

**SHROPSHIRE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVING FORUM (SRCDF)**

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015, at 5.30pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**1. Attendance:**

John Gibson, British Driving Society, Chairman. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council.

**Apologies:**

Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Pam Evans, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BWG, Joint Secretary. Caroline Le Butt, Long Mynd Bridleways Group. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Jan Mees Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Mark Weston, BHS.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (paper A) were approved, and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters Arising****(a) Wind Turbines**

It is noted that the application for a 77m wind turbine at Criddon has been refused. The response we put in was quoted in length in the Planning Officer's Report.

It is also noted that a Planning Application 15/03443/SCR (Scoping Report) has been submitted for a 48m tip height wind turbine at Webscott, which, is closer than 200m from the Humphrey Kynaston Way Linear Route. SC ROW has responded that as Bridleway 35 is approximately 160m to the north-west it will not be directly affected by the proposals. Concern was raised that there seems to be a misunderstanding over the recommended separation distance. This is a minimum of 200m, even if 3 times the height comes to less than this, which in this case it does. As this was only a Scoping Report the Planning Website did not allow public response.

**(b) Canal Towpaths**

It is noted that the CART (Canal & River Trust) representative is due to attend the LAF meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, and that Mark Weston, Director of Access, BHS, reports that the previously reported 3 pilot areas canal towpath trials are progressing, with for one, a specification of works required to enable the trial to proceed being drawn up; the second it is hoped may proceed on an informal basis. The third is not a runner, but CRT would be happy for their bridges to be used if another route can be found to connect them, which may be a possibility. The problem of low bridges was raised, but Angela said they were not a problem as riders could duck under many or dismount.

**(c) Deregulation Bill**

The report by Jonathan Tweney of Defra from NE LAF News Issue 7 is noted, and that the documents can be viewed on [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) by putting 'Deregulation Bill' in 'search'. It is understood that the regulations are due out in March 2016. It was agreed that it is best to wait until then before submitting any claims, but concern was raised that there may not be many staff left at Shropshire Council to deal with them.

**(d) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships annual public survey 2014-15**

It was felt that the poor response this time could be due to people having completed one in previous years, and not realising that they needed to do so again. Concern was raised again over SRCDF MINUTES 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 - 1 of 5

the questions being more weighted towards walking. Clare Fildes has been asked about this. It is understood that many of the questions are standard ones, to produce standard statistics, so cannot be changed. It was suggested that perhaps separate survey forms could be filled in for walking, riding etc. as the answers could be very different. People may always ride with a friend for one to two hours twice a week, but only walk with their family for an hour once a month. Some questions only referred to walking. It is not known when the next survey is due out.

#### **(e) Solar Farm Applications**

A response was sent on behalf of the Forum to the Application for a Solar Park on Land to the North of Moor Farm Baschurch, as agreed at the last meeting following concerns raised over the impact on narrow country lanes used by horse riders.

#### **(f) Shropshire's Great Outdoors New Website**

Zia reported that the new site is now live, but is still very much work in progress. She is working with Clare Fildes on the horse riding content on the site, and has raised the lack of carriage driving information which it is hoped to address. There have been errors in the transfer of some routes, and some photos still need to be sorted out, but the main elements are now there. There is an excellent interactive map which one can get the promoted routes up on, and overlay rights of way. Zia had asked for UCR's to be included, so riders can see where green lanes link the network, and these are now on. Another good feature is the aerial map, as this enables riders to see the type of terrain they would be riding over. This was also good, when overlaid with the Rights of Way layer as users can then see when Rights of Way are not on the used line. Any suggestions or comments on the site and its contents are welcome.

<http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk/>

#### **(g) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda**

##### **National Grid Power Lines**

The decision on these is still awaited, but consultation seems to be on hold.

##### **Helicopters**

It was reported that following the recent [RAF Shawbury - High Visibility Campaign](#), there had been a delay at the manufacturers, but RAF Shawbury hope this week to have the rest of their high viz items to send out. There has been good feedback on a presentation they did to the North Shropshire Pony Club. It is agreed that it is important to target younger riders. There is now a new Station Commander, Group Captain Jason Appleton. Zia will liaise with them over a future meeting.

##### **Shropshire Level Crossings Review**

There is nothing to update at present in Shropshire, but there was a report in the LAF News which we will send out with the Agenda papers for our next meeting in February.

#### **4. Shropshire Council**

##### **(a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships**

Shona reported recent changes in staffing – Emily Harrison is now Mrs. Parsons-Jones. Clive Dean has left the authority, and has taken up a position with the Wildlife Trust. In the interim Shaun Burkey will take on Colemere and the play and greenspaces in Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Ruyton XI Towns, and West Felton. Mark Blount will take on responsibility for Brown Moss, Nesscliffe, Corbet Wood, Whitchurch CP, Merrington Green, and Shelton. Ed Andrews will take on Snailbeach following the Higher Level Stewardship restoration works. Clive Dean had looked after the Nesscliffe Hills Countryside Heritage Park, and had been working on projects. Concern was raised over the future of maintenance of this site.

Shona also reported that the Council still have savings to achieve and that all services are having to look at further significant savings, efficiencies, and different ways of working to achieve these. The Council is moving towards a Commissioning Authority and is also looking at stopping

services. Outdoor Partnerships is not immune to any of this. The Council will be undertaking a consultation on the services people value which is called The Big Conversation due to be undertaken at the end of the month. It is important that everyone makes their views known as undervalued services are likely to undergo significant changes or will cease to exist. We are not sure of the detail yet, but think the following page on the Council's website will contain the consultation <http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved>.

### **(b) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships Implementation Team**

Richard Knight's team have done their summer topping, and they will be doing work on UCR's. Paul Butter has now started on the drainage work on BW25 Ford Heath by the former Boon's Abattoir. With regard to P3 Groups, David Hardwick is working with the Long Mynd Bridleways Group on projects, and Tim Simmonds with the Clee View Bridleway Group in the Farlow area. David Hardwick has been out to Preston Montford where there has been a problem with a new stockproof lift up latch on the new field gate. The Nesscliffe Hills & District Bridleway P3 Group has done clearance work on The Cliffe and worked with Paul Butter on improvement works on Hopton Hill. It is understood that Mark Weston is looking at getting a group together in the Tong area. Richard still has a full team, but they now do outside work to bring in funds. Concern was raised at the last LAF meeting over the protection of the monies raised, and that they should be ring fenced for Access work. Helen Beresford now does the Outdoor Partnerships Newsletter.

### **(c) Shropshire Council Planning**

Concern was again raised over development in country areas with poor road access.

In the short time since the Humphrey Kynaston Way was completed, applications totalling hundreds of houses have been submitted, especially in the Nesscliffe and Baschurch areas, which will impact on large sections of the route. Permission is being granted for many houses on the edge of hamlets in open countryside. An application has been submitted at Felton Butler for farm buildings to be changed to light industrial, and for a weighbridge and other buildings right beside the bridleway. There is concern that as the farmland is still there how it will be farmed with all the buildings developed, and whether new farm buildings will then be applied for, as has happened elsewhere, and then impacted on bridleways not used before for farm building access. The green lane section of the HKW at Felton Butler, that bordered open farmland is, following an application for additional chicken sheds, now to be sandwiched between the two lots of chicken sheds. As reported at our last meeting, there is also impact by planning on the Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park. An application has just been granted by delegated powers for an underground eco house, but with overground structures on one of the views out from the Country Park. The site is now being sold with 'probably the best views in Shropshire'. Objections had been submitted to point out the impact, and National Heritage expressed concern about above ground structures being put on the site. There are also other applications still pending within the area of the Country Park that will impact on access. Shona has confirmed that their department cannot object to Planning Applications, but put in concerns and guidance on ones which affect a ROW. Concern was raised that Planning Officers often then state in their report that Shropshire ROW do not object to the application, and fail to address the concerns raised by the SC ROW. Members raised concern that affordable housing has been sold off, and permission given for many small properties to be extended, but that a lot of the planning applications now being granted are for larger homes when starter homes are needed. Also that if all the plots of land identified in Sam Dev and all the small paddocks and bits of gardens are granted planning permission now, what will be left for the period up to 2026, and what impact will all this development have on the countryside, and the lanes that link to off road riding routes. Shona was asked if she was aware of any examples of additional access being given when routes are affected by planning, other than diversions, and she confirmed that she was not aware of any. CIL money tends to focus more on open space provision.

<http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

#### **(d) Shropshire Council Highways**

Concern was again raised over the failure to digitise the older Shropshire Highway Maps, especially now that Anita Corfield Jones, who looked after them, has been moved to Mouchel. Zia confirmed that on hearing of the move she went in at short notice and photographed all the maps with her digital camera, but has not had time yet to go through them all. Zia had emailed Andy Savage regarding the failure to record the last section of Old Moors Lane, St. Martins, following the Planning Inspectorate's decision to cancel the Order for it to be a bridleway after it was proved that it was a through UCR. Andy however has now left Highways Development. Shona followed up on this and confirmed that the route is now, at last, being reinstated to Highways mapping.

#### **Government's £3 million funded new digital road map OS ITN and Recording of White Roads by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016.**

Zia has been trying to find out more about this new mapping and what it is being used for. She has been told it is used for GIS. It is all very worrying with the large number of errors on the map for Shropshire. The map is currently still available to view on the SC Local Map under 'more maps' 'Outdoor Recreation' then 'OS ITN', but it can take a long time to load.

### **5. Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues**

**Llanyblodwel BW** – Shona confirmed that the area Officer has been on site, so this route should be opened up soon. Angela reported that the landowner has been concerned over user's safety when the route is opened up, and that he wanted to downgrade the route to a footpath. It is agreed that it is up to users to make the choice whether to use a right of way or not. There are many routes that come out on busy roads, and even if riders choose not to use a route, cyclists may wish to. It was asked if a field edge link might be possible, but it is believed that this is not feasible.

**Shawbury Restricted Byway 1A** – Shona confirmed that they had not had anything to add to the report on the proposed diversion. This is now with the Planning Inspectorate for determination following an objection from the Open Spaces Society, and the deadline has now passed for any further comments.

**Shirlett** – Shona reported that the Rights of Way Officer will be completing the necessary works to ensure that the route is open. The adjacent landowner has agreed to keep an eye on the route and has cleared glass and trees. Once opened fully, letters will be sent out to all users to report any issues.

**Adcote Bridge BW** – Richard is leading on the issue of the collapsed bridge. He is still waiting for the costings on the different options, but these have been held up due to other emergency works.

**Broseley – BW addition Chapel Lane to Lodge Lane** – Shona reported that the outlet is to be recorded on the Definitive Map, and that Lucy McFarlane will be undertaking consultation on proposals to extinguish the route originally claimed, and create the route available on the ground.

**Oaks Wood** – Shona will contact the Forestry owners to move this forward, and to discuss the Formal Application at the same time.

**Frodesley Orders** – The Officers are working on the Statement of Case so that this can all be sent off together to the Planning Inspectorate.

**Drumbles Wood** – Emily will address this once Frodesley has been sent off.

**Sutton Mill** – With Lucy McFarlane.

**Old Moors Lane** – As reported in 4(d) after many years of trying to get the through route resolved, this is now to be reinstated onto Highways Maps. It will then need work to open up the sunken hedged lane section as it has been used as a rubbish dump and road drain.

**Hilton** – No change. This is still waiting to be published.

**Melverley** – No Change. This is still waiting for enforcement of the correct width.

**Pontesford Hill** – Shona reported that if the Forum desired for higher rights there, it may be worth them contacting Friends of Pontesford Hill, and the Wildlife Trust who now own this site.

**Purslow BW addition** – The Public Inquiry was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, and it is now awaiting the Inspector's decision.

**Long Mynd Jack Mytton Way** – Zia reported that she had discovered, on riding the route in the summer, that the used route to the Shooting Box had been moved onto a different line, cutting it off from the connection to the bridleway to Ratlinghope, and it had been way marked as a footpath. On reporting this she found out that the National Trust had moved the route off the definitive line many years ago onto a line which impacted on historic sites, and that they had now reinstated it to the definitive line. The used route of the Ratlinghope Bridleway, part of a Ride Shropshire Route, is also on the wrong line. The new website interactive map, with rights of way overlaid on the aerial map, clearly shows this. Zia asked if a temporary path could be cut through to reconnect the used line of the Ratlinghope route to the Jack Mytton Way until this line anomaly can be resolved. The National Trust agreed to this, and it has now been done, and is all way marked.

## **6. National Trial of Self Closing Bridlegates held on 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

It is agreed that it is unfortunate that we did not have prior warning of this trial at Askham Bryan College near York, as this Forum has been working for some time on the subject of gate improvements. It is understood that it was on Twitter. Zia and Shona had only heard about it from the recent LAF newsletter. Zia reported that, at short notice, she arranged to go with her husband to York, but as no horse was available could only participate on foot. She passed round one of the survey forms used on the day. Most of the gates being trialled had high handles, which have caused a lot of problems in our area with riders and their tack getting caught on them. The lift up stock proof handle used in the trial, is also causing problems in Shropshire, as it is sticking, and riders cannot then get through. At the trial NE told Zia that they had now realised that the wider gates were no better than the 5ft ones. The gate with a high cross bar rocker opening being trialled is expensive, and Zia is concerned that it could be opened by stock. A gate that is working well here in Shropshire, is the Chiltern gate with the low stock proof pull handle below the top bar, but this was not put forward for the trial. They had the Chiltern gate in the trial, but only with the high handle, and different hinges. Zia had asked for the low handle to be included when she heard about the trial, but was told by Natural England that it was too late to try it as all the photos had been taken for the trial. Zia looked at, and discussed all the trial gates with the Natural England representative attending the trial. NE have asked for examples of good and bad gates.

## **7. Minutes and Feedback from LAFs and other Forums**

It is noted that the next Local Access Forum Meeting is to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, so the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July meeting are not yet confirmed. The CART representative will be attending to discuss Use of Towpaths, and Lost Ways in Shropshire is also on the Agenda. It was reported that at the last meeting, there were a lot of updates, and reports on new ways of working and current policies by Shropshire Council staff, including an update on management of UCR's by Richard Knight.

The minutes of the Central Walking Forum dated 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015 are noted, and Shona's article on Ploughing and Cropping.

LAF meeting papers are available on a new website link: [Local Access Forum](#) go to 'Browse meetings and agendas for this committee'.

## **8. Any Other Business or items to Note**

It is noted that the BHS Access Conference is to be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015, and that Jan Mees Robinson and Zia will be attending

## **9. Dates of the Next Meetings**

The next meeting is to be held at the Shirehall on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm.**

The date of the following meeting is confirmed for **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016**