially in the Long Mynd area. Zia has tried to get the message over that cyclists have, by law, to give way to walkers and horse riders on a public bridleway. A newspaper report mentioned the National Trust is putting in two cycle routes on Wenlock Edge, but no one is aware of where these routes are. Cyclists can already use The Jack Mytton Way along Wenlock Edge.

## **7. Game Shooting across Public Rights of Way**

The relevant extracts from 'The Code of Good Shooting Practice 2012' and from the BASC guidelines (attached to the Agenda) are noted.

There have been reports, from horse riders, of shoots not following the guidelines for shooting across public rights of way, putting horse riders at risk. Shoots have not put lookouts to hold the shooting, to allow users of public rights of way to pass through safely. Horse riders have been unable to use some bridleways on occasions when a shoot is taking place, or have been put in dangerous situations when they have. There has been a recent case of abusive behaviour towards horse riders out on an afternoon ride, unaware a shoot was taking place across the bridleway, and trying to get home, with no alternative. A request to be allowed to pass through was ignored, and beating and shooting was continued for 15 minutes, with shot raining down on the waiting horse riders. A representative from the CLA has said that he will get guidelines out to remind members before the next shooting season starts. There is no link on the BHS accident website to report incidents with shoots, or information on guidelines.

## 8. Shropshire Level Crossings Review

Concern was raised over the possible closure by Network Rail of level crossings. Shona has reported that they have had several site visits with Network Rail to look at key sites, but to date no firm proposals have been put forward following those visits. They will resist any proposals that are to the detriment of the access network and communities. Shona will follow up on this.

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

The minutes of the Local Access Forum held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014, attached to the Agenda, are noted. The meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015 included Ploughing and Cropping concerns, especially with regard to oil seed rape. For public bridleway, a useable width of 3m at field edge and 2m cross field must be left. There should be a wider width left to account for fall over of a crop such as oil seed rape. Shona reported that they will be sending out their usual reminder letters on cropping to landowners in April/May and that they hope to raise awareness with the landowning fraternity by discussion with the CLA.

Joe Penfold did a presentation on the Stiperstones Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme with consultation on routes. It is understood that Joe is to hold a workshop session to look at this with the communities and interested parties. Other issues covered at LAF have been included on the Agenda.

It is noted that the next LAF meeting is on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 at 10am in the Shirehall.

It is also noted that the full LAF papers are available on the new website link given on the Agenda.

## 10. Any Other Business

**Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships annual public survey 2014/15** Members are reminded that the survey closes on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The end date has been brought forward from the end of March. Members are asked to fill it in, and to pass on the link to it.

**British Horse Society Access Week** It is noted that this is from the 23-31<sup>st</sup> May 2015. Zia is doing a talk 'Exploring Shropshire on Horseback' on 30<sup>th</sup> April, to raise money for the BHS Access Fund. The venue is to be confirmed.

**Byways** - John Gibson reported that the British Driving Society and the CLA were getting together over green routes. Members reported that there have been problems on lanes near Bucknell with troupes of off-road vehicles damaging the surface. Steve reported that off-roaders often use vehicles which are not road legal.

## 11. Dates of the Next Meetings

It is noted that the date of the next meeting is **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 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 also noted that the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 meeting is the AGM, and any nominations, resignations etc should be in by the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

It is confirmed that the following meetings will be held on **5<sup>th</sup> October 2015**, with **possibly the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016** for the following meeting if this is not the half term week.

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