

Shropshire Local Access Forum

<u>Committee and Date</u>

Shropshire Local Access Forum

20 October 2016

MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2016 10.00 AM - 12.20 PM

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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Present

Roger Plowden, (Chairman)

Trevor Allison, Stephen Bell, Peter Carr, Alex Carson-Taylor, Chris Chillingworth,
Janet Mees-Robinson, Stewart Pickering, Roger Plowden, Zia Robins, Jim Stabler,
Stuart West and Mark Weston

13 Welcome, New Member Introductions and Membership Recruitment Update

- 13.1 The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and introduced Councillor Stuart West, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, and Jim Stabler who were attending their first meeting of the Local Access Forum.
- 13.2 The Chairman advised Members that Linda Jeavons would be retiring from the Council and that this would be her last meeting as Committee Officer for the Local Access Forum. He thanked her for all the work she had done for the Forum. Mrs Robins proposed a formal vote of thanks which was endorsed by all those present.
- 13.3 The Mapping & Enforcement Team Leader advised the meeting that further work had been done on the recruitment of members and that she was actively pursuing a number of organisations and interested groups. The Outdoor Partnerships Manager reminded members that Committee Members were appointed based on their interests rather than representing a specific organisation.
- 13.4 In response to a query the Mapping & Enforcement Team Leader confirmed that Natural England were still represented on the Forum but that due to capacity issues they were not always able to attend meetings.
- 13.5 Members suggested approaching outdoor activities groups and volunteer groups. The Mapping & Enforcement Team Leader agreed to follow this up.

14 Apologies for Absence

- 14.1 Apologies for absence were received from Gareph Boxley and Councillor Lee Chapman.

15 Minutes and any matters arising

- 15.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 had been circulated
- 15.2 Mrs Robins pointed out that there was a duplication in paragraph four of minute 5 and that it should be amended to read: -

With reference to Minute No. 39, final paragraph, a member reiterated her concerns with regard to the high number of errors on the OS ITN mapping layer currently available on the Shropshire Council local view Outdoor Recreation map layer; as many minor public roads are shown as private any errors on the maps could lead to Sat-nav errors. Shropshire Council had still not digitised the older highway maps and it was important that a copy of all maps were made and held secure.

15.3 RESOLVED:

That subject to the above amendment that the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Local Access Forum held on 15 October 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record

- 15.4 Mrs Robins asked whether there was any progress with the Integrated transport Network Mapping Layer. The Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader advised that there was no further progress to report.

16 Public Question Time

- 16.1 There were no questions from members of the public

17 Declarations of Interest

- 17.1 There were no declarations of interest

18 Rail Crossings - Presentation by Network Rail

- 18.1 The meeting received a presentation from Nick Carson and Andrew Bound from Network Rail, in which they gave a background to the work that Network Rail was doing with regard to rail crossings.
- 18.2 In response to a query members were assured that there was no “grand plan” to close all crossings and that each case was taken on its merits.
- 18.3 Members made the following points: -
- Concern was raised over provision of self-closing gates and the positioning of gates for equestrians use. A Member advised that the BHS have a very good advisory leaflet on provision at level crossings
 - Could anything be installed which gives users an indication of when the next train is coming

18.4 The Outdoor Partnership Manager asked what the scale of the problem was in Shropshire. Members were informed that there were no major concerns in Shropshire

18.5 The Chair thanked Mr Carson and Mr Bound for attending the meeting and answering questions

19 Local Access Forum National Conferences

19.1 Mr Weston and Mrs Mees Robinson gave feedback on the National Conferences they had attended in Bristol and Leeds. They commented that there was a generally positive atmosphere at the conference. They informed Members that the conference had received presentations on disabled ramblers and multi user access, and an update on deregulation. Concern was expressed that some multi user projects excluded horse riders. With reference to disabled access Deb Hughes reminded members that Countryside Access agreed policy is gap – gate - stile

20 Southern Shropshire LEADER Programme

20.1 The Shropshire Hills LEADER Co-Ordinator reminded Members that the LEADER programme was part of the RDP and was managed by DEFRA, with £2 million funding over 4 years. He informed Members that the 6 national priorities were: -

- Priority 1 – support to increase farm productivity
- Priority 2 - support for micro and small businesses (non-agricultural) and farm diversification
- Priority 3 – support for rural tourism
- Priority 4 – provision of rural services
- Priority 5 - support for cultural and heritage activity
- Priority 6 – support for increasing forestry productivity

20.2 The LEADER Co-Ordination explained the types of projects that were applying for funding and took Members through the application and approvals process.

20.3 The LEADER Co-Ordinator referred Members to the LEADER pages on the Council Website and asked that if they had any further queries that they contact him.

21 Parish Paths Partnership Update

21.1 The Shropshire Outdoors Development Officer advised the meeting that she had taken over the day to day running of the Parish Path Partnership (P3) groups. She informed Members that in the past 12 months the number of P3 groups had increased by 6 and the groups had contributed £74,445 worth of work to the network.

21.2 The Outdoors Development Officer informed Members that she was currently updating the P3 manual and was working to create a better network for groups, using social media. It was reported Shropshire Great Outdoors website is very successful with a great deal of visit.

- 21.3 Members congratulated the P3 groups for all the work that they did. The Outdoor Partnerships Manager commented that the P3 groups played a key role on the maintenance of the network whilst helping to reduce costs. A member commented that it was important that Parish Councils support for the ROW network

22 Bridges/Large Structures on the Network

- 22.1 The meeting received a presentation from the Rights of Way Team Leader (Copy attached to signed minutes), which set out the management of structures on the rights of way network
- 22.2 The Outdoor Partnerships Manager stated that a key priority was the need to provide a good network within the current financial constraints and that work was ongoing to resolve this by using a more commercial approach.
- 22.3 A discussion took place around commercial funding of maintenance and suggestions included the potential for the sponsorship of bridges.
- 22.4 The Chair thanked the Rights of Way Team Leader for his presentation.

23 Landowner Leaflet

- 23.1 The Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader advised the meeting that the Landowner Leaflet had been widely circulated and that good feedback had been received.
- 23.2 A Member commented that there was no mention of shooting on rights of way and asked that an advice note be circulated alongside the Landowner Leaflet.
- 23.3 A Member congratulated Officers on the production of the leaflet

24 Outdoor Partnerships Update

- 24.1 The Outdoor Partnerships Manager advised the meeting that a restructure of the Outdoor Partnerships team would be taking place and that she would be leaving the Council on 30 June 2016. She informed Members that as part of the process the AONB Partnership had looked at other ways of management and were looking to become independent of the Council.
- 24.2 The Outdoor Partnerships Manager advised Members that responsibility for 97 urban green spaces had been passed to town and parish councils and that the management of parks and countryside sites was being assessed to maximise income earning possibilities in an effort to create a neutral budget. A discussion followed on ways of doing this and suggestions included sponsorship and updating facilities such as cafes and visitor centres to increase income earned. It was also suggested that more use could be made of volunteers.
- 24.3 A Member asked about the funding for the Walking for Health programme. The Outdoor Partnerships Manager advised that funding came from the public health budget and that it had been secured for the next financial year but that future

funding of the scheme was uncertain. A Member stressed the importance of countryside access to the economy of Shropshire

- 24.4 The Chair thanked the Outdoor Partnerships Manager for her presentation and for all the work she had done during her time with the Council. This was echoed by all Members.

25 **Feedback from other Forums and items for noting**

25.1 Items for Noting

A member asked for an update on cropping on rights of way. The Mapping and Enforcement Team leader advised that inspections continued to be carried out by volunteers.

25.2 Minutes/Papers

The following minutes/papers, which were circulated with the agenda for information, were noted.

- (a) Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Meeting – 25 June 2015
- (b) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum – 5 October 2015
- (c) Shropshire Hills Forum – 9 October 2015
- (d) North Walking Forum – 19 October 2015
- (e) Central Walking Forum – 27 November 2015
- (f) North Walking Forum – 25 January 2016
- (g) Shropshire Hills Forum – 5 February 2016
- (h) Central Walking Forum – 26 February 2016

25.3 Future meetings

Members were advised that it was proposed that the next meeting take the form of an away day. There was some discussion about the date of the next meeting and it was agreed that Members would be canvassed for suitable dates and would be advised of the agreed date as soon as possible.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: