

Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting
held on
Wednesday 14th December 2016
at
Rhug Estate, Corwen
at 10:00 am

Local Access Forum Members

Tim Faire
Nicholas Lloyd
Heather Fitzgerald
Chris Marshall
Joanne Hughes
Cllr Martyn Holland
Hilary Davies
Kevin Slattery
Jim Gaffney
Max Grant
Gwen Buttler
John Buckley
Joanne Hughes
Kay Culhane
Iona Pierce

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Hannah Arndt (Access Officer) LAF Secretary
Adrian Walls (Rights of Way Manager)
Howard Sutcliffe (Countryside Officer)
Helen Mrowiec (Senior Recreation Officer)

Representing Conwy County Borough Council

Sian Williams (Access Officer)
Caroline Turner (Definitive Map Officer)
Victoria Currie (Area Co-ordinator South)

Apologies for Absence were submitted from: -

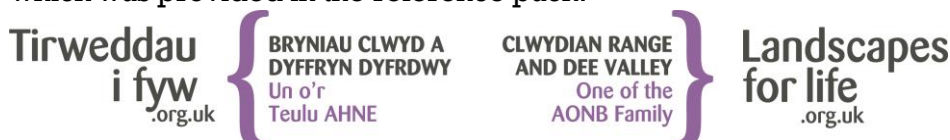
Tony Proffit, Hugh Crosswood, Cllr Dave Cowans (CCBC), Dan Hurst, Jim Gaffney

1. Welcome

Howard Sutcliffe opened the meeting and welcomed members to the Inaugural meeting of the joint Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum. He noted that it will take time get the joint forum working and members to know each other. He is keen to make it an enjoyable and productive meeting with site visits, dealing with consultations and access related matters. HS is keen on working across borders and this joint partnership is welcomed as Rights of Way (RoW) do not stop at boundaries.

Hannah Salisbury noted that we were looking for a Chair and Vice Chair today, a vote will be conducted in the second meeting of the LAF this afternoon.

LAF Members gave a brief introduction to their backgrounds, a summary of which was provided in the reference pack.



2. An Introduction to the geographic area covered by the Conwy East and Denbighshire LAF

Adrian Walls gave a presentation on Denbighshire's Countryside Access Resource. He provided information about the network coverage, assets on the routes (stiles, gates, signs) and issues. He showed the area of the new access forum, noting that it included part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the western side and Conwy Valley on the eastern side. A joint forum will be able to look at areas such as Hiraethog and Clocaenog and will facilitate cross border work.

He noted that the Flintshire, Meirionethshire and Denbighshire Definitive Maps were reviewed to the Clwyd Definitive Map. The Definitive Map comes in two sections - the map and the statement. The RoW team have been digitising the information and synchronising the data to modern maps. All of bridleway and byways have been verified, 88% of the footpath information has been confirmed to date. There is a total 1343.6km RoW in Denbighshire.

Adrian Walls outlined that there is a lack of RoW on the coast where the majority of the population live. He also mentioned that 19km of footpaths are cul-de-sac paths, which is a low percentage, however 34km of bridleways are cul-de-sac routes that don't go anywhere, which is a high percentage of the available network.

He also discussed that there were mapping errors on the Definitive Map – 784 anomalies have been noted, 158 can be corrected without a legal order, 129 require legal order, 22 paths don't reflect the statement, 28 are wrongly numbered, 27 statements are no longer correct, 161 paths contradict visual or map evidence for the correct route and 249 require investigation. To do all of this work would require £250,000, including the cost of 1200 press adverts, it is a matter that the Government needs to consider to adopt a more effective way to advertise changes.

Adrian Walls highlighted that there is a process for creating new paths, also in some circumstances new paths can be gained from planning applications etc.

53km of permissive paths exist within the county, some of these are within open access land, and these make a considerable difference to bridleway users in particular.

Adrian gave a summary of the furniture of footpaths which include signs, bridges, culverts and gates. The Authority has a strimming schedule for the RoW, this has been scaled back to two cuts which are done later in the year due to budget constraints.

Sian Williams circulated a handout about Conwy CBC RoW. She noted that the west area of Conwy is covered by the Snowdonia Local Access Forum. The County has urban areas, such as Llandudno, that contrast with very rural areas, such as Hiraethog. The statistics on the handout refer to Conwy CBC as a whole. The network includes 1572km footpath, 98km bridleway, 21km restricted byways and 15 byways 1706km in total. The RoW are reasonably spread out across the County with gaps in some upland areas. 5800ha of open access is mapped within the

County, outside of Snowdonia National Park area. 23,000ha of Snowdonia National Park is in in Conwy CBC.

Sian explained the new structure for dealing with RoW within Conwy CBC. The Authority has been split to three areas, West, East and South, for management purposes with no dedicated RoW Team, resources are tight.

John Buckley asked how work is prioritised. Adrain Walls commented that the Authority has a statutory duty to respond to Community Councils and also to issues on priority routes. Any complaint is generally inspected and assessed within 3-4 weeks, it is then logged and then placed on a list, if it is not resolved by the end of the year the item gets rolled over to the following year. Staff members are currently working with a tablet which records issues in the field. Adrian Walls would like a system where every footpath has a review period, relating to a scale of prioritisation, 1 being most important e.g. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. Landowners are normally receptive to doing the work if stile kits are delivered.

Victoria Currie noted that Conwy CBC do not prioritise in terms of the source of the complaint.

Heather Fitzgerald commented some Community Council members do not necessarily have an interest in RoW. Adrian Walls agreed that some Community Councils are more proactive than others, with the tendency to work in partnership with those willing to work with the Authority. Community Miles is a good example of projects done in partnerships.

Hannah Arndt noted that issues could be reported directly to the Authority and people do not necessarily need to go through Community Councils.

Cllr Martyn Holland would like to know how many complaints are received in a year and whether they have been made by local people. He feels that many complaints in his ward comes from outside of the Authority.

RESOLVED

Denbighshire CC and Conwy CBC to bring any figures that are available relating to complaints received regarding RoW to the next meeting.

3. Short introduction from members wishing to be considered for the role of Chair Person or Vice Chair Person

Max Grant asked if the term would be for 3 years, he would be willing to stand if no other member wished to stand as Chair.

John Buckley, noted that he would also be willing to stand as Chair, but has no previous experience of chairing a Local Access Forum.

Tim Faire noted that he would also be willing to stand as Chair if it was helpful to the Forum, he been the Chair of NFU Committees and his local Community Council.

Howard Sutcliffe said that it would be good to start with a new Chair for the new forum. Adrian Walls commented that there is a robust team of Officers to support the Chair. Victoria Currie noted that the officers try and make the forum as least onerous as possible.

Iona Pierce suggested Gwen Buttler. Gwen Butler responded that she would be willing to stand as Vice Chair.

4. Voting for Chair and Vice Chair, a ballot box and paper is provided

Max Grant and John Buckley withdrew their declarations of interest to become the LAF Chair, therefore no ballot was held.

RESOLVED

Tim Faire was nominated as LAF Chair by Cllr Martyn Holland and seconded by Heather Fitzgerald, all in favour.

Gwen Butler was nominated as Vice Chair by Kay Culhane and seconded by Iona Pearce, all in favour.