

Wales Coastal Access Improvement Programme (WCAIP) Conwy Steering Group

Tuesday 1st April, 6pm
The Great Orme Country Park Visitor Centre

**Conwy WCAIP Steering Group
meeting attendance**

Name	Apologies Attended	/
Members		
Paul Bucknall	Attended	
Jennie Frost	Attended	
Mike Griffiths	Attended	
David Tindall	Attended	
Richard Hatton	Attended	
Cllr Mike Priestly	Apologies	
Peter Sellers	Attended	
David Firth	Apologies	
Officers		
Helen Jowett CCBC	Attended	
Jennie Richardson CCBC	Attended	
Andrew Barker CCBC	Apologies	
Quentin Grimley CCW	Apologies	
Peter Rutherford SNPA	Attended	

1. Welcome and very brief overview of the programme and the role of the steering group.

Brief overview of the Coastal Access Improvement Programme was given. The aim is to improve access to the coast.

In Wales the Scheme is being funded by the Welsh Assembly who have delegated the administration and running of the scheme to the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW).

The Scheme is set to run until 2013 and the aim is to have a whole Wales Coast Path in place by 2012 but also to make significant improvement to access in the coastal zone.

Coastal Access Officers have now been appointed in most of the coastal local authorities. The local authorities are making annual grant applications to CCW to carry out work under this scheme.

2. Reason for setting up a steering group

All the local authorities need to work on the Coastal Access Improvement Programme in partnership with a local group or groups. Conwy East Local Access Forum (CELAF) were initially identified as a partner but it was decided at the last CELAF meeting that an additional group, specific to this project, was needed to give a wider input and range of expertise. While CELAF will remain involved in the programme the steering group will enable a more detailed and specific input.

The role of the steering group will be to advise on all aspects of the project but initially the two main elements will be;

- to advise on how projects already identified in the 08/09 programme should be carried out and;
- what should be included in the whole programme up to 2013

The whole project programme needs to be submitted to CCW by June 08 which is why it was deemed desirable to have this first meeting now in order to be able to meet again before the submission of the full programme.

Beyond this first year the intention is that the group continue to be involved with all aspects of the project as it progresses, to offer guidance or advice where possible and appropriate. This may include route development, particular works and development of information.

3. Introductions

All members of the group and officers present introduced themselves. Mention was also made of those who were unable to attend.

While all members of this group have various interests and expertise in different areas some of those mentioned were:

Officers

- Jennie Richardson Coastal Access (Survey) (CCBC)
- Also mentioned Andrew Barker Coastal Access (Delivery) (CCBC)
- Peter Rutherford (SNPA Access Officer and interested in Horses/ Cycling/Birds)
- Helen Jowett (Senior Countryside Officer, CCBC supervises the Countryside Service access team and site wardens)

Members

- Jennie Frost – CELAF various interests but mainly representing Equestrian Issues.
- Peter Sellers – Snowdonia North Local Access Forum (SNLAF) – Agricultural Officer, Walking / Climbing / Canoeing / Cycling / Botany.
- Paul Bucknall – CELAF Chair, Chartered Civil engineer.
- Mike Griffiths – Conwy County Borough Access Group (acts as advisory body on disability issues). Been involved with improvement plans for Rhos promenade and coastal defence strategy.
- David Tindall – Worked in water industry. Interests include walking, cycling, orienteering. Member of various organisations and also involved with Llandudno Town Council footpaths groups and Chairman of the Conwy County Ramblers Committee.
- Richard Hatten – Sustrans / cycling community.
- Cllr Mike Priestly - Unable to attend due to an unavoidable delay.
- David Firth –Unable to attend but Comments from other SNLAF members. Climber, walker, ex Head of outdoor centre.

Note. Initial attempts were made to recruit someone with more specific wildlife conservation interests but this has not been successful so it was put to the group to decide if they wished officers to pursue this. Various members indicated their own interests in nature conservation, botany and birds. PB offered to contact North Wales Wildlife Trust as he is a member and has some contacts if it was decided that is what the group wanted.

It was agreed that as there is a fair bit of interest and expertise in nature conservation already within the group, no one else at this stage need be recruited, however assistance could be sought on specific issues as and when required.

4. Election of the Chairman

Paul Bucknall was suggested by PR. Paul Bucknall indicated that he would be happy to do this. The whole group supported this and Paul Bucknall was voted in as Chair.

The group decided that at this time a Vice Chair was not necessary but the issue could be addressed in time if it was deemed necessary.

Paul Bucknall took over the chairing of the meeting at this point.

5. Work undertaken so far.

Andrew Barker was unfortunately unable to attend. While Andrew will be able to give a more detailed summary of works done at a later date, Helen Jowett stepped in to give brief details of some of the projects.

Works undertaken in this first year were mostly coastal zone work, previously identified on link paths on the Great Orme. Photographs of some of this work were distributed to members. Projects were chosen by prioritising work which could be achieved in a very short timescale. Due to these timescales and the time taken to obtain permissions etc. a small portion of the funding had to be returned.

Various individual issues were brought up including inappropriate barbed wire alongside paths and disappearing waymarkers on another section.

The Chair requested clarification regarding how the project funding works, if the budget was set until 2013 or if it was an annual process. It was confirmed that there will be annual bids submitted but a general programme (including costs) for the whole project up to 2013 needs to be submitted by the end of June 2008.

6. This years bid and work plan.

Current Timetable

- Proposed 08/09 work programme went to CCW by the 8th February 08. CCW have provisionally confirmed which projects will be supported.
- Formal grant bid 08/09 submission by 11th April 08
- Submission of full programme until 2013 to reach CCW by 30th June 2008

In keeping with the priorities discussed with CCW officers the works which have been identified and included in the Conwy bid for funding for 2008/09 are concentrated on the physical development of the actual route which is eligible for 100% funding this year.

Further work relating to the development of the coastal zone, other links and the promotion and signage of the route are to be included in the greater programme and annual bids from 2009 onwards.

The certainty of the line of the path was questioned in relation to how this would effect funding for works as this year works on the actual route are eligible for 100% funding but work undertaken in the coastal zone is only eligible for 75% funding. It is accepted that while the works planned for this year are on the intended main route that over the years other developments in some areas may mean that an alternative

route could also be considered. In Conwy's case there is currently little alternative to the proposed line due to geographical and structural features.

The line of the path and various issues were discussed, and the proposed works discussed at various points along the route.

Comments included:

A decision needs to be made regarding where the link to the Orme Summit should go. The original route suggestion was to go up Happy Valley but the general opinion seemed to be a preference for the link from Marine Drive up to Pinc Farm, where works had also taken place.

Various issues need to be looked at in the Deganwy area including the problem of sand on the track. There is also one small link which, due to land ownership reasons, is not actually a public right of way.

The possibility of legal path issues and the funding provision to deal with them needs to be considered in the whole program.

Cycle track developments being undertaken by other organisations were discussed, particularly those which involve building bridges across the A55. It was agreed that while such works are well out of the range of the Conwy project budget that the developments should be closely watched. While our current proposed route uses the best viable option, these developments may, in time be of great benefit to the programme and provide us with an alternative route, and more options to offer people.

The possibility of a bridle route from Conwy to Llanfairfechan was also mentioned. This is something being looked at by the Welsh Assembly / Trunk Roads Agency but is at the very early stages. A consultant is currently carrying out a feasibility study. Again this development should be closely watched.

A problem with drainage was discussed in an area behind Foel Lus and Alltwen. This is an area that the National Park Authority is also concerned about.

The Rhos-on-Sea promenade area was discussed with reference to access issues identified by the Conwy County Borough Access Group and also the planned improvements to the coastal defences in this area. MG agreed to liaise with JR to share information on these issues and possibly arrange a joint site visit.

Looking at the proposed work at Penmaenmawr underpass, it was suggested that the access problems here should be addressed by the Local Authority and not with the Conwy Coastal Access project money.

It was noted that the proposed coastal route is lacking in any specific provisions for equestrian users. While this is difficult in many areas, efforts are to be made to identify possibilities for inclusion in the full program.

A gap was identified within the group to include someone representing the tourism industry, i.e. a tourism provider. A tourism provider could be any commercial interest such as Chamber of Commerce. The possibility of a community group representative was also discussed. Someone from Stori Pen was suggested as a possibility.

Action Point JR to investigate and come back to the group / Chair with some possible names of people to invite to join the group.

Copies of the proposed route map for all members were requested. RH also suggested setting up an online map using Microsoft Live Search so that all members could access it and make comments on line. RH volunteered to look into setting this up and co-ordinating with JR regarding the route. Paper copies of the map still to go to members without computer access or anyone who would prefer the paper version.

7. Other Points

It was requested that all members were given the Contact details for the CCBC officers.

At this point any correspondence between group members can go via the officers until either individuals or the group wish to give out personal details to each other.

Andrew Barker – Coastal Access Officer (Delivery)
01492 874151 andrew.barker@conwy.gov.uk

Jennie Richardson – Coastal Access Officer (Survey)
01492 575123 jennie.richardson2@conwy.gov.uk

Helen Jowett – Senior Countryside Officer
01492 575310 helen.jowett@conwy.gov.uk

All the above officers can be contacted by post at:

Conwy Countryside Service
Planning Services
Civic Offices
Colwyn Bay
LL29 8AR

8. Date of the next meeting

As the Full programme needs to be submitted to CCW by the end of June 08 the group will meet early in June so that the detail of the full programme can be discussed in good time for any amendments to be made before submission.

The date has yet to be set but will not clash with the Conwy East or Northern Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meetings. The group agreed that during the summer the Great Orme Visitor Centre was an appropriate meeting place.

Any members wishing to make any comments or suggestions regarding the full programme are encouraged to do so. Officers will be happy to meet individuals or groups for site visits during April and May.