

Access, Countryside and Rights of Way

10th February 2014

Quaker Meeting Rooms, St James Street, Sheffield, S1 2EW

Present: Allen Pestell (Chair), David Gadd (Secretary), Terry Howard, Basil Merry, Cath MacKay, Les Seaman.

Apologies: Philip Ryder

Minutes of the meeting 10th November 2013

These were agreed as being correct.

Matters arising from those minutes

None.

Review of Access matters

September 2014 marks the 10th anniversary of the CROW Act in the Peak District. It was agreed to refer the subject to Area Council to consider holding a celebratory event.

Review of Countryside matters

TH and LS had attended a meeting on HS2. They feel that there is strong political will from the government to build HS2. There is a plan to establish a corridor, several metres wide, alongside the line for footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways; however the noise factor appears not to have been taken into account. In the local area much of the line will be above the ground or in tunnels, and hence rights of way will not be massively affected.

BM attended a presentation in Stavely. The maps showed cycleways which were, in fact, footpaths. In Derbyshire 60 rights of way would be affected, 50 of them in the Chesterfield Group's area. BM said that the Group had no confidence in the Derbyshire CC maps, very small digital maps being difficult to see accurately and having many RoW missing. The deputy head of the RoW Unit, at a Transport Users Group meeting, has said that all the White Lanes that DCC own will be made into RoW.

It was established that there were no guidelines on the closeness of wind turbines to Rights of Way.

Regarding rights of way matters Area Council has written to Ramblers RoW officer, Janet Davis, seeking guidance on the best way to make progress. The Deregulation Bill is still being progressed; it could make the claiming of historic rights of way much easier, although it was pointed out that the Bill may not be passed due to lack of parliamentary time before the next election. It was suggested that, after General Council, a meeting is held for people interested in claiming historic routes from our Groups. Copies of the book *Rights of Way; Restoring the Record* have been obtained and will be passed to Groups. The book contains full information on sources of historical information. One of the biggest categories of unclaimed routes are the 'White Lanes', i.e. historic routes which have simply never been claimed and thus have no legal status.

AP reported that the Derbyshire Area had recently held their AGM and were now without a Publicity Officer (as is SYNED). Ramblers in Derbyshire felt that the Derbyshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan was merely a paper exercise, to be carried out simply because it's a legal requirement.

TH said that Ramblers Groups should publicise what they do more - maintenance work as well as providing walks, which provide opportunities for people to improve health - especially in these times of council cutbacks. Some Groups record the man-hours worked, passing this information to councils. It was suggested that councils can claim money from the government on the basis of volunteer man-hours.

AOB

BM reported that the situation regarding the Eckington 34 footpath remains unchanged.