

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 12th March 2020

Carmarthen Leisure Centre, 6pm

Present:

Members:

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair
Richard Leggett (RL)
Mo Rapley (MR)
Geoff Williams (GW)
Jillie Gardiner (JG)
Glyn Evans (GE)
David Stacey (DS)
Gerald Brown (GB)

Secretary (interim)

Caroline Ferguson (CF) – (CCC Acting Countryside Access Manager)

Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public

Steve Pilliner (CCC)
Lucy Pugh (LP) - CCC Countryside Access Assistant
Martin Murray (MM) – CCC PRow Development Officer
Rob Williams (RW) – Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF)
Nigel Bailey (NB) – Walking Well St Clears
Clive Poulton (CP)
Phillip Morgan (PM) - NRW Team Leader Land Management
David Bleines (DB) - NRW People & Places Officer, South West

Apologies: Members:

Karen Burch (KB) – LAF vice Chair
Paul Barrett (PB)
Michael Jones (MJ)

Advisors/Observers:

Cllr. Hazel Evans

Absent:

Jane Evans
Neil Thomas (CCC)

*CCC in these minutes refers to Carmarthenshire County Council

**NRW in these minutes refers to Natural Resources Wales

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Items 1 - Welcome & Introduction</p> <p>MH welcomed all to the meeting and introduced new observers/advisors.</p>	
<p>Item 2 - New Members/Resignations</p> <p>CF – Paul Barrett resigned from the LAF effective from November 2020. MH/CF – sent thanks for his contribution to the forum. CF – Clive Poulton is considering joining the LAF.</p>	
<p>Item 3 - Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were taken and recorded.</p>	
<p>Item 4 – Matters arising from Minutes - not otherwise Agenda Items</p> <p><u>National Cycle Network Barrier Removal</u> DS: Barriers have been removed now, but it has not led to a significant issue of motorbike usage.</p> <p><u>Brechfa Windfarm Public Liability</u> JG: Waiting for further info from NRW re liability post construction. PM: Not familiar with topple distance legislation / case law. GW / JG to forward legislation to PM.</p>	<p>GW / JG</p>
<p>Item 5 – Public Access Management in Leisure</p> <p>Neil Thomas not present – discussion turned to general Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Management:</p> <p>SP: Capital budget p.a.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £50k additional allocation for ROWIP • £7k efficiency savings • £52k carried forward <p>In view of the savings that needed to be made, PRoW has not suffered excessively. Need to try to utilise volunteers as much as possible plus increase revenue from Orders.</p> <p>Tywi Valley Path has capital allocation. External funding options are also being investigated.</p> <p>JG: Will PRoWs be included as part of the Ash Dieback program? SP: Priority will be to address the main roads.</p>	

<p>CF: Trees on PRowS are generally considered to be a lower risk and will be addressed on a reactive basis.</p> <p>JG: The definition of Active Travel is being revised by some Local Authorities to include equestrianism.</p> <p>SP: Please can further details / references be provided.</p> <p>MH: What impact will the budget have in terms of staffing issues etc? SP: It should lead to gradual improvements.</p> <p>MH: What is the latest with the Tywi Valley Path project? SP: Currently undertaking landowner negotiations, Planning requirements, ecology surveys.</p> <p>CF: BBNP LAF are currently being advised about a similar route between Brecon and Hay.</p>	<p>JG</p>
<p>Item 6 – County Walks / Walking Promotion</p> <p>MM: The Marketing dept would like to promote walking this year. There are currently themed walks on the website to include River Walks, Coastal Walks etc. They would like to increase the content, possibly by including videos and commentaries of the walks.</p> <p>A4 printable route summaries with a map will be available on the website, but as not everyone has print facilities, the routes are also being made available on Plotaroute (which has a GPX download facility), and other downloadable media and apps are being considered.</p> <p>MH: Would need promoting as Tourism Operators are probably not aware. GW: Feedback from the public would be valuable. PM: There are also promoted walks on the NRW website – would be good to have reciprocal links on the websites. RL: Would need to ensure that the info is easy for people to find, and that it is kept up to date with details of any obstructions or other relevant info. MM: We would also be happy to hear suggestions for other walks. CP: There is little info for disabled access online. DS: It would be valuable to add access info to the downloads. JG: Are there categories for disabled access? Would be useful to know.</p>	<p>MM</p>
<p>Item 7 – Access Reform</p> <p>CF: The first series of meetings of the Expert Groups started in Feb 2020 and the process is expected to take a year. A draft report of proposals informed by the 3 expert groups should be ready to be presented to the Minister by March 2021. DB: LAFs will be given the opportunity to comment.</p>	

<p>Item 8 – PRow Signposting</p> <p>MM: 141 highway signposts have been replaced/installed over the last 3 years. The usual procedure is to install the highway signpost once all other works on the path have been completed.</p> <p>MH: Suggest ensuring that any new signpost have the sticker warning that removal or interference with the signpost could lead to a £1000 fine.</p> <p>CF: Will feed back to Maintenance Manager.</p>	CF
<p>Item 9 – NRW Area Statements</p> <p>DB: The online version of the Area Statements is under continuous review.</p> <p>MH: Please can DB provide an outline of what an Area Statement is? The Area Profile document is available and is an interesting read.</p> <p>DB: Area Statements result from the Environment Act and address the state of our natural resources and the challenges faced. <i>DB to produce a summary of the comments from the South West region.</i></p> <p>MH: NRW harvesting operations can destroy PRowS.</p> <p>PM: Any PRowS affected by harvesting operations should be reinstated. If there are any issues, they should be reported by telephoning 03000 65 3000.</p>	DB
<p>Item 10 – Sustrans Cycle Network – Paths for All</p> <p>Deferred to next meeting as KB not present.</p>	
<p>Item 11 – LAF Annual Report</p> <p>MH: The draft report has been sent out to LAF Members – please advise of any amendments that are required.</p> <p>RL: Can it be signed off by correspondence before the next LAF meeting so that publication can be brought forward?</p> <p>MH: Please submit any amendments by 12th April.</p>	LAF Members
<p>Item 12 – Issue Reporting</p> <p>RL: RL provided a summary of his analysis of the issue trends and noted that the number of outstanding issues continues to trend upwards. The 5% annual survey that is used as a Performance Indicator will be due very shortly. There is no easy way to report on issues on ORPAs as they are logged on different systems within the Council.</p> <p>SP: The LAF could consider lobbying the Welsh Government for additional resources using the issue statistics.</p> <p>RL: May also be worth approaching political representatives.</p>	

Item 13 – AOB

MH: Please can the LAF have an update on Cardi Bach and Pontfelin Gat?

CF: Cardi Bach is in very early stages of feasibility study for multiuser route. None of the former line is presently a registered PROW in Carmarthenshire. The Legal team are dealing with a public footpath claim based on user evidence on a short section of the route.
Pont Felin Gat is an area of land at the rear of the Botanic Gardens that used to be open to the public to use freely. It was closed for redevelopment last year and now might be subject to a claim of public rights, currently under discussion.

GW: It is the LAF Chair’s meeting tomorrow (13th March) in Newtown.

MH: Nobody from Carms LAF is able to attend.

PM: There is a closure of the Open Access Land in Brechfa on 21st and 22nd March for Dyfed Dirt Bikes.

JG: Brechfa Windfarm – 2 waymarked permissive trails are being created within Brechfa West – will there be consultation on this?

PM: Will check.

CF: PRoW Staffing – approval has been given for a 2 year Fixed Term Assistant post, plus the use of a Consultant.

A Charging Policy has been developed that allows landowners to have pedestrian gates installed free of charge where they replace more restrictive furniture such as stiles. It is hoped that this will lead to improved access.

The Equestrian Strategy is scheduled to be available in draft in a year. Some of the strategy will be aspirational subject to funding as with the ROWIP.

PM

Item 14 – Future Agenda Items

- Cambrian Mountains Initiative – presentation by David Wyn Morgan
- LAF Chairs Meeting
- Public Service Boards
- Wind Farm Community Fund – presentation from Moishe Merry
- Equestrian Strategy
- Sustrans Cycle Network – Paths for All (brought forward)
- Marketing & Promotion of Walking/County Walks
- Public Access Management in Leisure – Neil Thomas (brought forward)

Item 15 – Next meetings

~~11th June 2020 – Tywi Centre, Llandeilo~~ *Postponed Covid19*
10th September 2020 – Carmarthen Leisure Centre
3rd December 2020 - Tywi Centre, Llandeilo