

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

**Minutes of meeting held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019, at 5.50pm, Shirehall, Shrewsbury.**

**At 5.10pm, prior to the start of the meeting, Will Steel, BHS 2026 Project Manager, gave an informative presentation on the Project, and the mapping of route claims.**

### **1. Attendance:**

Angela Williams, BHS CABO & Ellesmere, Chairman. Zia Robins, Shrewsbury & District RC A&BWO, Nesscliffe Hills & Dist. BWA P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Linda Russell, South West Shrewsbury BW P3 Group, Joint Secretary. Elaine Newton, Broseley BWA., Nino Binns, Long Mynd & Dist BWA. Sue Evans, Ryton, Badger & Beckbury BWs. Ann Durnell, Bridgnorth BWA. Shona Butter, Shropshire Council. Will Steel, BHS 2026 Project Manager.

### **Apologies:**

Pam Yuille, Underton, Bridgnorth. Andrew Kelly, Vyrnwy & Dist. BWA. Mark Weston, BHS. Jan Mees Robinson & Sally Anne Robinson, Telford Bridleways. Gill Eyre, BHS South East Shropshire., who is now unable to attend meetings, but wishes to still keep in touch via the paperwork.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Following a correction to Agenda Item 4 (d) line 23, where 'Startlewood' Lane was changed to the correct 'Valeswood' Lane, the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (paper A) were then approved, and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **(a) Helicopters**

Squadron Leader Kim Leach, the Corporate Engagement Relations Officer at RAF Shawbury, [kim.leach347@mod.gov.uk](mailto:kim.leach347@mod.gov.uk) reports that they had a very successful Rider Awareness Day on 16<sup>th</sup> May, attended by 28 local riders. Representatives from Shropshire Council Bridleways team, the Wheatland Pony Club, North Shropshire Pony Club, South Shropshire Pony Club, and Shrewsbury & District Riding Club as well as local liveries attended. The opportunity to get airborne in a Juno helicopter to see a demonstration of the benefits of wearing high visibility was appreciated by all guests. The event was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, who is a keen rider. They will not have any more high-visibility kit available until the autumn due to the retendering of the contract. She attended the BHS Equestrian Safety Group meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> May.

Shona and Lucy attended the Horse Rider Awareness Day and found it useful. They enjoyed a helicopter ride. It is important that we continue to promote High Vis. We understand that currently no new landing sites have been granted. We set up the Helicopter Liaison Committee many years ago due to low flying incidents with horse riders, and the granting, by landowners, of landing sites on or near bridleways. It is agreed that it is important that we keep up the Liaison with RAF Shawbury as the personnel change so regularly.

To obtain information on the RAF Safety campaigns put in [www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-shawbury/](http://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-shawbury/) and go to Flying information, Safety campaigns.

### **(b) Cycling – Mountain Biking (MTB' s)**

**Noted** - The Shropshire Council notice to MTB's on Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park.

The letter that we proposed to send out to cycling organisations has not been sent as yet, as Shropshire Council have now sent out these notices to cycling organisations. The notices state 'Mountain Biking/Cycling permitted along bridleways' and 'Give Way to horse riders and Pedestrians', a point which the cycling websites do not make clear. There have been reports that the Forestry Commission have been experiencing problems with off route Mountain Bikers making wild tracks and causing damage in Eastridge Wood. This is in an area where there are MTB tracks provided with different degrees of difficulty. The FC are trying to control the damage being done. A report on a public meeting on this at Snailbeach VH, said it was packed, and that a lot of concerns were raised. Nicola Cowell of Forestry England, with the support of the Eastridge Trail Partnership have been closing down wild trails which endanger other users, and are damaging the site.

This is similar to the problems around the Nesscliffe site. The Nesscliffe Hillfort is now having to be fenced off due to the damage done by mountain bikers to the ramparts etc. There are reports of similar problems with MTB's causing damage at Grinshill.

Members reported concern over the problems in Badger where signs have been put up to deter cyclists. Tacks have been put on the road, and this is endangering all users, including horse riders. Other incidents with cyclists were also raised.

**The importance of reporting incidents on the BHS Accident website was emphasised.**

**Noted** - The report from Mark Weston on Sustrans UK Steering Group and shared use of pedestrian and cycle paths.

Mark has asked to be told of any Sustrans routes not open to horse riders, which horse riders would like to access. Sue Evans raised the cycling route in the Wyre Forest, which has been ridden, and which links bridleways, which we have tried to get shared use of. She was advised to raise this again with Mark Weston. Worcester BWs are involved in the area. She reported that parking charges have been put up in the Forest.

### **(c) Natural England Permissive Bridleway Routes**

**Noted** – The Lobbying Update sent by Mark Weston with regards to access Policy

It is understood that there is still money under Agricultural Policy for ROW furniture for permissive routes, but no payments for use of routes, and that Landowners can give permission for horse riders to use field edge routes, unless there are wildlife restrictions. Horse riders now have to pay for a permit to use the former Defra Permissive routes near Whitchurch. A few of the DEFRA Permissive Bridleway Routes are still available, but they all close in 2020.

### **(d) Outdoor Partnerships Annual User Survey 2019 Results**

**Noted** – That the Results Summary was emailed to members on 24<sup>th</sup> May, and that the Summary of the Results is also available on [www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk) website under 'Useful Links' 'News'.

895 people completed this year's Survey, and there was a much better response this year from Horse Riders. 46% supported linear, and 51% circular bridleway routes. It is agreed that it is important that horse riders continue to respond to the Surveys, as responses help to influence what work is prioritised. 94% of respondents felt better for taking exercise. 44% of respondents already volunteer. Items highlighted are overgrown vegetation, physical obstructions, the need for better signage, intimidating livestock, and problems with gates. The Survey Results have not yet been reported to a Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board meeting.

### **(e) Shropshire Council – Budget Consultation 2019**

**Noted** – The Response sent on behalf of the SRCDF raising concerns over the £50,000 cuts.

Shona reported that the Budget had been cut by £50,000 in their Department, and that the Contracts side would not be able to fill that gap, but that both Richard and Shona are doing the

best they can in trying to secure more funding, and will be making a case for some capital funding. The cuts are in addition to the cuts to the Wild Teams and Walking for Health. The Wild Teams, who do valuable work on countryside access, have now got external funding for 12 months. Walking for Health did have 3 Officers, but are now down to 1 for 4 days a week to cover the whole county. There is a National programme for this, but Macmillan pulled out, just leaving the Ramblers and Sport England, who it is believed are able to keep it going for the next 18 months. Shona, and Helen Foxhall who is still in place, took a new National Officer on a walk with a Shropshire Group to see how they benefit and are organised in Shropshire. Shona has written to Volunteers to assure them that despite the budget cuts, Shropshire Council will still be supporting them. There is nothing further our Forum can do at present.

**(f) Ironbridge Power Station Site Development**

**Noted** – the Statement sent on behalf of the SRCDF to the SGOSB Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019. This has not been acknowledged in the Strategy Board minutes.

Elaine and Jan attended the September, and the recent meeting. Horses are not being catered for in the plans. They were pointed to the main developer who was not helpful. They put forward to him an access from the Buildwas Road to the Central Hub, and then a circular ride around the perimeter of the development. The railway was raised as a problem, so they suggested building an underpass instead of a bridge, which he thought was a good idea. Elaine thought that it needs following up with the Head of Planning. Some of the Directors told riders that they would be able to horse ride on the footpaths, so clearly misunderstand the status of Rights of Way. It is important that the routes are multi user and registered as Bridleways or Restricted Byways. The possible opening up of the railway line had also been raised, and it was pointed out that there are bridleway routes by the existing steam railway. Shona said that connectivity, existing routes and formal applications, outlets for both sides of the River Severn, and resolving the anomalies with the network there is important. The Developers have to address routes, and Planners are aware of Horse Riders' needs. Shona asked for any information on the Ironbridge area to be sent to her and Kate Nore. They are keeping an eye on it all, and are aware and dealing with this with all involved. It was raised that there are a number of livery yards in the area, and with the increased popularity of cycling, and with the new housing there will be an even greater demand for more multi user routes in the area.

**(g) Shropshire Local Plan Review 'Preferred Sites' Consultation**

**Noted** – the Response sent on behalf of the SRCDF following discussion at our last meeting.

Shona did a presentation to the last SGOSB meeting on this (SGOSB Agenda item 70)

Concern was raised over Cross Subsidy Exception Sites, which can be put anywhere, including outside village boundaries, and Windfall Sites, as there are very open guide lines on those. Concern was also raised over the loss of hedges, and impact on narrow lanes of new building. New development on the narrow lanes around, and dividing, Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park are impacting on users of this important leisure area, which, with the Shropshire Council promoted routes there, supports tourism.

Shona reported that Kate Nore has looked at 'preferred sites' to check for impact on Rights of Way or claims.

**(h) Review of the Highway Code**

**Noted** – Jessie Norman M.P. Responses to lobbying, sent by Mark Weston, BHS.

Following the request from the BHS, Zia and others wrote to their MP's raising concerns over the Review of the Highway Code with regard to Horse Riders and other Equestrians.

**(i) Any other matters arising not on the Agenda**

There were no other matters arising.

#### 4. Shropshire Council

##### (a) Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships

Shona reported that Emily is having 12 months maternity leave, with no maternity cover, so there is no one currently to do North Shropshire, and no budget for a temporary replacement. Clare Fildes is now just the Interim Head of Culture and Leisure. Nothing is firmed up, so it is difficult for decisions to be made. The £50,000 cuts are affecting their ability to carry out work needed. Shropshire has additional pressures as it is such a rural County.

**Noted** - that the Shropshire Outdoor Partnerships and Volunteer Newsletters are available on [www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk) website on the Home page under 'Useful Links' – 'News', and that the 'Access & Rights of Way' link gives access to lots of other useful information on DMMO's Claims, Landowner Declarations, etc.

ROW problems etc. can be reported direct to [outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk).

##### (b) Public Inquiries and Definitive Map Issues

Sue Evans reported that a short section of FP4 Shifnal, part of the Sabrina Way to the Wyre Forest, was never upgraded. It is understood that Mark Weston wants to get it sorted out. Shona said that in 2004 they made a Definitive Map Modification Order to upgrade part of FP4 to bridleway. It may be that a bit was missed, or it may have been turned down for some reason, or have had objections to it. She will have a look at it and the background. Lucy did the work on it.

##### **Shona reported on ongoing issues:**

**Frodesley Lodge BW4** – There is now just one bit of BW0417/4 in the field further to the east to sort out, where the landowner wants the Definitive route moved to the field edge, which is the route that has been ridden. The Diversion route by the Lodge of BW0417/UN1 is all ready to be published, and it is hoped that a way forward can be agreed on the proposed diversions.

**Bentley Ford Farm BW 0417/7R outlet** – They went out on site with David Hardwick after the Inspector's decision on **BW0417/7**, to look at how to open up the definitive line of 7R, which has a number of difficult issues, and will be working with Paul Butter on how to resolve this.

**Hanwood Railway crossing** – There is still no update on the recording of the correct status for the railway crossing, which was changed from UCR to Bridleway under a Railway Act, but not changed on the Definitive Map. It is thought that Lucy is dealing with this.

**Old Coalport to Bridgnorth Railway Line and Link** – Sweeney Bridge. This is still with Lucy.

**Stiperstones Higher Access Route** – It is understood that Natural England are still against the waymarking of routes. There were problems getting signage there for the Shropshire Way.

**Oaks Wood BW claim** – Shona reported that she has been in contact with the Agent for the Landowners, and they are happy for the line amendment to go ahead, and, depending on the extent of their land holding, it is hoped that the formal application can be resolved by agreement.

**Drumbles BW outlet to Platt Bridge claim** – There are currently no resources to deal with this Order, which has been waiting for many years for the last section of BW to be confirmed.

**Weston Woods BW claims** - Emily was dealing with the republishing of the orders just for FP. Details of the diverted outlet of **RB 0232/4** to the road, used by vehicles, but only registered as a FP – **FP 0219/4Y**, and the link to, and the outlet of, **RB 0219/1** on the opposite side of the A49 road, also only registered as a footpath, **FP 0232/UN1**, but which should both be Restricted Byways from the A49, have been sent to Emily.

**Sutton Mill** – The Order is nearly ready, but it is still not too late to submit any new evidence

**Hilton BW claim** – No change. Unlikely to be dealt with for some time due to work pressures.

**Bishops Castle, Banks Head, RB Addition** – They have been in contact with the Trail Riders Fellowship over their objection to the Order. This is not on Shropshire's List of Streets, and if the objection that it should be a higher status is not withdrawn, it will have to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate for determination, but this could be complicated as part is in Powys.

**Adderley BW addition** – Lucy is dealing with the footpath issues. There are objections to the BW Order, so it will have to go the Planning Inspectorate for determination, but they cannot send off any Orders until they have the staff to deal with them.

**Taddymoor Lane, Hopesay nr Craven Arms** – New evidence is still needed.

**Linley Estate northern outlet for UCR URS U5999/10** – Lucy is looking into this route. There needs to be a restricted byway outlet north to the road from the last gate onto Linley Drive, which was locked. The Drive has no status, but just south-east there is **FP 0566/23** from the public road up to Linley Drive, and **FP0545/5** which returns from it, to exit lower down the road.

**Colebatch – BOAT claim** – Lucy is dealing with this, but Shona is not sure what will be done about this.

**Baschurch Station Yard** - A Bridleway route through the site, to replace the Historic Route set out in Railway plans, has been included in the passed Planning Application for the site, but with the north end still to be resolved as the line goes through the middle of the car park, also part is incorrectly shown on the plans as footpath. Shona will be looking at the BW link south to Eyton Lane. Old documents show the route as being owned by the Surveyor of Highways.

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

Richard Knight reports that they are up to full strength with their team at the moment. They were awaiting the delivery of new Gates and ROW furniture, but these are now on the way, and they hope to get the work on the diversion of **BW0437/10 Upton Magna** completed. The Annual topping of strategic routes, with their two teams, is on schedule. Sue Evans complained about work not being done, but Shona said that the Officers doing the work on the ground had to cover huge areas.

**Sansaw BW 0210/31** There is no progress reported on the problems there.

**Nesscliffe BW0419/25 B** – Zia has asked for a safe through route to be waymarked for horse riders, whilst the dug away definitive route, and dangerous alternative provided, are waiting to be resolved, and offered to put these up, but she has been told that this must wait until Shona and Richard have had a meeting with the landowner, which they have still not been able to arrange.

**Adcote Mill Bridge BW 0202/54 linking BW0202/UN3 & BW 0425/54 and opening up of adjoining Ford 0202/UN3.** Shona confirmed that the funding is still in place, and that it is hoped to go ahead with the reinstatement of the bridge and ford this year. The Engineers left, but they now have new ones. They will be writing to all interested parties.

**Melverley RB1 - drainage.** This is still waiting to be dealt with when staff are available.

**Acton Round - Shirlett RB 0101/UN1** – There are no current reports on any further incidents.

### **(d) Shropshire Council Planning**

**Planning Applications** - Members are asked to check and respond to any Planning Applications in their area that might impact on off-road riding routes, promoted routes, and on the lanes used to connect routes. on <http://planningpa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

There is concern over the impact of new farming development on narrow country lanes which are important to link off road riding routes, especially with regard to Chicken Farms and Anaerobic Digesters connected to them. The extra traffic generated by the quantity of crops in, needed to mix with the muck, and the muck and digestate liquids being taken out from Digesters is considerable, and has not been taken into account in the past, but it is hoped that the objections and legal challenges to an Application in south Shropshire will change this. Concern was also raised over building work taking place after Planning Permission has been granted, but before a public route to be obstructed has been diverted. This has occurred in Baschurch Parish on **FP0202/57** which is the historic outlet to the east for **BW0202/44**, and will be a lost way claim. Permitted Development of an Agricultural Barn 18/02127/AGR was granted over the footpath, with the condition that the path must first be diverted. It only came to light that the building had been built over the public footpath, with no diversion in place, when they then applied to build

an anaerobic digester to the east of the barn, 19/00526/FUL. This will also impact on users of the footpath, and on the historic bridleway route. Shona said she would look into this, but that Planning should enforce these, but it usually got passed to them to sort out.

NOTED - Kate Nore, [kate.nore@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:kate.nore@shropshire.gov.uk) deals with all the Searches and Planning Applications, so one person sees it all through. She consults with the area ROW Officers.

#### **(e) Shropshire Council Highways**

##### **UCR's and their maintenance –**

Following the maintenance of the UCR's previously maintained by Richard Knight's team reverting back to Highways some members reported difficulty in getting work done on them.

##### **Local Transport Plan**

This was discussed at SGOSB last meeting, but only walking and cycling are mentioned in the minutes. Mark Weston was unable to attend the meeting so there was no horse rider representative. The last unapproved LTP had little consideration of horse rider's needs, so it is important that we input to any new LTP. Shona thought that it is unlikely to be ready for the Consultation process before early next year, but will keep us informed of progress.

##### **Flax Mill stopping up order on UCR outlet to BW 0443/UN52**

Zia has still not had a response from Mark Wootton of SC Highways on the need for the route that is going to be stopped up to be a Public Bridleway, and not just a cycle and pedestrian path but Shona confirmed that Mark Wootton does know that he needs to address this.

##### **North West Relief Road and Oxon Relief Road**

Shona is not aware of any changes to the NW Relief Road plans that Zia was involved in the consultation on some years ago, and which included a parallel bridleway, linking to the showground. When the Oxon Relief Road was consulted on, it was mentioned that there was no money then for an overbridge, but that this would be considered when the funding of the NW Relief Road was agreed. Hopefully this will now be addressed as an overbridge is needed for Shepherds Lane as both that and Calcott Lane are planned to be stopped up, with no through way for equestrians, and the parallel route, currently only shown as a cycleway, needs to be a bridleway. The cuts to bridleway provision at the Oxon roundabout end also need to be reinstated to the plans, and the link to the bridleway network there. Shona confirmed that they would be looking at the whole network and at connectivity as they are at Ironbridge, and at multi user routes for active travel, but that she had not seen any plans yet.

**Chapel Lane, Yorton. UCR U2527/10** – Still no change on the incorrect signing of this UCR.

**Old Moors Lane UCR U1019/20 St. Martins** – No update on progress in opening up this route.

#### **5. Claiming Lost Ways (this item was taken at the end of the SRCDF meeting and was followed by a demonstration by Will Steel on the Project 2026 Website.)**

**Noted** – The BHS's Case for Extension of the 2026 cut-off date included with the Agenda.

Will reported that the Stakeholder Working Group, which the BHS is member of, had written to the Minister and made their case for extension of the 2026 deadline, to extend it to 2031, which was provided for in the CROW Act. A lot of people want the cut-off date repealed in its entirety, but that is not everyone's view, and there is concern that if rifts appear in the Stakeholder Working Group, and they push too hard for changes, that the Government might react in an adverse way.

Zia thought that having a cut of date does help us to focus on getting routes sorted and claimed, as with time passing knowledge of routes is being lost. It is important that we concentrate our time on routes that can physically be opened up and used on the ground.

Shona emphasised that with claims there are no set numbers of evidence of use forms needed. It is the quality, not the quantity of user evidence that is important. 6 really good long use evidence forms are better than 50 vague ones. Shona agreed to speak with Will about Applications etc.

Will Steel then demonstrated how things work on the new Project 2026 Website.



**NOTED** - Highways and Landowners Statements and Declarations, Formal Applications & Public Path Orders are available through 'Useful Links' on the right side of the home page of [www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.shropshiresgreatoutdoors.co.uk) click on 'Access & Rights of Way' to access these.

## **6. Minutes and Feedback from SGOSB and other Forums**

**Noted** – the Minutes of the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019, and the Agenda for the meeting to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 attached to the Agenda. It is noted that we have covered most of the matters arising from the Minutes.

Shona reported that from the 6<sup>th</sup> June meeting Clare wants to get feedback from organisations on the Strategy. It was also interesting to hear how ongoing Projects were being successful. Shona will see if Clare has something that can be sent out for our next meeting.

**Noted** – That Mark Weston was unable to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> June Meeting so there was no equestrian representative at the meeting. The date of the next meeting is not on the website.

For Strategy Board papers and list of the members go to.

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=727> then for the SGOSB Agenda and Minutes go to Browse Meetings, and click on Agenda.

Previous LAF Meeting papers are available with ctrl+click on: - [Local Access Forum](#).

**Noted** – That there are still no Walking Forum Meetings.

## **7. Any Other Business**

**Drones and Unmanned Agricultural Machinery** - Concern was raised over the possible impact on equestrians of the increased use of Drones for Agriculture. Will Steel thought that the BHS had discussed this and he thought that there might be a guidance leaflet out on Drones. Another concern is the move to unmanned machinery for working on land, and how this could impact on Users of Rights of Way on farmland, with no operator to see them. Will said he would make some inquiries on these.

It was confirmed that Mark Weston receives all the paperwork from our meetings, and that Zia contacts him prior to meetings for any input or updates. Our meetings clash with another commitment he has, so he has only been able to attend one.

**Ploughing and Cropping** – Shona confirmed that letters have been sent out on this, and the reminders. She also confirmed that this has been done for the cropped **BW0428/20** at Montford, and asked for photos to be sent to her if this has not complied with. She will then follow it up with a stronger letter. The ground was beginning to firm up, and there is concern that if the root crop currently growing on the bridleway surface is allowed to grow up, it will then need to be ploughed up again. Cropping of **BW0428/20** has been ongoing for a number of years now.

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

The date of the next meeting, to be held at the Shirehall at **5.00pm for a prompt start at 5.30-7.30pm**, is agreed for **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019**.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 is confirmed for the date of the following meeting.**