

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 5 September 2024

Tywi Centre, Llandeilo – 6pm

Present: Members:

Mark Hadley (MH) – LAF Chair
Karen Burch (KB) – Deputy Chair
Sean Brown (SB)
Jillie Gardner (JG)
Peter Griffiths (PG)
Wyn Owen (WO)
David Gravelle (DG)
Tara Jane-Sutcliffe (TS)

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

Advisors/ Observers/Speakers/Members of the Public:

Cllr Aled Vaughan Owen – CCC Cabinet member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability (AVO)

Apologies: Members:

Richard Leggett
Phil Snaith
Mo Rapley
David Stacey

Advisors/ Observers:

Cllr Edward Thomas – CCC Cabinet member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services
Alex Morgan (AM) CCC Countryside Access Project Officer
Phillip Morgan - NRW Team Leader SW Land Management

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

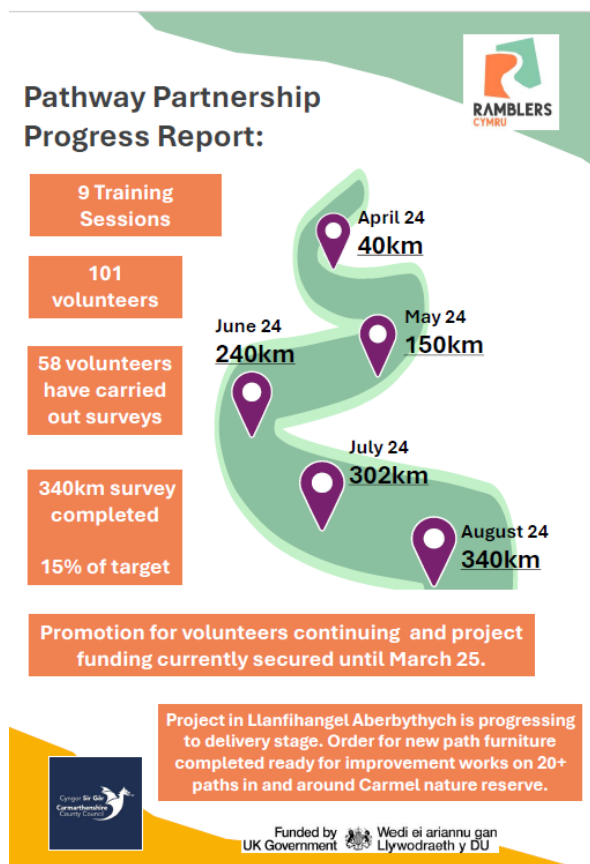
CAMS in these minutes refers to Countryside Access Management System (GIS mapping software)

BHS in these minutes refers to British Horse Society

ITEM	ACTION
<p><u>Item 1 – WELCOME & APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>MH welcomed forum.</p> <p>MH / CF read out apologies received</p>	
<p><u>Item 2 - PROW PROMOTION</u></p> <p>Item deferred to December meeting due to apologies received and forthcoming PROW promotion meeting.</p>	
<p><u>Item 3 – LAF ANNUAL REPORT</u></p> <p>Final draft report circulated to members 29 August 2024.</p> <p>Majority of members present happy with draft. For those not having read the draft in full, all present agreed that any comments would be submitted to CF by 13 September 2024.</p> <p>MH pleased to see Annual Report completed by CCC, many local authorities do not produce an annual report despite obligation to do so.</p> <p>MH queried status of ROWIP Mid Term Review</p> <p>CF confirmed several forum members have made comments on the final review document which have now been considered and implemented into the report where appropriate.</p> <p>MH suggested the same cut-off date of 13 Sept for any additional comments.</p> <p>CF will then take both documents through the approval process together.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>CF</p>

Item 4 – VOLUNTEERS PROJECT UPDATE

An infographic has been produced which details progress on the volunteers' project to date:



Further project details provided:

Additional AIG funding secured to extend project to 31 March 2025.

Discussions ongoing with Ramblers to submit Lottery funding bid for further funding to extend project.

Volunteer recognition event planned for 3rd October to acknowledge volunteers and provide networking opportunity.

Project informed by volunteer data being brought forward in Llanfihangel Aberbythych.

Hopefully, at least one project, informed by volunteer data, can be delivered per year.

Forum members consider CAMSWeb system to be a problem for the project, likely to be the cause of volunteers giving up

Suggestion of refresher sessions on CAMSWeb would be useful and help volunteers if they are struggling with it.

The experience of forum members highlighted significant differences in CAMSWeb performance according to home broadband speeds.

CF suggested CCC provide hot desk locations with good network speeds for volunteers to upload survey data.

MH proposed a letter to software provider from the LAF re: CAMSWeb performance and the impact it is having on a high-profile project. Members present agreed.

KB suggested digital voice notes for recording survey data quickly rather than trying to use paper maps or CAMSWeb out in the countryside. Voice data can then be uploaded later.

All agreed uploading data to CAMSWeb at home is only workable solution, using system in the field is not viable.

MH

<p><u>Item 5 – NRW RESTRUCTURE</u></p> <p>General concern across LAFs in Wales as NRW restructure will apparently see posts removed/reduced.</p> <p>Fewer NRW staff will create problems, already appear understaffed.</p> <p>MH – NRW staffing structure not a LAF consideration, but forum should keep a watching brief.</p> <p>New NRW Recreation Strategy also discussed – new strategic direction has implications for access, becoming a lesser priority.</p> <p>JG – NRW timber is UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) accredited, they must continue to meet public access eligibility criteria to meet the standard.</p> <p>JG – Further wind turbine sites in NRW forestry will have open access implications. Apparently, turbines to be NRW owned.</p> <p>AVO – likely connection with Trydan Gwyrdd Cymru; publicly owned energy company in Wales.</p> <p>MH - Apparent lack of consultation with LAFs or with wider public on strategy to raise questions/concerns. Propose Carmarthenshire LAF contact NRW to query lack of consultation particularly with LAF as a statutory consultee - members present agreed.</p>	MH
<p><u>Item 6 – EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY UPDATE</u></p> <p>Final draft of strategy virtually complete.</p> <p>Final few meetings with service managers responsible for the actions contained in the draft strategy still outstanding. These need to be completed prior to consulting with LAF and BHS.</p> <p>Anticipate circulation of draft strategy to LAF members in next 1-2 weeks.</p>	
<p><u>Item 7 – PROW IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS UPDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abermarlais PROW improvement project very nearly complete. - Mynydd Mallaen bridleway improvement project complete but safety concerns have been raised due to areas of bog on the mountain. <p>Solutions being sought. Costs associated with any changes to make route safe will be minimal with materials being re-used, re-located as necessary.</p> <p>KB keen to ensure project is still viewed as a positive network improvement.</p> <p>WO complemented new colour topped waymark posts used which make navigating the bridleway much easier.</p> <p>MH - Given this occurrence LAF members should pay close attention to future project proposals to maximise local knowledge and user input to projects.</p>	ALL

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project proposal forms have been created for LAF members to submit ideas, will be extended to Comm Councils in due course. - MH raised query re: Pantyrhedyn footbridge. <p>CF will ask PROW maintenance team for update</p> <p>AVO would like to help project reach conclusion, needs to properly understand situation first.</p> <p>MH to fwd. email trail to AVO</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">CF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MH</p>
<p><u>Item 8 – PROW PERFORMANCE REPORTS</u></p>	
<p>Data analysis undertaken for this meeting but little change in the report trend.</p> <p>TS – is anything being done to tackle the continually increasing issue figures?</p> <p>CF - new ways of working developed in the Countryside Access Unit over the last 2-3 years aim to see issue numbers fall to more manageable levels. Such a vast rural PROW network will likely always see a high rate of issue reporting. Existing issue reports do not give full picture, other aspects of PROW management not illustrated. New report under development to provide more complete picture of service delivery to LAF.</p> <p>TS – Could a summary dashboard be created to put on website? Promote ongoing PROW work.</p> <p>CF – good idea, worth looking into.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CF</p>
<p><u>Item 9 – LAF PROJECT SUGGESTIONS & GRANT FUNDING UPDATE</u></p>	
<p>Forum members keen to commend creation of Project Officer post as role includes vital grant funding duties, essential that the role is retained?</p> <p>CF confirmed post is permanent.</p> <p>AVO briefly outlined budget saving targets for the coming year, budget position gets increasingly difficult, external funding is essential.</p> <p><u>Item 10 – ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ROWIP Mid-term Review <p>MH - document is clear, easy to interpret and performance to date is satisfactory. Sept 13th cut-off date for LAF comment already agreed in item 3</p> - Towy Valley Path (TVP) 	

<p>Where are we now? Could LAF have an update now and a further update for Dec meeting. CF will request both.</p>	
<p><u>Item 11 – ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS</u></p> <p>Pembrey (Equestrian Parking)</p> <p>Not all CCC permit holders are eligible to park in new bay, this is unclear, needs a sign saying 'horseboxes only' or similar. Whole process has been poorly communicated.</p> <p>CF will pass signage suggestion to Traffic Management team</p> <p>Brownhill</p> <p>Only available update suggests project is proceeding</p> <p>Carms Cycle Routes</p> <p>Update on the cycle paths on PROWs situation needed, could somebody present to the LAF?</p> <p>CF will request</p> <p>Byway User Group</p> <p>Next meeting 15th October, 2pm</p> <p>PROW Promotion Sub-group</p> <p>Next meeting 26th September, 1pm</p> <p>Keep correct distance from Cyclists - advisory signs</p> <p>PG advised that initially cycling safety signs printed and erected with incorrect design, all now replaced with new signs with correct design. Can first set of signs still be used elsewhere in the County?</p> <p>CF will ask Traffic Management team</p> <p>Planning Consultation</p> <p>WO not receiving consultations.</p> <p>CF issue with planning consultations has been raised, currently seeking a solution with Planning Development Manager. Consultations should return to normal process soon.</p> <p>Rali Ceredigion</p> <p>JG advised Tourism Cluster Group issuing feedback questionnaire on impact of Rali event. Open questions to gather all opinions/experiences.</p> <p>National Trust AGM</p>	<p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>CF</p> <p>ALL</p>

<p>TS notified members of upcoming National Trust AGM. Organisations on NT Board of Trustees voted in/out at the AGM. TS formerly OSS representative on the board, standing down this year, advised LAF members consider voting for access organisations suggested for the Board, such as the OSS, who support the access agenda.</p> <p>PROW Consultant</p> <p>KB - are the Countryside Access team still using a PROW consultant?</p> <p>CF consultant use in ongoing, new consultant was selected 2023, provides valuable assistance for complex cases.</p> <p>ROWIP</p> <p>KB – can't find appendices to the ROWIP on the CCC website</p> <p>CF will follow up.</p> <p>Meeting Closed</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>CF</p>
<p><u>Item 12 – Next Meeting</u></p> <p>December 9th 4pm - Carmarthen</p>	