

# Wrekin Forest Partnership

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011

7-9pm. Main hall, Little Wenlock Village Hall, Little Wenlock

Chair – Phil Holden, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager  
Secretary - Wrekin Forest Officer – Pete Lambert, Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Attendees: Paul Kalinaukis AFRTW, Mike & Jackie White WCS, Robert Saunders FOE, Naomi Wrighton WWAW, Cllr Tracey Hope TWC, Juliet Esp LWPC, Matt Marston SWT, Michael Barker TWC, Rachel Taylor TWC, George Chancellor, Dorothy Roberts WTC, Phil Holden SHAONB, Pete Lambert SWT

Apologies: Rt. Hon. Harry Vane, Raby, Sheila Hutchison LWPC, Luke Neal SWA

Introduction – tonight's meeting of the Wrekin Forest Partnership has been structured to reflect the need to begin the process of writing the next 5 year landscape plan for the Wrekin Forest. The three presentations were commissioned to help generate debate and prepare the way for the task of creating a vision and action plan to address the conservation needs of a highly valued landscape.

## **1. Presentation – The Wrekin Forest Landscape Conservation Plan 2008- 2013 – review**

Pete Lambert, SWT

A short review of the existing landscape plan was presented in recognition that the plan is due to expire in 2013. The work of producing a new plan would need to commence soon. PL highlighted some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan and refresh the members in terms of the scope and landscape themes that it contained.

## **2. Presentation – Regional Parks in the UK – case studies**

Pete Lambert, SWT

The aim of this presentation was to explore UK models of landscape protection and conservation. It had been suggested that a 'regional park' model may be a good fit for the particular conditions, size and existing ownership and use found within and around the Wrekin Forest. SWT staff member Matt Marston researched a number of UK examples and the presentation focussed on the following Lee Valley, London; Sherwood Forest and River Nene. For further information check out the websites below:

- [www.leevalleypark.org.uk](http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk)
- [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rpfbusinessplan.pdf](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rpfbusinessplan.pdf)
- [www.riverneregionalpark.org.uk](http://www.riverneregionalpark.org.uk)

The presentation looked at size, governance, the role of partnership structures and area character to seek out possible similarities and divergences with the situation for the Wrekin Forest. The Wrekin Forest faces clear threats from encroaching and inappropriate development and requires positive management to retain and conserve the values it has for wildlife, the local community and visitor. The 'regional park' model may help expand the list of options as the new plan comes into full development.

### **3. Presentation – The Wrekin Forest – a strategic view**

Rachel Taylor, Senior Environmental Projects manager, Telford and Wrekin Council

The purpose of the final presentation was to put the issues and concerns of conserving the landscape values of the Wrekin Forest into a planning and development control context. Rachel introduced a number of strands of TWC activity that may or do include the Wrekin Forest. The presentation is attached to this document as a pdf file.

### **4. Discussion**

A general discussion followed in which some of the following dimensions were explored:

- Borough wide opportunity to protect area with new designation, Regional Park model may possibly overcome current limitations of Local Development plans. Buffer zone might be created to extend sphere of influence of SHAONB designated landscape.
- Shropshire Council may have a limited role though liaison is good between the two authorities.
- Tourism dimension important – local economy benefits in relation to Wellington/Ironbridge
- Plan writing – concern over who is going to drive forward the new plan creation process, role of co-ordinator unclear, who is to lead on consultation and final report production. TWC/SWT/Phil Holden are working on these issues currently.
- Regional Park model had merit, though members had just been introduced to the concept and would need to do more research to fully understand how this model might help out on the Wrekin Forest.
- Boundary under question and would clearly need re-visiting in the new plan process.
- The process seemed to fit well with TWC's new Cooperative Council structure.

- Finally the members were asked if they would be happy to form the key stakeholder group for the plan development and a majority of those present agreed.

#### 5. AOB

- **The Trundle** – multi user access project has received £76k in funding from the UK Coal Community Fund. This money will cover the cost of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the development of two sections of the actual route.
- **New Works Wildlife Project** – SWT have received £50k funding from the UK Coal Community Fund to support a 2 year community wildlife project focused on the eastern fringes of the Wrekin Forest.

**Set date of next meeting Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012  
Little Wenlock Village hall 7 -9pm**

Please send agenda items to Pete Lambert either via email [petel@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:petel@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk) or 01743 284285 , thank you.