

Wrekin Forest Partnership Notes of meeting Monday 16th May 2011

Little Wenlock Village Hall 7 – 9pm

Apologies: Cllr Dorothy Roberts & Cllr Jacqui Seymour (Telford & Wrekin Council), Joanna Deacon (The Wrekin Museum Partnership) and Trevor Parkin (ENTEC).

Attendees:

Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership [chair]
Pete Lambert	Shropshire Wildlife Trust [Wrekin Forest Project officer]
Michael Barker	Telford & Wrekin Council
Cllr Tracy Hope	Telford & Wrekin Council
Naomi Wrighton	Wellington Walkers Are Welcome
Mike White	Wellington Civic Society
Jackie White	Wellington Civic Society
Robert Saunders	Wellington LA21
Luke Neil	Small Woods Association
George Chancellor	Individual member
Brian Herring	Wellington LA21
Marilyn Pietroni	Telford Local Access Forum
Anthony Francis-Jones	Wrekin Forest 4 All project

1. Matters arising

Michael Barker said that TWC have embarked on Green Infrastructure Strategy development – currently mapping and evidence gathering. By late summer will conduct wide formal consultation with residents, agencies and organisations active in TWC area, this will include WFP.

TWC are also pursuing a bid to the new government Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which should help to carry forward sustainable transport/travel initiatives that have been identified in the Quiet Lanes study and the Sustainable Transport study. The lead contact officer at TWC in relation to sustainable transport is Stuart Freeman, he has already been in touch with Little Wenlock PC and other WFP members.

Michael informed the WFP members that the new lead Councillor with the portfolio that includes the areas relevant to the Wrekin Forest is Hilda Rhodes.

PH noted that as yet the National Trust have not been able to complete purchase of the Wenlock Edge quarries.

2. Presentation – Wrekin Forest 4 All

Anthony Francis-Jones gave an entertaining presentation of the access project he and others are developing to help resolve and enhance part of the rights of way network in the Wrekin Forest. The project will be seeking funding from the UK Coal Community Fund. The WF4A project is focussing on good information for visitors, measures to discourage illegitimate use, traffic calming, enhanced mapping, multi-user information, specific consideration of development of the Donkey Field for parking and visitor facilities such as composting toilets. A useful discussion followed, though it was acknowledged that the WFP had agreed a position last year (by majority vote) in opposition to development of the Donkey Field for car parking, in favour of the proper implementation of traffic calming and other measures. It is

hoped that Anthony could return to the WFP as his project develops, other members offered to meet him to explore his ideas in relation to current projects.

3. Presentation – The Wrekin Trundle

Marilyn Pietroni updated the members on the current status of the Wrekin Trundle multi user trail project. The UK Coal Community Fund had pledged £30k to match fund the larger amount being pursued via the Veolia CR8 challenge fund. The Trundle project has been successful so far in the early rounds of the funding process. The project involves a project team lead by the Telford Local Access Forum and has negotiated a range of agreements with at least 7 landowners. As confirmed by Michael Barker this evening, TWC will be responsible for the future maintenance of the Trundle. MP outlined the thoroughness of the thinking behind the Trundle, its consideration of legislative issues, user group consultation and environmental impact assessment. George Chancellor praised Marilyn's energy and determination in driving forward this large and complex project.

4. Launch – Five Towns Trail

Robert Saunders distributed copies of the newly published Five Towns Trail booklet. The publication was written and collated by Marc Petty under the directions of the Wellington LA21 group. The trail is a cycle route linking Wellington, Dawley, Ironbridge and The Wrekin Forest. The booklet contains a broad range of information and contributes positively to the growing literature that promotes exploration of the local area and the Wrekin Forest in particular. Robert said that another leaflet focussing on the wildlife of the Wrekin Forest is the next project.

5. Explore more of the Wrekin Forest

Pete Lambert gave a brief overview of the LEADER funded project, which will be carried forward to the next WFP meeting for further elaboration.

6. Shropshire Hills AONB update

Phil Holden informed members that a 5.4% cut annually for the next four years was being made to Defra national funding to English AONBs. However despite this reduction in core funding, the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership's overall budget had grown 17% from the last Financial Year due to new project activity. The contribution to SWT for Pete's time to support the WFP is reduced this year from £2,000 to £1,000. The funds available to the Sustainable Development Fund are also reduced. A Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the AONB and surrounding area (the area covered by the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Development Partnership) is being prepared for publication shortly.

7. AOB

WFP Members have been invited to the next Royal Forest Society tour of the Raby Estate woodlands – invitation to be distributed to interested members.

Next meeting - Monday 4th July 2011 Little Wenlock Village Hall, Small Hall 7-9pm