

Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on
Thursday 6th December 2018 at
Llyn Brenig Visitor Centre at 10:30

Local Access Forum Members

Tim Faire (Chair)
Gwen Butler (Vice Chair)
Jo Hughes
Paul Frost
Duncan Barratt
Heather Fitzgerald
Hilary Davies
John Buckley
Tom Woodall
Hugh Crosswood
Laura Crawford
Kevin Slattery

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Hannah Arndt (Countryside Access Officer and LAF Secretary)
Adrian Walls (Rights of Way Manager)
Howard Sutcliffe (AONB and Ranger Service Manager)
David Shiel (Senior Countryside Officer (AONB))

Observers

Paul Mitchell (NRW)

Apologies for Absence were submitted from: -

Cllr Don Milne, Jim Gaffney, Cllr Martyn Holland, Max Grant, Iona Pierce, Kay Culhane, Chris Marshall, Caroline Turner, Victoria Currie, Sian Williams

Actions and Notes of the Last Meeting

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. HA listed apologies received.

The Chair asked if the notes of the last meeting were an accurate record.

Proposed as accurate by Jo Hughes and seconded by Paul Frost. Actions raised at the last meeting were as follows;

Matters arising

Action Point	Detail of Action	Current Situation
AP 7.1	HA to recirculate the list of members and request background information for those not provided previously	Received from Duncan Barratt
AP 8.1	VC to send HA updated documents.	Complete
AP 8.2	HA to circulate updated documents to members	Complete
AP 8.3	LAF Members to send comments on assessment documents to VC	Complete
AP 8.4	HA to remind DCC staff about Community Chest to see if funds can be gained through walking groups or Friends Groups	Complete
AP 8.5	HA to invite Laura Crawford to join the Forum and AW contact to complete application.	Laura Crawford invited
AP 8.6	HA to liaise with PF to invite his contact in Penmaenmawr to a future meeting.	HA and SW to meet contact in 2019

RoWIP Updates – HD cannot find the annual RoWIP reports on the Conwy website. JB said there had been an error in transferring files to the new website and they were missing. Could Victoria be asked for the documents to be provided?

AP 9.1	Could Victoria Currie provide RoWIP Reports to LAF?	Requested.
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Work Plans for 2018-19

Donate a Gate – JB asked for Sian to provide an update on the project to the Forum as it has been discussed for almost 2 years. PF thought accepting funds should be straightforward due to the bench scheme already being set up. It was thought that this funding would go to a different department so a new system would need to be set up perhaps.

AP 9.2	Could Sian Williams provide update on Donate a Gate scheme in Conwy?	Requested
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Lost Ways in Conwy

– Presentation by Duncan Barrett

Duncan was prompted by the following paragraph in the Draft RoWIP Assessments from Conwy CBC to research Lost Ways and create this presentation. Presentation available to members in CEDLAF Dropbox. Hard copies available for next meeting on request to HA.

“There are potentially many more routes which the public use which we do not have records of and, on application, these are investigated through the Modification Order process. Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) is currently dealing with one Definitive Map Modification Orders at this time with another one waiting to be processed. This puts Conwy County Borough Council in a strong position regarding the validity and accuracy of the Definitive Map.”

Duncan’s research highlights that there are many anomalies on the OS Map where rights of way change status at community and county boundaries. Many more anomalies exist beside these, but the ones on boundaries stand out as good examples. Duncan focused on researching the network of paths and tracks that exist in his local area – Betws yn Rhos - and displayed an extract from the 1888 map, created from the 1875 survey which shows the community boundary and a byway. On the 1949 map (pre-classification) the Byway turns into a track and the boundary is shown. In a second example of a footpath near Glyn Bach, the footpath on the definitive map carries on with contour, the OS map now shows the footpath going down a steep bank and it is now unusable and wrong.

The current Conwy CBC RoWIP (page 56) claims there are 370 possible lost ways identified by CCBC. Duncan has asked to see the research into identifying these 370 lost ways but not had a response from CCBC.

A discussion followed the presentation.

AW: From his Clwyd boundary knowledge it is evident that the area was industrious in late 1800s and farmers were building infrastructure to get lime onto fields. Both examples given are partly covered by enclosure awards. AW also highlighted that he spent two days on a course with JH in Hawarden records office with John Trevalyn from the Ramblers Association. AW’s book from that course can be made available for members to view. AW can also make maps of “dead end” bridleways in DCC available to members.

JB and HD had also looked into it and been on the same course as AW and JH. They said it is hard to find evidence against the 1880 map that routes were open to everyone, not just landowner.

JB and HD have worked on the DMMO currently in progress with Conwy CBC, which is in Penmaenmawr. They had been able to provide evidence of 12 people using the route for 20 years. A decision should be made in January, if not, it will go to the Secretary of State. It was added that as part of the evidence, the names and addresses of witnesses is required.

A discussion then followed about whether the 2026 cut-off for Lost Ways in Wales still happening. DB highlighted that Max Grant gave presentation to Snowdonia LAF and there is a green paper about the matter.

AW added that revoking it could take 5 years to go through Parliament. If it isn't dropped, there will be a lot of work to do in 4 years' time to meet the deadline.

KS added that 2026 is a deadline for applications and it would be possible for Conwy CBC to put in applications for all lost ways and form a queue. It is not a deadline for deciding on whether they will be adopted or not.

AW said that once the application goes in, you can't change status of route.

HD, who has experience of putting in an application said that a lot of work went into it and it took 6 months to do something that seems very obvious.

AW said people can make a claim for any right of way based on 20 years use irrelevant of 2026 cut-off. JB disputed this and has heard the opposite of what AW claims.

DB added that Conwy CBC acknowledge that based on the last RoWIP they can work through 3 claims per year. Based on DB reading all the RoWIPs across North Wales there are over 2000 lost ways in North Wales. He also added that there is a Facebook page running a tutorial on putting basic information together – DB to circulate details.

PF thought the group were looking at it from wrong point of view. Local Authorities are currently managing decline and now have to justify doing what people have been previously happy for them to do. PF thinks it comes down to how important this is, as groups and individuals could go through a lot of effort for a route that is used twice a year. Building a priority basis is needed as there is no use having priorities if there is nothing to gauge them against.

Visitor Appraisal Study in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

- Update from David Shiel

David provided a background to this work. There was a feeling and some evidence to show that visitors to key sites in the AONB are increasing dramatically. This is a problem around the country and this area is not in isolation. Key evidence shows that annual visitor numbers have increased to over 300,000 at Loggerheads and Moel Famau. There have been increases at Dinas Bran and notably at Horseshoe Falls. There are no quiet weekends now at Moel Famau. The car parks are full and people park on the road. It is affecting local people and diminishing the visitor experience.

The impacts are not just around traffic. Litter is another issue, with 8 tonnes of dog poo at binned at Loggerheads annually. At Moel Famau there is 4 tonnes of bagged litter, and 4 tonnes of un-bagged litter to dispose of annually. Moel Famau has also experienced a series of dog attacks on livestock with nearly 20 sheep killed last year. The AONB team has been campaigning for visitors to keep dogs on leads and

this year there have been two sheep deaths that we are aware of. Erosion is another issue and a lot of path work is required to make sure the sensitive landscape can cope with increasing numbers of people. Horseshoe Falls was inscribed as part of the World Heritage Site in 2009, which has impacted on visitor numbers there too. The AONB and CRT have improved access to the river for paddle sports as the numbers had increased, we have also improved access from the car park. Horseshoe Falls is a hub for access to the river with commercial operators using the car park and the site to access the river. The value of outdoor access to north Wales is estimated to be £150 million.

David suggested that we need to look at how to promote our tranquil areas and consider whether we promote these areas for people to visit in order to protect some of our most sensitive sites. A lot of our favourite sites are beautiful and are important and sensitive. Loggerheads limestone grassland is an example of this and the grassland at the top of the rocks is failing as an internationally important site due to the visitor impact.

There are also issues when it snows and local communities are impacted because so many people visit Loggerheads and pile into private fields, leave rubbish, causes chaos and pressure to staff as well as inconvenience to locals and farmers.

As part of this study we want to capture the benefits and also look at the environmental and social impacts of these sites. A few questions include: How can we maximise benefits? How much is being spent in the towns? How much are these sites worth to the local economy?

The report is due to be published in January 2019. The work has involved surveys on the ground in August and October, online questionnaire, use of existing data and business data to ascertain how much are sites worth to the businesses who use them. Stakeholder groups have been held to gather issues for people living nearby. Some things were thought to be issues are actually not that important to people living near sites.

Questions and comments to David.

HD asked that as there is a car parking issue, is the AONB doing anything regarding public transport.

Buses have been used at Moel Famau in the past but it added empty buses into an already congested situation. People don't like to jump on a bus with the picnic, the dog, the family etc.

However the Llangollen lift worked well when it was funded. Working with 9/12 seater taxis rather than buses, which took short loops between the town and places of interest and avoided going into the honeypots was a success. The AONB is looking at running this service again in the World Heritage Site as part of the new HLF project.

HD suggested putting the parking prices up to deter visitors.

Unfortunately this forces people to park on road. In Loggerheads the parking prices have actually been reduced to stop people parking on the A494

KS said that with regards to public transport, a different mind-set is needed. The general public must realise that a change needs to take place.

It was suggested that the sensitive areas be cordoned off to protect them. Sympathetic signposting to explain why the work is needed could help. DS said his team are looking at fencing off some areas at the top of cliffs at Loggerheads to see how quickly it recovers. JB said the sites were a victim of their own success.

DS said social media has also has an impact on visitor numbers.

PF asked if the report could be added to Dropbox and added that targeting people who aren't fit and healthy would be an idea and getting away from the idea of going to the most extreme place. Promoting local and accessible / doorstep access. Convincing people to go there first and then graduate to more extreme routes.

DS said that the current Nature for Health project is attempting to do just that by engaging with people in towns and on housing estates to get out and active. In Llangollen a small group are walking along the canal and have seen progress in only a few weeks.

The Hiraethog Strategy and Clocaenog Wind Farm Fund

- Presentation from Eirian Jones

Eirian is the Hiraethog Strategy coordinator. It is a comprehensive strategy and can be found here: <https://cadwynclwyd.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/A-development-strategy-for-the-Hiraethog-.pdf>
Menter Iaith Conwy tendered to deliver the strategy. MI Conwy are trying to reduce reliance on grants. Eirian works 2 day a week on the Strategy and is 2 years into a 3 year contract.
A steering group was set up which guides Eirian's work. There are 10 members including 3 council members from both CCBC and DCC.

The context of the strategy is set out by electoral wards. See the map with blue outlined communities, which illustrated which communities are in the strategy. Eirian will circulate the map.

The aim of strategy is to sustain and develop Hiraethog as a place where people want to and are able to live, work and play utilising and sustaining the area's unique natural environment, landscape, heritage and culture. There are five main objectives set out in the strategy, which are linked to delivering the aim of the project.

Current projects involve helping local communities, helping with project development if they link to strategy objectives and can help to form new groups.

Project examples include providing a new community meeting point in Llanfihangel and in Clawdd Newydd a project to clear a pond and get the community involved in developing site is ongoing.

EW is looking for Hiraethog wide projects and recently held two meetings for the community councils. Lots of local people are involved in rural shows; however worries about health and safety requirements are increasing and it is putting people off getting involved. The Hiraethog rural shows project has been put together to fund someone with specialism in health and safety to help groups and volunteers with putting show on. The Agricultural Shows are very important to Hiraethog area it is hoped this project will alleviate any concerns about being involved in organising the shows.

EW is happy to meet and discuss and project ideas individually.

EW gave a summary of the two current wind farm funds.

Clocaenog Wind Farm – this fund is index linked and the geographic boundary is yet to be defined. The consultation ends 17th December and is in the form of an online survey on the Innogy website <https://iam.innogy.com/en/ueber-innogy/innogy-innovation-technik/erneuerbare-energien/onshore/innogy-onshore-bauprojekte/clocaenog-forest-onshore-wind-farm>
This fund should be up and running by the end of 2019. The tender for someone to administer the funds is to go out in summer 2019.

Brenig windfarm – There is a survey on the Cadwyn Clwyd website for this fund. It can be found here <https://cadwynclwyd.co.uk/brenig-wind-limited-community-benefit-fund/> There is some contention

with this fund as the area is all in Denbighshire and Conwy communities aren't included, yet lorries are going through Conwy communities and they are affected. This fund should be up and running early 2019

Kevin Slattery said he accessed the Gwynt y Mor for local history group and asked if councils are able to access the other two fund. They are not, it is only for not-for-profit community groups.

Duncan Barrett asked about the split of funding between community and economic projects. No split has been defined yet.

Paul Frost commented on the survey. Looking at the strategy helps to make more sense of the survey.

Local Authority Officer Updates

Howard Sutcliffe gave an overview of the EnRaw funding bids Countryside and AONB officers have been involved in. The first is based around coastal access and biodiversity and covers the Denbighshire coast and into both Flintshire and Conwy. The second scheme is based around the Berwyns, Hiraethog and Clwydian Range. Cadwyn Clwyd are leading on this bid.

We are also leading on a project called Nature for Health, which involves working with Denbighshire's housing department.

Adrian Walls gave a presentation detailing his assessment of the rights of way network in Denbighshire. At present he is unable to keep to RoWIP timetable as he has a much smaller team working on it compared with when the last RoWIP was created. There are currently 3.5 people in his department and there is no money for consultants to carry out the work.

Adrian's presentation shows how the network is made up by community and where the greatest and least provision is. AW believes that losing paths from areas with lower density would have a bigger effect than losing paths from an area such as Corwen which has a higher number of paths. AW will resist the loss of rights of way in communities with low path density. He also wants to increase the diversity of path and used the example of Llandrillo, which has a good mixture of rights of way types. AW ideally would like to see some diversity in all communities and be able to divert spend to focus in increasing diversity on communities to give more user groups the opportunity to have routes for recreation in their communities.

Other Matters

Tom Woodall expressed that it was disappointing that no CCBC reports were put forward to the meeting and no officers were present. Other LAF members supported TW's comments and asked for the comments to be noted and CCBC to respond.

Date of forthcoming meetings:

Thursday 7th March 2019

Thursday 6th June 2019

Thursday 5th September 2019

Thursday 5th December 2019