

TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 31st January 2018 at 1.30pm at The Business School, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington, Telford

Present: Anthony Francis-Jones (Horse Riding / BHS), Jane Bonner (Severn Spokes), Bob Coalbran (Wellington Walkers Are Welcome), Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects/TES Ramblers), Cllr Arnold England (TWC), Chris Hallam (Madeley Town Council), Dave Hopkins (Dawley Hamlets Parish Council), Jan Mees-Robinson (British Driving Association) and Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Countryside Trust).

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-18 Apologies for Absence

Katrina Baker (STROWP), Alec Connah (STROWP), Peter Holt (CLA/ Landowner), Fiona Smith (Disability) and Gill Steed (Shropshire Ramblers).

LAF-19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting required some minor amendments so would be brought back to the next meeting of the LAF for approval.

LAF-20 Chairman's Matters

The Chair reported on the following issues:

Definitive Map – Update

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that the work on the Definitive Map was progressing well. The 1965 Definitive Map had now been transferred onto a digital data format. Work was now progressing on to post 1965 extinguishment and modification orders due to the development of the New Town under TDC rights as this was the safest way to ensure all information was captured on a step by step approach. A question was raised as to when the work on the map would be complete and the Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that it would be late 2018.

A discussion took place around ongoing work and the footpaths online, how often the DMMOs would be digitalised, if the digitalised maps could be used as conclusive evidence, the streamlining of legally defined information via the internet for the public and search companies. The information would be a minimum statement and a legal snapshot at the time. There was a checking process in place for Planning Officers with regard to incoming planning applications and the mapping system would now show the DMMOs as well as DMMO Register. It was suggested that LAF Members check the Shropshire Star for new planning applications. Ordnance Survey were

notified of DMMOs. LAF members requested that they be put on the planning application circulation list.

TWC Website - Update

P Doherty gave an update on the website. The main LAF page was not up to date. On the travel/transport/cycling/walking pages, Hutchison Way was listed as a cycling route in error and the routes for walking only needed looking at. Hutchison Way was also spelt wrongly on the website. The leaflets regarding the Hutchison Way and Reynolds Way need presenting in a different way as the format they were currently in was difficult to access and contained old branding, but this issue would be difficult to resolve.

Lime Kiln Woods Path Improvements and Ercall issues

The Chair informed the LAF that Shropshire Wildlife Trust had installed board walks for walkers and were currently clearing routes. He was unsure of what work was currently being undertaken and if the routes were open.

Path improvements/Path Clearance Update

B Coalbran updated the LAF on the work which had been ongoing to provide stone steps on the path near to the boundary of Limekiln Wood. Wooden boarding was the more affordable option and wide boarders had been created for horseriders and cyclists in order that everyone could use the area. Work was being undertaken to clear the bridleways and remove the branches along the bridleway. The next phase was to create a bridleway to Ercall Woods.

J Mees-Robinson informed the LAF that the DMMO for this area had not yet been processed and the route was not yet on the definitive map, although she welcomed the resources that were being utilised in this area. She raised concerns regarding the wood covered with wire and if the paths are not there the horses are unable to access the area and felt that it was better to have mud alongside the steps and that the wood spoilt the look of the area, although she appreciated that the logistics of bricks/stone was unsustainable.

The Chair suggested that a balance had been struck and improved access for everyone provided.

UK Coal Restoration Site – Creation Orders

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that the footpath orders came into effect 40 weeks after the commencement of the works on the site and were currently being created and inclusion on the map would follow.

The Chair confirmed that the route had been checked out by Wellington Walkers and Welcome who had walked the route together with the Ramblers.

B Coalbran confirmed that the footpaths and a Bridleway had been created and way marked and it was hoped that a guide would be produced.

J Mees-Robinson congratulated all involved on a job we done and was grateful to everyone that had pulled this together.

New Works Planning Application TWC/2016/1143 Update – Footpath Diversion

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF of a retrospective planning application which had been brought to his attention which had been objected to. If the building was to remain, a diversion of the footpath to the east of the property would be needed.

Shropshire County Council – Action on cropping

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that he had attending a course regarding cropping and following on from this the Council were to develop an enforcement policy around ploughing and cropping which would be fair but rigid. It was suggested that for a first offence that no action be taken but if future infringement occurred then prosecution would take place.

LAF Members felt that this was good news if it worked and reports should continue to be given to the contact centre in order that they could be logged. It was suggested that workshop sessions take place with Parish and Town Councils, the rural forum and WET to get the message out.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that he regularly met with some Parish and Town Councils but other were more difficult to engage with.

Horton Lane TRO

The Traffic Regulation Order put forward to block one end of this lane to motorised vehicles had been rejected.

Maxell Site – Apley Woods

B Coalbran reported that the Right of Way alongside Apley Castle Wood on the amended plans was not clear. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the original route had been logged with Development Plans but was still ongoing.

Travellers Joy

N Stallard reported that the Order had been published on the 19th January 2018 but it was expected that this would go to public inquiry.

D Hopkins raised a question if objections did not have substance, would this Order still need to go to public inquiry.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that if any objections were received the application had to go before the Secretary of State. The Government had proposed

and passed a piece of legislation under the De-Regulation Act and when the Statutory Instrument was published it would allow the Council to evaluate the objections against a test and if it didn't fit the parameters then the objection could be refused. When in force this issues would have to be looked at very carefully as the Council would be held to account for their actions.

N Stallard confirmed that the closing date for objections was the 19th February.

A Public Inquiry was due to be held at Newport Cricket Club for the Chetwynd Aston Footpath Diversion.

LAF- 21 Terms of Reference of the LAF

The Senior Rights of Way Officer addressed the LAF regarding the current process of the LAF meetings. In order to deal with strategic issues and LAF business it was suggested that he held a 1-1 session either prior to the start of the meeting or at the end of each LAF meeting for up to 1 hour to discuss individual concerns. He further suggested that a means of communication, ie a closed facebook page or similar be set up for LAF Members to communicate with each other between the scheduled meetings.

Some LAF Members were not in favour of facebook as a means of communication and did not use this, so it was suggested that a range of communication methods be explored. It was also suggested that the website could be used as an open blog which people could use to record items such as photos, progress and areas of interest in order to reduce the length of the meetings. The Chair felt that this method of communication could work to the detriment of the LAF and it would need to be carefully monitored. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that this was only in the informative stage at the moment and rules and policies would need to be carefully considered and this would be explored and reported back.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer proposed that Members suggest Agenda items to the Secretary who could be contacted on Jayne.clarke@telford.gov.uk who would agree the Agenda with the Chair in advance prior to circulation.

LAF-22 Membership Matters

The Senior Rights of Way Officer reported to the LAF that Membership would benefit from a greater presence from Landowners, farming and the HCA.

Suggestions were made that representation could be sought from the Young Farmers or the NFU or for a particular Agenda item specific invitations could be sent out. It was also suggested that the LAF may have guest speakers to attend at meetings.

LAF-23 Meeting Dates 2018/2019

A schedule of meeting dates was circulated for consideration. The next meeting of the LAF would be held on 25th April 2018. The proposed dates for the 2018/2019 municipal year were:

18 July 2018 – AGM
17 October 2018
16 January 2019
(tbc) April 2019

LAF-24 Any other urgent business

The Ercall Modification Order

J Mees-Robinson gave an update on the DMMOs for the Wrekin. With regard to paths 18/69/74/75 these were all with Shropshire County Council. Path 18 went to the top of the Wrekin, but path 72 had not been mentioned and she considered that an application for this DMMO should have been undertaken.

A Sharkey confirmed that no application had been received for Path 72.

Footpath/Path Clearance Updates

B Coalbran gave an update on the recent path clearance on the Shropshire Way. The outstanding way marking was due to be undertaken soon.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that a few signposts still needed to be put up and that his team would be paying for this to be undertaken.

B Coalbran informed the LAF that Wellington Walkers are Welcome had put in a bid to Veolia for Wellington 360 which included the New Shropshire Way route and paths within New Works. Wellington Friends of Shropshire Way had been formed from volunteers who would litter pick the route from Rodington to Little Wenlock on a regular basis. The Big Litter Pick had also been undertaken around the Forest Glen where 60 people had filled a 7½ tonne lorry within three hours. The road was due to be closed for works and the clean-up would continue at this time. Little Wenlock Parish Council had invited Telford Tourism to discuss the issue of parking, but the approaches had been rebuffed but the Parish Council would keep trying. Further path clearance was undertaken within Limekiln Woods to clear a number of fallen trees although one may prove to be too large for the volunteers to handle. The Working Party had visited part of the Shropshire Way route, the Ercall Woodland, near Golf Links Lane and were appalled at the state of the stream crossing which needed some sort of bridge or stepping area. The Chair confirmed that this was Shropshire Wildlife Trust land and was not a Public Right of Way.

C Price thanked B Coalbran and the volunteers for all of their hard work. The Blue Route from Bowers Yard was very muddy and needed approximately £5k of funding to resurface.

J Bonner informed the LAF that T Bugs was trying to get up and going again. They had now had 2 meetings, but were still struggling.

P Doherty reported on the proposed Telford 50 Walk. The Secretary of Wellington Walkers and Ramblers member, Naomi Wrighton came up with an inspirational idea

to celebrate Telford's 50th anniversary this year with a new circular walking route of 50 miles to join our open green spaces and communities from Newport in the north to Coalbrookdale in the south. A consortium consisting of Telford and East Shropshire Ramblers, Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival, Ironbridge Walkers are Welcome, Telford Harriers, Walking for Health Telford & Wrekin and Wellington Walkers are Welcome would plan and waymark this Telford 50 / 50 route and the volunteer members from each group would actively participate to make this project a success. There will be a launch event with a mass walk along sections of the route starting off 10am (tbc) from Telford Town Park Saturday 16 June. The route would follow and link to the existing rights of way and known long distance footpath routes not create new ones. However, help and support would be required and permission from Andrew Careless to waymark sections where signage is old or missing and to liaise with landowners as necessary. There would be a new waymark which adopted the Telford Anniversary logo where the line of the ROW was unclear. Help to identify the status of some paths, where there may have been recent changes may be necessary. A grant of £1700 from Telford & Wrekin Council had been received and further funding was being applied for. Local sponsors would be sought from local businesses that may wish to advertise their services to walkers such as pubs, cafes and specialist shops. The Telford 50 / 50 would leave a lasting legacy to benefit our community for many years to come and LAF support would be welcomed. Councillor England welcomed the walk and suggested that Parish and Town Council were approached with regard to adopting parts of the walk.

N Stallard reported that the with regard to footpaths 55, 56, 57 and 58, these were now active and investigations ongoing. J Mees-Robinson asked that these routes were made multi use for the less abled riders and that kissing gates were not installed.

A Sharkey confirmed that all Town Park routes which belonged to the Council now had DMMO applications specifying what kind of route but that these needed evidence. These orders could only be made if the landowner agreed or if enough evidence was produced.

The meeting ended at 3.46 pm.

Chairman:

Date: