

SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING FORUM (SRCDF)

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 8th June 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. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Wendy Beaumont, Bridgnorth. Gaynor Evans, Broseley Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council

Apologies:

Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Jan Baldwin & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Mark Weston, BHS. .

As there were no nomination for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, and no resignations, it was unanimously agreed that they should continue in office.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th February 2015 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

(a) Wind Turbines

It is noted that the application 13/04250/FUL for a 77m wind turbine to be sited approx. 60m from Bridleway 11 at Wigmarsh has been withdrawn.

It is noted that, as agreed, a response was sent on behalf of the Forum to the application for one 77m wind turbine at Criddon, along similar lines to the one done for the two turbines. Ann D. also responded to the application. It is agreed that we should continue to object to any applications that fall within the BHS guidelines.

(b) Canal Towpaths

It is noted that the last LAF meeting, which it was hoped the CART representative would attend, following their non attendance at the February LAF meeting, was cancelled. Shona reported that they hoped to attend the next LAF meeting on 2nd July 2015. There was a good response to the Canal & River Trust's 'Sharing Towpaths' Consultation: - <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/consultations/completed-consultations> by horse riders. Shona reported that the document was quite positive. The BHS did a good response. Members confirmed that many canal towpaths were, and are, ridden. The old canal towpath from Shrewsbury to Uffington is now a public bridleway. Zia reported that Anne Roberts has sent details to Mark Weston of riding use of the Canal in the Maesbury Marsh area. As towpaths were built for horses to tow boats, and tow horses were often ridden whilst towing, it was asked why riding is not permitted on all tow paths. Horses are to be included in the Tow path 'Code of Conduct'. Zia reminded members that Mark Weston had reported that there are to be three pilot areas for horse riding use of towpaths.

(c) Deregulation Bill

Shona reported that they are waiting for the regulations. John thought this would be by next year. Andrew K, with his apologies, wrote that he is watching the detail very closely on two very important points. Firstly, the detail of the cut-off date, and, if 2026 is still the chosen date, whether an extension will be given, or if it may be dropped altogether: the best solution all round. Secondly, what, if anything, will be said about the future of MPV's, and their access to the countryside. Following on from the amendments put forward, but not taken forward, on vehicular use of green lanes, the CLA has been surveying members on usage and problems. Shona reported on how they manage problems on routes with maintenance work. Zia reported that where green lanes have been repaired, this does seem to put off inappropriate vehicle use. There are current problems in the Alveley area.

Documents can be viewed on www.parliament.uk by putting 'Deregulation Bill' in 'search'

(d) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships annual public survey 2014-15

Zia only received a long document giving the results this afternoon. There were only 342 responses down from 688 last year. It is disappointing that not many horse riders had responded. We need to get the survey out to more horse riders, and impress on them the importance of responding to every survey. The questions are still very biased towards walking, so riders could not respond on some. Also riders walk as well as ride, but some questions did not allow responses to reflect both uses, as they only allowed one item to be ticked. We have put forward our concern over this before, and a few changes were made, but the Forum agreed that we should respond again to point out that the questions are still not permitting riders to respond as they wish to some questions. Shona reported that the results are important as they guide what they do. She will feed back our concerns to Clare Fildes.

(e) Helicopters

The RAF has had a huge response for high-viz garments from their recent campaign, and have featured it on their website. They launched the campaign at their Landowner's Day, and Zia attended, and had been interviewed by the Press. The BHS had come in to help sponsor it. John reported that they have had no complaints recently from carriage drivers regarding helicopters. A date has not yet been set for a future meeting. Zia reported that it is important the liaison is kept up as RAF personnel change frequently, often every two years. Linda asked if they were updating their landing sites, and consulting on new ones, as these had caused concerns. Zia has raised this with them. Shona's department has not been consulted on any recently.

[RAF Shawbury - High Visibility Campaign](#)

(f) Shropshire Level Crossings Review

Shona reported that Officers have been out with people from Network Rail to look at particular crossings with regard to usage and any issues. All the ones she has looked at were footpath crossings. Emily has looked at footpath ones in the north, and Lucy McF looked at footpaths in the south. The four being looked at for diversions are all footpaths. They are waiting for them to come back on the Shrewsbury Area. John had been told that there were 87 crossings, but it depends on what you class as level crossings. Zia raised a BW crossing at Yockleton where the gates have been replaced with self closing ones: one is set back from the track, but the other gate riders have to open and negotiate whilst right by the line. The BHS have guidelines for crossings. Steve put forward the suggestion of an electronic count down to show when the next train was due. It was pointed out that devices can still go wrong. John reported that the British Driving Society is doing a big survey with Network Rail in East Anglia on crossings.

(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda

BHS Access Week – To raise money for Access week, Zia gave a talk for BHS Shropshire 'Exploring Shropshire on Horseback' including the Humphrey Kynaston Way at the Preston Montford Field Studies Centre. They very kindly donated the venue. She also took out two guided rides along the Humphrey Kynaston Way taking in the circular rides at Montford and at Nesscliffe.

All the money raised went to the BHS 'Paths for Communities' fund. The BHS hope to create new bridleways using this fund. If any one knows of a suitable route to put forward for this funding, they should contact the BHS.

Solar Farm Applications – Zia raised concerns over traffic being brought onto narrow lanes due to applications. One recently applied for near Baschurch, in an area with few bridleways, will be accessed via a narrow well ridden lane, where horse riders have no off road alternative. It is agreed that in schemes where proposed new fencing adjoins bridleways at field edge there should be a wider margin of 4-5 metres left with a maintenance agreement. If a riding route passes through a proposed Solar Farm, then the width through should be 5 metres. Forum members were also concerned over the type of fencing. There should not be any spiked fencing near riding routes. It is agreed that the Forum respond to express concern over the application near Baschurch.

Shropshire Riding Website – Zia has got errors on the current website corrected. The information from the www.shropshireriding.co.uk and the www.shropshirewalking.co.uk websites is now in the process of being transferred to a new joint site. There will be a map search facility which it is hoped will be easier to use for visitors and for locals. Phase 1, the promoted route layer, has been completed, but there are omissions that they are addressing. The existing sites were managed by Shropshire Tourism, but Shona reported that Outdoor Partnerships will now be able to modify and make correction on the new site, which will make things much easier.

4. Shropshire Council

(a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships

Zia read from a report on Tourism from Steve Charmley, Shropshire Council's Deputy Leader, which included that Shropshire Council would continue to invest in the tourism sector, that Outdoor Recreation Services will continue as they form a vital part of visitor's experience to Shropshire, and that Tourism is a significant part of the Shropshire Economy. Shona reported that they are still looking for savings and to outsource as many functions as they possibly can. Health funding is only in place until the end of the year. Concern was raised over funding for ROW furniture. Shona confirmed that Shropshire Council are responsible for fingerposts off public roads, and that Landowners are responsible for gates and stiles on ROW, but that Shropshire Council has a legal obligation under the Highways Act to contribute 25% towards them. The Council provide stile kits, but if the Landowner agrees to a gate then Outdoor Partnerships may put it in as an incentive to get the network more open, and to provide easier access. Shona reported that the system they use works well.

(b) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Implementation Team

Richard Knight's team are doing summer topping. They have been working on Offa's Dyke which has brought money in. The Spring Newsletter reported they had made 738 improvements on the network, worked on 111 gates, and done surface works. This included works on the new Humphrey Kynaston Way long distance bridleway. They now have better equipment to carry out clearance work. They now have 62 Parish Paths volunteer groups. Work is ongoing on improving the drainage on BW25 Ford Heath past the now closed Boons's Abbatoir following the clearance work done earlier in the year to open up the width. Llanablodwell is due to be opened up soon.

Some big trees have come down, one blocking the Sabrina Way at Apley Park off the side of the old railway line by Linley Station which has been reported, and Apley Park are going to look if they can clear it. Others are at Shirlett, St Mary's Cottage by Cross Lane Head, Kingsley Park Farm, and another at Frog Mill. Shona asked for reports on these, with route numbers, if they are not cleared. Gaynor has tried to resolve a problem with a black iron kissing gate with sharp prongs put beside the field gate on a bridleway at The Haycock, Broseley which is dangerous, with a horse injured on it. If a stock proof gate is required Zia reported on a better alternative to the gate with the latch on the gate post, which is the gate used on the HKW new section, which opens with one hand, with a pull handle just below the top bar, and a 'D' loop, so nothing to get caught up on. Zia also reported on the Shropshire Great Outdoors, Nesscliffe Hills & The Cliffe Heritage Project survey that is being carried out. Claire Fildes and Clive Dean are involved with this.

(c) Shropshire Council Planning

It is noted that the application for 30 houses off Back Lane, Ford, on the Circular HKW route, has been refused. Concern was expressed that developments like this can have a great impact on country lane riding routes. Also of concern was the development of all the small pony paddocks in and around villages. Zia reported applications for a number of houses on small plots of land, and gardens, which will impact on the Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park. The time being taken to make decisions was also raised. It is thought that this could be due to 106 agreements and not enough staff to deal with them. The Sam Dev Inspector clarified the position with regard to holiday lets, stating that they should not be converted into housing. Concern was expressed over the lack of consultation by planning Officers when applications impacted on Rights Of Way.

The planning application which proposed changing Cwms Lane, a County Road at Church Stretton, into a footpath has still not been resolved. <http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

(d) Shropshire Council Highways

Digitising of Shropshire Highway Maps. Shropshire Council has still not digitised the older Highway Maps, so Zia has now taken photographs of them all. She is concerned as to what will happen to them now that the staff who look after them are employed by Mouchel. These are important documents.

Government's £3 million funded new digital road map OS ITN and Recording of White Roads by 30th March 2016. This map contains many errors with even public roads shown as private. This map is currently available on SC Local Map under 'more maps' 'outdoor partnerships' but can take time to load. It shows public roads, alleys, private roads restricted access, and private roads publically accessible. Shona agreed that it is all very worrying: who is checking it? When roads get taken off, it can then leave anomolous rights of way. It is not understood how highways can just remove routes from their maps or change their status, when Rights of Way changes have to go through such long processes.

Update on Unsurfaced UCR's and the proposed layer on SC mapping to show those now maintained by Outdoor Partnerships. Shona reported that Richard needs to do work on clarifying which ones they now look after, and then someone will need to digitise them all.

Concern was raised over damage done by quad bikes to the surface of rights of way. John said if classified for road use, then the police can be involved but many are not registered.

5. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues

Llanyblodwel BW– This now confirmed bridleway is waiting to be opened up

Shirlett – It was reported that the glass has now been removed. Shona will do a blanket letter to everyone to try and resolve the incidents occurring there. They will remove the two trees down, do the ditches, and check the through route.

Clun/Offa Dyke – BW Gap on the Parish boundary – Shona said that she did the review of that parish and that the BW just stops on the parish boundary. Lucy will look at the routes there as there is another route near there that is partly permissive that need resolving.

Adcote Bridge BW – The options for the collapsed bridge are being looked at. The middle section has now gone leaving a gap. There are private access routes across it, as well as the bridleway. Both parish councils are prepared to attend a meeting with other interested parties to discuss the way forward, but Richard is still waiting for the costings on the different options.

Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane – Shona reported they have received correspondence on this to say that the boundary dispute has been resolved. They will look to see if they can now get this resolved by dedication.

Oaks Wood - Lucy went out and found the route has been flattened out making it now a more useable route. They hope to get in and resolve this.

Frodesley Orders – They are hoping to send this off soon, together with the Statement of Case. They have written to all the objectors to see if they have anything to add.

Drumbles Wood – This is now with Emily to do.

Sutton Mill – This is now with Lucy to do as she has the background knowledge.

Old Moors Lane – Zia reported that she has spoken to Andy Savage to say we need to get this route resolved. It is shown as a through public road on their old highway maps.

Hilton – this is still waiting to be published.

Melverley – The enforcement of the width is now with Emily.

Pontesford Hill – This is now owned by the Wildlife Trust. Zia hoped that the possibility for higher status routes there will be looked at

Purslow BW addition – This is now with the Planning Inspectorate. The appellants will be fighting the case. If granted this will leave a 15m section of BW with no outlet. There is a line issue nearby so it will all have to be looked at.

Gippols route near Highley – the used line there was by permission of the landowner, but when use increased they locked the gate. The historic route is on a different line.

6. Cycling and Rights of Way

The minutes of the Shropshire Cycling Forum dated 10th February 2015 are noted. This was the last meeting of the Forum. Funding for staff involved with cycling has been cut.

National Trust Cycle routes on Wenlock Edge. It is not known what routes they are referring to. It is thought a survey was done in 2013 for the National cycle network.

7. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums

It is noted that the Local Access Forum Meeting to be held on 23rd April 2015 was cancelled, so the minutes of the 5th February 2015 meeting are not yet confirmed and that the next LAF meeting is on 2nd July 2015.

The minutes of the Southern Walking Forum dated 21st April 2015 are noted, and that they include, on p2-3, a list of new P3 Volunteer Groups. It is also noted that the forum may split into 3 groups.

LAF meeting papers are available on a new website link: [Local Access Forum](#) go to ‘Browse meetings and agendas for this committee’. The Southern Walking Forum Minutes referred to along with other Forum Minutes, are near the end of Item 29. Additional documents. The Cycle Forum Minutes are also in Item 29 under the link ‘Feedback from other forums and items for noting

8. Any Other Business or items to Note

Ramblers Big Path Watch – The www.ramblers.org.uk/BigPathwatch has been launched, and they want people to go on line, download the app, and survey one or more 1km squares.

Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Project – Joe Penfold did a presentation to LAF on this. A meeting was held which Zia could not attend. All the reports from that meeting only addressed all ability trails and not multi user trails, although they included discussions on the bridleway around Pontesford Hill. There are used routes by horse riders on Stapeley Common that are not recorded.

9. Dates of the Next Meetings

The next meeting is to be held at the Shirehall on **Monday 5th October 2015 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm.**

The date of the next meeting is confirmed for **Monday 8th February 2016**