

The Wrekin Forest Partnership
Monday 23rd February 2009
Closed Session – Buckatree Hall Hotel

Chair - Michael Mander DL

Attendees – Pete Lambert SWT , Mike and Jackie White Wellington Civic Society, George Evans AFRTW, Pat Hutchings Little Wenlock PC, Andy Wigley SCC Historic Environments Advisor, Jim Roberts Upper Huntington Farm, Dr. Chris Meads Buildwas PC, Karen Jones SABC, Phil Holden Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager, Julia Owen Leasowes Farm, Cllr. Stephen Bentley TWC.

Apologies – Trevor Parkin ENTEC, Colin Preston Director SWT, Cllr Jacqui Seymour TWC, Peter Holt Orleton Estate.

Agenda

1. Opening remarks Michael Mander DL
2. Thanks to Telford and Wrekin Council and Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership for recent funding support.
3. Vote of thanks offered by George Evans to the Wrekin Forest Volunteers for their efforts, Michael Mander has agreed to draft letter on behalf of the Partnership.
4. Wrekin Forest feasibility study – discussion

After a brief introduction from Pete Lambert author of the study there followed a wide ranging discussion on the key elements of the study. The study has received positive support from key landowners but does contain potentially controversial recommendations.

- a. Visitor centre considered uneconomic and inappropriate development for the Wrekin Forest- general agreement with this finding.
- b. Walkers café development at Buckatree Hotel- this element was looked upon favourably unfortunately the Hotel management were not available to comment on the work they have done in this respect.
- c. Toilet block – the study recommended the old toilet block should be demolished, there was disagreement with this finding. **Cllr Stephen Bentley offered to look again at the situation regarding the closed building and will be reporting back at the next Wrekin Forest partnership meeting.**
- d. Car park – the study proposes that the Orleton Trust offer to lease land to help remodel the parking arrangements should be accepted on the basis of the unsatisfactory nature of the current layout. There was a mixed response to this element **Cllr Stephen Bentley echoing the recent offer by TWC officers, has offered to explore the options surrounding car parking and report back to the Partnership in due course.**
- e. Quiet lanes – general agreement that traffic calming measures would be welcomed throughout the Wrekin Forest. Little Wenlock PC has already initiated work in this respect and recent discussion with TWC also indicated support to look at possible solutions to traffic concerns.

5. New website for the Wrekin Forest – Following recent difficulties with the All Friends Round the Wrekin Website and a more positive wish to have a community based website to celebrate the Wrekin Forest Pete Lambert asked the members for ideas setting up a new website. Phil Holden offered to extend the coverage of the SHAONB website to accommodate more Wrekin Forest material.
6. Access PL – Pete explained the scope of the recent works on Ercall Lane and around the base of the Wrekin. All part of a Natural England funding project via Aggregates Levy Sustainability fund the project includes a wall repair, new footpaths and footbridge in the Ercall woods, repairs to the Forest Glen Car Park, safety tree works and new walkers direction signs. The aim of the project was to improve walker safety and restore the entrance to the main track to the top of the Hill. The project has been carried out in close partnership with the Orleton estate, Buckatree Hall Hotel and other local residents.
7. Deer issues – Chris Mead – Chair of Buildwas PC introduced a discussion of concerns related to the presence of deer within the Wrekin Forest. Issues included road collision, browsing pressure, management co-ordination and survey. Pete L. is about the present a bid to fund a 12 month field worker post to look at these issues and help co-ordinate a positive response across the whole landscape.
8. New projects and funding opportunities – LEADER and Veolia Environment Fund – a wide ranging discussion ensued regarding various forms of funding a number of members are going investigate – Julia Owen has offered to follow up potential funding source via Veolia Environment Fund as the Wrekin Forest appears to be eligible.
9. Shropshire Hills AONB update by Phil Holden covered imminent approval of new AONB Management Plan; LEADER funding available later this year, Sustainable Business Scheme and Friends of the Shropshire Hills are both gathering members; events programme launched; Shuttles and integrated farm advice pilot.
10. AOB – litter pick is due Pete L to try to find date and circulate. /11th March Talk by George Evans – the Wrekin Forest – details from George/ Horse logging Demo in the Ercall LNR on 28th March see local press for details or contact Pete L.

Meeting closed 9pm

Next meeting Monday 1st June 2009
Venue to be confirmed

Wrekin Forest Officer : Pete Lambert
 Shropshire Wildlife Trust
 Office 01743 284285 or Mobile 07785964497
petel@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

