

**Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**Online via Microsoft Teams, 6pm**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair  
Karen Burch (KB) – Deputy Chair  
Richard Leggett (RL)  
Mo Rapley (MR)  
Jillie Gardiner (JG)  
Paul Barrett (PB)  
David Stacey (DS)  
Geoff Williams (GW) – intermittent network issues

**Secretary** - Caroline Ferguson (CF) – CCC Countryside Access Manager

**Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public**

Councillor Hazel Evans (HE) CCC Executive Board Member for Environment  
Andrew Paterson (AP) CCC Common Land Officer  
Phil Morgan (PM) Natural Resources Wales

**Apologies:**

**Members:**

Michael Jones

**Advisors/Observers:**

Neil Thomas – CCC Senior Outdoor Recreation Manager  
Helen Grey - Natural Resources Wales

\*CCC in these minutes refers to Carmarthenshire County Council

\*\*NRW in these minutes refers to Natural Resources Wales

| ITEM  | ACTION           |
|---|------------------|
| <p><b>Items 1 - Welcome &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p>MH welcomed all to the meeting</p>   |                  |
| <p><b>Item 2 – New Members/Resignations</b></p> <p>MH introduced new advisor – Common Land Officer Andrew Patterson &amp; welcomed back Phil Morgan as NRW advisor.<br/>New member application to be considered – Steve Barratt, primary interest mountain biking.</p>  |                  |
| <p><b>Item 3 – Actions arising from Minutes</b></p> <p><u>UCR &amp; PROW mapping</u></p> <p>CF - when List of Streets is online UCR data could be integrated into PROW mapping as well. List of Streets audit needs to be completed first. Improved Highways defect reporting system will also integrate with PROW mapping and reporting.</p> <p>MH – positive steps</p> <p>KB – very positive, could member of Highways demo system when it is ready?</p> <p>MH – volunteer project, not progressed, Brechfa suggested as a project location, initially requires survey, on hold until CAMSweb is delivered and in use.</p> <p>CF – delivery of CAMSweb will be asap, in final approval stages.</p> <p>HE – LAF can't assist with speeding up process but will pass on forum support.</p> <p><u>Network Hierarchy</u></p> <p>CF – Member comments considered; rationale provided on CCC decisions where needed.</p> <p>MH – Good idea, way to prioritise limited resources</p> <p><u>Country Parks</u></p> <p>MH – Neil Thomas has provided team structure and key responsibilities. Issues should be reported to Neil. Current project is LLO access improvements.</p> <p><u>Self-Closing Bridle gates</u></p> <p>CF – BR gates installed will not be self-closing as standard, if requested they will meet or exceed BHS recommended closing time.</p> | <p><b>CF</b></p> |

## Annual Report

MH – report done, needs to be circulated to members so amendments can be made before next meeting.

## Active Travel

MH – conversing with Simon Charles about improved LAF engagement around AT. LAF Chairs meeting discussion highlighted tightening up of LAF roles and making AT consultation compulsory.

KB – will public AT consultation be improved too? Public in general are apparently unhappy with levels of local consultation (Sutrans information).

MH – query over article re: funding of TVP

CF – read TVP update and explanation re: MH funding query – CCC capital funding has been reduced not pulled, increased need to secure external funding.

## Performance Indicators

RL – update on 2021 aim for completion of PI.

CF – aim for 100% network survey once CAMSweb is live, no need for PI this year. If 100% survey is delayed we'll consider PI this year but ideally 100% this year and 5% PI's going forward.

RL – conscious of prior commitment

CF – prior to 100% survey commitment, not a good use of volunteer resource to do both.

KB – how long do CCC think it will take?

CF - dependent on number of volunteer numbers. Training will be provided to maximise efficiency.

JG – Would it be possible to begin training ahead of time.

CF – discussion with Ramblers Association in respect of preparing bespoke training package has begun

JG – How will RA train for equestrian routes

CF – RA will train in accordance with CCC requirements, training will be on all elements of the network and associated assets, equestrian expertise is not a key requirement for this volunteers or those training them.

## **Item 4 – Common Land Officer**

AP – gave verbal presentation of Common Land in CCC and its management.

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| <p>JG – will register provide information in respect of which Common Land has equestrian rights</p> <p>AP – all information on the paper-based record now will be available online. Urban &amp; Metropolitan Commons carry equestrian rights in all cases. Unfortunately, CCC register does not hold information in respect of which Commons are Urban or Metro.</p> <p>KB – How do horse riders find out?</p> <p>AP – have a non-definitive list he will circulate.</p> <p>MH – is there a map?</p> <p>AP – have a non-definitive digital copy. Happy to provide to forum members for information purposes. Will send to CF to fwd. to members.</p>  | <p><b>AP/CF</b></p> |
| <p><b>Item 5 – Access Reform Update</b></p> <p>CF – NRW officer has advised that presently the draft reform report produced for the Minister is not for LAF/public viewing yet. Expert groups have been consulted on draft &amp; comments have been considered. Final version will be completed by end of June, should be able to circulate to wider stakeholders after that.</p> <p>MH – extended conversation with NRW, initially about the complexity of the LAF ARAG consultation. Indications were that a second LAF consultation would take place but latest correspondence is that there is no intention of further engagement. Disappointing response, no further comments will be taken on board. John Morgan in discussion with NRW on the subject.</p> <p>KB – to be expected.</p>   |                     |
| <p><b>Item 6 – Issue Reports</b></p> <p>RL – maintenance figures have reduced, likely due to signposting project. If signpost figures are discounted, then issues continue to rise. Probable that increased use of network is the cause. Covid effect both positive and negative, good that public are making more use of network, puts LA under increased pressure and identifying most effective use of resources.<br/>Number of older issues are increasing; indicative of pressure team is under.<br/>WG guidance states sufficient resource should be allocated for PROW network management, difficult balance for LA and WG</p> <p>KB – WG investing so much in walking and cycling, statutory duty to make year on year improvements, statutory duties for PROWs carries same weight? Investment doesn't match.</p> <p>JG – something LAF Chair of Chairs could raise, not enough investment in existing statutory duties.</p> |                     |

HE – Cannot comment currently, by next meeting funding matters should be clearer.  
RL – is there a forum where members meet with WG to discuss PROW & access matters?

MH – will email John Morgan on subject, request issue is highlighted to WG

RL – the last year has highlighted value of outdoor access, physical and mental.

MH – Carms making good use of available resource but issue should be raised for the benefit of all LAs and their ability to comply with WG guidance.

RL –with other LA not providing issue data it's very difficult to challenge central government funding decisions.

CF – signposting project intentionally tackled a specific issue; we consider the project was a success as was the associated reduction in overall issue numbers.

RL – very good piece of work that is helpful to people

KB – could LAF send official thanks to HoS?

### **Item 7 – Delivery of 2020-2021 Projects**

CF - Major project of 134 signposts on paths with data that suggested were open and available. 11 instances where installation was refused, we intend to go back and install with enforcement as necessary.

All ability route Swiss Valley, good success with joint working alongside Llanelli Rural Council, will be subject to promotion.

Delivery of Kidwelly Byways project delayed, moving to 2021-22

Byway signposting project delivered instead, 39 BOAT signposts, similarly routes that we are aware are open based on the data we hold.

MH – has had good feedback on BOAT signposting project, all positive, congratulations for successful delivery. 2021-22 projects?

CF - 2021-22 Projects are in early stages, we have developed a forward work programme to prioritise and budget strategic maintenance and improvement projects, also capital bridges programme to maintain assets on the network. Community proposals are being considered alongside LA proposals; in these cases LA are asking for volunteers from communities to help with maintenance.

KB – what areas?

CF – varied, Kidwelly, Llanybydder, Tycroes, some are County wide, other to add.

KB – encouraging riders to engage with their Community Councils.

MH – promotion will be important.

**Item 8 – Re-election of LAF**

MH – special powers to extend LAF term until December 2021

CF – Begin process in Autumn rather than Dec, don't want to leave it too late.

MH – Any objections to extending term?

None

MH - proposed

JG – seconded

**Item 9 – AOB**

CF – New WG guidance relates to cases where DMMOs are referred to Pins if LA hasn't made a decision inside 12 months. LA can be instructed to process Order, guidance introduces 6 months window for that instruction to be completed.

MH – Carms have applications over 1 year statutory decision period

CF - many but they will not automatically all be referred, DMMO applicant would have to actively refer their application. Could have a bearing on prioritisation of Orders if a Pins instruction is received.

CF – Email from JG re: Enforcement policy, this is a commitment in ROWIP, we're behind by a year due to COVID, will be next major piece of work after Equestrian Strategy.

CF – Equestrian Strategy – questionnaire development underway (to include equestrians, businesses, other road users, community councils, councillors), will go live after Purdah for 4 weeks. Will send to LAF in draft survey to test questions and system. Hope to have a draft strategy by September.

CF – County Walks – email received to request re-introducing some old County Walks, no intention currently as no capacity in the service. Routes removed were not sustainable, worthy of promotion, situation hasn't changed.

MH – Discover Carmarthenshire – positive project giving good information, great tourism resource.

PM – NRW website holds walking and cycling information which would be worth linking to Discover Carms.

JG – Tourism Cluster groups also have community walks/trails that could link

MH – Will forward suggestion to Martin Murray

**MH**

KB – Equestrian trails/opportunities are not included; these serve walkers and cyclists as well. Could equestrian access be integrated into Discover Carmarthenshire promotion where it is also available as part of the same activity, to inform public of breadth of access opportunities at sites.

RL – also overview location map would help tourists identify location of facilities and proximity to each other.

MH – will feed both suggestions back.

DS – received email re: legality of permissive cycling on PROWs. Has significant implications for shared use paths.

MH – will raise with HoS.

PM – NRW Forestry Resource Plan consultation, management proposals for next 10 years, can circulate to members for comment, deadline 22<sup>nd</sup> May 21.

MH – not a great deal about PROWs, may request more details around PROWs and working with LA to tighten up plan.

PM – Health and well-being values bring in ROWIP considerations.

KB – also thought PROW and public access was minimalist, additionally quite hard to find link to consultation.

MH – will circulate consultation link to LAF with comments for members to contribute before submission.

MH – Budget consultation – forum response was simply prioritisation and recognition of PROW team.

MH - BBNP Consultation – will circulate to LAF for comments.

JG – again, walking and cycling, no equestrian consideration.

MH – also negative towards farming

MH – LAF Commented on draft Agricultural Bill consultation, raising lack of PROW and Access considerations as a concern.

MH – New Countryside Code, is it now on CCC website?

CF – link to NRW Countryside Code page on CCC website.

**MH**

**MH**

**MH**

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|--|---|
| <p>MH – code includes black arrow on white background requirement for UCRs, do Highways know about that?</p> <p>CF – will pass on to Highways for information</p> <p>MH – <u>Mountain Bike Audit of Trails</u> circulated by marketing team for members to respond. LAF to be kept in loop going forward.</p> <p>MR – <u>National TRF Green Road Mapping project</u> – brought more activity to the area. Has brought some negative reaction as public do not appreciate status of UCRs and lawful right to motorcycle. TRF will match fund any signposting or public engagement activities/projects to improve relations. Could BUG meeting or similar be set up to explore opportunities.</p> <p>MH – keen to re-start BUG meetings</p> <p>PM – NRW seen increased use, regular instances of trespass so signposting would be welcome.</p> <p>MR – all local TRF fundraising will be assigned to this and it will be matchfunded by head office.</p> <p>MH – GLASS would likely be keen to join forces on the scheme</p> <p>KB – excellent idea, improving relations with horse riders appears to be a high priority for motorcyclists.</p> <p>JG – GIS project for Brechfa could benefit from knowing which routes are open and available.</p> <p>MH – continue conversation via email with a view scheduling a meeting.</p> <p>KB – current situation with Pembrey Equestrian parking Order?</p> <p>MH – will ask HoS.</p> | <p><b>CF</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>MH/MR</b></p> <p><b>MH</b></p> |
| <p><b>Item 11 – Next Meeting</b></p> <p>July 8<sup>th</sup> agreed.</p>  |   |