

## TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 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), 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) and Malcolm Morris (STROWP).

**In Attendance:** Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer, TWC) and Jayne Clarke (Democratic and Scrutiny Officer, TWC)

### **LAF-19                      Minutes**

**Resolved** – the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **LAF-20                      Apologies for Absence**

Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects), Ann Sharkey (Legal Assistant, TWC) and Peter Holt (CLA/ Landowner).

### **LAF-21                      Chairman's Matters**

The Chair reported on the following issues:

#### LA21 and CPRE meetings

The Chair, together with Bob Coalbran, had attended the LA21 and CPRE meetings. Mark Petty had also been in attendance to give a good rights of way representation. With regard to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England meeting attended by the Chair, Michael Vout, now retired from the Planning Department, had been a guest speaker, although the meeting seemed to be mainly focussed on planning applications.

#### Definitive Map Update

The Senior Rights of Way Officer reported that a short term contract was now in place for the work to be undertaken on the Definitive Map. There were approximately 10-12 panels of the map on 1-25,000 scale of which some sections had been enlarged to 1-10,000 scale of which 5 panels had now been completed on the urban area as this had the advantage of housing. The 1927 OS Series Map provided the closest and most accurate information with regard to parishes and this could be overlaid on the mapping system. There was to be a topographical change where the base map and current map could be superimposed. Work was

progressing rapidly and it was envisaged that it would take a further 3 months to complete and then work would take place on the modifications. He was confident that the vast majority of the work would be completed prior to making a new Definitive Map in 2019.

Bob Coalbran enquired if there was anything the LAF could do to help but the Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that it was a one person job transferring the information onto the computer. Councillor L Clare thanked the LAF for the offer of help. The IT work being undertaken would be focussed on meeting the definitive map deadline at which time all of the information would be available to members of the public/search companies which would free up officer time and be a significant step forward.

In the meantime, progress was being made with regard to the definitive map orders registered, key word searches and the register of deposited plans / statutory declarations and the register of applied for but undetermined public path extinguishment Orders / creation orders / diversion orders. There would be improvements to the DMMO register which will be automated for search companies and a 24/7 service which would make the service more open and available.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer reported that with regards to the Hinks at Lilleshall, it was disappointing that the Agricultural College were still obstructing the right of way and had not yet removed the obstruction despite promises to do so. A more formal, legal route may be required in order to bring this matter to resolution. He confirmed that P Doherty was leading on this issue from a Parish point of view and that styles could have been installed at the time the fencing was erected. A reasonable amount of time had passed and weather conditions had been such that this work could have been completed. A letter would be written giving a two week timescale for completion of the work and this would be followed up with a Notice if necessary.

#### Website and Hincks Signage (Lilleshall)

As apologies had been received from P Doherty it was suggested that a full update on the website take place at the next meeting.

#### 'T&W Cycling and Walking Strategy' Workshop

M Morris confirmed that he had attended a consultation workshop which hoped to address the barriers to cycling and walking and introduce "off the shelf" thinking. A draft of the strategy was due to be produced by 30<sup>th</sup> November and be ready for Christmas. This so far had not been forthcoming as there were difficulties with the definition of the walking network.

The Chair commented that he had received information about the meeting at a very late stage. Comments from the LAF were that the event was run by Strategic Planners APCOM and it was held at Addenbrooke House on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Only 1 LAF Member was allowed to attend and that it had been commissioned in late September by Highways. M Morris confirmed that the event had been by invitation only and anyone wishing to attend had to apply for a place. Other attendees had felt

that this was a "box ticking" event and the delegates had been swamped with information which was difficult to take in. Some attendees were not from the Borough and did not understand the local area. It was also felt that the consultation was cycling focussed.

#### Path Clearance Update – Ramblers and Wellington Walkers are Welcome

B Alton gave a brief update on the work of the Ramblers since the last meeting. The last outing had been in November where work had been undertaken on Offa's Dyke path. Unfortunately no other work had taken place. The next planned work was to be a section of the Silkin Way around Severn Drive and Harley Close and the Dothill Nature Reserve which was due to take place in February. It was suggested that there was co-ordination between the groups in order that there was no duplication of work and that B Alton and B Coalbran liaise with each other. It was suggested that a facebook page be set up or something on the Telford and Wrekin website or maybe some kind of electronic notice board that could flag up the paths/areas that needed attending to. It was suggested that for long distance routes the contact point would be the Chair of the Telford Green Spaces Partnership, (Alec Connor). J Mees-Robinson commented that the Caynton Manor Bridleway was on the list to be completed soon. M Morris informed the LAF that some of the clearance work was allocated to the Community Payback Scheme. The Senior Rights of Way Officer explained that he was reluctant to give the volunteers routes to look after on a regular basis in order that they weren't treated as "contractors". The Chair commented that better relationships needed to be built with some Parish Councils. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that every Parish Council had been written to but that each Parish Council worked differently. The Senior Rights of Way Officer would continue to co-ordinate the work that was required.

B Coalbran gave a brief report regarding the Wellington Walkers are Welcome volunteers who had recently been working in Limekiln Woods doing lighter work and all the tasks on the list had now been completed but there were still issues regarding the stone and boards which were required for the project to be completed.

#### UK Coal Restoration Site / Steeraway / RB 51 (Huntington Lane, Little Wenlock

The Senior Rights of Way Officer had been in contact with Anton Fix with regard to the UK Coal Site restoration. All work should soon be completed and signed off by Telford and Wrekin Council. The Chair confirmed that the work had almost been completed and had been looking at the snagging ie gates and surfaces, and he had noted the fencing had been installed. J Mees-Robinson suggested that there be some form of celebration that this route was being re-opened and it was suggested that a joint project be undertaken with the carriage drivers and the British Horse Society maybe in May when this route may get national coverage. The Chair and J Mees-Robinson would work together on this project.

#### Shropshire Way Consultation/Route Issues

A proposed rebrand of the Shropshire Way had been proposed by the Shropshire Way Association following a consultation exercise. Replies from the consultation had been received regarding the replacement of dangerous styles and furniture and

way marking. The Section through Telford and Wrekin would be strategically developed along the Silkin Way and the Dothill Nature Reserve and would incorporate an existing route change around Allscott/Isombridge and then to the Wellington entrance to the Erccall. The Shropshire Way Association would be meeting in January 2017 and a walk through of the route would take place. The Chair was concerned that part of the route on the Silkin Way had no status. B Coalbran confirmed that the Shropshire Way Association had taken all these issues into consideration. It was expected that the completion date would be September 2017.

#### Cycling and horse riding – multiuser routes

The Chair informed the LAF that the letter from Cycling UK, which had been circulated with the papers, had referred to a statement saying that “horses and cyclists do not mix”. He considered this a very negative statement regarding multi-user routes and was not based on fact. It was clear from the attached document that the authors (the BHS and Cycling UK) both agreed that shared routes were fine too and they were both making the point that statements such as this were unhelpful and not based on fact.

#### BHS List of Streets consultation

J Mees-Robinson asked the LAF where the list of streets was kept and if white roads were on the list. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that some parts of the list were maintainable and others weren't and that white roads were not on the list but would have been picked up before they became out of date. If the right of way was not being used or historically it was not a right of way and was a white road it was not necessary for this to be on the list of streets. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the list of streets was kept at Wellington Civic Offices in the Planning Section. J Mees-Robinson asked if white roads could be claimed as byways or restricted byways. It was confirmed that if there was evidence, this needed to be submitted but if there was no evidence there would be no value in putting in a claim. If routes had not been used since 1949 then these were considered not needed. The Chair confirmed that the 2026 cut off date did not affect currently lodged DMMO applications and that the cut off date was to pick up historical claims not those that are based solely on user evidence. The last snapshot had been taken via the new Definitive Map in 1965 and a review should be completed every 5 years. B Coalbran expressed concern regarding an area that had been sliced off on a route near to the Motorway. The Senior Rights of Way Officer explained that if the right of way had been adjusted then this needed to go through the legal process if this had not already been done.

#### SCC Outdoors Membership Scheme

SCC were offering an outdoors membership scheme for the use of open spaces and rights of way possibly in order to generate capital.

#### Shropshire Council's Countryside Access Strategy Document

The Shropshire LAF was due to become the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board which would include sub-groups.

### Locked gate – Horsehay – DMMO still to be determined

The Senior Rights of Way Officer addressed the LAF regarding the route from Horsehay to the Travellers Rest which had a locked gate placed across it and a retrospective planning application had been lodged for this gate. It was proposed that a DMMO be drawn up from the Travellers Rest to Horsehay Pools. There had been 24 statements of evidence of use from walkers as well as use by push bikes, horses, carriages and vehicles. The Chair confirmed that there were currently locked gates and that this had possibly been done to promote the value of the land. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the route itself had not been lost and that the Developer was aware of the DMMO application although the furniture on the existing route had not been removed. The Senior Rights of Way Officer had the backing of the Parish Council.

### Bridleway Issues at Greenways Recycling – Ketley/Overdale

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that a Traffic Regulation Order had been made on a section of road, near the Pink Skips site, which included double yellow lines. This prohibited parking on the road and highway off the road behind double yellow lines and there was no reason for the Police not to be prosecuting as this was a criminal offence acted on by the Police. A public meeting had taken place with local people who were unhappy with the access to the right of way and bridleway being blocked, the fouling of the area and the planning application which was to come forward for the re-cycling with increased hours and truck movements.

### Effect of Brexit on PRoW

Defra Schemes for routes with access for walkers and riders had now ceased following the ending of the European funded scheme. The implementation of the De-Regulation Act had been held up and although this should have been in place by Oct/Nov 2016 with immediate effect it would take place in stages up to 2020.

### Big Path Watch – Survey Results

The results of the Big Path Watch Survey were available on the website at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/pathwatch/the-state-of-our-paths-report.aspx>

### **LAF-22      Membership Matters**

It was proposed and seconded that Gill Stead become a Member of the LAF as the area Secretary of the Shropshire Ramblers.

The LAF confirmed that it would be superb to have Gill as a LAF member.

**RESOLVED** – that Gill Stead become a member of the LAF representing the Ramblers.

**LAF- 23**      **Current Projects - Review**

Lloyds Dingle Steps – there was currently unsatisfactory access and a project was being undertaken in order to take out the steps and replace them with a path.

Rough Park – work had been undertaken on the Old House Coppice steps.

**LAF- 24**      **Review of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications**

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that Ann Sharkey was currently on secondment and would not be looking after rights of way for a while. There had been a backlog of DMMOs for some time and it was important to have applications based on statements of evidence of use for 20 years. He confirmed that the easiest way forward was to take out a Land Registry Search and locate any affected parties and write to the Landowner. Unless there was any response from this communication, an order would be made by the Senior Rights of Way Officer. This would be undertaken on any DMMO that was over five years old. Any that were unable to be confirmed would be sent to public inquiry. A question was raised if every order would go to public inquiry. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that if the DMMOs could not be confirmed then they would have to go to public inquiry. There were currently approximately 80 DMMOs waiting to be processed and it was hoped that about 60 of these would be confirmed, go to public inquiry or be resolved by the Secretary of State.

**LAF-25**      **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

M Morris Reported on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The previous plan had been due for review and had been disorganised with no action plan or aims and objectives. He had extracted all the relevant information from the previous plan and presented this in a new format which looked at overviews, objectives, actions and achievable aims which would enable the monitoring and progress of the work. The draft proposal was to outline the resources required, identify the work that needed to be done and the relevant costs. The working document was intended to identify that issues were still relevant, still policy, still achievable and to see what had changed. The Plan had been due for review in 2015. The next stage was for the plan to be looked at by a smaller group. The Chair suggested that all members of the LAF look at the Plan and this be brought back to the next meeting of the LAF.

**LAF-26**      **Future Meeting Dates**

A discussion took place regarding the future meeting dates of the LAF. It was

**RESOLVED: that the following dates be schedule for the LAF for the 2017/18 municipal year:**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017**  
**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 AGM**  
**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017**  
**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.**

LAF-27      Any other urgent business

Change of Venue for LAF Meetings

The Chair informed the LAF Members that Wrekin College now had a new building which was a new Business School. Discussions were being held with the Head to see if the LAF meetings could be held in the Building School Board Room.

B Coalbran informed the LAF that there had recently been a co-operative effort on the Wrekin Link in order to clear the brambles and the autumn growth before the end of the season.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and noted that the next meeting of the LAF would be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at The Studio / New Business School, Wrekin College at 1.00pm for 1.30pm start.

The meeting ended at 4.04 pm.

Chairman: .....

*Mr Jones*

Date: .....

*26 April 2017*

