



Committee and Date

Shropshire's Great Outdoors
Strategy Board

INSERT NEXT MEETING DATE

SHROPSHIRE'S GREAT OUTDOORS STRATEGY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021

Virtual meeting held via Microsoft teams

10.00 - 11.42 am

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chairman), Mark Weston (Vice Chairman), Peter Carr, Cecilia Motley, Lezley Picton, Nigel Pocock and Ronald Repath

42 Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

42.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that apologies had been received from Lee Chapman, Sarah Faulkner, Jack Tavernor and Andrew Wood.

43 Declarations of Interest

43.1 There were no declarations of interest.

44 Public Question Time

44.1 There were no public questions

45 Minutes of the Last Meeting

45.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire great Outdoors Strategy Board held on 15 October 2021 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

46 Access to Land Project Proposal

46.1 The meeting received a presentation from Will Davies which introduced plans for a company which would provide a platform which would link rural businesses and landowners with consumers. He then answered questions from Members.

47 North West Relief Road Update

47.1 Members received a presentation from Matt Johnson, Executive Manager - Strategic Projects Shropshire Council which gave an update on the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road (NWRR).

- 47.2 The Executive Manager advised the meeting that the Oxon Link Road project had now been incorporated into the NWRR project.
- 47.3 The Executive Manager pointed out that as well as being a road scheme the NWRR presented opportunities for improved cycling and walking routes.
- 47.4 The Executive Manager advised members that work was ongoing with partners to look at combining the NWRR with an appropriate water resource scheme.
- 47.5 in response to a question the Executive Manager confirmed that there would be a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of over 10%
- 47.6 In response to a question regarding access for horse riders, the Executive Manager confirmed that the existing bridleways network had been acknowledged and there were works incorporated in the project to protect and enhance the local bridleways routes.
- 47.7 in response to a question regarding the effect of noise and how this would be mitigated, the Executive Manager informed Members that low noise surfacing will be used which would help to some extent and that engineering solutions such as embankments would be used.
- 47.8 The Chair thanked the Executive manager for his presentation and for answering questions.

48 Press Releases, Social Media, and Public Messages regarding the Covid 19 Restrictions

- 48.1 Members received a short presentation from Adam Spreckley, Communications Officer Shropshire Council, which gave an update on how the Council had communicated with the public around problems associated with the increased use of the countryside during the current pandemic, using the Council Website, social media and where appropriate signage on site, liaising with partners to ensure that a consistent message was being given.
- 48.2 The Interim Outdoors Partnership Manager commented that it was a difficult balance to reach with the increased number of people accessing the countryside and asked partners to let him know of any examples of good practice around communicating with the public regarding access.
- 48.3 In response to a question the Communications Officer confirmed that he was working with neighbouring Welsh authorities to ensure a consistent message.
- 48.4 The Chair thanked the Communications officer for his presentation.

49 Countryside Code

- 49.1 The Interim Outdoor Partnership Manager reminded the meeting that the Government had recently updated the Countryside Code, and that Council was trying to publicise the key messages contained within the code through press releases and signage, and working with partners such as schools and other organisations.

50 Current Situation and Challenges for the Outdoor Partnership Team

- 50.1 The Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager reminded the meeting of the challenges caused by the current pandemic and paid tribute to the volunteer groups for the work that they were carrying out. He went on that the pandemic had seen an increased use of the footpaths network and country parks, increasingly by people from outside the area which was causing problems of overcrowding and increased concern from local people.
- 50.2 The Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager advised the meeting that the increased use of the network had seen a 215% increase in issues reported. He added that there was the added problem that the volunteer groups were currently not able to carry out work.
- 50.3 The Interim Outdoors Partnership Manager informed the meeting that during the pandemic there had been an increased use of BOATS by 4x4s and other off-road vehicles, particularly in the south east of the county which had caused issues of damage and vehicles straying off the route. There were also issues of conflict with other users.
- 50.4 The Interim Outdoors Partnership Manager informed the meeting that he was currently looking at the next years budget and was looking at increasing staffing levels especially retaining the two maintenance officers that had been recruited on a six month contract using covid funding, and that these posts would be funded by increased commercial activity.
- 50.5 The Chair thanked the Interim Outdoors Partnership Manager and his team for all the work that they do.

51 Date of Next Meeting

- 51.1 Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Strategy Board would be held on Thursday 3 June 2021 at 10.00am

Signed (Chairman)

Date: