

## Central Shropshire Walking Forum

### Notes of Meeting

2pm, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

The Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury

#### Attendees:

John Newnham (Chair)	Shrewsbury Ramblers	<a href="mailto:john.newnham@btinternet.com">john.newnham@btinternet.com</a>
Bill Hodges	Shrewsbury Ramblers	<a href="mailto:vibill@phoncoop.coop">vibill@phoncoop.coop</a>
Phil Barnes	Shrewsbury Ramblers	<a href="mailto:phil@trigpoint.me.uk">phil@trigpoint.me.uk</a>
Trevor Allison	Shrewsbury ramblers	<a href="mailto:eta-06@tiscali.co.uk">eta-06@tiscali.co.uk</a>
Phil Wadlow	Much Wenlock WfH & WaW	<a href="mailto:wadlowfarming@msn.com">wadlowfarming@msn.com</a>
Anne Suffolk	Telford & East Shropshire Ramblers	<a href="mailto:annesuffolk1@gmail.com">annesuffolk1@gmail.com</a>
Naomi Wrighton	Wellington WaW, Walkabout Wrekin	<a href="mailto:info@wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk">info@wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk</a>
Clare Fildes	Outdoor Partnerships	<a href="mailto:clare.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk">clare.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk</a>
Mick Dunn	Outdoor Partnerships	<a href="mailto:mick.dunn@shropshire.gov.uk">mick.dunn@shropshire.gov.uk</a>
Shona Butter	Outdoor Partnerships	<a href="mailto:shona.butter@shropshire.gov.uk">shona.butter@shropshire.gov.uk</a>

#### Apologies:

Dick Bailey  
Bob Coalbran  
Audrey Menhinick  
Geoff Sproson  
David Hardwick  
Helen Beresford

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

John opened the meeting at 2pm

#### 2. Feedback/Action from Previous Meeting

There was no actions from the previous meeting

#### 3. Group Updates

##### a. Naomi Wrighton (Walk about Wrekin & Wellington Walkers are Welcome)

The Wellington WaW footpath group hold 2 path clearing sessions each month. The group also hold regular Wednesday health walks and longer Sunday walks. Details of walks can be found at [www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk](http://www.wellingtonwalkersarewelcome.org.uk) The annual Walkers are Welcome General Meeting was held at Whitchurch in November. A route linking together WaW towns in Shropshire has been discussed. ? If this is possible to link in with the Shropshire Way.

##### b. John Newnham (Shrewsbury Ramblers)

Shrewsbury Ramblers held their AGM in November where a number of "footpath topics" were discussed as well as the Shropshire Way. Deb Hughes (Outdoor Partnerships service manager) and Richard Knight (Maintenance team leader) were in attendance. [www.shrewsburyramblers.org.uk](http://www.shrewsburyramblers.org.uk)

##### c. Phil Wadlow (Much Wenlock Walking for Health & Walkers are Welcome)

Much Wenlock WaW held their Walking Weekend in September. The festival was another success but a few walks were undersubscribed which was potentially down to a problem with online bookings. Walking for Health continues to do well averaging over 70 walkers every Monday. The WfH group now has over 30 trained walk leaders and back markers. [www.2shrop.net/wenlock.walks](http://www.2shrop.net/wenlock.walks)

##### d. Anne Suffolk (Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers)

There have been lots of recent personnel changes in the Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers. There is a new Chair, Footpath Officer, and secretary. The Footpath group will be working closely with the WaW footpath group. The Telford & East Shropshire Ramblers are trying to liaise more closely with local walking

groups and are becoming more engaged with social media. (Note Mick will add a list of walking related FB pages in Shropshire to the end of the Notes) [www.shropshireramblers.org.uk/groups/telford.php](http://www.shropshireramblers.org.uk/groups/telford.php)

**e. Geoff Sproson (Marches LDWA & Stiperstones)**

Way markers are now in place on the Elsie Rowson walk. A plaque has been donated by the Women's Institute and will be erected outside the old post office. A guide has been produced and is awaiting printing. A website will be launched shortly.

LDWA Update

1. Wem Winter Wonderland walk (20mile walk in North Shropshire) takes place on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December starting at 08.30am from the Wem Sports Centre.  
<https://www.ldwa.org.uk/Marches/E/15691/wem-winter-wonderland.html>
2. South Shropshire Circular in February is now full and entries have closed.
3. Wenlock Olympian Walk (64 mile challenge walk) takes place on July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016. Entries open Jan 02<sup>nd</sup> 2016 <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/Marches/E/15788/wenlock-olympian-walk.html>

**f. Helen Beresford – P3 Update** (in Helens absence Mick Dunn gave the following update)

P3 Hours since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015

Volunteer hour's whole County – 5097

Central area parishes' hours – 810

Total cost if done by contractors £43,153

David will be coming round with maps to identify all routes which the volunteers consider as priorities in their parish and to ask them to think about this beforehand. Naturally if the Shropshire Way, Severn Way, etc. go through their parish these will be automatic priorities as well as any route with a publication available for it. However, we also need to know the routes which are valued most in each parish and which also make important links to the wider area.

**g. David Hardwick – Maintenance Team Update** (David was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following update)

The biggest project has been improvement of the Severn Way at the Mount/Doctors Field, Shrewsbury. Work parties from Shrewsbury Ramblers P3, Shropshire Wild team and Shropshire Wild Trust have assisted with this. There have been delays in putting the finishing touches together because of high river levels. But the path has not shown any signs of damage after recent flooding.

A new warden in Westbury Parish has highlighted issues at Vron gate which the neighbouring P3 at Alberbury has helped with as well as Shrewsbury Ramblers P3. There is also potential for Pontesbury P3 to assist in the area.

Pontesbury P3 have been active in the Hope Valley area improving footpaths and bridleways.

All the local volunteer groups have been given parish maps to identify what they feel may be the priority paths in their areas.

**4. Shona Butter (Mapping and Enforcement Team Leader)**

**Discovering Lost Ways** - Shona gave the forum a presentation on "Discovering Lost Ways & and the Deregulation Act 2015" a copy of the presentation is attached.

**Ploughing and Cropping** - Shona provided an update on Ploughing & Cropping for Shropshire. Comparisons over recent years clearly demonstrated that cropping was by far the greater issue. See below:-

Year	Ploughing	Cropping
Apr 12 - Mar 13	9	80
Apr 13 - Mar 14	16	67
Apr 14 - Mar 15	14	75

This year's campaign had resulted in the following success rates:

% of paths clear of crops  
North Shropshire 39%

Oswestry	54%
South Shropshire	76%
Bridgnorth	54%
Shrewsbury & Atcham	59%

#### Future Actions:

- a. Landowners who have been sent letters in the past and are highlighted again in the following year will be sent a stronger letter, or notice will be served.
- b. Cropping with maize has been identified as a growing problem with increasing acreages grown for ensiling or energy production. This crop lengthens the cropping season and a further harvest period (Sept-November) This must now be taken into consideration in any campaign and the situation when a crop could be obstructing the path from May to November. It should be emphasised that a crop should be cleared as soon as it emerges for the advantage of both walkers and landowners.
- c. In addition, the fact that some crops lodge (fall over into the path) e.g. oilseed rape are also being looked at more closely by the enforcement team. It has come apparent that this crop can also obstruct depending on the method of harvesting. If it cut and left in swathes to ripen before combining these across the path make it impossible to negotiate.
- d. More timely inspections are required to give officers sufficient time to take action and prevent landowners using the 'imminent harvest' as an excuse not to clear the path. Volunteers to inspect routes were welcomed.
- e. Production of the landowner leaflet to help raise awareness of legal requirements to ensure routes are open and available.

#### 5. Shropshire Way

Discussions have been ongoing about establishing a definitive, circular Shropshire Way route. A full update will be given at the next meeting.

#### 6. Shropshire Outdoor Partnership Updates – Clare gave the following updates:

- a. **The Big Conversation.** <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/big-conversation/> Clare explained that due to further funding cuts Shropshire Council were conducting a public consultation regarding the service the Council currently provide and which services should be provided in the future. Clare encouraged all attendees to complete the survey.
- b. **The Severn Way.** Funding sources are being sought to upgrade and improve the Severn Way through Shropshire. Surveys are being carried out to establish the extent of the work needed.
- c. **Outdoor Partnership annual ROW survey.** <http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/outdoor-recreation-annual-public-survey/> Clare reminded everyone that Outdoor Partnerships conduct an annual user survey for our ROW, Parks and Country Side sites. Attendees are encouraged to complete the survey and encourage members of their relevant groups to do so. Evidence collected from the survey is vital for securing future funding.

#### 7. The Big Path Watch

Trevor gave the following update. The Telford and Wrekin area has been completed apart from 6 grid Squares. Shropshire is the Top area in the country at the moment for completing target squares. 46% of total Squares have now been completed in Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin. [www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-big-pathwatch.aspx](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-big-pathwatch.aspx)

#### 8. AOB

#### 9. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2pm – 4pm The Wilfred Owen Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury SY26ND

## Walking Facebook Pages

<https://www.facebook.com/WalkingInShropshire>

<https://www.facebook.com/ShrewsburyAndMidShropshireRamblers>

<https://www.facebook.com/Telford-and-East-Shropshire-Ramblers-463941947076536>

<https://www.facebook.com/Wenlock.walks>

<https://www.facebook.com/WellingtonWalkersAreWelcome>

<https://www.facebook.com/Ironbridge-Gorge-Walking-Festival-30-Apr-08-May-2016-416628868384643>

<https://www.facebook.com/Church-Stretton-Walking-Festival-2016-757983534315681>

<https://www.facebook.com/Shropshire-Hills-Area-of-Outstanding-Natural-Beauty-103513872530>