



Committee and Date

Shropshire's Great Outdoors
Strategy Board

6 February 2020

SHROPSHIRE'S GREAT OUTDOORS STRATEGY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2019

**In the Bridgnorth Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2
6ND**

10.00 - 11.30 am

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Alex Carson-Taylor (Chairman), Mark Weston (Vice Chairman), Peter Carr,
Stewart Pickering, Lezley Picton, Nigel Pocock and Ronald Repath

12 Welcome. Introductions and Apologies for Absence

- 12.1 The Chair welcomed Lauren Eaton, Greenlane Association (GLASS) communications officer who was observing the meeting. She gave a short introduction to the work that she did for GLASS
- 12.2 Apologies for absence had been received from Sarah Faulkner, Chris Mansell, Jack Tavernor and Andrew Wood.
- 12.3 Apologies for absence had also been received from the ROW Mapping & Enforcement Manager who was on leave.

13 Public Question Time

- 13.1 3 questions had been received from Mr Stephen Mulloy

- 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 1st 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 14th 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 6th 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."

14 Declarations of Interest

- 14.1 There were no declarations of interest

15 Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 15.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2019 had been circulated

- 15.2 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board held on 6 June 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

16 Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 16.1 The meeting received a briefing note reading the introduction of a Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 16.2 The Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager advised the meeting that the Planning Policy team were commissioning a Green Infrastructure Strategy which would provide an evidence base document for the Local Plan Review.
- 16.3 Members made the following comments:
- The importance of public rights of way should be stressed.
 - Provision for horse riders should be included in Active Travel
 - Opportunity for green space to be planned
 - Need to ensure enforcement used where needed
- 16.4 It was agreed that the Board would feed into the strategy and that an update would be brought to the next meeting

17 Cultural Strategy

- 17.1 The Interim Head of Culture and Leisure advised members that the Cultural Strategy Working Group had been set up and that the Chairman represented the Board on the Group. She informed members that consultants had been appointed to develop the strategy and a number of workshops would be held in November.
- 17.2 It was agreed that a further update should be brought to the next meeting

18 Glover Review

- 18.1 Members received an update on the recently published Glover Review of Protected Landscapes.
- 18.2 The AONB Partnership Manager commented that it was an ambitious plan with a lot of good recommendations. He reminded the meeting that the report was not

binding, and that Government would be making a response to the report in due course.

- 18.3 In response to a question the AONB Partnership Manager confirmed that the AONB would feed in any comments to the NAANOB to enable a nation response to be formulated.
- 18.4 It was agreed that the Board should write to DEFRA welcoming the proposals and highlighting the proposals relevant to the Board.

19 General Updates

- 19.1 Mr Pickering reported that GLASS had made a donation to the National Trust for works to prevent inappropriate access at Quatt and had also provided volunteers to help with the work. He advised the meeting that there funds available from the group for similar projects and that he had been in contact with Helen Beresford regarding his members volunteering but had not had any response. The Interim Outdoor Partnerships Manager agreed to follow this up.
- 19.2 Mr Carr reported that he would be standing down as Chair of the Shropshire Ramblers at the next AGM and that it was hoped that Will Tandy who is currently Chair of the Shropshire Young Ramblers Group would succeed him. Mr Carr advised the meeting that Shropshire Ramblers had concerns regarding the reconfiguration of the Mile End Roundabout at Oswestry as they had been advised that a footbridge would be installed over the A5 but that it appeared to be missing from the latest plans.
- 19.3 The Chairman commented that the Environment Bill had not been “carried on” and so had been lost when Parliament had been prorogued but that it was expected a similar bill would be introduced sometime in this Parliament.
- 19.4 Mr Weston advised that the British Horse Society had funding available to help with work on new bridleways.

20 Other items

- 20.1 Members noted the contents of the minutes of the meetings of the Shropshire Riding and Carriage Driving Forum which had been circulated.
- 20.2 Councillor Ed Potter, Ward Councillor for the Loton Ward was present and asked for an update on the problems at the Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park mentioned in the minutes, as he had been contacted by the local press regarding the matter. The Interim Head of Culture and Leisure commented that the problems expressed in the minutes were historic in nature and that the situation currently was much improved. The Interim Outdoor Partnership Manager outlined the actions that had been taken and commented that it was a good example of the various agencies and user groups working together to reach a solution.
- 20.3 The following items were suggested for the next meeting:

- North West Relief Road
- Green Infrastructure Strategy Consultation

21 **Dates of Future Meetings**

21.1 Members were advised that meeting of the Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy Board would be held on:

Thursday 6 February 2020 at 2.00pm and
Thursday 4 June 2020 at 2.00pm

Signed (Chairman)

Date: