

P3 Pathways Group Meeting

18th May 2021, 7.30pm Online (Zoom)

Attended: Tom Currie (Chair) Brian Gaskin, Denise Davies, Nick West, John Hall, Andrew Careless, Steve Lowe

Apologies: David Brown, Sue Brown, John Seales, Sandy Walker, Tom and Louise Kiely, Connor Furnival, Rodington Parish Council

1. Welcome

TC welcomed all to the meeting and to SL as this was his first meeting. Introductions made.

2. Notes and actions (notes of 30.3.21)

Arising: DD registered an objection to the proposed diversion of R6 at Rodenhurst Business Park. DD repeated her concern that the proposed surfacing of the diversion (aggregate/MOT) would not be to the same standard as the existing road surface. A tarmac surface is the best option and, in light of this proposed diversion being made on the grounds of health and safety of the public, at the behest of the landowner (SW) it was suggested that this should be funded. SL, who regularly uses the route, supported this view.

The implications of the above are this diversion might not go ahead as the cost of this would be prohibitive, estimated in the region of £30-40,000. AC stated that this decision needs to be made soon as a number of other route modifications depend upon the status of Rodenhurst Lane. He said, Telford and Wrekin Council would be prepared to part fund the diversion, to a good standard but could not support the costs for a tarmac surface.

Action: *A discussion now needs take place with the landowner, and Telford and Wrekin Council (AC) on the best way forward. BG will contact SW to arrange site meeting to discuss the above.*

3. Update from Telford and Wrekin Council (AC)

Signposts have been erected in several locations, and two galvanised kissing gates are in the process of installation. This is work linked into phase one of the action plan. Phase two will involve installations in other locations, including Longdon on Tern.

AC met with the owner of the Old Smithy Cottage who expressed concern arising from an abusive altercation with a walker seeking access across the property. The status of the route is not shown going through the property on pre-existing maps, OS1954-58, 1960 and 1965, but it does go up to it. Locals have always assumed the right of access for decades; therefore it could be shown to 'subsist' as a footpath. AC advises a Modification Order can be obtained, but in the interim is looking for alternatives. These include:

- a. Route via an obvious gap in the hedge - the landowner (PD) would have the right to object.

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- b. Diversion across the land further down the garden of the Old Smithy.
- c. Another option, not yet identified.

In all instances, the consideration should be to find and secure an alternative the present debacle.

Action: TC to contact landowner, PD with a view to arranging a site visit to discuss options (timescale early June).

The formal application to designate Rodenhurst Lane as a 'Restricted Byway' would acknowledge the right of walker, horse-riders, cyclists and horse-drawn vehicle (pony and trap) but not motor cars to pass through its entire length. The evidence to support this application is very strong. Telford Bridleways have a live application which would seek to show Rodenhurst Lane as a right of way. AC stated all evidence would be reviewed, including Tithe maps, user evidence, rebuttals etc. The application would be subject to public consultation. Once approved, responsibility for maintenance would transfer to Telford and Wrekin Council.

The Spinney, R3 adjoining R6/R3 is agreed but the installation of a galvanised kissing gate allowing access from Church Road is awaited; those on the northern boundary have now been installed. AC confirmed routing dispensation for the footpath to follow the line of the hedge boundary permitting access to R6 and R3 via the newly installed swing gates. This will allow NW to fence off his land for private access only.

AC confirmed that the contract with AP has come to an end and this will have to be retendered. He sought a budget of £40,000 and an increase but recent decisions within the authority mean that Cabinet will have to authorise expenditure on larger projects. However, the majority of ROW projects for Rodington and Longdon on Tern fall into the small project classification and are a priority.

4. Longdon on Tern Routes

An enforcement notice may be required at Manor Cottage where the owners have blocked access to the footpath.

Action: AC will undertake a Land Registry search in the first instance and issue a notification letter requesting reinstatement of the footpath.

Discussion on where new signposts are needed in Longdon on Tern, including L1 and L2. These are required at the field boundaries where routes have not been maintained. There were also difficulties in accessing L1 on approach to Longwood Farm as this was effectively blocked by a crop of potatoes and the ridges. AC stated that the landowner should receive a notification letter requiring reinstatement within 14 days.

Action: He will undertake a Land Registry search in the first instance then write to the owner of Longwood Farm to identify responsibility to maintain right of way.

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5. Project work with volunteers

SL mentioned that he was doing volunteering work with Shropshire Council ROW Team, and asked whether Telford and Wrekin use volunteers. AC confirmed they do, and referred to Waters Upton and Tibberton where this is happening.

SL mentioned that Shropshire Council (Direct Labour) take posts and equipment out to sites for volunteers in their P3 Shropshire Group. AC thought there should be no reason why this could not happen in this area. TC mentioned that we have identified a group of volunteers who are prepared to undertake small work projects and welcomed SL's help in this.

Longdon on Tern notice-board (currently showing the Aqueduct) JH raised the issue of updating this to include a local map of the rights of way. It's believed the notice-board belongs to the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal Trust.

Action: BG will provide an updated map, but needs to contact Bernie Jones, Chair of the SNCT. TC will provide contact details.

6. Next Meeting:

Tuesday, 13th July, 7.30pm (venue tbc)