

WILTSHIRE BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION (WBA)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 13th November 2024 at the Quaker Meeting Rooms, Sussex Wharf, Devizes.

Present:

Mr. Norman Beardsley - Chairman; Sustrans Liaison; CAF Representative; Netheravon Area Representative; (NB)
Mrs. Rosie Cunningham - Administration Secretary (RC)
Mrs. Kate Dilnott-Cooper - Minutes Secretary (KDC)
Mrs. Heather Emery - Marlborough Area Representative (HE)
Mrs. Emma Hodgson - Lavington Area Representative (EH)
Mrs. Liz Keen - Treasurer (LK)
Mrs. Rosie Pack - Membership Secretary; Newsletter Editor; Ride Organiser; (RP)

Apologies:

Mrs. Charlotte Hill-Baldwin - Web Master (CHB)
Mr. Bill Riley - Historical and Legal Advisor (BILLR)

1.01 Minutes of the last Meeting - NB signed a copy of the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024 as a true recording of proceedings and he took the document for filing at Brail Farm.

2.00 Matters Arising

2.01 (2.01) Treasurer's Financial Report

LK presented a bank reconciliation document which showed that the opening balance of the Current Account at the beginning of October was £6,352.66. The only transaction during the month had been the renewal of the website at a cost of £28.78 which CHB had paid and wished to have it recorded as a donation from her to the WBA. This transaction therefore appeared as both income and expenditure in the bank reconciliation. The closing balance on 31st October was £6,352.66.

The Business Savings Account had received £66.89 in interest during the month and the balance in that account on 31st October was £17,953.33.

2.02 (2.02) Membership

RP reported that there were 139 members of which 62 were life members. Following discussion it was agreed that the cost of a subscription should rise on 1st January 2026 to £15.00 for a single membership and £18.00 for a family membership.

2.03 (2.03) Newsletter

RP said that the next newsletter would go out just before Christmas. A note would be included with those that go out by post asking the members to either register their email address with the WBA so that they could receive future newsletters by email. If they still wished to receive their newsletter through the post, there would be a charge of £10.00 per annum to cover this.

2.04 (2.04) Electronic Communications

NB reported that all the WBA's electronic communications were up to date. He went on to say that the PRoW website (<https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com>) was not currently working but that it was possible to access it through the Wiltshire Council (WC) website.

2.05 (2.05) Pleasure/Guided Rides

RP said that there was no news.

2.06 (2.06) Brail Farm

1. Filing etc. - NB said that he would undertake this until the Annual General Meeting on 27th March 2025.
2. External Maintenance - NB said that he had been there a couple of times and had started a general tidy up.

2.07 (2.07) Annual General Meeting

It was confirmed that the AGM would be held at Rushall Village Hall on Thursday 27th March. NB undertook to write to Inspector Andy Lemon to invite him to be the guest speaker.

2.08 (2.08) Other Organisations

1. Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum (WSCAF) - NB reported that he had attended a meeting in Amesbury the previous week at which briefings were given by Chris Clark (CC) of WC and Martin Fry (MF) of Swindon Borough Council (SBC) via Teams although Sally Madgwick (SM) of WC was unable to attend. Presentations relative to the DMMO problem had also been received from Tim Lewis (TL) of Wiltshire Ramblers (WR) and Graham Bennett (GB) of the British Horse Society (BHS) and their previously prepared papers had been distributed to the WBA Committee members. That item will be discussed at the next WSCAF meeting and NB asked that these papers were read and any comments submitted. The 2025 meetings were provisionally planned for 3rd April, 23rd July and 5th November.
2. Open Spaces Society (OSS) - nothing to report.

2.09 (2.09) Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs)

1. West Lavington BR14 - EH said that this had been downgraded to a footpath by usage and it was agreed that this should be reported to WC.
2. Easterton BR10 - no progress, ongoing. (EH)
3. Kington Langley BR10 + BR11 (upgrade to BYs) - still pending, ongoing. (NB)
4. Stert FP11 (upgrade to BR) - RC said that this had been confirmed and EH undertook to go and see if the footpath gate had been removed. CLOSED
5. Access for riders at Conock - no progress, ongoing. (NB)
6. Winterslow BY94 - NB said he was waiting for the decision from the Planning Inspector.
7. Seend BR40 (upgrade to RBY) - NB said that an objection had been sent.
8. Application to record bridleway rights over part of Drove Lane, Market Lavington - EH agreed to check what was happening.

2.10 (2.10) Contact with Chris Clark (CC) of WC

The dates for the meetings in 2025 had been provisionally planned for 29th January, 14th May and 3rd September at a venue to be agreed.

Gates - North

2.11 (2.11) Broad Town BR25 - no change, ongoing. (RP)

2.12 (2.12) All Cannings BR20 + Stanton St Bernard BR10 - NB said that he was waiting for an update from Stephen Leonard (SL). Ongoing

2.13 (2.18) Huish BR14 - site visit still awaited, ongoing. (NB)

Gates - South

2.14 (2.14) Collingbourne Kingston BR1B - RP said that she had got two people from local livery yards who were going to report it. Ongoing.

2.15 (2.17) Berwick St John BR14 - site visit still awaited, ongoing. (NB)

Gates - West

2.16 (2.13) Longbridge Deverill BR2 - NB said that he had received no response to his email to Ben Braine (BB) and Vicky Roscoe (VR) of 8th October and he had therefore resubmitted it on 4th November and copied it to Matthew Hale (MH), Senior Business Support Officer at WC, and Paul Millard (PM), Countryside Development Officer at WC. He had received the instant response that the gate did not have weights on it but that it wasn't bridleway compliant and that WC intended to speak with the landowner to see if it could be upgraded. As the response only referred to a single gate whereas there are two involved, NB resubmitted his email asking about the second gate but had not received a response. Ongoing.

2.17 (2.15) Melksham Without BR87 - EH had not looked to see if the barbed wire had been removed.

2.18 (2.16) Longbridge Deverill BR9 - NB said that he had included this in his emails described in 2.16 above but no information had been provided. Ongoing.

2.19 (2.55) Steeple Ashton RBY30 - a Kent gate was needed for this location so that it could be used by carriage drivers. Ongoing. (EH)

Gates - Swindon Borough Council (SBC)

2.20 (2.19) The Lane which runs from Hinton Parva in the parish of Bishopstone to Horpit in the parish of Wanborough. NB said that the situation had appeared in the minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 2nd September as follows: "The issue of an obstructed bridleway is ongoing and is being dealt with by SBC". He went on to say that at the WSCAF meeting on 6th November, MF had also commented on this matter stating that notice under The Highways Act 1980 section 143 had been served on the farmer requiring the removal of the concrete blocks and the bridleway being reinstated to its legal position. Ongoing. (RP)

Signage - North

2.21 (2.21) Milton Lilbourne BR18A - no change, ongoing. (RP)

2.22 (2.22) Barbury Shooting School - ongoing. (NB)

2.23 (2.24) Baydon BR4 - HE reported that the status on MyWilts was In Progress, no updates, no notes (report number 40593). Ongoing

2.24 (2.25) Baydon BR5 + BY17 - HE reported that the status on MyWilts was In Progress, no updates since 10.02.2022 (report number 54749).

2.25 (2.28) Tidcombe and Fosbury BR1 + BR2 - still outstanding, this needs a post, ongoing. (RP)

2.26 (2.29) Christian Malford BR9 - awaiting action by WC, ongoing. (NB)

2.27 (2.30) Signage required around the area of Westcourt, Burbage, Easton Royal, Milton Lilbourne, Wootton Rivers and Ram Alley - awaiting action by WC, ongoing. (NB)

2.28 (2.31) Grafton RBY15 - nothing happening, ongoing. (RP)

2.29 (2.32) Grafton RBY29 + RBY30 - nothing happening, ongoing. (RP)

2.30 (2.33) Fyfield BR25 - RP reported that there was nothing happening, ongoing.

Signage - South

2.31 (2.20) Winterbourne Stoke BR5 + Shrewton BY4 + BY5 - awaiting action by WC, ongoing. (NB)

2.32 (2.27) Chute BR4, BR36 + BR38 - this needed one post with three signs on it, ongoing. (RP)

Signage - West

2.33 (2.23) Bromham BR59 - RP said that she and Alison Rasey (AR) of WC had walked the bridleway and had agreed that it would need a diversion as it was very overgrown.

2.34 (2.26) Market Lavington BR24 - NB said that he now had the two signs and that he just needed to get them installed. (EH)

Surface and Spoil on the Bridleway - North

2.35 (2.35) Pewsey BR6 - no progress, awaiting action by WC, ongoing. HE undertook to get CHB to highlight this situation on Facebook. (NB)

2.36 (2.36) North Newnton BR8 - NB reported that following the flytipping having been resubmitted to WC on 9th October, it was once again recorded as "closed" by WC without explanation. NB went on to say that he had discussed it with WC PRoW management on 6th November and it appeared that the problem had been passed to the contractor by the department dealing with flytipping (not PRoW) and that once this had happened the report was automatically closed.

Surface and Spoil on the Bridleway - South

2.37 (2.38) Sedgemoor and Semley BR28 - NB said that the work had been due to be started at the end of October. Ongoing.

Surface and Spoil on the Bridleway - West

2.38 (2.37) Seend BR55 + Rowde BR21 - EH said that there was no new information, ongoing.

Overgrown Vegetation and Fallen Trees - North

2.39 (2.45) Pewsey BR69 - severely overgrown, ongoing. (RP)

2.40 (2.48) West Overton BR20 - overgrown with trees and bushes which reduced the height and width of the bridleway, HE reported that the status on MyWilts was In Progress (report number 00182245). She went on to say that there was a lot of work being done in West Woods over the winter and that she hoped that this would be cleared during that work.

2.41 (2.49) Fallen tree across Wilcot BR41 and Alton BR1 - HE said that she had heard that this had been cleared but she had not yet checked it. Ongoing.

Overgrown Vegetation and Fallen Trees - West

2.42 (2.39) Rowde BR19 - cul de sac blocked by a fallen tree, NB site visit awaited, ongoing.

2.43 (2.40) Chapmanslade BY31 - ongoing. (NB)

2.44 (2.41) Melksham Without BR41 - overgrown vegetation. NB said that he had asked for an update and the response from WC was that "it was on the list issued to one of the contractors". He understood that BB would check on the progress and update NB. Ongoing.

2.45 (2.42) West Ashton BR4 - bridleway and gate are reported as blocked, ongoing. (NB)

2.46 (2.43) Cheverell Magna BR12, Witchcombe Lane - no further information, ongoing. (EH)

2.47 (2.44) Seend BR41 and BR42 - reported as overgrown. NB visited on 24th October and said that both routes were clear with the exception of approximately sixty metres towards the northern end of BR42 which may require an element of clearance when the 2025 growing season starts. He went on to say that the evidence on the ground is that both routes are ridden regularly and are therefore passable. TO BE CLOSED

2.48 (4.01) NB said that he had received a report from Vicky Rieunier asking for advice on a blocked bridleway. He went on to say that he had asked for details of the problem on 7th October to which he had not received a response. TO BE CLOSED

2.49 (4.03) Alton BR2 (Workway Drove) had been on the list to be cleared by WC contractor and the work had been completed. TO BE CLOSED (HE)

Solar Farms

2.50 (2.50) Proposed solar farm in the Malmesbury area (Lime Down) - no news, ongoing. (NB)

2.51 (2.51) Proposed 160 acre solar farm which may affect Marden BR6, Wilsford BR6 + BR10 + BY7 - no information, ongoing. (RC)

2.52 (Annex List) Proposed solar farm at Potterne Park Farm - KDC reported that once again the developers had been allowed to submit additional documents following the end of the consultation period. The consultation had therefore been reopened and extended to 6th December. She said that she had read the new documents and had drafted a further objection for the WBA to submit to ensure that those involved in taking the decision were not under the misapprehension that the new information had changed the view of the WBA. The Committee agreed KDC's draft and she undertook to post it on the WC website.

Other

2.53 (2.52) Ogbourne St George BR7 - ongoing. (NB)

2.54 (2.53) Shalbourne BR50 - RP said that she had tried to contact Nicola Hartman a number of times by email and telephone but had not succeeded in getting a response. NB suggested that this issue should be highlighted on Facebook.

2.55 (2.54) Hullavington BY9 + BY32 - no progress. NB said that there is a lot of house building going on in that area and an extension to the school next to the large field in which the byways are situated.

2.56 (2.56) Durnford BR11 + Winterbourne BR27 - no information, ongoing. (RP)

2.57 (2.57) Chute BY35 - RP said that she had been told that there was no cooperation from the landowner and NB reported that at the WSCAF meeting on 6th November Alex Howson (AH) of WC had said that enforcement action was being considered. NB further said that Barbara MacMullen (BM) had reported to him that she had driven along the byway during the first week of the month and that there had been no change to the prevailing situation.

2.58 (2.58) Horse warning signs in the West Grafton/Burbage area - RP undertook to chase the Parish Council. Ongoing.

2.59 (2.59) Ramsbury FP5 + FP8C + BR6 + Little Bedwyn FP20 - no news, ongoing. (RC)

2.60 (2.60) Application to delete Ogbourne St George BY1, also known as Gypsy Lane, and add BOAT in the parish of Chiseldon. NB reported that at the WSCAF meeting on 6th November, MF had reiterated that this application affected both WC and SBC. However, the situation had become "very quiet" and he had no information on potential progress.

2.61 (2.61) This incident report (00145938) needed to be amended to read Trowbridge not Devizes, it concerns delivery vehicles illegally using the Trowbridge BR41A to access a local housing estate. NB went on to say that he visited the area on 5th November and the access of delivery vehicles as described by the complainant was not possible. He saw evidence of some casual use by cars or motorcycles made possible by one missing bollard but there was only pedestrian access to the housing estate from the bridleway. He spoke to a number of residents and pedestrians and all denied knowledge of illegal use by delivery vehicles. NB discussed the situation with PM on 6th November. He went on to say that bollards are in situ to prevent passage of utility vehicles when attending the adjacent electricity sub-station and arrangements are in hand to replace the missing bollard. TO BE CLOSED

2.62 (2.62) Search for new Chairman of the WBA - ongoing. (All)

2.63 (2.63) Search for new Filing Clerk for the WBA - ongoing. (All)

2.64 (2.64) Twenty-eight PRoW defect reports submitted by Clare Brixey - NB said that he was still working his way through the list. Ongoing.

2.65 (2.65) Savernake FP30 - RP said that although a number of people had been riding this footpath for years, none wanted to rock the boat by asking for an upgrade in case that were refused. TO BE CLOSED

2.66 (2.66) Collingbourne Ducis BR35 - no update, ongoing. (RP)

2.67 (2.67) Wilsford BR10 - NB said that although there were round bales on the bridleway, there was plenty of space to get round them. TO BE CLOSED

2.68 (2.68) West Lavington BR32 - enormous white plastic covered piles at the end of the bridleway although they were being reduced in size and it was possible to get round them. TO BE CLOSED (EH)

2.69 (2.69) NB reported that he was awaiting the relevant decisions following the consultation concerning locations for proposed new sites for the gypsy and travelling community. It was mentioned that land adjacent to Whistley Road, Potterne was a potential location.

3.00 Annex List

3.01 Alton BR4 - the distance between the marked exit onto the road and the location of the definitive exit is approximately thirty metres. The marked route is on a level with the road having good visibility in both directions. The definitive access is up a bank from the field and will require considerable clearance. This also has good visibility of both directions but, given the requirement to surmount the earth bank at that point, it creates an additional hazard for horse, rider and any traffic on the road. The speed limit on this road is 50mph. The BR is seldom, if ever, used as the landowner permits riders to use the field edge to access the network of other PRoWs. Following discussion it was agreed that the situation should be left as it was and that this should be added to the forthcoming newsletter. TO BE CLOSED

3.02 Alton BR2 and BR15 and Stanton St Bernard BR17 and FP4 - temporary blockage by livestock gathering pens in December 2023. TO BE CLOSED

3.03 A303 underpass and diversions (Stonehenge) - the new Government had announced that this project would no longer be undertaken. TO BE CLOSED

4.00 Correspondence

4.01 15th October - J Hughes at WC - DM and Statements for Chippenham FP24, Langley Burrell Without FP34 and FP42, Hankerton FP24 and FP26 and Stert BR11 - passed to NB for filing.

4.02 21st October - A Roberts at WC - application to add two footpaths in Latton.

4.03 1st November - J Green at WC - application to upgrade Wootton Bassett FP64 (Muddy Lane) to a BOAT. Order made, copy of order, order plan and Notice.

4.04 2nd November - email from NB, information on WSCAF meeting on 6th November.

4.05 2nd November - email from NB, additional information (DMMO problems) for WSCAF meeting on 6th November.

4.06 4th November - email from NB, copy of report sent to WC regarding Zeals BR22.

5.00 Any Other Business

5.01 NB had heard from Katie Smart that Kilmington BR1 had been incorrectly signed as a footpath - it had been reported to WC (report number 00191819). NB had visited the location on 28th October, rectified the signage and subsequently told the informant that this had been done. TO BE CLOSED

5.02 NB reported that he had visited Zeals BR22 to view the overgrown hedgerow. MyWilts did not accept his report and photographs and he had therefore submitted it by email to CC, AH and Carys Ford (CF) of WC. It had also been added to Facebook. Ongoing.

5.03 Pewsey BR6 - HE reported that she had been to look at the wooden planking. She said that the first bit wasn't too bad and that it was possible to get a horse alongside the "causeway" however the second bit was dangerous. The planks were broken and probably wouldn't take the weight of a horse, they had also been covered in chicken wire which probably provided a good grip for walkers but could get caught in a horse's shoe and cause a nasty accident. The "causeway" is slightly raised and there is only a narrow gap at each side which is overgrown, boggy and may contain a ditch so it would not be possible to ride a horse at the side of it.

5.04 Preshute BR31 - RP said that this had been blocked by a garden having been put across it. She said that it had been reported a number of times and SL's view was that this had been a problem for thirty years.

5.05 KDC suggested that something should be done to mark BM's long and much valued service to the WBA. Following discussion, she undertook to see if she could find a picture of the Tedworth which could be presented to BM.

6.00 Date of Next Meeting

6.01 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 7.30pm in the Marsden Room at the Quaker Meeting Rooms, Sussex Wharf, Devizes.

The meeting closed at 2140 hours.