

TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 18th October 2017 at 1.30pm at The Business School, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington, Telford

Present: Anthony Francis-Jones (Horse Riding / BHS), Fiona Smith (Disability), Jane Bonner (Severn Spokes), Bob Coalbran (Wellington Walkers Are Welcome), Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects/TES Ramblers), Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Countryside Trust) and Gill Steed (Shropshire Ramblers).

In Attendance: Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council), Ann Sharkey (Legal Assistant, TWC) Nichola Stallard (Legal Assistant, TWC) and Jayne Clarke (Democratic and Scrutiny Officer, TWC).

LAF-10 Apologies for Absence

Katrina Baker (STROWP), Alec Connah (STROWP), Trevor Davies, Cllr Arnold England (TWC) and Peter Holt (CLA/ Landowner).

LAF-11 Chairman's Matters

The Chair reported on the following issues:

Definitive Map – Update

The Senior Rights of Way Officer advised that work on the definitive map had been progressing well with the 1965 base map being transferred to the database. Work was being undertaken to transfer all of the modification orders made since the publication of the map in order to create a clear record but that he was unsure how long this work would take to complete.

In response to several questions, the Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the Council had never owned the original foil maps and that these were kept at Shropshire Archives. The copies of the map that the Council had would be retained. The map would become legal once all work had been completed and recorded at that date. Changes would continue to be made, depending on the rate of development. It was envisaged that the map would then be updated every two to five years and to keep it updated as a legal document. The map would be uploaded to the rights of way section of the Council's website, although he was unsure what it would be called at this stage, but confirmed it would not be called "the definitive map" in order to avoid any confusion. There was a possibility that the map may become interactive in the future, but this could not be confirmed at this stage. The current numbering for rights of way would be used as they could not be changed. There was a possibility of having a link to the map put on the Shropshire Great Outdoors web page, but this would need to be discussed with Shropshire Council as it was not in their political boundary. It would be important to put a disclaimer on the map to indicate that it was not the actual definitive map. The new map would not be a tool to undertake local searches.

P Doherty had recently tried to find Agendas and Minutes for previous meetings of the LAF but was unable to find any Agendas since the 18 January and Minutes from 13 April last year. The Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that she would forward the relevant documentation to the officer again for uploading on to the website.

Edgmond Rights of Way Project

P Doherty explained that this order had been partly done but had stalled whilst waiting for Telford and Wrekin Council to get the resources to complete the works.

Ironbridge

P Doherty informed the LAF that Ann Suffolk from the Ramblers had been looking at the disconnect on routes between the Iron Bridge and Buildwas and the surrounding routes around the River Severn, Severn Valley and Much Wenlock which were key sites for walking within Shropshire. The Central Walking Forum for Shropshire was putting together a proposal for rights of way to Shropshire Council and had been contacting walking and cycling groups, local Town and Parish Councils, Telford and Shropshire Ramblers and Ward Councillors within the area for feedback. Problems with the connectivity to Severn Way to the north side of the river were also being highlighted.

Update –Wellington Walkers are Welcome (WWW)

B Coalbran updated the LAF on the work carried out by WWW. Cross group working had taken place between the Ramblers and WWW and was making progress.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that WWW had carried out work which was not at the public cost and the Council was grateful that they had been able to sort out some issues.

The Wrekin Link continued to need work to clear the brambles and nettles and it was asked if these could be sprayed in order to weaken them. This would free up the volunteers time to work on other areas instead of having to concentrate on the Wrekin Link. B Coalbran and the Senior Rights of Way Officer would liaise on this matter.

The Chair asked B Coalbran to pass on the Council and LAF's thanks to the volunteers.

UK Coal restoration Site (Huntington Lane, Little Wenlock)

A Sharkey, Legal Assistant updated the LAF regarding the Section 53 Applications relating to the footpaths and bridleways in the UK Coal restoration site.

B Coalbran informed the LAF that these routes were now back as they should be and suggested that the new routes should be promoted and the old routes extinguished and raised concerns regarding routes near to the heavily mined areas.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the Section 106 agreement came into effect when the standard of the right of way was considered satisfactory and would be completed in stages: publication of order and confirmation of order once right of way was on the ground satisfactorily. No consultation was needed and a Certificate was published once the process had been completed. Unfortunately, the local Ward Councillor did not agree with this process and it the process had currently stalled.

The Chair asked that this item be included on the Agenda for the next meeting.

National Grid

National Grid had made money available for Rights of Way in areas that have high tension lines and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Horton Lane

Concerns were raised regarding the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) from the Queens Pub to the Industrial Estate at Horton Lane. If this road was to be blocked to motorised vehicles it was queried how this would affect disabled access and if motor cycles would still be able to gain access. This TRO was unpopular with some residents. Should a Kent Carriage be installed.

Newspaper article regarding safer walking and cycling routes

F Smith updated the LAF regarding the newspaper article on behalf of Trevor Davies, who was unable to attend at the meeting. She also informed the LAF of the recent accident that Trevor had been involved in which was caused by an extending lead that had not been visible across the road in front of him. The dog owner was on one side of the road with the dog on the opposite side out of sight. The lead had come up from the ground in front of his bike and caused him to have a nasty accident and sustain injuries. It was asked if the LAF could do anything to raise awareness and educate dog owners regarding the dangers of these extending leads. The LAF concluded that it was common sense and that both dog walkers and cyclists should be more aware of their surroundings whilst out on the network and that the rules could be found in the Country Code.

Wellington Walkers are Welcome – Update

B Coalbran updated the LAF on the success of the WWW since the last meeting of the LAF:

Following the 2016 Wellington Walking Festival the WWW had won the Community Event Category in the TWC Active Lifestyles award whilst the Wellington 360 Walking Guide Project was runner up in the Healthy Spaces Category.

The Walkers Information Noticeboard at Wellington Railway Station had finished 3rd in Small Projects category of the National ACORP Awards

The Wellington Walking Festival had attracted 450 participants across the 26 events which was an increase of 42% on the 2016 event. The Walking Themes film night attracted 80+ participants which helped to raise funds for the Clifton Project.

The festival had included a talk on the Shropshire Way at a launch event for the newly way-marked southern part of the route and was held at Wrekin College and he thanked the College for their hospitality.

A new plank path had been installed on the PRow beside the 16th Tee of the Golf Course at Limekiln Woods. Unfortunately, this had been vandalised by a bonfire on the wooden boards, but the Senior Rights of Way Officer had been quick to have the damage repaired.

Following a question, B Coalbran confirmed that the Shropshire Way Association had its own funding and was responsible for establishment of the new route.

Boardwalk at the Buckatree Hotel

The Chair reported that a boardwalk near to the Buckatree Hotel had been installed by Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) due to the area becoming extremely muddy for walkers. There was currently permissive use of this area and it was hoped that a dedication to a bridleway for horses could be achieved. A DMMO for a bridleway had been submitted. SWT had an open access policy, but this area was not a right of way.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that SWT had intended to clear and allocate a route for horseriders and they had been working on a dedication of this route as bridleway but there had been some issues and that this may now go to Public Inquiry.

A Sharkey, Legal Assistant, informed the LAF that this route had been walked a couple of years ago and that SWT had been happy to dedicate and for people to use the area, but due to recent issues SWT had been less satisfied with the situation.

The Chair hoped that the issues could be smoothed over.

Access Newsletter – Defra

The Chair reported on the recent Access Newsletter from Defra regarding S119 Orders under the Highways Act 1990 which gave Planning Inspectors powers to decide on the date that a new route should come into force.

LAF- 12 Review of the Terms of Reference of the LAF

The Chair asked for this item of business to be carried over to the next meeting of the LAF on 31st January 2018. It was also an opportunity to look at the behavioural code of conduct for the LAF.

LAF-13 Membership Matters

The Chair suggested that the Membership be looked at alongside the Terms of Reference at the next meeting, but felt that in order to balance the LAF representation from Landowners, particularly farmers would be required. Suggestions came for approaching Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Harper Adams University.

LAF-14 Current Projects

The Chair asked the Members of the LAF if there were any current projects that needed to be highlighted:

- C Price - SGCT had been experiencing issues with broken wooden steps within Lloyds Coppice, Silkin Woods and the Rotunda. No further wooden steps were being installed and stone steps would be used in the future.

- J Bonner - TBUG Group seemed to have disappeared and it was hoped that a new group would be formed which would work with the LAF, although she now believed that a TBUG meeting would be held in the following week and she would be in attendance.

- B Coalbran - Little Wenlock Parish Council had a new Clerk who had been looking at the speed restrictions and parking at the bottom of the Wrekin. It was believed that discussions were taking place with the Parish Council, Peter Holt, Police, Highways and Shropshire Wildlife Trust in order to discuss these issues.

LAF-15 Review of the DMMOs

N Stallard, Legal Assistant, gave an update on the current position with the DMMOs:

Footpath 1 – Chetwynd & Aston Station Road – There had been 8 objections to this order and a Public Inquiry had been booked on 8th February 2018 at 10 am at the Newport Cricket Club – the Inquiry would be advertised in the local press, locally and on site prior to the Inquiry.

Festival Gardens – a Bundle of Documents was being collated to be sent to the Secretary of State.

Travellers Joy – The Order had been drafted and was near to publication.

Victoria Hotel – A meeting took place on 27 July with local residents to affirm their evidence. Full Statements had been written and signed by the residents. The Draft Order was currently with the Senior Rights of Way Officer.

Sylvan Close – A Bundle of Documents was being collated to be sent to the Secretary of State.

Station Road – This involved three separate routes, so it would be necessary for three separate orders. These had been drafted and were with the Senior Rights of Way Officer.

Reynolds Wharf – Investigations were currently ongoing with user evidence being gathered.

Rowton Stables – This had not yet been confirmed. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that this was subject to an extinguishment order. The Stables were putting in plans to renovate the property. P Doherty explained that this seemed a reasonable request as the path ended up in the middle of nowhere.

LAF-17 **Any other urgent business**

None

The meeting ended at 3.49 pm.

Chairman:

Date: