

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

Thursday 19th January 2017 (following Dec 8th 2016 postponement)

Carmarthen Leisure Centre, Carmarthen, 6pm

Present:

Members:

Mark Hadley (MH) - Chair
Karen Burch (KB) – Vice Chair
Richard Leggett (RL)
Geoff Williams (GW)
Caroline Evans (CE)
Chris Rankin (CR)
Gerald Brown (GB)

Secretary (interim)

Caroline Ferguson (CCC) (CF)

Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public

Jason Lawday (JL) (Countryside Access Assistant)
Martin Kelly (MK),
Bethan Edwards (BE) (Innogy)
Glyn Lloyd-Jones (GJ) (Natural Resources Wales)

Apologies (Members)

Alan Warner (AW) – CCC Maint representative
David Stacey (DS)
Glyn Evans (GE)
Edward Percy (EP)
Jillie Gardner (JG)
Jane Evans (JE)

Apologies (Advisors/Observers)

Marie George (MG)(NRW)
Councillor Derek Cundy

*CCC in these minutes refers to Carmarthenshire County Council

ITEM	ACTION
Items 1 Welcome & Introduction MH MH welcomed all to the meeting. All attendees introduced themselves.	
Item 2 Brechfa Wind Farm (moved from item 6) MK & BE Overview and introduction of project with PowerPoint presentation. Development consent for project given 12/03/13, 06/10/16 consent for grid access given. Overview identified existing forest roads to be used, and new roads to be constructed, and affected PRoW's.	

CE asked if any turbine locations had been changed – MK said no, but that some turbines may be moved slightly within an accepted 50m radius movement deviation, none of these are near PRoW, but some are near forest roads.

GW felt that some turbines may be within topple distance, CF explained TAN 8 guidance, and that the turbine locations should comply as matter would have been raised during the planning process and the development of the Public Access Management Plan.

BE explained current status – works commenced on main access road November 2016 and Planning Conditions were presently being discharged.

CF explained these planning conditions covered whole site and surrounding highway network being used for construction traffic.

MK stated that project program going well, main access now built. First four bases coming end of January, with first turbines to be delivered in July 2017, and expects to be ready by the end of October 2017. The first power generation intended by end of November 2017. Developers will be on site until June 2018, and then will run down the project.

CR queried possible overrun penalties.

BE Stated that the line in is in construction.

KB asked when public access will resume.

BE stated that new signage had been erected this week. MK stated that public access would resume once major works have been completed and reinstatement works started, with partial opening in sections from early next year. He also stated that work could possibly be delayed by high winds.

CE asked if the works would be carried out by Irish workers. MK responded that that would be up to the contractors.

MH queried what PRoW's would be closed. BE responded that not all PRoW's would be closed; the paths within the red line area are still open, and would be closed when necessary. This would include permissive access routes on forest roads. BE cited the Public Access Management Plan which outlines the proposals for PRoWs and Open Access and where it could be found. Rosie Charmichael (CCC) has also supplied conservation information for the plan. There is a commitment by the developers to maintain the routes for the twenty five year planned timespan of site.

KB asked if maps would be displayed onsite, as she had seen some notices and thought that they were too small. BE showed the group new signage which was more legible, and has been erected this week.

KB Felt that there was a pinch-point which excluded riders from using a north-south route.

GW queried furniture maintenance and long term status of routes. BE responded that furniture would be maintained by developers. Long-term status would be as permissive paths only.

KB stated that the routes should be circulated / publicized, and queried total length of new routes.

RL Suggested that the site could be promoted by CCC as a County Walk once the routes were open.

BE Stated that the routes would be promoted locally as part of the development.

GW raised concerns over liability in regards to new permissive paths constructed as part of project.

KB queried equestrian provision. MK stated that no bridleways were affected, but permissive access on forest roads is withdrawn during construction. BE stated that she was not sure whether all the bridges would be suitable for horses, and would look into it.

BE stated public communication measures have been undertaken, and improved, with new signage around the site.

GW was concerned that the LAF were not properly consulted, and that this was unacceptable, and should be improved in the future. BE and MK took this onboard, but stated that there are currently no future projects with their organization planned in the area. BE stated that it was useful to get feedback, and that the draft form was consulted on.

BE stated that the Brechfa East development is currently not going ahead, and that there were other wind farm projects.

CE queried the community benefit funding, BE stated that presentation has been made to Llanllawddog, and that it has been suggested that the funds could be administered by an independent administrator and an advisory group. GW has requested that the LAF be added to the advisory group.

CE requested that the Llanllawddog Community Association be added to the advisory group.

KB asked if anything has been decided on how it will be spent.

BE responded that nothing has yet been spent, as the project was just starting.

MK stated that they do not control the money.

GB asked how this will be advertised, BE responded that it will be advertised by NRW through their website in 'Funding Newsletter'.

Item 3 New Members/Resignations (moved from item 2 on agenda)

CF stated there were none

Item 4 Apologies (moved from item 3 on the agenda)

<p>Apologies were taken and recorded.</p>	
<p>Item 5 Consideration/Approval of Minutes - Meeting held on 22nd September 2016 (moved from item 4 on the agenda)</p> <p>The minutes were checked and approved subject to the correction of a typo on page 4, the date needed to be amended to 28th September, and the addition of Chris Rankin's apologies.</p> <p>CF will make correction and send for translation.</p>	<p>CF</p>
<p>Item 6 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd September 2016 (moved from item 5 on the agenda)</p> <p>General discussion regarding planning applications, general feeling that it would be good for the LAF to be consulted where PRow's affect development sites. RL queried should a consolidated response come from the LAF, rather than individually? General feeling was that response should be from group.</p> <p>Suggestion that all Planning Applications sent to CA Legal team will be FW to LAF for a 6 month trial period initially– subject to agreement from Planning dept. CF to arrange.</p> <p>MH will send out briefing to members to explain the proposal to those who are absent.</p> <p>RL queried Active Travel / Simon Charles (SC) re: integrated network map for February meeting. KB noticed that some Active Travel information is available on CCC website. CF confirmed that SC is provisionally booked to attend the Feb LAF to go through Active Travel.</p> <p>Re: Bridges, CA Maintenance have outlined 9 bridges projected for next year, budget not going as far as hoped, but progress will be made. GW suggested that routes with new bridges could be promoted. CF suggested that the CCC Social Media Team could be used. RL suggested that information could be circulated via the LAF. KB asked if the LAF could support AW re: bridges.</p> <p>New walks leaflets were distributed in meeting.</p> <p>A general query from the group regarding whether works were being carried out on Byways / UCR's, and how much funding. AW to provide update.</p> <p>GW asked if AW could set out duties for potential volunteer work parties?</p>	<p>CF</p> <p>MH</p> <p>AW</p> <p>AW</p>
<p>Item 7 LAF Conference 2016 MH/GW/JG/CF</p> <p>GW gave an update on the meeting, which he felt was good, with 85% attendance.</p> <p>Topics covered were the updating of LAF's, the way LAF's are working has changed, with more replies to consultations.</p>	

No guidance on complaints.

Accessibility info from NRW to be made available.

Public service boards to be formed for health, etc., to get more people into the countryside.

A projected 30-40% of PRoW's will be blocked in the future?

Queried viability of creating new routes – KB responded that this was necessary for riders due to lack of bridleways. GJ responded that NRW are moving forward with access to green gyms

GW stated that some LAF's were now working together, and this may be possible for Carms. LAF.

MH responded that he will be attending the Ceredigion LAF (re: off-roading), and will discuss with them. GW John Morgan is forming a LAF sub-committee. RL Felt that it would be better to have a briefing before proceeding with this idea.

**MH added an update on LAF Chair meeting at this point.*

Possible alteration of regulations, with public bodies consulting more on spending.

Chair to be recognized as an official meeting

*Standardised procedure, with better access to the Chief Executive.
Bench marking of LAF – annual reports, minutes, formal advice to Chief Exec.*

Membership to lapse if members do not attend over four meetings.

No minutes of meeting available yet.

Item 8 3D Walking Campaign MH

MH hoping for an update, will be live soon.

RL gave input, embraced campaign but has concerns over long term sustainability.

Item 9 BBNP delegation agreement CF

CF provided an update, BBNP have drafted a new agreement which is being discussed between the halves of the service at present. Decision on content must be agreed jointly between 'Communities' and 'Environment' as the two Departments involved.

KB raised concerns regarding BBNP willingness to carry out duties in regards to PRoW's where they conflict with their policies, e.g. wilderness areas / SSSI.

<p>MH concerns regarding the number TRO's on byways / UCR's within the NP.</p> <p>MH & KB queried how this agreement would affect the Carmarthenshire LAF?</p> <p>KB queried whether the BBNP would be getting more staff?</p> <p>CF to consult with Powys re: LAF consultation.</p>	<p>CF</p>
<p>Item 10 ROWIP review 2017 CF</p> <p>CF overview and update. A consultant has been appointed (Capita), now awaiting process to move forward. Initial contact needs to be made and an initial meeting with Capita followed by a meeting with LAF, possibly in February or at a separate meeting.</p> <p>RL requested methodology, and would like something to work with and a clear timetable. He is concerned that the process could overrun.</p> <p>CF responded that the procurement procedure has slowed progress but that has been unavoidable – things should progress more quickly from now.</p> <p>MH suggested that the LAF contacts the Chief Executive to try and speed things up.</p> <p>RL responded that it may be best to wait until the presentation / next meeting, and possibly contact Capita directly to avoid due process through the LA.</p> <p>CF will get in touch with Capita asap and ensure they have a timetabled schedule prepared for their meeting with the LAF.</p>	<p>CF/Capita</p> <p>CF</p>
<p>Item 11 CCC Countryside Access Maintenance & Legal Teams CF</p> <p>CF stated that new structure for maintenance team has started but did not have a copy to show the group.</p> <p>MH has requested copy of structure for LAF.</p> <p>CE queried who was responsible for clearing fly tipping, as there have been issues in her area. CF and JL responded that it was the responsibility of Environmental Protection.</p> <p>CF Explained that the new part-time assistant will be starting soon, and explained her role and that it will help with the current workload in the Legal team.</p> <p>RL queried length of time taken to sort out jobs, and suggested that the LAF should query this with Chief Exec or Ruth Mullen.</p> <p>CF Explained current position re: Steve Pilliner workload and responsibilities</p> <p>MH will contact Chief Exec</p>	<p>AW</p> <p>MH</p>

<p>GJ Stated that NRW are going through a similar difficult time, with wage cuts and jobs at risk.</p>	
<p>Item 12 PROW network issues report CF</p> <p>CF stated that reports are produced not quite quarterly due to postponement of Dec meeting.</p> <p>GB Misleading signage query – CF explained.</p> <p>GW Queried legality of ‘bull in field’ signs – CF explained.</p> <p>RL was not happy with the reports, which appear to show worsening of network.</p> <p>MH to report to Chief Exec referencing the problems with jobs.</p> <p>CF has drafted an enforcement scoring matrix complimenting the maintenance team’s mirror document for maintenance.</p> <p>MH would like an overview / guidance re: prioritisation matrix for both Issues and Orders.</p> <p>CF explained need to go through old orders and issues before matrices can be effectively used.</p> <p>KB queried old prioritisation policy from J Tudor / K Thomas, never completed or implemented. MH to bring to LAF.</p> <p>CF will circulate both prioritising documents before next meeting.</p> <p>GW queried what happens with complaints and multiple objections from LAF.</p> <p>CF and JL explained that the number of complaints received is used as a measure of demand for action, multiple complaints from numerous members of the same group would effectively skew the results unfairly.</p> <p>MH agreed that it would be best to produce a one-off report.</p> <p>KB requested user group prioritisation be considered as criteria on new scoring matrix</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p>
<p>Item 13 Orders report CF</p> <p>Number of Orders completed shown in report. Results show steady completion of PPO’s, DMMO’s to a lesser extent. Also showed TRO’s completed.</p>	
<p>Item 14 Revised Welsh Government PROW Guidance</p> <p>General discussion on new document.</p>	

<p>CF explained that guidance consolidates existing guidance and circulars into one catch-all document and references newer legislation such as Active Travel Act.</p> <p>JL mentioned that there is also guidance document for members of the public.</p> <p>MH suggested that this should be put onto next month's agenda.</p>	
<p>Item 15 Visit Wales Themes 2017 & 2018 MH / CE</p> <p>Myths and Legends 2017, The Sea to follow in 2018</p>	
<p>Item 16 Heart of Wales Trail CF</p> <p>CF had meeting with Les and Llandovery Walkers and Welcome representative.</p> <p>Explained that crowd funding has been raised to support LA in carrying out improvements (£2000 in three weeks) to the identified trail.</p> <p>They are keen to drive forward project themselves, are complimentary of CCC, and will push certain routes up the agenda.</p> <p>KB stated that any work on bridleways must be done to standard, and could receive a contribution from Carmarthenshire Riders. CF confirmed that they would be and acknowledged the offer which could be passed on to HOWLT group.</p> <p>GW queried who would be doing the work, and that although disappointed that the Heart of Wales Association were not consulted, however they are in favour of the scheme.</p> <p>CF stated that Maintenance are getting costings together asap and moneys will be allocated first come first served basis. Also that Maintenance have advised it would be best to avoid further grant funding as this would make the works easier to achieve with less bureaucracy. Additional works could potentially be followed up using grant monies once main works are completed.</p> <p>GW will push for more trains to be run off the back of the project.</p> <p>CF stated that it was part funded by Arriva Trains, and that the HOWLT group are keen to attend the next meeting to give an overview – tbc.</p> <p>CF discussed Llandeilo station permissive path, and if this could be approved as part of the scheme. HOWLT intend to contact local member and Arriva Trains on this.</p>	<p>CF</p> <p>CF</p>
<p>Item 17 2017 LAF meetings</p> <p>GW Queried dates on website and possible missing documents on site.</p>	

<p>CF confirmed that some Minutes and the Annual Report have disappeared from webpage. Working to resolve asap. Hoping to have all information and documents back on CCC site by next meeting.</p>	
<p>Item 18 Future Agenda items</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) BBNP Delegation Agreement 2) Brechfa Wind Farm 3) Public Service Boards – LAF involvement 4) CCC use of TRO's 5) WG Guidance for the Public on PRow – discussion 6) CCC Prioritisation documents – discussion <p>** Future item for when agenda is quieter – Improving Access for Equestrians, Equine Routes.</p>	

AOB

CE Request for a list of National Trust Wardens - JL is in regular contact with NT Senior Warden, and will contact for info.

CR raised concerns over possible moves to improve access for cyclists following a recent newspaper article.

GJ mentioned that beavers are being released in Carms, on the river Cywyn, should not impact on PRow.

MH discussed LAF Annual Report, LA have responsibility to produce, and MH willing to do again this year.

MH raised subject of TRO's on byways and UCR's, and is noticing a trend to implement TRO's over resolving problems.