

TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 9th April 2014 at 1.30pm at The Studio, Graham Building, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington, Telford

PRESENT: Anthony Francis Jones (Telford Bridleways Association), Fiona Smith (Disability), Marion Law (Rambler), Janet Mees-Robinson (British Carriage Drivers Association), Jim Roberts (Landowner), Cllr Liz Clare (Telford & Wrekin Council), Cllr Tracy Hope (Telford & Wrekin Council), Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Countryside Trust), Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects), Bob Alton (Rambler), Bruce Udale (Landowner) and Peter Holt (Land Owner)

ALSO PRESENT: Naomi Wrighton (on behalf of Bob Coalbran, Wellington Walkers are Welcome), Dominic Proud (Interim Group Manager - Transport, Strategy and Road Safety), Valerie Hulme (Development Management Team Leader), Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer), Jayne Clarke (Democratic Services Support Officer)

LAF-36 MINUTES

Matters arising from the minutes included:

- Classification of Routes
- Lack of Signage in Telford Town Park
- Responsibility of Town Centre Projects
- Enquiries to general enquiry line of (01952) 384000 or by e-mail to highways@telford.gov.uk

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 January 2014 be agreed following a change to a typographical error as follows:

LAF-31 – Sharing Good Practice – bullet point No 6 should read

“Ironbridge should not be the only approach to tourism in Telford”.

LAF-37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Reg Potter (BUGS), Jill Seymour (Association of Parish/Town Council Reps), Ann Sharkey (Legal Assistant, Telford & Wrekin Council), Helen Cork (NFU), Bob Coalbran (Wellington Walkers are Welcome), Malcolm Morris (STROWP), Bruce Udale (Landowner) and Angela Smith (Natural England)

LAF-38 CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS

The Chair met regularly with Andrew Careless who kept him fully briefed on matters.

Planning Applications –

Planning Applications were checked for Rights of Way issues. The Chair submitted comments where necessary on behalf of the LAF, but in his name, and they were supportive of any planning gain, ie Telford Millennium Community. Other areas the Chair had considered were Newport and the Solar Farm at Wheat Leasowes.

Public Path Orders –

- Gresham Drive, near to the Grazing Cow at Lawley was now being re-opened. The delay had been due to the wet weather
- UK Coal had not released any restoration plan and the LAF had not received any information. Jim Roberts informed the LAF that work was due to start on Easter Tuesday
- Paddock Mount to Ketley – this had been withdrawn but this may come back at some time
- Edgmond – Paula Doherty reported that the Orders for Harper Adams had now been received and that as the routes already lay on the ground these were already being opened up. The chair thanked Paula for all of her hard work.

Telford & Wrekin Council Website -

Paula Doherty had been liaising with Lisa Carruthers in the Council's Web Services Team.

The Rights of Way Section on the website was currently being revised and all points that had been raised were being taken into consideration which included:

- Interactive map
- Disabled Access
- Countryside Code
- Named walks & Rides

Staffordshire and Shropshire Council's websites were being used as examples of good practice.

The website is due to be launched in August/September 2014 and the LAF would need to keep a close watch on progress.

Survey and Canals, Rivers & Towpaths

A survey had been completed regarding canals, rivers and towpaths and it was hoped that the comments would be considered. There needed to be more access on towpaths as this was a huge network and would be valuable to multi-users and wherever possible access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Llangollen was a good example of shared use which was part of their tourism strategy.

Interim Group Manager for Policy and Road Safety

The Chair introduced Dominic Proud to the LAF. Dominic had been appointed as the Interim Group Manager for Policy and Road Safety. His work would involve transport planning policy and safety, public transport and footpaths. He would work alongside Andrew Careless and

would have a more planned approach towards cycling/walking routes which would bring about more significant improvements with regards to questions and queries.

LAF-39 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The Chair consulted the LAF regarding the request by Angela Smith from Natural England to attend at the LAF Meetings. As Natural England was the body that looked after LAFs nationally it was:

AGREED – that Angela Smith from Natural England be invited to attend at the LAF Meetings.

LAF-40 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Valerie Hulme from Telford & Wrekin's Planning Department was introduced to the LAF.

The Chair began the discussion by explaining that he made regular comments on the planning website, backed up by highway law, some of which included:

- Restricted byways
- Rights of Way matters where there had been no communication / no orders
- Housing estates being built over footpaths
- Rights of way going through eg lakes and gardens which had taken 5 years to resolve

The Senior Rights of Way Officer commented that there was a huge improvement from the way that rights of way matters were dealt with now compared to the past. A number of issues were historical and had occurred when Wrekin District Council had taken over the rights of way from Shropshire Council and these issues were still being tidied up.

The Chair referred to appendices C1 and C2 and asked Valerie Hulme to explain to the LAF how Right of Way issues were now dealt with during the planning process.

Valerie Hulme explained to the LAF that when Planning Applications were received by Telford & Wrekin they were mapped out on the GIS system (Council's mapping system). The Highways Team were alerted to the planning application and asked to submit comments. The Planning Team addressed any comments received and negotiated with the applicant to seek improvements, where applicable.

With regard to S106 monies, the circumstances must mitigate against measures, improvements and enhancements.

Consultation takes place through the weekly planning list which is available on the Council's website and twitter. Comments on applications can be made by anyone who has an interest in an application.

A discussion took place including:

- Consideration to Multi-User footpaths/bridleways and provision for cyclists
- Multi-User routes not be diverted down roads, where possible
- Street furniture minimising access to routes
- Examples of new rights of way created in large developments
- Consultation with the public who use the routes
- Status of the Paths in large developments ie Sugar Beet Factory, Donnington Site and Haygate Development need to be shown and not just classed as “footway”
- Concern over status of paths
- GIS Mapping System
- Definitive Map
- Volunteers or Apprentices to update the Definitive Map
- Consideration given to rights of way and the surfaces of the rights of way
- Character of the Developments plays a big part in the choice of rights of way and surfaces ie rural or urban
- Ramblers Association involved at initial stages of consultation but no further involvement
- More consultation
- Consultation with Parish Councils for their comments
- Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings
- Funding and Pilot Projects to upgrade Definitive Map – Application to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- The Marches LEP (Hereford, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin areas)

The Chair thanked Valerie Hulme for her attendance at the LAF meeting.

LAF-41 LAF ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Jan Mees-Robinson tabled a report regarding Workshops and Regional LAF Meetings that she had attended on behalf of the Chair which was attached the Minutes at Appendix 1.

The Conference was good and had been worthwhile attending. Some points highlighted were:

- Figures showed that there were now 3.5m horse riders compared to 3m cyclists
- LEP – should the LAF have a representative on this?
- Town Park to Priorslee – no motorised route
- Huddle and DefRA Websites

A discussion took place regarding the possibility of a representative from the LAF attending LEP Meetings. It was also discussed that there may be the possibility of obtaining funding from the LEP for projects.

Further investigations needed to be undertaken in order to propose the best way to move this forward.

LAF-42 RIGHTS OF WAY – TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL UPDATE - PROJECTS

The Senior Rights of Way Officer gave an update on the Right of Way Projects.

Wrekin Trundle

The first stage of the Trundle from the Church to the Top of the Field, together with the disabled car parking and over-spill car parking had been on the ground since 2013.

The second stage of the project was due to begin on the 6th May 2014. This would involve the path on the top field to New Works Lane. This route had been modified slightly from the agreed 1.5m stone and 1.5m earth within the wooded areas, due to this becoming boggy and churned up. The suggestion was that 3m rolled stone be laid in the boggy areas of the route. It was expected that the second phase of the Trundle would be completed by the end of June 2014 and at this point there would be an introduction of way marks and signs on the open section of the route.

A discussion took place around the signage and interpretation boards. The Senior Rights of Way Officer asked the LAF for their ideas and for a branding of the Trundle. It was suggested that seating and interpretation boards may be best placed where they could be seen and be safe and graffiti-proof surfaces be used. Cadi Price informed the LAF that interpretation boards were used in other areas ie The Gorge and these had not been damaged.

A further discussion took place regarding the name of the route. It was discussed that the Community should know that the project had been funded by the Huntington Lane Fund as not many people were aware of this. Suggestions regarding the name and interpretation boards were welcomed by the Senior Rights of Way Officer.

A concern was raised regarding the parking space at New Works Lane and the laying of the hedge on the side of the road. This meant that it was difficult for anyone to see what was happening in the car park ie fly tipping and anti-social behaviour.

With regard to the 1:5 gradient, this area would now be surfaced with shuttering and rolled stones and have break-out areas wherever possible.

LSDF Newport

The widening of the paths at The Red House was due to completed within the next 3 – 4 days. The next stage would be to widen the footpath at Kynnersley Drive to a 3m width. Jacob's had provided signage for route 55. There had been difficulties with the Staffordshire side of the route due to its muddy condition.

Silkin Way

There had been surface improvements at Aqueduct together with improved lighting. Lighting improvements had also been made along Legges Way to the Cooling Towers. It was expected that the project would finish at the end of March 2015. The barriers had been ordered and it was expected to take 10 working days for them to be installed. This would comprise of a kissing gate next to the horse barrier and the hedge would be brought down to sit level with this.

Concerns were raised regarding access for wheelchairs which would be via a radar key. There were also concerns raised regarding access for horses. The Senior Rights of Way Officer commented that the furniture had been agreed with Shropshire Council as this lay on the Shropshire side of the right of way. He further stated that the latch on the gate would

allow larger mobility vehicles to get through the gate. It was also suggested that the whole area needed resurfacing.

The Chair suggested that further talks regarding the Silkin Way continued after the meeting.

LAF-43 HARWORTH ESTATES REPORT – UK COAL SITE

Appendix D was for information only for the LAF and the LAF were drawn to 4.4 on the summary and conclusions of the Report.

LAF-44 RABY ESTATE – SIGNAGE ON THE WREKIN

The Chair brought to the attention of the LAF signage that had appeared on permissive and public rights of way which could be found at Appendix E. This showed the marked footpaths across land owned by Peter Holt and Raby Estates.

A discussion took place regarding the signage which was thought to be a generic sign. It was not expected that this signage would be a regular occurrence and it was not preventing people accessing the land, although this had angered and upset users of the route.

It was suggested that the LAF invite a member of Raby Estates to speak to the LAF

LAF-45 REVIEW OF THE DMMO'S

The Chair presented a report of the DMMOs on behalf of Ann Sharkey.

There were two reports regarding the Definitive Map. The first had been submitted to Cabinet to approve 4 applications. Telford and Wrekin Council was the landowner and Cabinet represented the landowners and it was hoped that these would be signed over and officially dedicated and would then become Rights of Way. This would link the Ercall Golf Course with the Cockshutt. It was expected that processes would be followed and it was hoped to present to Cabinet in September 2014. The DMMOs had been blocked together to be dealt with all in one go and things were moving in the right direction. The second report would go forward to the Planning Committee with an explanation to Planning Committee do determine the outstanding DMMOs. Delegated authority would be used in order for these to go to Planning Committee.

A question was raised with regard to the dates of the Planning Committee. The Democratic Services Support Officer would send the relevant dates to the Chair following the meeting.

LAF-46 REVIEW OF PUBLIC PATH ORDERS

The Senior Rights of Way Officer gave an update on the public path orders.

There were two Orders under the Town & Country Planning Act at Priorslee within the BSF Project. Outstanding representations were currently being resolved before these went to completion.

At Harper Adams there were two orders and one creation order in the early stages of consultation

A Diversion Upgrade Order was due to be completed at Telford Millennium Community site at Ketley a week on Friday.

Further evidence was needed for a diversion creation order at Cherrington which was begun approximately 18 months ago.

The Public Realm Team were now responsible for some footpaths in the area and the following numbers could be used to report issues:

- (01952) 384384 Open Spaces
- (01952) 384000 Highways

E-mail enquiries could be sent to: highways@telford.gov.uk

It was hoped that these changes would alleviate the time consuming issues and allow a more appropriate allocation of work to the correct team.

A question was raised by Jim Roberts regarding Limekiln Lane/Steeraway. Mr Roberts had paid the contractor £750 to complete work but had never been reimbursed for this payment. The Senior Rights of Way Officer would look into the matter.

LAF-47 WALKING FESTIVAL DATES

Naomi Wrighton on behalf of Bob Coalbran informed the LAF that the Wellington Walking Festival was due to take place between 16th – 22nd June 2014.

A walk would take place along the Trundle on Monday 16th June. Other walks included orienteering and were centred around the Wrekin.

There were 2 regular walks that took place each month.

Bob Alton commented that the volunteer maintenance group would continue with way marking and revisit sites from last year. Naomi Wrighton added that Wellington Walkers are Welcome volunteer group was now also up and running.

Cadi Price circulated leaflets regarding the Ironbridge Walking Festival to LAF members who required them. Further leaflets were also available at the end of the meeting.

LAF-48 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

A discussion took place around the Trundle funding. It was asked if a regular report could come to the LAF giving an update on the spending of the allocated funds. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that he would bring details of this to the LAF.

The Chair reported that the Paddock Mound route had been changed and improved by the Town Park Management. This now ran parallel to Hinkshay Road to the Dawley Phoenix School.

Cadi Price drew the LAF's attention to a request for permission to ride rickshaws through Telford Town Park and The Gorge.

LAF-49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A discussion took place regarding the dates of the LAF meetings for the municipal year 2014/15.

The following dates were proposed as dates for 2014/15 meetings:

- 9 July 2014 - AGM
- 8 October 2014
- 7 January 2015
- 15 April 2015

The venue would continue to be Wrekin College at the time of 1.00pm for 1.30pm start.

AGREED – that the dates for 2014/15 would be:

- Wednesday 9 July 2014 - AGM**
- Wednesday 8 October 2014**
- Wednesday 7 January 2015**
- Wednesday 15 April 2015**

held at The Studio, Wrekin College at 1.00pm for 1.30pm start.

The Meeting ended at 3.36pm

Chair:

Dated: