

**Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2014**

**Held at Carmarthen Leisure Centre, Johnstown at 6pm**

**Present:**

Jonathan Tudor (JT) - Secretary

**Members:**

Mark Hadley (MH) - Vice Chair

Caroline Evans (CE)

Glyn Evans (GE)

Keith Morgan (KM)

Eric Davies (ED)

Jillie Gardiner (JG)

Chris Rankin (CR)

David Stacey (DS)

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

Geoff Williams (GW) – Ramblers

Ceri Daugherty (CD) – NRW

Lindsey Curtis (LC) - Sustrans

**Apologies (Members)**

Karen Burch (KB) - Chair

Llew Thomas (LT)

Rosemary Jones (RJ)

**Apologies (Advisors)**

Cllr. Deryk Cundy (DC) – CCC Chair of  
Community Scrutiny Committee

Rory Dickinson (RD) – CCC

Countryside & Coast Manager

Cllr. Meryl Gravell - CCC Executive

Board Member

Phil Stone - NRW

Mike Scott-Archer - BBNP LAF

	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>Item 1 Welcome</b> – MH welcomed all to the meeting.	
<b>Item 2 Apologies</b> – Apologies were taken and recorded.	
<b>Item 3 Sustrans Cymru: Presentation - Lindsey Curtis, NCN Area Manager</b>  LC introduced herself as Sustrans National Cycle Network Area Manager. LC said her role was promoting and maintaining the National Cycle Network in the region and to champion good design. Surveys have shown that only 19% of users of the network knew about Sustrans. JG asked about access for horse riders. LC explained that Sustrans is a charity with the primary aim of enabling people to travel on foot, by bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. Their objective is that by 2020, 4 out of 5 journeys under 5 miles will be made on foot, by bike or on public transport. This contributes to health and wellbeing and environmental agenda and enables people to save money by not using their cars. Also:  Sustrans also work with schools to make streets surrounding schools more child-friendly.	

Sustrans works in 3 ways:

1. Improving our streets, spaces and environment
2. Increasing skills and confidence
3. Influencing e.g. Welsh Government as well as local councils. This contributed towards the Active Travel Act.

Sustrans Bike It project works in schools teaching cycling skills and encouraging children to cycle safely to schools: <http://www.betterbybike.info/schools-youth/youth-projects/bike-it-project>

GW asked about the new school in Llandeilo and whether there were facilities for storing/locking up bikes. LC believe that bike storage is being provided.

Sustrans also produces a variety of free leaflets promoting routes – the Swiss Valley leaflet was recently re-printed to coincide with the National Eisteddfod held in Llanelli. It also produces guides on traffic-free routes: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/wales/national-cycle-network/free-leaflets-and-maps>

LC said Sustrans is proud of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which aims to provide more information on safe usable routes for the public and requires Councils to plan improvements and new routes. Walkers and cyclists will now have to be considered as part of the planning process. The process of implementing the legislation will be rolled out over the coming years. The first stage is mapping existing routes. There will be a legal duty to promote walking and cycling.

CD said NRW are also looking to promote access for other users including horse riders. Discussion followed about appropriate surfaces to enable routes to be multi-user where possible and appropriate.

Sustrans maintain their own routes e.g. the Swiss Valley trail. However, they only have 2 maintenance people to cover the whole of South and Southwest Wales. Recently, some fixed A-frames have been removed to enable use by pushchairs and wheelchairs. This has also allowed access to horse riders but unfortunately some landowners do not want horse riders over their land. LC said there are plans to develop NCN Route 4 in the Pembrey area with a 10k circular route.

LC concluded here presentation and was thanked by MH.

**Item 4 Consideration/Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd May 2014**

The minutes were checked and accepted as correct subject to minor alteration.

**Item 5 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014**

- **Brechfa Windfarm Connection Project** – the preferred route had just been announced.
- **Google sharing platform** – JG had set up a ‘shared drive’ online that could be used by the LAF but was asked to re-circulate information about it.
- **Town/Community Councils** - GW said that the Ramblers’ groups were looking into how they could establish a link with Town and Community Councils and the Walkers are Welcome towns/villages of Llandeilo and Llandovery.
- **Ranger Reports** – Alan Warner, Countryside Operations Manager was looking to

<p>provide regular updates on maintenance and improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amman Valley Cycleway</b> – An email from Nigel Skinner, CCC Transport and Engineering, gave an update.</li> <li>• <b>Active Travel/Walking and Cycling Strategy</b> – An email from Simon Charles, CCC Transport, Strategy and Infrastructure provided an update.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Item 6 NRW Dog Walking Strategy</b></p> <p>JT had circulated consultation documentation from NRW regarding their proposed Dog Walking Strategy. A response by the LAF was required by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014. Comments to be sent to JT to collate and submit on behalf of the LAF.</p> <p>MH raised concerns from the LAF Chair, KB, about loose dogs being exercised as a pack causing issues for horse riders. There had been a recent incident at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park. KB thought that any dog walking advice should address this issue.</p>	<b>ALL</b>
<p><b>Item 7 LAF Chairs Conference</b> – Report - JT</p> <p>JT reported that John Griffiths, AM, Minister for Culture and Sport (at that time) had giving a speech stating that following the Review of Outdoor Access Legislation there would be no immediate legislation but a Green Paper would be issued outlining possible changes. The Wales Coast Path had made a £32 million contribution to the Welsh economy in 2 years. RoWIPs funding had improved the proW network during a time of recession. LAFs were essential advisors to WG/NRW and Local Authorities. Glastir was aimed at targeting resources at paths that would be used.</p> <p>In a Q&amp;A session the minister a number of issues were put to the minister:</p> <p>JT asked if, following the recent review, the Minister recognised that substantive legislative change is required to improve access opportunities to land and inland water for the people of Wales. JT pointed out that the voluntary access agreement approach to improving access to inland water had failed as a policy yet the Minister still seemed to be adopting that approach. JT also asked if the Minister accepted that whilst consultation with stakeholders was an important part of the legislative process, there is a danger that powerful and well-organised can hijack that process and effectively sabotage meaningful change to the detriment of the interests of the silent majority of people in Wales who probably will not be even be aware that a specialist consultation is taking place.</p> <p>Questions were also put regarding Cross-Compliance under the Single Farm Payment Scheme to encourage land owners/managers to ensure they complied with public rights of way legislation. Concerns were expressed about future finance, access for horse riders and motorised access.</p> <p>Other sessions during the day covered, Review of LAF Working Practices, a plan from NRW to review and promote longer distance routes (which take a day or longer) to compliment the WCP and National Trails, an update on the ‘Come Outside’ Project.</p>	
<p><b>Item 8 St Illtyd’s Walk</b> – JT</p> <p>JT reported on an initiative by Swansea Ramblers to review, revive and re-sign St Illtyd’s Walk a long distance route from Pembrey to Margam Abbey. KB had</p>	

<p>asked Richard Beale from Swansea Ramblers for more information about how this would be financed. At present, Richard was trying to garner support for the idea in principle and seeking the views of the relevant LAs Carmarthenshire, NPT and Swansea before feeding back to NRW.</p>	
<p><b>Item 9 General Update – Common Agricultural Policy Reform – WG Cross-Compliance Proposals - JT</b></p> <p>JT outlined proposals in a consultation from Welsh Government that he had replied to. They included a proposal that public rights of way should be included under cross-compliance, as they are in England where they are subject to the requirement to keep land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC8). There is a view that this should be implemented as many landowner/farmers are receiving public money under this scheme and a requirement to keep public rights of way open and unobstructed was not unreasonable in that context. However, there was an alternative view from some landowners and farming unions that such a requirement should not be part of an Agricultural Scheme.</p>	
<p><b>Item 10 – AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bronwydd &amp; Newchurch County Walk – JT was asked to check status of some of the routes by GE.</li> </ul>	<p><b>JT</b></p>
<p><b>Item 11 Date/Location of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>All meetings are held on Thursdays at 6pm at Carmarthen Leisure Centre as follows:</p> <p><b>20<sup>th</sup> November 2014</b></p>	