

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 15 January 2025

Carmarthen Leisure Centre, Johnstown – 3pm

Present: Members:

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair
Richard Leggett (RL)
Phil Snaith (PS)
Sean Brown (SB)
Jillie Gardner (JG)
David Gravelle (DG)
Wyn Owen (WO)
Dai Stacey (DS)
Peter Griffiths (PG)

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

Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public:

Alex Morgan (AM) CCC Countryside Access Project Officer

Apologies: Members:

Karen Burch (KB)
Mo Rapley (MR)
Tara Sutcliffe (TS)

Note:

CCC in these minutes refers to Carmarthenshire County Council

PROW in these minutes refers to Public Rights of Way

NRW in these minutes refers to Natural Resources Wales

WG in these minutes refers to Welsh Government

ITEM	ACTION
<p><u>Item 1 – WELCOME & APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>MH welcomed forum.</p> <p>MH / CF read out apologies received.</p> <p>9 Members present.</p>	
<p><u>Item 2 – UPDATE ON PENDING STRATEGIES/REPORTS</u></p> <p>CF – report has been prepared for Equestrian Strategy, awaiting date for report to be taken through first stage of approval process.</p> <p>LAF Annual Report and ROWIP Mid-term Review yet to be approved, extent of Council approval within new department unclear, awaiting advice.</p> <p>MH – will write to HoS to expedite information and scheduling required to secure approval and adoption of various documents.</p>	MH
<p><u>Item 3 – PROJECTS UPDATE</u></p> <p>AM provided update to group</p> <p>2024-25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Llansadwrn PROW Improvement project complete - AIG* funded PROW sensors purchased and installed to monitor routes initially identified for monitoring. Sensors are mobile and can be moved to new locations in the future according to need. - Signposting programme ongoing - WCP improvements and filming for Google Streetview, funded by NRW, scheduled for completion by end of financial year. <p>2025-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ramblers Accessibility Grant secured to enhance 2 PROWs in Llandeilo. - AIG and Lotto funding combined has secured Volunteer Project Officer until Nov 2026. Considerable effort was made to seek appropriate funding, an acknowledgement of the benefit of having a dedicated volunteer coordinator. - Continued AIG funding has been confirmed, sum not been announced. <p>* Access Improvement Grant</p> <p>RL – queried the possibility and value of interpretation boards in project areas.</p> <p>CF - Ongoing maintenance and replacement costs have historically been a burden.</p> <p>RL – Community Council adoption of panels a possibility?</p> <p>AM – something to consider in future project planning.</p>	

<p><u>Item 4 – CONSULTATIONS</u></p> <p>i) CCC Cycle Track Order</p> <p>No comments of note. General view that consultation exercise has been thorough, worth highlighting the importance of timing consultations to maximise public engagement.</p> <p>ii) Llandovery Active Travel (AT) Improvements</p> <p>Group questions value of implementing AT infrastructure in Llandovery. Local residents in Llandovery do not appear to see value in proposals. More AT value to be gained in urban areas.</p> <p>PS – AT picture is changing with a significant reduction in funding offer.</p> <p>MH – will provide LAF response in respect of Llandovery, reflecting the view of the group.</p>	
<p><u>Item 5 – COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PERFORMANCE REPORTS</u></p> <p>CF outlined new reports. Capture more data and contain a lot of new information for the LAF. Should provide a more rounded picture of performance across all aspects of Public Rights of Way management in Carmarthenshire. Previous reports focussed solely on issues (reported/resolved).</p> <p>Several comments made by members regarding clarification of data, CF to take comments on new reports up to 2 weeks before next meeting so amendments/clarification can be included in 2nd report.</p> <p>RL – suggest a formal review after one year of reporting to determine trends and usefulness of data presented.</p> <p>All present agreed.</p>	
<p><u>Item 6 – WELSH TOURISM TAX (WTT)</u></p> <p>MH explained that Welsh Government decision has not yet been made on WTT. If approved there will be consultation.</p> <p>Cefn Cambell quote “tourism is extractive of the local economy”</p> <p>WTT may force businesses to invest locally, and money could be ring fenced for local investment in resources used for tourism such as PROWs.</p>	

<p><u>Item 7 – IMPACT OF STORMS ON PROW</u></p> <p>CF – implications for PROW maintenance have been significant with daily demand for tree clearance since 9 December 2024.</p> <p>MH – Storms have been catastrophic for WG Forestry Estate. Vast areas of windblown trees across NRW managed forestry, affecting most PROWs within the estate.</p> <p>Events at Pembrey Country Park have been cancelled</p> <p>RL – damage being more frequently caused by storms due extremes of weather and the age of the tree population.</p> <p>DS – the type of trees being planted in plantations and felling regimes are influencing the vulnerability of trees.</p> <p>Emergency Storm Repair Fund may be able to assist in future with the financial impact of storm damage across PROW network and perhaps other sites with public access.</p>	
<p><u>Item 8 – NEXT LAF TERM, RECRUITMENT TIMELINE</u></p> <p>CF outlined intention to commence recruitment promotion beginning of February 2025, running for 6 weeks.</p> <p>Membership selection to undertaken end of March 2025 with inaugural meeting for new LAF mid-April 2025.</p> <p>Meeting to include election of new Chair & Deputy Chair.</p>	
<p><u>Item 9 – ACTIONS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u></p> <p>Item 4 – Volunteers Project.</p> <p>MH has not yet written to Idox regarding CAMS Web performance and its effect on volunteer engagement.</p> <p>Updated position on CAMSWeb performance needed.</p> <p>CF to discuss CAMSWeb performance with volunteer project officer</p>	CF
<p><u>Item 10 – ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS</u></p> <p>Nothing recorded.</p>	