

# Wrekin Forest Partnership

## Notes of meeting, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Wellington Library

### Present:

Bob Coalbran, Wellington Walkers Are Welcome  
Jack Cooper, Balfours on behalf of Raby Estates  
Jayne Madeley, Little Wenlock Parish Council  
Janine Hayter, Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council  
Brian Herring, Wellington LA21  
Phil Holden, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (Chair)  
John Hughes, Shropshire Wildlife Trust  
Dag Saunders, Walkabout Wellington  
Robert Saunders, Wellington LA21  
Cllr Jacqui Seymour, Telford & Wrekin Council

### 1. Welcomes and Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Juliet Esp (Little Wenlock Parish Council), Andrew Jenkinson (Shropshire Geological Society), George Evans (individual member), Dorothy Roberts (Wellington Town Council), Jayne Davidson (Little Wenlock Parish Council), Fran Lancaster (Telford & Wrekin Council).

### 2. Notes of meeting 29th June 2017 and matters arising

These were accepted as accurate. Jacqui queried the AONB structure in relation to the new AONB Trust – Phil clarified that the Trust was not set up as the governance body for the AONB, due to the statutory duties involved, but it was an additional structure to focus on fund-raising. The formal proposal to create an independent AONB Conservation Board had been resubmitted to Defra in August, following Ministerial guidance, and the decision was still awaited.

Bob asked if any more was known about plans for the Ironbridge Power station site. Other members were aware of some discussions about possible housing and wind turbines. Jacqui thought that most of the land would become a nature site.

### 3. Brief Updates from partners

AONB Partnership – The Partnership is working with the new Shropshire Hills AONB Trust on fund-raising, including a membership push on Friends of the Shropshire Hills AONB. It is hoped to develop a 'visitor giving' pilot in the Church Stretton area – this approach may have relevance to the Wrekin in the future. Review of the Sustainable Tourism Strategy is under way, linking with Discover Telford regarding the Wrekin area. The five year Stiperstones & Corndon HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme has only six months left to run. The AONB Management Plan review is starting now. Projects in development include work with young people, support for volunteers on heritage sites, and the National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

Shropshire Geological Society – (update from Andrew via email) Still interested in a possible SJ60 project and keeping in touch with SWT about possible bids. Hope to link with Telford50 events, and in touch with Thomas Telford School re field trips.

Little Wenlock PC – Nothing specific to report.

Leighton & Eaton Constantine PC – Nothing specific to report.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust – John said that potential to reapply to HLF is still being explored. Also in discussion with Bourneville Trust and Veolia. Proposals for outdoor activities business at Maddock's Hill Quarry was discussed – pre-application discussions have taken place with TWC. Catering facility at Forest Glen continues, mostly on Thurs - Sundays. Discussions ongoing with owner at Halfway House which is up and running now, with active support from Jenny Joy.

Raby Estates – Nothing specific to report. Bob raised potential for improvements to the path down the south side of the Wrekin.

Walkers Are Welcome – Bob said that Wellington Walking Festival was last week, and was used as a 'launch' for the link section of the Shropshire Way through Wellington. The Shropshire Way Association works with Shropshire Council on this. WAW have carried out work on reinstatement of rights of way on the former coal site, and are collaborating with Friends of Wellington station. Bob enquired about the Quiet Lane designation on Spout Lane in Little Wenlock parish. Jane said it was complicated and took a long time. It is in place and though there are no statistics, a local councillor thought it may be having a beneficial effect.

Walkabout Wrekin – Dag said Walkabout Wrekin was going to become part of Walking for Health Telford, which is part of a national network. There is a shortage of volunteer walk leaders. The Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival is set for 5<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> May next year. A number of organisations are working together on a proposal for a 50 mile circular walk linked to Telford50.

LA21 – Robert said LA21's AGM is tomorrow. Details circulated of the Big Green Shropshire Gathering <http://www.greenshropshireexchange.org.uk/big-green-shropshire-gathering/> and an Electric Vehicle Day at Little Wenlock Village Hall on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. Robert is working on a Strategy for building the network of electric vehicle charging points around Shropshire.

Telford & Wrekin Council – Jacqui was meeting with Colin and John from SWT soon to discuss taking forward project proposals.

#### 4. **Car parking at Forest Glen**

Jayne said that the meeting to be held on this has been delayed from September to October. In the mean time West Mercia Police have been active, and have visited with TWC's Principal Traffic Engineer. Speed limits with sections of 50 and 30 are proposed, and extension and repainting of the double yellow lines, possibly along with rumble strips. This was encouraging and welcomed by all. Jacqui said TWC have not taken on civil parking enforcement but are still looking at this. Ironbridge and the Wrekin are the key problem areas in the Borough.

It was agreed that these 'on road' traffic measures were helpful, but there still needed to be additional space actually to park. Jayne would progress the working group – **ACTION Jayne**.

Bob raised a safety point about Forest Glen, asking about a possible off-road path towards the Hatch Road. John said SWT were keen to do this and it might form part of a bid to Veolia.

#### 5. **National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative**

Phil said that an Expression of Interest form had been submitted to National Grid, and they were inviting a full application. Much further work was needed however to discuss potential works with landowners and draw up specs to the level of detail needed. The full application would not be made until next year, but the discussions would continue to be progressed as time allowed.

#### 6. **AOB**

Bob asked if Friends of Dothill Nature reserve could come on the Partnership - this was agreed.

7. **Date of next meeting** – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 7-9pm, at Wellington library.