

**Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Online via Microsoft Teams, 6pm**

**Present:**

**Members:**

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair  
Richard Leggett (RL)  
Mo Rapley (MR)  
David Stacey (DS)  
Paul Barrett (PB)  
Sean Brown (SB)  
Phil Snaith (PS)  
Dave Gravelle (DG)

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

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

Councillor Hazel Evans (HE) CCC Cabinet Member for Environment  
Clive Poulton (CP) (Disabled Access spokesman)  
Catherine Nakielny (CN)  
Phil Morgan (PM) (NRW)

**Apologies: Members:**

Karen Burch (KB) – Deputy Chair  
Jillie Gardner (JG)  
Andy Pughsley (AP)

**Advisors/Observers:**

Stephen Pilliner – CCC Head of Transportation and Highways  
Neil Thomas – CCC Senior Outdoor Recreation Manager  
Andrew Patterson – CCC Common Land Officer

\*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>CF - Welcomed all new and previous members to the inaugural “new LAF” meeting and gave apologies as listed above.</p>	
<p><b>Item 2 – Election of NEW LAF Chair</b></p> <p>CF – Only one person has put their name forward - Mark Hadley – presentation by Mark Hadley to introduce himself to new members.</p> <p>DS - Proposed Mark Hadley as Chairman.</p> <p>RL – Seconded.</p> <p>CF - Welcomed Mark Hadley as new Chairman.</p> <p><b>Item 3 – Election of Deputy Chair for NEW LAF</b></p> <p>CF – Only one person has come forward for Deputy Chair – Karen Burch, Karen has had an emergency and cannot be with us, she has sent her presentation, which CF read.</p> <p>SB - Proposed Karen Buch as Deputy Chair.</p> <p>RL – Seconded.</p> <p>Observers invited to introduce themselves following election process.</p> <p>Philip Morgan (NRW) - team leader of NRW forestry operations management covering Carmarthenshire.</p> <p>Clive Poulton – Chairman for Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition and Carmarthenshire 50 plus and interests in two walking projects, general interest in walks for Disabled people.</p> <p>Catherine Nakielny - Sheep farmer from Talley near Llandeilo – interested in Public Access from the Farmers perspective and interest in access for land owned by public.</p> <p><b>Item 4 – INTRODUCTORY REMARKS FROM NEW CHAIR</b></p> <p>MH - Thanked everyone for reelection and looking forward to a productive term of three years and hoping any new members will enjoy their time as being part of the LAF.</p>	

**Item 5 ACTIONS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING (SEPT 9<sup>TH</sup> 2021)**

Page 3

MH - Advice note produced regarding illegal raves on NRW land requesting CCC, NRW, LAF and the Police liaise with users concerning closures – going forward how can we manage this?

**MH/CF**

MH & CF to act as contact points to move information forward.

Page 4

MH - Digital map of common land – Any news from Andrew Patterson?

CF – Yes have chased, but will do so again.

**CF**

MH - LAF Minutes to be produced more quickly – are we actioning this, this year?

CF – Yes, intend to task a member of PROW team with write up.

MH - Pembrey Parking update requested.

CF – Checked and was informed by Pembrey Country Park Manager that they are unable to utilise the disused parking area as it has been designated a conservation area, so unable to do any works there to make it fit for purpose.

CP – Should bring forward a complaint re: access parking, conservation not an acceptable excuse for restricting access.

CF – Provided explanation of this particular site enquiry, currently disused area in Pembrey CP, LAF had queried possible use for additional parking.

Page 5

MH - Kidwelly Byways report – advice note sent out – is that being looked at?

CF - No allocation of new lead officer as yet (staff shortages) – more detail to follow.

Page 6

MH - Email from Richard about 100% network survey, any further comments?

RL - Yes, we were told that the new version of CAMS (Countryside Access Management System) would be live August/September, obviously been delays in implementation do we have a new live start date?

CF – Outlined what CAMS Web is, how it will work in relation to Public Rights of Way, and what we expect of it when it's in place. Training expected shortly which will bring staff up to date and then a "soft" launch by mid Feb where LAF members (and other selected groups) will be asked to help test the system. Thereafter, full launch in March to coincide with a Town and Community Council Forum meeting where we will be launching and publicising the CAMS web system and asking for more volunteers to assist.

RL – Raised question of ROWIP delivery plan Review

CF

MH - To be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Page 7

LAF annual report – checked online, only seem to have up to 2018 online?

CF

CF - 2020 has not been translated yet, 2019 - will check why that's not online.

CF

MH - ALSO minutes only online up to April 2021 can we chase it up please?

CF

PB – Substantial gaps in minutes back to December 2019, nothing for 2020 and July and September 2021 all missing – need to check this back and tighten up.

RL – Can we please explain Acronyms – I feel this is important or new members will lose continuity. Also, in relation to CAMS WEB –as Lucy has now moved to another department, leaving an IT gap will her replacement have the necessary IT management skills for CAMS WEB?

CF – In the short term Lucy will continue to administrate CAMS. We will not be recruiting a CAMS officer as it is not part of core function. If we need CAMS development Exegisis (software provider) can pick that up at a fee. We do expect to have a full team with two team new members by end Feb/March.

#### **Item 6 – EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY UPDATE**

CF - Was due to go to committee in November, has been delayed until March. The data analysis is almost complete, hoping to schedule a stakeholder meeting with all relevant parties by end of January, with a LAF subgroup meeting in February. Thereafter, a finalised draft to CMT in March.

#### **Item 7 – PROJECTS UPDATE**

CF - We are moving towards project-based work in an effort to manage the network more effectively.

AIG (Access Improvement Grant) - spend has been completed apart from a Bridleway in Cefneithin which requires legal work.

Category A -The Whole PRoW Network has now been categorised as priority A to E. All of the outstanding maintenance works on the Cat A network is done, the Legal work is underway, but not complete as there are statutory timescales to follow. Whilst working on this project officers have identified several unreported areas with “room for improvement” on category A routes. They will hopefully be completed as well if funding allows.

Cilycwm Multiuser - the Cilycwm multiuser project has been postponed until next year, as the peat bog area needs to be done at a more appropriate time of year - summer months.

Rhandirmwyn Multiuser - replaces Cilycwm. All physical works here have been costed and scheduled. There is a legal issue at Coleg Eidr which will need to go before Magistrates, but we are not expecting any objections to this.

Kidwelly Byways – there is currently no staffing to allow this to move forward, the money is available for next year, which looks likely to be more achievable than bringing it in this year. There is a “back up” project in the form of Ffoslas racecourse area which has suffered considerable surface damage from heavy use and excess water.

One big project proposed for next year is the former open cast site known as Gilfach Iago. Agreement now reached with Celtic Energy, the former owner, to transfer the reinstatement responsibility to the Authority with a financial settlement to go with it. The work will be going out to tender early this year with delivery for next financial year. It will deliver three Bridleways and enable all the FPs to connect up, opening up a considerable area for recreational use.

PS Will there be a need to complete Orders for all the new PRowS in Gilfach Iago? Also, a request for all new members be given past minutes, to allow them to become au fait with the ongoing projects. Also expressing concerns for preserving rights for cyclists on the Gilfach Iago site.

CF Yes, I will ensure that all members have copies of past minutes  
RE: Gilfach Iago, yes, the roads have to be reclassified as Bridleways by legal Order, it will have full public consultation as required by statute.

CF

## Item 8 - ACCESS REFORM

CF – Gave a brief background for new members - Welsh Government (WG) Access Reform Consultation and advised new members, that as this is a very large and complicated undertaking, to do some background reading and research around this area, using the online information available. Especially the latest Ministers' report that was published on 29.12.2021 it is very detailed.

NRW now tasked with providing additional information on group 1 reforms – liaison groups have been set up for each reform proposal, they now need to finalise, develop reform options and produce an advice report by April 2022.

## Item 9 – ISSUE REPORTS

RL – firstly to say that it is helpful to get these stats and we should be very grateful to the CA team, in particular Lucy, in developing the framework for this information.

At the moment it looks as though things have stabilised in the maintenance team over the last year. There was a big jump in 2020 and we have not fallen back to pre 2020 levels.

We should ask what is an acceptable level of issues?

We are aware that the gaps in the legal team may have contributed to the outstanding issues which doubled over the last five years and the number of issues older than three and five years have increased significantly.

Obviously we need more funding to deal with these issues, and this may be a dialogue for CCC and WG.

HE – Thank you Richard, appreciate the analysis provided.

Obviously COVID has affected the work needed with increased reporting of issues due to higher user numbers. There has been a report through cabinet for PROW network hierarchy that will determine how demand will be dealt with in the future. We're also trying to work out funding and asking more town and community councils to take some responsibility in their own areas.

Hopefully any new measures will be able to help reduce the numbers of issues being reported.

PB – General stats – oldest legal obstruction issue is dated 2003-04 and oldest legal alignment issue is dated 2005-06 what is happening with these?

CF – We have to deal with this by priority. Those older issues possibly could be on routes that are little used.

This is where the hierarchy can help, category Ds & Es must wait, we just don't have the resources to deal with all these, we have to consider level of use and level of risk. A comprehensive survey will help the prioritisation.

PB – Wont the 100% survey bring a lot more to the fore?

CF – Yes, and it give us a base to move forward and make best use of resources.

MH – Is it likely that some of these could have been resolved and not reported?

CF – Yes

MH – Circulate copy of the hierarchy please?

CF – OK.

**CF**

#### **Item 10 - AOB**

PS - Raise awareness of Gwendraeth Valley Multiuser path – currently owned by Network Rail, who are looking to dispose of it.

MH – This was raised by Samara Hicks during Active Travel presentation last Sept (2021).

CF - It would be useful to invite some outside contributions to the meeting, i.e. presentations say on behalf of the National Sheep holders Association for example – If anyone has any ideas, please bring them forward.

**ALL**

CF - If anyone else can think of anyone who can bring outside contributions please bring it forward to the meeting please – it would be good to bring some new topics into the mix.

**ALL**

SB - We are Copied in on emails for Planning Applications - what should we be looking for?

MH - We started doing this as we were asked to comment if necessary? Hopefully if this is in your area then please make sure that they are not encroaching etc.

MH - Can the rights of way team carry on with the system of sending them to everyone on the mailing list?

CF – Confirmed this can be done.

MH - Can any LAF member responding to any Planning Consultation ensure that Mark Hadley be cc'd in please?

**ALL**

**Item 11 - Dates of 2022 meetings**

CF - Can we move to another day to secure more attendance? Especially, to secure a more diverse input from the Leisure team.

MH – In the absence of agreement it was decided to leave in abeyance, check and circulate possible dates via email.

MH – Just to confirm are we still meeting online for the foreseeable future?

CF – It would seem so for the moment, there are no plans to review the regulations.

MH - Thanked everyone for attending.