

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 8 April 2026

Towy Centre, Llandeilo – 3.30pm

Present: Members:

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair
Richard Leggett (RL) - Deputy Chair
Karen Burch (KB)
Sean Brown (SB)
Jillie Gardner (JG)
Peter Griffiths (PG)
David Gravelle (DG)
Julie James (JJ)
Julie Sweet (JS)
Laura Grant (LG)
Sandra Downey (SD)
Wyn Owen (WO)

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

Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public:

Jason Lawday (JL) – CCC Countryside Access Officer
Gary Baxter (GB) – CCC Strategic Public Realm Manager
Neil Maskell (NM) – CCC Assistant Area Manager (Highways)

Apologies: Members:

Tara Sutcliffe (TS)
Phil Snaith (PS)

Advisors/ Observers:

Phillip Morgan (PM) - NRW Team Leader SW Land Management
Cllr Aled Vaughan Owen (AVO) – CCC Cabinet member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability (PRE-ELECTION PERIOD)
Cllr Edward Thomas (ET) – CCC Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services (PRE ELECTION PERIOD)

Note:

CCC in these minutes refers to Carmarthenshire County Council

PROW in these minutes refers to Public Rights of Way

CA in these minutes refers to Countryside Access

NRW in these minutes refers to Natural Resources Wales

CAMS in these minutes refers to Countryside Access Management System (GIS mapping software)

BHS in these minutes refers to British Horse Society

GB/CF explained that decisions around delivery of TVP maintenance has been an ongoing discussion. Placing new staff and resources assigned to TVP into the Countryside Access team has been identified as the best fit. It is also considered beneficial to the service in the form of additional capacity – cycle path Rangers will be available for PROW duties when they have available capacity.	
<u>Item 3 – PROW PERFORMANCE REPORTS</u> 3 x quarterly reports presented to the forum, a full year has now been provided. Members generally pleased with the data now being presented in the reports. Interested to know CCC's view on data. CF outlined data is not surprising, gives a realistic picture of the demands placed on the service. Data outcomes following completion of ongoing network survey will reveal true network picture and how/if new ways of working will deliver positive results. RL suggests legal data requires more details and the system for prioritisation of issue resolution is also not clear from the report. WO also commented that the current reporting on Projects in the report does not provide any detail to indicate what work has been carried out. RL offered to meet with CCC separately to assist with report enhancements. Meeting to be scheduled. RL gave details of how the data shows that the team are now, generally, staying on top of incoming issues, but only just. CF advised that project based working tackles problems more broadly, not necessarily aligning with network hierarchy prioritisation in every case. Request that additional project data is included in the reports. CF to discuss with project officer and software developer to determine what is possible. Suggestion that the performance reports should be presented to Cabinet, CF/GB to consider/discuss with Cabinet member.	CF/RL CF CF/GB
<u>Item 4 – CONSULTATION WITH LAFS</u> MH – CCC have confirmed that LAF will not be formally consulted on Active travel consultations. AT team have advised that all Forum members can respond to consultation as members of the public. National AT guidance is vague, open to interpretation. KB – if LAF aren't consulted, how will wider access issues be raised? Read out section of AT guidance stating, '<i>effective consultation</i>'. MH considers LAF are not valued. Also, Forum appears to be seen as equestrian focussed, but it is here to discuss and raise all issues relating to access.	

Members want engagement so that the Forum can provide advice, circular communication is needed. MH has gone back to Carys Drew (NRW) and Ian Mabberly (LAF Chair of Chairs) for input, no response to date.	
<u>Item 5 – BYWAY USER GROUP PROJECT DISCUSSION</u> A meeting of the BUG subgroup has been held since the previous meeting of the LAF. CF shared the success of using the BUG subgroup to review the Kidwelly Byway project proposals. Using the expertise and local knowledge within the subgroup, project proposals were reviewed, discussed and agreement was reached allowing the project to move forward. More use of LAF sub-groups might be beneficial to the forum. Members of the subgroup present agreed that the project review was successful and more subgroups would be useful.	
<u>Item 6 – LOST WAYS</u> JL provided members with an outline of what a Lost Way investigation entails. Details provided in respect of research challenges, sources of information and digital improvement which makes information more available. KB made members aware of BHS Lost ways training opportunities. Suggestion that there should be a Lost Ways sub-group. Sub-group could advise in the development of a Lost Ways project. To be discussed further - agenda item for the next meeting. RL queried whether there might be some grant money that could be accessed/bid for to help fund this work or additional staff? Something for the CA Project Officer to look into? Volunteer surveying project has provided data, recorded in CAMS, in respect of routes that might be suitable for higher rights. Data is about route suitability, not evidence/historic accuracy, but it presents a database of routes to consider under a Lost Ways project. Archive charging policy affects how easily evidence can be collected. JL – a lot of information is available online, will share research links to LAF members.	CF CF/AM JL

<u>Item 7 – ACTIONS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u> - CCC GROUNDS ACCESS MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION GB to provide presentation slides and Terms of reference document as agreed. CF to circulate. - NEXT MEETINGS MH to circulate dates for Summer and Autumn meetings, CF to circulate. - HIGHWAYS RECORDS UPDATE Update request on Highways Records project, what next?	GB/CF MH/CF CF
<u>Item 13 – ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS</u> - CARMARTHENSHIRE VOLUNTEERS Grant funding for continued employment of Volunteer Coordinator has been secured for next 12 months. New volunteer model for Carms can now progress, moving from surveying to PROW maintenance and improvement. New model will see 'Adopt a Path' agreements, regular 'Snip and Stroll' days and monthly PROW improvement days, supported by Ranger service. Training and equipment has been costed and part funded with further funding opportunities being explored. WO suggested this information needs to be circulated and the new model needs to get underway as soon as possible. CF will feed back to project officer and volunteer coordinator. - EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY CF updated members on the current stage and next steps of strategy delivery. Social media communication gone out inviting expressions of interest for Equestrian User Group, several received already. Application forms under development, will be made available with further online publicity mid to late April. Members requested that application forms are circulated to the forum. - STORM RECOVERY More of WG Forest estate has been re-opened following storm Darragh. Members commended NRW for progress given the challenges posed by the nature and extent of damage.	CF

- WIND TURBINE SITING SAFETY Turbine blade detachment in Brechfa raises safety concerns. Detached blade did cross area of access, if it had occurred during the day outcome could have been severe (incident occurred at 4am). Distance recommendation for siting turbines to be cited in comms with PEDW/TRYDAN in respect of scoping exercise. - SUSTAINABLE FARMING SCHEME WALES Applications are now open, opportunity for supported PROW enforcement. CCC keeping a watching brief, likely to be an all Wales approach. - NRW EQUESTRIAN PERMIT, PEMBREY NRW proposing a review of the permit system Ideal item for Equestrian User Group to consider and comment on. - CCC MARKETING Congratulations offered to Marketing and Media team for improved promotion of Carmarthenshire and access opportunities it offers. - TEIFI TRAIL Grand opening soon. Team have worked hard to deliver the improved trail across Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion. CCC have made a substantial and timely network improvements requested by the Teifi Trail group to assist in delivering the rejuvenated trail for the launch. - COTHI TRAIL Plans to rejuvenate the Cothi Trail and deliver proper promotion of the trail as a multi-user facility. To be added to Discover Carmarthenshire as a promoted route. To be funded by Access Improvement Grant, implementation proposed for June/July 2026.	MH
<u>Item 13 – NEXT MEETING</u> TBC	