

Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Thursday 10th of October 2024

Coed Pella,
Conway Road
Colwyn Bay
LL29 7AZ

AGENDA

1	Welcome, Introductions	SB/ All
2	Terms of Reference	SBR
3	Conwy Update	SBR
4	Denbighshire Update	AW/ HA
5	What do we want to achieve through the forum? (Breakout session)	All
6	Expressions of interest	All
7	<p>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR</p> <p>The procedure to be followed for the appointment of the Chair and the Deputy Chair of the Forum is set out in Regulation 12 of the Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001.</p> <p>In essence, the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair must be conducted by secret ballot as the first item of business at the second meeting of the Forum. Only members of the Forum can stand for the positions, with the Secretary presiding over the election.</p> <p>The guidance issued by the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales suggests that candidates be proposed by another member of the Forum. The guidance provides for the Forum itself, at the first meeting, to decide subject to the Regulations how it wishes to conduct the election.</p> <p>Rather than conclude the first meeting by seeking nominations (as suggested in the guidance), it is proposed to seek nominations, and conduct the election itself, at the beginning of the second meeting of the Forum. This will enable members who will have already familiarised themselves with the details their fellow members have submitted (as set out in Agenda Item 6 above) to meet informally prior to the appointment process prior to the start of the second meeting..</p> <p>PROPOSAL – That nominations for, and the appointment of, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Forum be dealt with as the</p>	SBR

	first item of business at the next meeting. Any persons with an interest in consideration may submit a brief CV to the forum secretary who will provide each member with a copy during the week prior to the meeting.	
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Attendees

Simon Billington	SB	CCBC
Sophie Birchall Rogerson	SBR	CCBC
Bethan Roberts	BR	CCBC (minutes)
Cllr Goronwy Edwards	GE	Forum Member
Caroline Turner	CT	CCBC (via Teams)
Andrew Wilkinson	AJW	CCBC
Heather Fitzgerald	HF	Forum member
Ant Tomlinson	AT	DCC
Howard Sutcliffe	HS	DCC
Adrian Walls	AW	DCC
Cllr Barry Mellor	BM	Forum Member
Chris Ruane	CR	Forum member
Emma McCloskey	EM	Forum member
Andy Murir	AM	Forum member
Kevin Slattery	KS	Forum member
John Buckley	JB	Forum member
Geraint Roberts	GR	Forum member
Katherine Goodey	KG	Forum member
Graham Taylor	GT	Forum member
Leena Farhat	LF	Forum member
Tom Johnstone	TJ	Forum member (via Teams)

MINUTES

Item		Action
1.0	Welcome, Introductions	
1.1	SB conducted health and safety briefing. SBR welcomed everyone to the meeting and forum members introduced themselves.	
2.0	Terms of reference	
2.1	SBR presented a draft terms of reference document to the attendees.	

2.2	<p>KS queried section 8.e and asks if any member of the public can attend?</p> <p>AW stated that they can come and observe and can be invited by the chair to speak.</p> <p>TJ queried that we appear to only have terrestrial access interests represented and don't currently have any freshwater or marine access interests represented?</p> <p>AW explained that if there's a high number of members it is unlikely to meet quorum so it is better to have fewer members making it possible for the forums to go ahead.</p> <p>SBR followed up by explaining that it's taken a long time to get enough people interested and if there's enough members to have a forum that covers most requirements it's better to have forum than no forum.</p> <p>GE stated that Snowdonia LAF have a number of members who may be able to represent those interests.</p> <p>LF also stated that she knows prospective members with freshwater and marine interest and can share their details if required.</p>	
3.0	Conwy Update	
3.1	<p>SBR presented a Power Point showing some of the work CCBC has undertaken within the past year with grant funding by NRW, Local Places for Nature and the Levelling up fund. SBR explains that a lot of the work undertaken was done with the assistance of local Ward Members, residents, students and 'Friends of' groups. Focus areas for improvement have included Access Improvement works countywide, tree preservation, nature reserves enhancements, green infrastructure enhancements, species protection and mitigation, coastal defence works and active travel schemes.</p> <p>SBR shared a link to Conwy's Right of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029 (ROWIP)</p>	
3.2	<p>KS asked if the ROWIP is purely aspirational.</p> <p>SBR explained that CCBC use it as a strategy for maintaining and proving local access in Conwy.</p> <p>GR asks as the forum is 'Conwy East', where is the line drawn?</p> <p>SBR clarifies that it typically covers the County that doesn't fall with Snowdonia LAF, however she has, in her presentation, shown examples of work from all over the county to give a good update of what's been happening Countywide and will continue to do so at future meetings.</p>	
4.0	Denbighshire Update	
4.1	<p>AW referred to a presentation conducted in the last CEDLAF in 2023 that outlines DCC's path survey where 963km out of c1300km of public paths were surveyed and says that instead of surveying the remainder of the paths this year they decided to use the funding to carry out the improvement works picked up.</p>	

	<p>He went on to explain that every path has a condition rating and linked images of each item of furniture on that route e.g. styles, signposts, bridges.</p> <p>AW advised that the routes were then able to be given a status: Green – passed Blue – minor inconvenience e.g. missing signpost Purple – could walk but might not be a pleasant experience Red – can't pass</p> <p>This means that they can focus their efforts on the communities which appear to have the most problems.</p> <p>AW stated that their access improvement plan is based on a large scale upgrade, particularly on the promoted routes and improving landowner engagement. For example some of the farming community much prefer having hand gates instead of stiles as they can actually use them and it adds to the value of their operation. AW went on to say that urban area development is another element being dealt with. When builders wish to put a housing estate in a field in Rhyl they encourage them to lead the path through an open space or green area instead of just a pavement to avoid depreciation of the network.</p> <p>TJ asked if any of the assessment of the network analysis considered the critical points and prioritised those for action. E.g. where there's a blocked PROW that renders an entire section of the network unusable for wheelchairs / cyclists / horses etc.? So the short bottlenecks that if fixed would unlock loops / routes?</p> <p>AW confirms that yes they have but are currently going through their findings and haven't finished the entire survey yet. Further, prioritising works is something they want to talk with the forum about, looking at issues of importance on the less dense networks then the broader network and looking at alternative routes if a footpath or bridleway isn't used often or are unpassable the road network can be used instead.</p>	
4.1	<p>HS started his presentation by explaining that the Countryside Service and National Landscape Team focuses on, site management, visitor pressure, supporting Rights of Way team, managing promoted routes, health and wellbeing and volunteers. He explained that one visitor pressure is that DCC and NL Teams encourage dogs to be on leads and that there are two or three campaigns every season to encourage people to put their dogs on a lead as it's a bylaw within the within the Country Parks.</p> <p>HS explained that they have three different types of grants coming in that support the Rights of Way team and promoted routes. AIG, SLSP (Special Landscape Special Places) which is a Welsh Government grant</p>	

	<p>for protected landscapes as well as the Natural Resources Wales granting.</p> <p>DCC promote 261 miles / 424 kilometres of walking routes, 117 miles in Denbighshire (outside NL), 45 miles in Clwydian Range and Dee Valley. They also promote 509 miles for cycling and horse riding which have been funded in various different ways including the Wales tourist board grant that has helped improve off road cycling that links into the Hiraethog trail and other routes around the Alwen and Brenig.</p> <p>The Nature for health programme promotes access to nature and the outdoors through exercise, arts and crafts, gardening, and practical conservation. HS shared that some of the benefits of promoting and having more people using these routes are that the more a route is used the less likely it is to deteriorate as well as encouraging Community ownership of green spaces within the Right of Way. The schemes have also encouraged people who have never walked before to improve their fitness, self-confidence and mental health.</p> <p>HS talked about the importance of nature recovery for elements effected by climate change within the area such as moorland management, dune erosion and flooding.</p>	
5.0	What do we want to achieve through the forum? (Breakout session)	
5.1	<p>Forum members spilt into groups of four to discuss breakout session questions as below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you could pick your favourite path/route or place in the CEDLAF area what would that be? (Icebreaker) 2. The purpose of the Local Access Forum is to provide advice on issues of particular local relevance. What topics should therefore be considered as agenda items of particular local importance at forthcoming meetings? And why? 3. How could future forums be structured to enable the sharing of advice and good practice? 	
5.2	<p><i>The answers to the breakout sessions have been collated and formulated into an Excel spreadsheet for circulation to the group members and to inform the proposed topics to be put forward as future Agenda items once a chair is elected at the next meeting.</i></p>	
6.0	Expressions of interest	

6.1	<p>SBR announced that in advance of the next meeting the forum will be looking at the expressions of interest for those who wish to take Chair and Vice Chair positions. SBR refers to the bottom of the agenda, which outlines details about the appointment of Chair and the way officers propose to do this. She explained that an email will be shared in the coming weeks in order for members to submit their statements that should be no longer than a page. The statements will be shared with all members to then secretly nominate a Chair and Vice Chair at the beginning of the next forum.</p> <p>GT asked how long the term of appointment is.</p> <p>AW answered that they will be appointed for three years or until someone resigns.</p> <p>SBR explained that the term of appointment and frequency of the meetings will be written in the terms of reference which will also be circulated to the group within the next couple of working days.</p> <p>HF asked the forum if they want to put a comment in on the proposed National Park as comments have to be in by the 16th of December.</p> <p>CR suggested that the next meeting be held relatively soon and proposed the first week of December.</p> <p>SBR suggested holding the next meeting at the end of November/ beginning of December as it will also give time for the members to submit their statements.</p> <p>SBR actioned BR to send out an e-mail with the ballot and proposals for date and locations for the next meeting.</p>	
7.0	AOB	
7.1	<p>TJ shared that there's a community led project based in Abergele looking at getting a pump track installed in Pentre Mawr Park, planning permission is currently with CCBC. They have also been successful on getting a £300,000 Sport Wales grant and an additional £20,000 from the Gwynt Y Mor Fund meaning they have about 90% of the funding needed. TJ encouraged anyone with interest to research the project and share their supportive comments.</p> <p>AW provided an update on the current legal situation with the 2026 cut-off date based on information received from the NRW.</p> <p>AJW introduced himself and shared his support for the forum and thanked the members for attending.</p>	