

NORTH SHROPSHIRE WALK FORUM
MONDAY 27TH JANUARY 2014

Present : Trevor Allison, Liz Evans, Ernie Heath, Jane Ing, Ann and Neil Moore, Harvey Morgan, Alison Parker, Denis Powell, Jim Stabler, Barrie Stephens.

From the last meeting: Peter Carr had enquired about the possibility of an unmade road near Llanyblodwell becoming a bridleway due to damage from 4 wheeled vehicles. It will not be possible to downgrade the status of this path, but it is a maintenance issue. The maintenance team are aware. The creation of a new footpath alongside the road is seen as a good idea, but requires the permission of the local landowner.

Walking Festivals update:

Whitchurch Walking Festival plans are nearly complete and as soon as the leaflet is ready it will be distributed. Three days of long, short and themed walks, plus activities, from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th May.

Welshampton and Ellesmere are having another activity weekend around Easter, but this is still to be confirmed.

There will be a snowdrop stroll around Oswestry on Tuesday 18th February.

Meres and Mosses have also produced a comprehensive programme of themed walks throughout the year.

Walkers are Welcome are having a Wrekin Spring Gathering on Thursday 20th March 2014.

Details that are available are attached.

Walking for Health update:

There have been a few new members recently and groups are growing, but north Shropshire has far fewer members than central and south Shropshire.

Ellesmere have advertised in local papers which has elicited some response, so this may be tried in Oswestry.

The next volunteer walk leader training course is on Wednesday, 26th March at the Lantern in Shrewsbury.

Footpath activity:

Harvey outlined recent and current work in north Shropshire.

Hodnet – path opened to wetland site next to bypass and on to Stoke on Tern.

Bridleways opened in Baschurch

New P3 group in Kinnerley

Volunteer meeting due in February to try to find volunteers for Oswestry P3 group.

Nescliffe – rhododendron clearance ongoing, plus beginning to clear saplings and scrub for hillfort in preparation for removing most of the trees from this important historical site.

Colemere – removal of trees from edge to allow more light enabling reeds etc to grow

Brown Moss – fencing erected so cattle can graze to reduce regeneration of scrub and give room for other plants and flowers to regenerate.

Oswestry – new footpaths around shelf bank and Henley wood now allow easier access for walkers around the town.

Footpath survey update:

Trevor is walking all the rights of way in Shropshire.

Whilst he has found many good paths to walk, there are a great number of obstructions, many of which need reporting to the enforcement officer for north Shropshire. He is on target to finish by the end of the year.

Oswestry Oswald's Trail:

Jim had wanted to create this as part of the paths for communities project, but this was declined as he was unable to create a bridleway. The Ramblers however have agreed to help create this circular walk around Oswestry for which there will be a guide and bespoke waymarkers etc.

WW1 Walks:

Jim would like to create a series of walks over the next 4 years that tell the story of how Shropshire was affected by the war. He has a programme that he has started, but there are gaps to be filled in. He would like people to volunteer to do research in their local area about something to do with the war that interests them that could be turned into a walk.

A cycle route linking war memorials was suggested.

Update of Welshampton Public Inquiry January 22nd:

Everyone was pleased at the level of support this was given by local people. Shropshire Star may have helped by reporting on it. It was requested that it be noted that Lucy McFarlane, Rights of Way Officer, presented a flawless case and handled the day in an

extremely professional manner. The result should be known in about 5 weeks.

P3 Support in 2014:

Harvey said that, as far as he is aware, there will be no change to the level of support offered to the P3 groups in north Shropshire.

Council Matters:

Outdoor recreation needs to save £250,000 a year for the next 3 years. The final shape of outdoor recreation is not yet decided. As soon as it is, this will be promulgated to all the walking forums.

Points for Local Access Forum:

People want to know what the impact of less finance will have on the future of footpaths.

Any other business:

There is still a problem with a footbridge around Whitchurch that needs replacing.

The possibility of using people on probation to help with maintenance was discussed and thought to be a good idea.

Jim asked everyone to complete the online survey if have not already done so.

The Walkers are Welcome Shropshire Hills booklet is due for reprinting. It is now going to incorporate all Walkers are Welcome towns in Shropshire.

The Humphrey Kynaston Way is going ahead. This links from Carding Mill Valley to Grinshill. Montford Bridge was a problem, but is now going to be a new route going around the picnic area and under the bridge.

Liz thanked everyone for coming.

Next meeting Monday 28th April, 7.30pm, Ellesmere Town Hall.