

NOTES FROM WALKING FORUM
MONDAY 1ST JULY 2013

PRESENT

Shona Butter, Peter Carr, Liz Evans, Helen Knight, Ann Moore, Neil Moore, Harvey Morgan, Alison Parker.

1. Walking Festivals

Whitchurch Walking Festival was a great success, so much so that Neil said there will be another next year and it is already in the planning. Dates are 16th to 18th May 2014. The Welshampton and Ellesmere Walk and Bike Weekend is on 13th and 14th July. The Oswestry walking festival is 13th to 15th September.

2. Walking for Health

Liz is asking people in the walking forum to advise her if they think a walk for health scheme would be a viable proposition in a particular area. Schemes in Weston Rhyn and St Martins did not take off and Prees and West Felton have very few takers. It would benefit all for schemes to only start where there is a recognised core of people who could help spread the word.

Helen said she would help with marketing walking for health schemes through her MacMillan network.

Peter said there is a workshop next Monday 8th July at the Gateway in Shrewsbury for more fluidity between the Ramblers and Walking for Health.

3. Pilgrimage Walk

Jim Stabler has proposed a route from Shrewsbury Abbey through the north east of Shropshire, encompassing as many churches and holy wells as possible along the way. He has also used promoted paths where possible. He hopes to involve local church groups to help with the guide where the path will be in their area. Suggestions from people as to who else he could contact were Trevor Allison, Gerald Moss, John Newnham and Stuart Morgan.

4. WWW 1 Walks

Jim Stabler would like people to suggest ways of promoting walking using the upcoming centenary of the first world war. His programme so far is enclosed. People also suggested he involves schools where possible. Oswestry has just produced a Wilfred Owen town walk.

5. Footpath policy

Shona advised the best way to report problems was on the website. Photographs are always useful but are best sent by email. People can also telephone customer services who will forward the problem on to Lucy who will log it on to the CAMS system.

The footpaths that receive the most complaints, complaints from a parish council, or a promoted route will receive a higher priority.

Shona acknowledged people do not always receive feedback about a problem, but that does not mean nothing is being done about it, this is down to lack of resources.

The NILS team who provide footpath furniture are 2 people down at the moment due to staff leaving, but these vacancies will be filled.

Regarding enforcement, letters went out in May to landowners about cropping, and this needs to be followed up by inspections.

Neil asked if volunteers can trim footpaths, and Shona said it depended on the volunteers. It may be possible to involve contractors who could be re-imbursed from landowners.

Shona reminded people there were only 3 rights of way officers to cover the whole county, so they need to focus on routes people want the most. Peter felt this fitted in with the Ramblers adopting a new policy to focus themselves on key and local issues.

Neil said it was now more difficult to check planning applications as the parish was no longer listed online, making it more time consuming. Shona said she would look into this.

6. Recent footpath activity

Harvey outlined work that had been done in north Shropshire recently.....

Whitchurch – Ash walk completed. This is now a 3 mile 98% gated walk

Hengod – cluster of paths being gated

Queens Head – golf course waymarked

Malverley – gating on route

Hodnet to Marchamley – footpath creation

Dudleston Heath – connecting to schools

Maesby – furniture in Sweeney area

PP3 groups – there are 19-20 groups – some are more active than others

Whitchurch is an active group

Stanton on Heath has a working team

Market Drayton is becoming more active, clearing paths

Myddle and Shawbury are pro-active at addressing issues with landowners themselves, using Mat as a back up when required

There is a new P2 group in Kinnerley

Woore parish council want a new P3 group

Ellesmere need a P3 group

Next meeting will be Monday 14th October
2pm in Ellesmere town hall