

NOTES FROM NORTH SHROPSHIRE WALK FORUM

MONDAY 26TH JANUARY 2015

Present: Trevor Allison(Ramblers), Peter Carr(Ramblers), Mark Cuthbert-Brown(P3), Tony Eccleston(Wem Walkers), Liz Evans(W4H), Clare Fildes(Outdoor Partnerships), Ernie Heath(Wem Walkers), Jane Ing(P3), Andy Lipa(Outdoor Partnerships), Ann Moore(P3), Neil Moore(P3).

Notes from the last meeting:

Llanyblodwell enquiry – Trevor reported that all 3 routes had been approved, subject to the owner's appealing.

Oswald's Trail – Wat's Dyke is partly incorporated into this. There is now a website where people can put comments on. There have been 2 negative reports which Jane and Trevor are going to check. There is an AGM for the Wat's Dyke group in a couple of weeks.

Bluebell Walk – Alison and Jane are going to repeat their September walk in bluebell time so people can see it at its best. Date to be advised.

Walkers are Welcome

Oswestry are doing 4 seasonal walks again. The first walk, the snowdrop walk is on Tuesday 24th February, leaving the Heritage Centre at 10am. Full programme is attached.

Whitchurch walking festival – programme is nearing finalisation and will be distributed as soon as possible.

Liz is attending a workshop day in Talgarth which aims to come with ideas to promote walkers are welcome locally.

Sam Phillips is the new chairman for Walkers are Welcome.

Walking for Health

Shawbury, Hadnall, Ellesmere, Whitchurch and Baschurch are all doing well.

Market Drayton has had 6 new walkers this year which has doubled the size of the group and made it more sustainable.

Wem, West Felton and Oswestry continue to struggle with numbers.

The next volunteer training day is Friday 20th February in Shirehall.

WW1 Walks

Liz is taking over the WW1 walks from Jim. The ones for 2015 relevant to north Shropshire are:

Walk around Whixhall moss on Saturday 29th August by Jim

Leaflet for walk around Oswestry talking about Wilfred Owen and training at Park Hall camp.

Walk based at Harper Adams – to be confirmed.

Letter to landowners from footpath groups

Liz distributed a template that the Hodnet footpath group are going to send to local landowners. Some people felt that a letter from Shropshire Council would have more effect, but some that this, more friendly approach might be worth a go in the first instance.

Shona said a generic letter will be sent out in May to landowners known not to comply, but all felt April would be better.

Neil is monitoring Budney Farm which has had issues requiring letters from Shropshire Council.

Council matters

Clare said that there are major cutbacks in council funding.

As such we all will have to:

- Focus on statutory duties
- Generating income – for example rights of way team work for other agencies
- Think carefully about promoted routes as may have to reduce these
- Need to prioritise what people want

There was a discussion about how important rights of way is for leisure, health and income. Attached are links for the recent MENE survey, and a report on the economic and social value of walking.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/survey-reveals-importance-of-outdoor-visits-in-england>

Clare would like the next walk forum meeting to focus on priorities.

Any other Business

Alison was concerned about the plans in Ellesmere for new houses which will cover a public footpath behind Lakelands School down to the canal. Liz to check if Shona is aware and if any action is required.

Peter Carr said the Ramblers are doing a survey of Britain's footpaths which will enable them to compare how different counties are doing

The Oswestry group of Ramblers are having a talk on outdoor equipment on Tuesday 3rd March, 7.30pm at Trefonen village hall, by Peter Moss from Cotswold Outdoors. £2 entry to cover cost of hiring hall