

Shropshire Local Access Forum

<u>Committee and Date</u>
Shropshire Local Access Forum
11 February 2016

MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2015 10.00 AM - 12.23 PM

Responsible Officer: Linda Jeavons
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Present

Trevor Allison, Stephen Bell, Gareph Boxley, Peter Carr, Alex Carson-Taylor, Janet Mees-Robinson, Roger Plowden, Zia Robins, Mark Weston and Leslie Winwood.

1 Elect a Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Mr Roger Plowden be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lee Chapman, Chris Chillingworth and Stewart Pickering.

4 Appoint a Vice Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Mr Mark Weston be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

5 Minutes and any matters arising

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 2 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- With reference to Minute No. 42, Trevor Allison provided an update on The Big Pathwatch survey, which was ongoing and would conclude in 10 weeks' time. To date, nearly 49,000 1 km squares had been surveyed in England and Wales and overall over 30,000 positive comments and over 36,000 negative comments had been made. Out of 3,000 sq. kilometres in Shropshire 815 sq. km had been surveyed, with 680 positive comments and 1,250 negative comments submitted.

During a discussion the following points were noted:

- One member expressed the view that the survey was being undertaken from a walker's perspective so any outcomes on higher status routes would only be of benefit to walkers; and
- The results would be of use to the voluntary sector and would identify issues and areas where partnerships could work with councils.
- 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; and Shropshire Council had not digitised all maps and it was important that a copy of all maps should be made and kept secure. 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.

All members of the Forum reiterated their concerns with regard to the potential that information could be 'lost' if transferred to other organisations, ie Mouchel, and requested that a copy should be made of all highway maps that were transferred out-of-house.

In response to comments, Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, explained that:

- The Integrated Transport Network mapping layer was a resource which provided information on the location of public and private roads. It was not clear whether the mapping could be used in a public capacity. She agreed to identify the purpose of the mapping and any safeguarding implications;
- The National Street Gazetteer was essentially smaller but more accurate; however, there were errors with the data and insufficient resources to provide an accurate picture at this time; and
- Some material, ie historic mapping, had transferred to Mouchel but she reiterated that historic mapping had been and would continue to be held secure. She agreed to raise the concerns of this Forum and explore the costings to copy a full set of maps.

6 Public Question Time

There were no public questions, statements or petitions received.

7 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8 Canals and River Trust

Wendy Capelle, Waterway Manager, and Ani Sutton, Development and Engagement Manager, Canal & River Trust (CART) were in attendance and provided an overview

of the work of CART to protect, manage and improve the nation's canals and river navigations. A copy of the presentation could be viewed on the Shropshire Council website and would be appended to the signed minutes. A question and answer session followed, during which CART reiterated their willingness to work with all groups and communities in order to ensure waterways and access both on and off towpaths were made and continued to remain accessible and user-friendly to as many users as possible. In response to concerns raised regarding horse riding access, Mark Weston offered to act as the point of contact.

The Chairman thanked them for their attendance and excellent presentation.

(At this juncture, Councillor Les Winwood left the meeting and did not return.)

9 **Lost Ways / Deregulation Bill**

At this juncture and with reference to Minute No. 33 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2015 (Public QuestionTime – “A plea for the Lost Ways of Shropshire”), Shona Butter, Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader, drew attention to the question and response as attached at pages 11 – 13 of the report.

SB and Mark Weston provided an update on the position to date with regard to Discovering Lost Ways & The Deregulation Act 2015. A copy of the presentation could be viewed on the Shropshire Council website and would be appended to the signed minutes. The basis of the Deregulation Act was to try at the outset to get applications submitted of sufficient quality so as not to waste a local authority's time and hence a Basic Evidential Test would be introduced. When an application was received a local authority would examine it and decide whether to make an Order and would notify and enter into dialogue with the landowner to find out whether they would accept the evidence or would prefer an alternative route; an applicant would have the right of appeal; applications would be able to be transferred from one person to another; a local authority would be able to draft Orders; as a cost saving, there would no longer be a requirement to advertise the diversion in the press; and certain routes, ie those routes on the List of Streets, Gazeteer etc., would be exempt from the cut-off provision.

In response to questions from the floor, SB commented:

- That, to date, details of the Basic Evidential Test were unknown but this Forum would be appraised as soon as more information became available;
- If the local authority had initially consulted with landowners who then had suggested an alternative route, then ramblers could appeal but the local authority had the ability to disregard irrelevant objections/comments and determine the matter;
- There was already the ability for a group to submit a Definitive Map Order;
- SB agreed to check if there was a disc available listing all the Lost Ways and, if so, what information could be released;
- When changes to routes were advertised grid references were already included; and
- Evidence of historic and continual use, consultation/agreement with the landowner and claims submitted by a local authority would be used to protect

routes in use prior to cut-off and also those routes linked to rights of way with no status.

10 **Shropshire Great Outdoors Website - Launch**

Clare Fildes, Outdoor Partnerships Development Team Leader, was in attendance and via a live link drew attention to the new Shropshire's Great Outdoors website, which could be found at www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk. This was a "work-in-progress" project, with a possible launch date of spring 2016. She welcomed any feedback, comments, suggestions for links etc. and she could be contacted on 01743 255067 and/or email clare.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk.

A member reported that the Shropshire Great Outdoors website had an interactive map which now had the facility to show rights of way and UCRs separately or altogether so that omissions and gaps could be identified for lost ways.

Members of the Forum congratulated CF on a superb site and welcomed the inclusion of the interactive map.

11 **Corporate Sponsorship**

Alex Carson-Taylor provided an update on the developments that had taken place with regard to corporate sponsorship. A copy of the presentation could be viewed on the Shropshire Council website and would be appended to the signed minutes.

The meeting noted that Severn Valley Country Park had been identified as the pilot site with one of their aspiration's being the development of the visitor centre. In the ensuing debate, members of the Forum commented that the public transport links to the site were not good but noted that the site was accessible by other means and questioned if corporate sponsorship could be used to improve this aspect.

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

Items for Noting

There were no items for noting.

Minutes / Papers:

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

- (i) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 26 January 2015
- (ii) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 27 April 2015
- (iii) Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum – 8 June 2015
- (iv) North Shropshire Walk Forum – 20 July 2015
- (v) Central Shropshire Walking Forum – 26 August 2015

Future meetings:

The following agenda items were suggested for consideration at a future meeting:

- (a) Ploughing & Cropping – SB reported that a booklet on the responsibilities of landowners was currently being developed in consultation with the NFU;
- (b) Shooting over Rights of Way;
- (c) New LEADER Programme;
- (d) Update on Parish Path Partnerships;
- (e) Level Crossings – update on the Network Rail project to close level crossings in the future.

Following a discussion it was suggested that all members should give some consideration to the future membership of this Forum with an aspiration to provide input from a wide variety of backgrounds, skills and interests. Suggestions for future membership and representation/input included CART, Local Enterprise Partnership, Health & Wellbeing Board, cycling, public health, tourism and Shropshire Councillors; liaison with cross-border LAFs; and the importance of raising the public awareness of the work of LAF was also raised.

Future meeting dates:

- Thursday, 11 February 2016
- Thursday, 30 June 2016
- Thursday, 20 October 2016
- Thursday, 19 January 2017

Signed (Chairman)

Date: