

TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 5th October 2016 at 1.30pm
at The Studio, Graham Building, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington,
Telford**

Present: Anthony Francis-Jones (Horse Riding / BHS), Fiona Smith (Disability), Bob Alton (Ramblers Association), Bob Coalbran (Wellington Walkers Are Welcome), Peter Holt (CLA/ Landowner), Jan Mees-Robinson (British Driving Association), Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Countryside Trust), Jane Bonner (Severn Spokes, UK Cycling Shropshire), Cllr Liz Clare (Telford and Wrekin Council)

In Attendance: Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer, TWC), Stacey Worthington (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, TWC)

LAF-10 Minutes

Resolved – the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LAF-11 Apologies for Absence

Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects), Malcolm Morris (STROWP), Ann Sharkey (Legal Assistant, TWC), and Sarah Faulkner (NFU)

LAF-12 Chairman's Matters

The Chair reported on the following issues:

Definitive Map - Update.

The Rights of Way Officer reported that an apprentice had started on the Map update two weeks before. He had been transferring data from the 1965 definitive map into a modern map base. The apprentice was focusing on the rural areas initially, before moving onto more urban areas, as it was imagined these would be more complex. Once this work has been completed, there would be a new definitive map. The Rights of Way Officer advised he was unable to state how long this work would take.

The Chair enquired if this work had been driven by Con 29, The Rights of Way Officer replied it had not specifically driven by Con 29, however, Con 29 was important as it had been made a mandatory question. The map needed to be accurate as there were financial and reputation risks if not.

The Rights of Way Officer, in response to a question from the Chair, advised that an electronic copy of the map could be the definitive version; however, it could not be altered. Once the current work had been completed, the officer could see no reason

why an update definitive map could be produced every twelve months, as the base would remain the same, with updates added yearly.

The Rights of Way Officer advised that he checked the work completed by the apprentice, but it was inconceivable that there would not be an error in the complete map, given that there were over 1000 Rights of Ways to be recorded. Cllr Clare advised that the team were very pleased to have the apprentice and time should be given to allow him to get settled in with the work.

Jan Mees-Robinson asked how long the apprentice's contract was for, the Rights of Way Officer confirmed he had a twelve months initial contract, however, there was the opportunity to extend this if necessary. Jan Mees-Robinson stated that an eye should be kept on the apprentice and asked how much experience he had with GIS; the Rights of Way Officer advised the apprentice was experienced with GIS, this was the basis of his apprenticeship.

The Rights of Way Officer stated that the majority of the map would be completed with approximately three months, however, there would be a lot of time spent on the 'nitty gritty'. With the scale of the map used, there would need to be some judgement calls to make on the exact locations of the rights of way.

TWC website update

The Chair advised that Paula Doherty had sent her apologies to the meeting. Paula had provided an update for the meeting, Paula advised that she had requested a map for the local community website in her area and mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a map available for all parish clerks.

The Rights of Way Officer noted that once the definitive map is complete; this would be available on the Council website. The Council had a statutory duty to have a register of DMMO applications and deposited statutory declarations. The ICT department were arranging for this to be added to the Council website. Although it is not a requirement, the Rights of Way officer had requested that current applications for Public Path Orders be included on the website.

Path clearance groups update – Ramblers and Wellington Walkers are Welcome

Bob Alton reported that the Ramblers had been hard at work. To his knowledge, the path had been cleared in Lime Kiln Wood and the group had completed the work in Lilleshall.

Bob Coalbran advised that a lot of work had been completed in Lime Kiln Wood as part of the working group. The Ramblers have helped to clear a path to the south of Steerway Farm. Paths in Wellington Town have also been cleared and nearly all of the lighter work which had been identified had been completed. They have tried to make the paths as useable as possible.

UK Coal restoration site (Huntington Lane, Little Wenlock)

The Rights of Way Officer advised that it was envisaged that the fencing would be completed within 12 weeks. Jan Mees-Robinson asked if a kissing gate was going to be installed; the officer replied that a horse stile will be installed next to the gate within the next three weeks. A Kent Carriage Gap would be installed on the Restricted Byway that leads to Short Woods at its junction with New Works Lane.

A discussion was held regarding driving on the tracks. Jan Mees-Robinson suggested that Restricted Byways signs be put up stating that no vehicles were allowed. The Rights of Way Officer noted that the site was clearly not for vehicles and this would be very clear without signage; Cllr Clare agreed that signs do not help if the area is not policed and enforced. Peter Holt agreed that the signs have no effect on the Wrekin.

Shropshire Way consultation and way marker ideas

Bob Coalbran stated that he was a member of the Shropshire Way Association and advised the group on the consultation over the proposed new route. The most popular proposed route was a figure of eight, so three working groups had been established to map new routes based on this; a North group which focused on Oswestry to Whitchurch, a South Group for the Shropshire Hills and a smaller, central group which looked at the area of Haughmond Hill to Much Wenlock and Ironbridge.

In terms of strategic walks, it was suggested that the Shropshire Way link to the Silkin Way, however, there were issues with this. It would be looked into at the meeting of the sub-group which had been scheduled for the following week.

There had been a separate sub group established to look at the design of the way markers. Pink was not a universally popular colour, however, the buzzard design was to be retained. The design was more likely to a more 'rigid' bird, which pointed in the direction of travel. The colours and precise design were still to be agreed.

The green prescription model – New Zealand

The Chair advised that there had been a trial in New Zealand where doctors prescribed walking. It was noted that GPs in the UK can prescribe gym sessions.

Off Road cycling survey

Ann Suffolk advised that all Cycling UK members had been asked to complete this survey. The Chair felt it was positive that other groups were looking into Rights of Way.

National Travel Survey

The Chair stated that the report forgot that people walk or ride for fun, and it noted that the population was more vehicle bound than ever.

Cycling on public footpaths

The Chair advised this information had been shared previously.

Rail Crossings

A discussion was held regarding local level crossings, especially in Allscott. The Chair asked members to keep their eyes on the issue.

LAF-13 Membership Matters

There had been no requests made for new members. The Rights of Way Officer had attempted to gain a representative from the HCA, however, the office was in Birmingham, which made it more difficult for a representative to be present. A suggestion was made that a representative from the HCA could present a talk at one meeting.

Jan Mees-Robinson advised that there was no representation from bridleways and suggested a member could be sought from the Telford Bridleways Association.

LAF- 14 Current Projects - Review

This item had been discussed under the Chairman's matters. The Rights of Way Officer stated that most of the work that had been done was remedial issues.

Members brought several issues with various routes to attention. These were noted.

LAF- 15 Review of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications

The Chair advised that Ann Sharkey had sent her apologies to the meeting and had provided an update, which was included as Appendix C in the agenda. The Chair noted the huge leap forward that had been made by Ann's contribution.

The Rights of Way Officer noted that the issues with opposed orders; at the time, any applications that had received objections had to be taken to the Secretary of State for determination. The De-Regulation Act was to give the Council power to object to irrelevant objections. This placed pressure on the Local Authority to decide what an irrelevant objection was.

LAF-16 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

This item had been added to the agenda in error.

LAF-17 **Future Meeting Dates**

Future meeting dates were noted in Appendix D of the agenda.

LAF-18 **Any other urgent business**

Bob Coalbran advised that the walking festival had gone well and positive feedback had been received. A committee meeting was to be held the following day so that an overall picture could be gained.

Cadi Price stated that a new trail had been opened in Ironbridge Gorge, called the Tile Trail. The trail was made of 18 tiles in a circle walk and had been created as part of the stabilisation plan in the Gorge.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and noted that the next meeting of the LAF would be held on the 18th January 2017 at The Studio, Graham Building, Wrekin College at 1.00pm for 1.30pm start.

The meeting ended at 3.37pm.

Chairman:

Mr Tom

Date:

18 JAN 2017

