

1. The very first meeting of the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board (SGOSB) held on 1st June 2017 only had 5 members present and it was pointed out that the meeting was not quorate; the constitution requiring 8 members for a quorum. It was agreed to amend the constitution to reduce the quorum number but I cannot see how that decision could be made if the meeting was not quorate.

**Can I ask that the Board looks at, and confirms, that this decision was in accordance with due process?**

**Answer**

The Regulations governing LAFs clearly states at 6(1) *that subject to regulations 7,8 and 10, the proceedings (including the quorum) relating to the meetings of a local access forum shall be such as the forum may determine.*

It is for Shropshire Council to determine the number of Board members required for a quorum.

The minutes of the meeting of the SGOSB on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 states:

“The Committee Clerk pointed out that under the Constitution the quorum required 8 Members to be present and that the meeting there was not quorate. The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager commented that this figure had been carried over from the previous LAF Constitution. Members present felt that given that the Board had a smaller membership, the quorum should be reduced. The Committee Clerk advised that the normal quorum for a committee with a membership of 10 – 12 would be 4 members. The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager agreed to look at amending the constitution accordingly”.

The amended constitution states at section 16:

“Meetings should consist of a quorum of four Board members. The Chair may suspend any meeting should this quorum not be reached”.

Chris Edwards – Head of Infrastructure and Communities under delegated powers pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and by the Executive under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 2000, agreed to the changes to the SGOSB Constitution on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

2. **Can I ask what the SGOSB has done in their function as the LAF since its formation and whether they will be taking a proactive stance and ensure that safe access is provided for local residents to open public space around the areas designated for the OLR/NWRR?**

**Answer**

Meetings of Shropshire Local Access Forum are available via the Councils website from 2009-2017 and for the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board (SGOSB) are available from 2017 to present. For clarity, between 2009-2017 the LAF met on twenty-nine occasions.

Since becoming the SGOSB there have been 9 meetings covered the following topics.

- Review of the Local Plan
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors Access Strategy (Incorporates Rights of Way Improvement Plan)
- Changes to the British Standard for furniture on Public Rights of Way
- Health funding and benefits
- Ironbridge Power Station Site Development
- Biodiversity
- Local Transport Plan
- Green Infrastructure Planning
- Shropshire Hills AONB and the Glover Report
- Local Plan Site Allocation Consultation
- Rural Development and the Agriculture Bill
- Cultural Strategy
- Rural Economy Report
- General Updates

It is therefore considered by Shropshire Council that the SGOSB is fulfilling the statutory function of the LAF in advising decision making organisations about making improvements to public access for outdoor recreation and sustainable travel.

The OLR/NWRR has not yet gone to planning, the plans will go to public consultation. The mapping and Enforcement team have been involved in the development stages of the process. The Interim Head of Culture and Leisure Clare Featherstone sits on the NWRR board.

The next meeting of SGOSB is on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the NWRR will be an agenda item and be part of the pre-planning consultation exercise.

3. The current Chairman of the SGOSB, Mr Alex Carson-Taylor, is also Chair of the Agricultural Law Association, and more importantly chair of the Shropshire CLA (Country Land & Business Association not Cornish Liberation Army).

**With all due respect to the Chair, can I ask if this is a potential conflict of interest?**

**Answer**

Members of the LAF (SGOSB) are **not** there as representatives of other organisations, so Alex Carson-Taylor is not representing CLA but is representative of land owners and the rural economy. As stated in the constitution:

Board members will be representative of:

- Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists, wheelchair users and motorised users)

- Owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist
- Any other interests relevant to the area which could include; nature or land conservation, heritage, health and well-being, tourism and the outdoor economy, local community or minority interests

Preference will be given to those people who can influence organisations or networks and have a wide range of experience and knowledge on a cross section of local interests."