



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

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013, at 7.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

### **1. Attendance:**

Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere, Chair. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG. Joint Secretary. Judy Dickenson, Church Preen & District. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Jan Baldwin & Margaret Dutton, Broseley Bridleways. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford. Steve Benbow, Oswestry Riding Club. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council

### **1. Apologies:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Vice Chair. Sue Evans, Beckbury, Ryton & Badger BWG. Gill Eyre, BHS South Shropshire East, South Shropshire & Long Mynd BWA. Gaynor Evans, Broseley Bridleways. Elaine Thomas, Telford Bridleways. Rosemary Pattenden, Worthen BWA. Carol Williams, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Mark Weston, BHS. Anthony Francis-Jones, Telford BWA.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Cycling**

Zia reported that Peter Carty NT had not attended the last LAF meeting so there was no update on mountain biking on the Long Mynd. Concern had been raised over the promoting of bridleways as fast downhill cycle routes. A new cycling representative on LAF stated that he used Ride UK routes as they were for cyclists, and he thought he would not meet horse riders. It was explained to him that Ride UK was the National Bridleway Network, and that these were routes he was more likely to meet horse-riders on. Zia found no information on way marking colours, or trail marking, on Shropshire Council's websites, and has asked for this information to be provided.

**ReaVan - Rea Valley Multi User Trail.** – Linda and Zia have had a meeting with Jonathan Brown and Richard Small to discuss the ReaVan project, and discovered that they had not got very far with landowners. They have been concentrating on the Minsterley-Pontesbury end of the old railway line. It was suggested to them that the Hanwood to Pontesbury end would help to connect routes as there is already a new roadside multi-user route now being put in between Pontesbury and Minsterley. This route is being done as part of Tranche 1 of the Government's £62 million cycling funding recently announced. Some bridleways are being upgraded as part of the scheme, but it is not known if horse riders are included on all the rest.

#### **(b) Public Forest Estate in England – Independent Panel on Forestry**

Owen Patterson has announced that Forestry will be put in Trust, with a Public Forest Estate Management Body, independent of Government, and they will “fund a pilot project to assess and improve the condition, quality and connectivity of Public Rights of Way for woodland access by foot, cycle and horse”. They will look, at local level, to increase access through ROW Improvement Plans, and work to explore opportunities for increasing access. Zia reported that the Marches Forestry Commission information pages have been updated and state, “Horse riders are welcome on the network of bridleways and surfaced forest roads within our woodlands”. Parking charges are being brought in at Haughmond Hill car park from April 2013.

**(c) Proposed wind turbines by Jack Mytton Way at Meadowley, Morville.**

The new application for one wind turbine at The Down, by the Jack Mytton Way, is on Shropshire Council's public access site but will not currently accept any comments. There is no news on the Meadowley site, but the application for two turbines close to a RB, which is part of the proposed Bishop Bennett Way, near Whitchurch, which was turned down by the North Planning Committee, has been resubmitted for one turbine. This one is still sited nearer than the 200m BHS recommendation although growing the hedge up has been cited as mitigating the closer distance, but the hedge is deciduous. An application at Netley, Dorrington that we were not aware of, has been withdrawn, as it was reported that it would interfere with RAF radar.

**It is agreed that Zia will respond to the new application near Whitchurch, and that we will respond to other similar Wind Turbine applications, on the BHS guidelines, as agreed at previous meetings.**

**(d) "Paths for Communities"**

There have been problems with Natural England, with a new application form still not available, so Zia has been told to fill in the old form for her Humphrey Kynaston Way with circular routes off. She has worked hard to get landowners to agree to dedicate a new section of bridleway to Montford Bridge. **Agreed that this Forum will write a letter of support for Zia's routes.**

The bridleway at Sibberscote, part of one of the circular routes, has had reports of swans attacking ridden horses. Shona has been following up on these, but it is complicated as the Queen owns all mute swans, and a landowner is not responsible for a wild creature. She asked if anyone knew of riders who had had an incident there to let her know, as walkers do not appear to attract attacks.

**(e) Helicopter Liaison Meeting**

Jim Stabler has confirmed that he will be attending the meeting at RAF Shawbury on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 13.30 hours. Zia, Linda, and Angela will be going, and Zia will contact the others to confirm they are able to go on that day. The meeting will be followed by a tour. It is important that we keep up the contact, as their personnel change every two years.

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

**7. (a) p.5. Consultation - Stopping up and Diversion Orders:Reform of the Application Process for Local Highways.** Zia reported that there were only 70 responses to this: 33 from local Authorities; 17 from Developers/Planning Consultants Advisors; and 20 from National Bodies of which our Forums was one. One of our responses was quoted in the response "important that there is full consultation with user groups". It has been agreed to do Option 1 but with negotiation, the chance to object, and the option of holding a Public Inquiry, with the Secretary of State for Transport having the final decision.

**10. p.6 BHS Accident Website** - Zia reported that she has suffered two bad incidents of dog attacks whilst riding on a bridleway on Nesscliffe Hill which she has reported on the website. Incidents with loose dogs are increasing. Dogs must be under close control on a public right of way. It is important that all dangerous incidents, under any of the categories, are reported on the website. The BHS need the statistics in order to take any action.

**4. Shropshire Council**

**(a) Outdoor Recreation Implementation Team**

Richard Knight has reported that annual clearing was completed last year and they now have a full complement of staff. Contractors have started work on repairing the Donkey Bridge on the Jack Mytton Way, which was damaged by floodwater. Follow up work has been done on the UCR previously repaired in the Long Mynd area. Shona confirmed that the Benthall RB has not been cleared yet. Fish House Wood and Shirlett, Lucy and Shona will go and see the landowner to get the obstructions removed. This will be enforced if necessary, so volunteers can get on and the route can be cleared. These are in Ped's area. Shona said that all routes confirmed at Public

Inquiries would be opened up, but that there were sometimes issues that had to be resolved. Unclassified County Road Black Arrow way marks are being used on Ride UK routes as there had been complaints when these had been way marked with other Ride UK status marks as there was previously no way mark to denote a UCR. Work is also planned, when funding is available, to improve the drainage on the Bridleway near Pole Cottage. Work on the Polemere BOAT is on hold for now. Ann Durnell reported problems with 4x4's damaging the surface on a RB where the gate has been removed.

**(b) Shropshire Riding website** [www.shropshireriding.co.uk](http://www.shropshireriding.co.uk)

No progress has been made on updating the site; some pages have still dropped down, and some information is out of date, but it does have a link to the 2013 ROW User Survey.

Information for the website should be sent to Jim - [Jim.Stabler@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jim.Stabler@shropshire.gov.uk).

**(c) Shropshire Council online Rights of Way User Survey 2013**

It is important that we encourage people to fill this in and get others to do likewise. There are still things that could be improved on the form. Points raised last year with Jim have not been addressed. Promoted routes will not be ticked as Bridleways are used more, and only one can be ticked. It is also still quite walker orientated.

**(e) Shropshire Planning**

Stuart Thomas, Area Manager, Development Management, Shropshire Council Planning, addressed the last LAF. He confirmed that they send applications to the Ramblers and that they can send appropriate planning applications to other groups if given a contact. Ann Durnell already gets them for her area.

**Agreed that Linda will be the contact for planning consultations and will pass them on to the appropriate area groups.**

Following a report on an application to remove 7 miles of hedgerow at Marrington near Chirbury, where two footpaths, and a possible lost way lane crossed the route, which has now been withdrawn, the issue of hedgerow removal was discussed. A hedgerow was recently given planning permission for removal. This was after the field edge bridleway alongside had been confirmed following a Public Inquiry. Shona confirmed that where there is a definitive statement of width of a route that would be the width that should be left unploughed, but she did not know if a field edge route could be protected from being ploughed up when planning permission was given for its hedge to be removed making it a cross-field path. The width given for reinstatement after ploughing and cropping are only guidelines for when there is no definitive statement width. Shona also confirmed that her department are sending out letters to repeat offenders on cropping/ploughing and reinstatement, and also that the Planning Department are now consulting them where there is a right of way alongside, or crossing, an application site.

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

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane.** Shona reported that an Order will now be published under delegate powers, to resolve the anomaly at the outlet. This needs to be resolved.

**Benthall -** This will be done over the winter, as they have to wait until after bird nesting. Richard Knight's team now have a chipper. The RB is a big clearance job. Jan Baldwin said that there were volunteers willing to help.

**Benthall Woods FP65 upgrade –** Shona reported that they are just waiting for Telford to sign the Creation Order. The National Trust is keen to get this done, and Shona had a meeting with the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust. They have an issue with mountain bikes, which could be helped if they get the Bridleway sorted. They need Natural England consent to upgrade, as this is an SSSI. Jan B said that one of the landowners was keen to get it done, and had cleared some of it. The National Trust has also cleared some, and has offered to do more clearing work. It was felt that an offer of help with the clearing might help with another of the landowners.

**Badger Wood –** There has been no progress on this.

**Badger** – Following the Inquiry on 25<sup>th</sup> July, the route was confirmed at Bridleway status, but a kissing gate has been put back by the landowner, which obstructs the route. Jan reported that they have a ride going through on 12<sup>th</sup> March. .

**Culmington** - FP addition – The bridleway claim was not confirmed, but the Inspector in her report said that if the map had been with the enclosure award this would have made a difference.

**Oaks Wood** – As well as the bridleway claim, there are still problems with the line of the Definitive route in the woods near Church Hill woods. Linda said they could clear this route when they knew the correct line. Due to this not being resolved, Zia was unable to use it for her long distance route. Shona will look into this.

**Frodesley** – Still waiting to be resolved.

**Drumbles Wood** – Mat is still too busy to address this.

**Brogynryn** – The Diversion Order has been published and Angela and Zia have responded raising points, including that the through route must be fully open at RB status, and suitable gates and surfaces in place before the diversion is confirmed. They both think that the diversion should be left until it is known what is happening with the house before confirming, as a new owner may wish to develop the area, or use it differently, and divert it back. The diversion includes moving the Definitive route to pass through the gate alongside the entrance cattle grid. Members were asked for their thoughts on the best gates to request. There is an objection from a walker

**Llanyblodwel** – Lucy is preparing the paperwork to get the remaining issues here resolved.

**Old Moors Lane** The Inspector has deleted the order for the whole lane to be a Bridleway. Modifications to this order, and the order for a short section of unused bridleway to be deleted have to be advertised, so the matter is still ongoing. Old Moors Lane is shown on the 1929 Handover Map as a through road, and three quarters of the route is on the current Highway Map.

**Hilton** – Shona will be looking at the outlet anomaly.

**Lea Hall Quarry** – Planning permission has now been granted. Members asked why only footpath creation has been mentioned, when we understood that bridleways would be created here with a link to the south quarry. Judy said the link tunnel under the road is now under water as the pumps have been turned off. Jan reported that bridleways were promised at an open meeting.

## 6. Highways

### (a) Provision of a Definitive Map showing status of Shropshire Highways

Shona reported that Zia has done a lot of work on researching UCR's that should be on the Highway maps. There were many errors in recording them, and routes that have come on and off Highway's maps. She needs a detailed list of them all from Zia that she can pass on to Highways, so they can correct their maps. The effect of NERC on routes will have to be checked as there seem to be differing opinions on how this impacts on some roads. It is the non-tarmac ends of roads that have, in many places, been left off, as well as a number of through green lanes. A number are dual recorded. Shona's department wastes a lot of time dealing with claims for routes, and anomalies that are roads, and which should be shown on the Highway's map. Unless there has been no legal Order to stop them up, they should still be shown as Highways. A lot of confusion has been due to maintenance responsibility. It is important that a proper copy is made of Highways older maps, such as the 1929 Handover Map.

**Signing of UCRs** – This was dealt with in Richard Knight's update where it was reported that. Black way marks, with Unclassified County Road on them, are being used on Ride UK routes.

### (b) Highway Verges

A problem at Kenley Common was reported to the last LAF, in public question time, by Sula Rayska, a former member of LAF. The owner of a caravan site has put stones along the wide grass verge to stop its use, and to keep it "manicured". Shropshire Highways then provided him with a large number of bollards that he has put along the edge of the verge, and he has told horse riders to stop using it. LAF confirmed that the verge is part of the Highway and the bollards obstructions, and would be writing to inform Shropshire Highways of this. The verge is important for horse riders as the road can be slippery and it is also needed in order for vehicles to pass. A SRCDF

member reported that he told her that he owned the verge, which was incorrect, and that she was not to ride on it. Riders continue to use it, but the stones and bollards impede access from the road.

### **c) Consultation on HGV speeds on single carriageway roads**

Zia's response on behalf of the Forum is noted. There is a proposal to increase the speed for HGV's on single carriageway roads to 50mph. Zia reported that she got the response in to meet the 1<sup>st</sup> February deadline, but after the papers for this meeting were sent out. She sent a copy to those with e-mail addresses, and can forward it to anyone else who has not received it.

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

The extracts, relevant to our Forum, from the Minutes of the Local Access Forum Meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012, (attached to the Agenda marked **B**) and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012 (marked **C**) are noted. Many of matters dealt with at the last meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 have already been covered on this Agenda. Zia raised Access to Commons, and Shropshire Council's response to this is with the LAF Agenda papers, which are available on <http://bit.ly/XNg7vP>. It is noted that the next LAF meetings are on 11<sup>th</sup> July and 17<sup>th</sup> October.

## **8. Items to note**

**Natural England** – Zia was thanked for the response she sent on members' behalf to the consultation on possible reforms, including a possible merger of Natural England with the Environment Agency. She emailed this to everyone this week, and had brought copies for those not on email. She only found about this consultation recently, and only just made the deadline.

**National Grid Power lines** – [www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection](http://www.nationalgrid.com/midwalesconnection) gives up to date information on this project. 'Shropshire against the Pylons' will be speaking at Oswald & Llanymynech Local Joint Committee meeting at Trefonen Village Hall on Feb 19<sup>th</sup>. Shona confirmed that their department has now been consulted with regard to the National Grid Power Line, and that there are a lot of issues to address on the line of the route with regard to Rights Of Way. These were not marked on their maps, and all had to be checked which took a lot of time.

**DEFRA Stewardship Routes** – To note that schemes due to end 30.9.2013 are Burlington Farm, nr Shifnal. Little Wytheford Farm, nr Shawbury. Lower Elcott Farm A, nr Cleobury Mortimer. Lower Netley Farm, nr, Shrewsbury. Tong Park Farm, nr. Shifnal. Wheathall Farm, Dorrington.

## **9. Any Other Business**

**Dog Attacks** – Zia reported that she and another rider had suffered two nasty dog attacks on a bridleway on Nesscliffe Hill, and that a number of dogs being exercised are not under 'close control' on ROW. The BHS have asked that everyone report any incidents to the **BHS Accident Website**: - [www.horseaccidents.org.uk](http://www.horseaccidents.org.uk). An advice leaflet, which is available on the website, from a horse, and a dog's viewpoint, entitled "look at it from my point of view" has been produced by the BHS, in conjunction with The Blue Cross and The Association of Chief Police Officers. A copy has been put up at Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park.

**11. Dates of the Next Meetings** The next meeting is to be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The provisional date for the AGM meeting, of Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013, is confirmed. Meetings to be held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury, at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 pm.

It is noted that all the papers for future SR&CDF meetings will be sent out by email.