

## Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

at

Oneplanet Adventure Mountain Bike Centre, Llandegla

at 17:30pm

### Local Access Forum Members

Tim Faire (Chair)  
Gwen Butler (Vice Chair)  
Heather Fitzgerald  
Cllr Martyn Holland  
Kevin Slattery  
Max Grant  
Kay Culhane  
Tom Woodall  
Jim Gaffney  
Paul Frost  
Duncan Barratt

### Representing Denbighshire County Council

Hannah Arndt (Access Officer and LAF Secretary )  
Howard Sutcliffe (Countryside Officer)

### Representing Conwy County Borough Council

Sian Williams (Access Officer)

### Observers

Tom Culhane

### Apologies for Absence were submitted from: -

Nicholas Lloyd, Chris Marshall, Hugh Crosswood, Iona Pierce, Hilary Davies, Jo Hughes, John Buckley, Toni Proffitt

### Introductions

Duncan and Paul. Paul working on a project with NRW

### **Apologies and Minutes of the Last Meeting**

HA listed apologies received and everyone introduced themselves and their interests.

The Chair asked if the notes of the last meeting were an accurate record. This was proposed by Cllr Holland and seconded by Tom Woodall. When working through the notes the following points were highlighted:

**Page 3:** PF asked for clarification around projects not being funded for three years through Active Travel. HA responded that projects submitted within the application window would be considered for funding over the next three years. However the speakers had asked for smaller projects to still be sent to the Local Authority, even when the funding window had closed as smaller funding schemes were available which could offer support in the interim.

**Page 2:** KS provided an update on the "Donate a gate" scheme on the Isle of Wight. So far 160 gates have been donated through the scheme, which was started by the Isle of Wight Ramblers. KS will be travelling to the Isle of Wight this summer and will see the gates installed through this scheme. Mike Slater is contact in the Ramblers. KS asked to give a presentation at the next meeting about the scheme and also presented a piece from Walk magazine where the scheme is being adopted in North York Moors National Park. Feedback from the Snowdonia LAF on Monday states that a similar scheme has started in Lake District through a donation scheme.

The Chair agreed to a presentation from KS at the next meeting and asked HS about the memorial policy in Denbighshire. HS said it is not a no memorial policy, but an effort to avoid plaques and encourage good will through donations. This avoids personalisation which appears through adding a physical plaque or shrines which sometimes appear, and can affect the enjoyment of the countryside for others. HS showed an example on the canal towpath in Llangollen where a bench and flower beds had been added without landowner consent.

TW asked if there would be any way to recognise the people making donations or the people being remembered. HS said a letter to the family would be sent and a book of acknowledgment could be held at Loggerheads Country Park.

**Page 4:** PF clarified the question raised about riding a horse on a pavement or cycle lane.

The law says you must not ride on pavement / footpath and the Highway code says shouldn't ride on cycle path.

**Page 6: Definitive Maps**

GB mentioned that Llandyrnog Community Council does not have a Definitive Map of the Parish.

<b>AP1</b>	<b>Adrian Walls</b> to liaise with Llandyrnog Community Council regarding a definitive map of the parish.	
<b>AP 2</b>	<b>Tim Faire</b> to check with Llanfair DC Community Council clerk if they require a definitive map.	

**Page 6: Cerdded Conwy**

PF highlighted that community councils can make an application to Community Chest (A National Lottery Grant for physical activity) for walk leader training. The maximum grant is £1500. SW added that applications have been made to this fund for walk leader training. PF said that Ramblers could apply in addition to other groups locally to increase the funding available and work with the Local Authority to maximise the benefit.

**Page 6: OS Map Updates second paragraph**

MG has had a positive result through NRW and all OS online maps should be up to date by the end of June. Any printed maps after this time will be up to date.

**Update from Chair's Meeting, April 2017**

TF gave an update from the Chair's meeting held in Newtown in April. TF and GB weren't aware that the LAF is a statutory body and some LAFs felt there could be a conflict of interest with the LA running the Forum. Both agreed that they don't see this issue with the CEDLAF and felt it would be impossible for this Forum to run without LA support and the Secretary. HS added that the information for setting up LAFs advises Local Authorities to provide the secretariat. TW said that if the group was led too much by the secretariat then this may need to be looked at. It was not felt to be an issue for this Forum. TF added that it was not meant as a criticism.

GB referred to an agenda item at the Chair's meeting relating to the relationship between the LA and LAF. One Local Access Forum group had expressed disappointment at the lack of availability of senior LA staff for consultative meetings and no longer engaged a LA secretariat. When asked who carries out the administration and sets the agenda the impression was given that they have individuals within the group who are happy to do this. KC asked how they get the actions through to LA. This appears to be sent by formal communication. No officers attend the LAF. PF asked if there was a misunderstanding by LAF as LA officers are there to support and advise the Forum.

## Glastir Agri-Environment Scheme Update

HA provided an introduction. There has been some interest in the access part of Glastir since it was announced that the scheme will continue. Jane Tibbott from Welsh Government was unable to make the meeting but hopes to attend the September meeting. HA circulated a briefing paper from Welsh Government and highlighted some of the timescales mentioned.

MG added that when he was last involved through CLAF WG provided a CD. HA to check with AW and SW to check with VC on the location and availability of these CDs.

TF added that some permissive routes created through TG may now be lost, but this is an ideal opportunity to save routes if farmers go back into the scheme.

HS added that it can be tricky to know what to put in as we don't know who has applied for the scheme. Farmers may need to work with neighbours in order to provide some meaningful access. HS said this is a great opportunity for joint working between the counties.

TF asked if the LA's could enable the sub-group with provision of maps and details of dead end routes.

<b>AP 3</b>	<b>Hannah Arndt and Sian Williams</b> to speak to Right of Way officers, locate CDs with routes of last Glastir routes. Also provide details of dead end routes as starting point.
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## Oneplanet Adventure overview

The Chair invited JG to give overview of the mountain bike centre for the members who may not know the area or have visited the Centre.

JG gave an overview of how OPA started through funding available following Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) to aid and set up tourism businesses. JG was working at DCC at the time as a cycling officer, also on work to increase tourism following FMD. His contract was due to end so JG and now business partner Ian Owen put a tender in to run the business. Facilities include a café, shop, bike hire and workshop. The trails are free to use but there is a parking fee. There are currently around 40km of trails, graded in a similar way to ski grading. The trails attract around 170,000 visitors per year. The Church of England owns forest.

KS asked how the trails are maintained. Maintenance is funded through car park income. Most works requires specialist contractors and they also run a trail pixie volunteer scheme. JG added that they have many school groups help out and it is rewarding to work with children who need to let off a bit of aggression and energy!

Running trails have been a successful addition to the offer and JG added that Oneplanet Adventure is here to help people get into the countryside who aren't comfortable with taking a map out into the wider network. The centre provides an opportunity to gain experience on the trails and then venture out using the routes on the Ride North Wales website. Coed Llandegla is a commercial forest foremost. The crop was all planted at same time and is now mature. Currently a sensitive approach to felling sections at a time and replanting is being taken. Felling sections changes the forest and the views you can see and sections of forest that were felled before the trails are now coming to maturity. JG said it was important to note that without the Forestry the trails wouldn't have been there.

It was added that the Mountain Bike centre has helped other local businesses thrive with local campsites and accommodation providers in and around Llandegla benefit. HS added his view that it is up to other businesses to see how they can benefit from the success of the Mountain bike centre, which is what some businesses have clearly done.

## RoWIP Review Update

SW provided an update for Conwy CBC. Victoria Currie is now spending one day a week reviewing RoWIP. A letter has been drafted, which details the timetable of how the work is planned and stated that the draft RoWIP should be available in February 2018. MG asked if it had been sent to statutory consultees. SW to check.

HA to provide an update on the position within DCC to the Forum members once she has spoken with Adrian Walls. MG added that he hadn't heard anything from DCC yet. HA said DCC are not at same stage in process as CCBC.

TW said it would be useful to know as a LAF what involvement the Forum can have and it would be useful to tell LAFs what is required throughout the process. MG referred to point 3.9 in the RoWIP review guidance which lists points for LAF involvement. TW asked if it would be useful to double up rather than going through the process twice with the LAF. HA and SW to feedback comments to Rights of Way managers.

MG asked about a subgroup and SW said it would be best to liaise with VC.

HS said it would be good to look at nearby LA's and asked TW about their progress. TW said the difficulty is that Flintshire (FCC) are coming to the end of the current LAF term. Desktop and condition assessments ongoing. Any opportunity for crossover working and shared learning should be taken.

MG asked if a joint consultant for the LA's was a possibility. TW answered no, because essentially external support through RoWIP varies between counties, therefore a coordinated single point of work will not happen.

HS added that in DCC seasonal wardens are carrying out a 13% survey. PF asked if this would be an opportunity to recruit volunteers. Local groups could be used through the review process or admin work, or surveying. WCVVA may have funding?

TW added that buy in from the public is useful and FCC made a conscious decision for condition survey to be carried out by a small amount of people to have a consistent approach. In addition they will provide a qualitative survey to engage with users asking such questions as; Where have you come from, what was the condition of the path you used, what you think about... This will generate a valuable human insight into use of network.

PF said volunteers can be trained to a high level. The Outdoor Partnership has 850 active volunteers. All have received some training. SW used students to carry out the RoW survey in Conwy, who are trained and this ensures consistency, but it can change between years depending on the students.

KS added that lots of organised walks happen each week and asked if a general briefing sheet could be given out to gather a huge number of replies and statistics. These could be graded depending on how valid.

<b>AP 4</b>	<b>Sian Williams</b> to check RoWIP review letter has been sent to list of statutory consultees	
<b>AP5</b>	<b>Hannah Arndt</b> to gain update on RoWIP review progress in DCC	
<b>AP6</b>	<b>Hannah Arndt</b> to circulate RoWIP review Guidance Document to members	
<b>AP 7</b>	<b>Hannah Arndt and Sian Williams</b> to feedback comments from Forum members about LAF involvement and crossover working through the RoWIP review process	

Cllr Martyn Holland left the meeting at 18:30

### Community Miles Project

HA gave an overview of the Community Miles project, which came about through the Denbighshire RoWIP. Started in 2010, ten circular walks from communities across the county and in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB have now been delivered, with new projects ongoing. The project has been successful in drawing Rural Development Plan funding through Cadwyn Clwyd and current projects are funded through NRW.

The project works with community councils to develop a suitable route and to discover places of interest along the route. A leaflet is then produced displaying the route on an OS base, along with places of interest, refreshment stops on the route and places to stay locally. The leaflet includes information about the Countryside Code, other walks in the Community Miles series and a calorie count for the walk for those looking to walk as part of a health regime. The project also promotes the use and maintenance of the rights of way network and the LA is looking for champions within each community to walk the route and carry out basic maintenance such as cutting back, while also reporting issues to the rights of way team. The project has been used as best practice for a scheme in Powys. Current work involves the addition of mobile friendly leaflets online and another print run of existing leaflets.

The Forum liked the idea of the project and the compact layout of the leaflet, which contains a lot of useful information. KC asked that a date be added to the leaflet and TF suggested HA contact the community councils which currently have routes about the condition of the route and about community champions.

SW was asked if Conwy have plans to do something similar. Conwy have separate walks leaflets for different communities, which are on the Conwy website. They are not as compact as Community Miles and can be historical leaflets or slim line booklets.

MG added that he thinks it is an excellent concept and it would be good to move out to other LA's. The RA is trying to get other LA's on board with something like this. HA will circulate the Montrayx report and Llangynhafal case study to the Forum.

DB asked how community councils would go about creating a route themselves and asked can they take the model? Yes they could but most community councils prefer the LA to deliver the project for them.

KS said it would be good to deliver a similar scheme in Conwy, perhaps with the help of Trefriw volunteers. HS added that it is important to support existing service, and Conwy is very different to Denbighshire in this respect. PF said there is opportunity for volunteers to take things like this on, to relieve or help the LA and doesn't accept lack of resources as an excuse.

SW said Conwy have tried though Cerdded Conwy, but there is still some work to do.

HS added that an important consideration is the sustainability to next generation. There is still a need for full time staff support to volunteers in their work. HS went on to distribute Denbighshire's Volunteer programme to the members.

MG asked for an agenda item on volunteering at next meeting and suggested CCBC look at how they deliver volunteering and potentially gain formal advice to how they improve. PF added that he could provide a speaker with 850 active volunteers. HA to liaise with PF.

<b>AP 8</b>	Hannah Arndt to circulate Community Miles case study and Montrayx Report	
<b>AP 9</b>	Agenda item for next meeting: Volunteering. Hannah Arndt to liaise with PF about location and speaker.	

Howard Sutcliffe left the meeting at 19:05

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at the Great Orme Llandudno at 13:00

TF added two points before closing the meeting.

1. A project called Tree Watch was brought to his attention at the Chair's meeting. This is led by NRW as a way to detect tree disease. HA to circulate link to website.
2. The growing issue of livestock worrying in North Wales, which is devastating to the farming community. TF mentioned campaigns by the Farmers Guardian and North Wales Police. HA added that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB have a campaign and have been working with the Local Authority and North Wales Police. Feedback has been incredibly positive and it is hoped that this will change behaviour. TF doesn't know where increase has come from and TW suggested stronger public spaces controls may have pushed people out into the wider countryside.

DRAFT