

## Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on  
Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at  
Coed Pella at 10:00

### Local Access Forum Members

Tim Faire (Chair)  
Gwen Butler (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Don Milne (CCBC)  
Jo Hughes  
Paul Frost  
Tom Woodall  
Laura Crawford  
Kay Culhane  
Kevin Slattery  
Chris Marshall  
Duncan Barratt  
Hugh Crosswood  
Iona Pierce

### Representing Conwy County Borough Council

Sian Williams (Access Warden)  
Victoria Currie (ERF Area Coordinator South)  
Caroline Turner (Definitive Map Officer)  
Tom Gravett (ERF Area Manager East)

### 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))  
Huw Rees (Countryside and Heritage Manager)

### Observers

Paul Mitchell (NRW)  
Peter Rutherford (Snowdonia LAFs)  
Tom Culhane

### Apologies for Absence were submitted from: -

Cllr Martyn Holland, Max Grant, Hilary Davies, John Buckley, Heather Fitzgerald, Jim Gaffney has offered his resignation to the Forum.

### Actions and Notes of the Last Meeting

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. HA listed apologies received. HA to amend the notes to include the changes received from Duncan Barratt and John Buckley via email.

The Chair asked if the notes of the last meeting were an accurate record. Proposed as accurate by Tom Woodall and Duncan Barratt.

### Matters arising

Actions raised at the last meeting were as follows;

Action Point	Detail of Action	Current Situation
AP 9.1	Could Victoria Currie provide RoWIP Reports to LAF?	The previous ROWIP reviews are no longer on the Conwy system. The information for the old ROWIP is in the assessments for the new one as an overall 10 year review.
AP 9.2	Could Sian Williams provide update on Donate a Gate scheme in Conwy?	Sian to give an update at the next meeting.

## **Nature for Health – Presentation by Emily Reddy**

Emily attended the meeting to present and discuss the Nature for Health project. Emily supports the Social prescribing 2025 movement and to help health services, Denbighshire Countryside and Housing teamed up to develop a funding application covering 4 areas. The project aims to address issues and inequalities within communities across Denbighshire as identified by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). Denbighshire Housing manage the exercise referral programme, however only 50% of the people referred annually actually attend and around ¼ of these complete the full 18 week programme. Many people don't feel comfortable attending the gym. Nature for Health caters for those people and other groups such as youths with mental health issues.

This project looks to other ways to address these issues and to get people out and active. It focuses on 4 areas – Denbighshire's housing estates in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Llangollen and Corwen. Prestatyn is already leading the way in social prescribing through Artisans Collective; Corwen is benefiting from a Rural Development transport project which benefits this project and the community. The project is collaborating with Bangor Uni and BCUHB. The measuring of outputs is different to usual projects due to the health input and Emily is currently waiting for access to Elemental social prescribing software so the health improvements through exercise and activities offered can be monitored. In the meantime the project is using Warwick Edinburgh questionnaire as the health board is keen to determine the value of the project.

Referrals are high in north of the county from occupational health, mental health and GP referrals. In the south there are more self-referrals and from the community. Many people living on Denbighshire's housing estates are supported by numerous services. This project engages with these groups to reduce their needs and encourage them to help themselves. The project is working well with the Countryside Service as a partner as they are welcomed on the housing estates.

Free walking and volunteering sessions are offered weekly in each of the four communities. Projects include a sheds project, dry stone walling and den building in Llangollen and a community allotment project with 18 plots in Corwen. Some communities have taken ownership of the project, which is essential for project sustainability. Denbighshire Housing have provided match funding to improve green spaces and move away from offering parks, but to enhance green spaces in a sustainable way.

*Laura asked what is offered for people with disabilities.*

The health walk in Llangollen is along the canal, which is accessible to all.

*Paul asked if the project is targeting people with disabilities.*

It isn't directly, however anyone can be referred or self-refer.

*Paul asked about the sustainability of the project.* Emily said they have looked to work with existing community groups for sustainability, including the Artisans collective in Prestatyn, the Pengwern community group in Llangollen and the Edyrnion allotment group in Corwen.

*Kevin asked how GPs and Schools are made aware of the project.* Emily has visited all GPs and is working with Betsi Cadwaladr. Some GPs are more interested than others in project. It is proving harder in the south, but GPs are under so much pressure in north to make these referrals, the project is good for them.

*Peter asked if the teams have undergone any additional training.* Emily's background is delivering this type of project and she has done the Every Conservation Counts training and will now be training the staff.

## **Officer Update: Sian Williams**

*Cerdded Conwy Walks* – Sian highlighted the community group of volunteer walk leaders, which hosts six walking weekends during the year. There is also the Trefriw walking festival in May and additional walks put on by leaders when they can through the year, that are advertised on Facebook. Cerdded Conwy Walks continue to be members of the Outdoor Partnership to offer continued training to leaders in First Aid, Navigation, Geology and Plant Life. Leaders offer short walks on the *Pilgrims' Way and Slate Trail in sections*. Aled Owen, author of the slate trail book is giving a talk on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, contact Sian for details.

*Wales Coast Path* - surface path works now complete on the Little Orme. These works are to stop erosion of limestone grassland and protect the SSSI. Two kissing gates have been fixed/replaced.

A kissing gate and dog gate has been replaced on Conwy Mountain.

Way marking is fading on the coast path across the area and Sian has placed an order to replace these. Way marking has been done on the Little Orme and the coast to the west so far.

There has been storm damage at Morfa Madryn in the past. Following discussion about reinstating the path it has been decided not to reinstate it as the area is a natural salt marsh and will be allowed to flood in the future. Work to tidy up the area and make it safe will be completed in March.

There is a new Wales Coast Path website. NRW have asked for short walks for itineraries. Sian is working on mapping those at present.

It is coming to the end of the financial year and Sian may spend some of the remaining money on sand clearance at West Shore.

Sian has two students one day a week for 10 months each year and they have completed the annual 5% rights of way survey. It has all been done digitally for first time, which has worked well now just need to analyse the figures.

Conwy, along with numerous local authorities are working in partnership with the Ramblers on an EnRAW bid - Paths for People. This is based around communities and will fit into RoWIP and wellbeing goals. We are waiting to hear the outcome.

*Donate a Gate* is moving slowly, Sian has drawn up a draft application form and terms and conditions, and she has spoken to Conwy's mapping and IT teams to map suitable gate locations on the Conwy website. The user can then click on location for more information. Sian has a list of potential contractors to write to and ask if they would be interested in the scheme. Conwy's current memorial bench scheme currently works with Conwy supplying the spec and the donator and contractor then completing the works and payment between them.

*Lost Ways* – Duncan Barratt gave a presentation to LAF and to officers in CCBC office. Simon Billington, head of Open Spaces has issues the following response:

### **Lost Ways and Anomalies Presentation by Duncan Barrett (Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum member) to CCBC officers.**

15/01/2019 CCBC Mochdre Offices

#### **Attending:**

Duncan Barrett

CCBC Staff: Simon Billington (Open Spaces Manager), Elwyn Williams (Area Manager, South), Vicky Currie (Area Coordinator, South), Caroline Turner (Definitive Map Officer), Barbara Owsianka (Ecologist), Sian Williams (Access Warden).

Duncan Barrett (DB) has looked into the lost ways around Betws yn Rhos and the wider area in Conwy County. He is keen to put forward DMMO applications for these lost ways and anomalies and presented some of his findings at the meeting. He was also keen to know what time and resources the authority could put into the subject as it's something that the Local Access Forum (LAF) could potentially progress with researching.

Simon Billington (SB) responded on behalf of Open Spaces that at present we don't have the budget to look into the subject or take any additional work on. Our Definitive Map Officer is only able to deal with a minimal number of queries per year and couldn't offer officer time to support an LAF sub group. Any DMMO applications we do receive are dealt with chronologically. We could potentially look into the project in the future if we could source funding e.g. ENRaW grant. This would have to be looked at more creatively in relation to health and well-being. This would also have to be done working in partnership with a third party such as the Ramblers.

<b>Action 10.1</b>	HA to circulate email response with the notes of the meeting
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Kevin: Great to hear about progress with Donate a Gate.

With regard to Cerdded Conwy, Kevin asked how you go about asking/suggesting that GPs refer to these walks. The Ramblers have been asking Welsh Government and Westminster for GPs to bear in mind walking as a useful activity for health and wellbeing. So if GPs and Schools are aware of various walking groups and to prescribe this rather than medicine. Does Cerdded Conwy have links with GPs. Sian said that at present there is no direct link, but they are advertised for anyone who can to come along, you don't have to be a member.

Sian has had links with Aberconwy Mind and Nant Y Glyn to offer guided walks for clients to encourage them to come on the Cerdded Conwy Walks. This has been hard as not many have been turning up for the walks at Nant y Glyn as each client has to be risk assessed before coming by their 'carer' and for some reason this hasn't been happening. Conwy are open to walks with Nant y Glyn if this happens in the future. Cerdded Conwy volunteer leaders are also a bit nervous of leading such walks without appropriate training and some, understandably may not wish to do this.

Paul added that he agrees with Sian, they are volunteers, but specific skills base required to deal with referrals whether that is physical or mental ability or problems and people have a right to expect to be treated in professional way in relation to those problems. Volunteers need training to deal with this.

Howard raised issues with WG funding and its competitive nature saying this affects continuity because projects are reinvented to meet criteria.

Laura raised the issue of the sand on West Shore in Llandudno. At the end of the beach there is a ramp, which is always clogged with sand and not accessible by wheelchair. In other direction to Deganwy there is no way to access and it's the only route wheelchair users have in the area.

Tom Gravett answered that Conwy have accessed some Wales Coast Path grant money to deal with sand clearance but it's a Highways issue. It's not sustainable to keep clearing as tens of thousands of pounds is spent and sand keeps coming back. People are looking at redirecting the path to address this issue.

<b>Action 10.2</b>	The Chair asked for a progress update at the next meeting on the ramp that is clogged up.
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Tom W raised the Active Travel work that is a wider issue in this area.

Councillor Don Milne: A big piece of work on north and west shore flood defence is ongoing, which should offer a solution. He added that £40,000 was spent to keep the path clear of sand last year. Conwy is currently looking into further improvements through active travel to Maes Du golf course. As it stands it is not viable to maintain this route.

The other end Laura referred to is where sand is blown over onto the prom, this may need a review of the maintenance of that section.

Kevin offered to present at the next meeting on proposals to clear sand in Llandudno.

Kevin added that the Ramblers were asked to take group from Hafod mental health unit in Rhyl on a monthly walk for a few years. The walk leader was happy to deliver the walk without additional training. Two of the Hafod group members are now trained walk leaders with the Ramblers.

### **Officer Update: Adrian Walls**

Adrian presented the latest community miles leaflet to the Forum explaining that the project originally came through Denbighshire's RoWIP to cater for walking enthusiasts and promote the local health benefits of walking, in addition to being an attraction to boost tourism. Assessment found there could be 70 potential locations. The project was originally funded through RoWIP, with £10,000 each year supporting Hannah's time, a leaflet and general furniture upgrade. This year a £20,000 project bid was successful through the Green Infrastructure Grant for the removal of stiles and replacing with kissing gates.

Llanfair DC has community plan in which they wanted a walk linking to Pwllglas and the village shop. North Wales Wildlife Trust was also looking to enhance use of its sites to community.

Adrian's project supported a noticeboard for the Wildlife Trust and a public promotion event with the local school, including a walk, wild daffodil planting and apple pressing to offer an enhanced experience in the natural environment. The project also delivered new signage for the route, a new set of steps and 24 new structures were installed, including 9 gates, 11 kissing gates, 4 field gates and one item removed. 400 new way markers were also purchased in addition to the design of a leaflet including facts and a map and print of 10,000 leaflets. The total project cost was £17,000 and Adrian highlighted that this is the money required to deliver this kind of project. This also meant staff were not dealing with other rights of way issues and complaints.

Analysis of RoWIP data shows that in 2005/6 Denbighshire were not putting in any hand/wicket gates. This continues for 4-5 years. However, 20-40 hand gates and 40-50 kissing gates have been installed in Denbighshire per year in last few years. Emphasis has moved from stiles to providing and installing hand gates.

Kevin asked if volunteer groups are used. Adrian said it can be difficult to manage, train and supervise. Not a reliable resource at present, due to the time involved, however one group has recently come forward which Adrian is keen to work with.

Tom W asked how Denbighshire's RoWIP was progressing. Adrian said he is still on the assessment. There is currently no timeline as he is the only person working on it.

## Conwy Council Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan – Victoria Currie

Victoria presented the draft Conwy RoWIP to the Forum and highlighted that £500,000 was received from Welsh Government to produce the last plan, which was an aspirational plan. In 2013 Conwy council restructured and rights of way split into 3 regional areas. There is now only 1 officer for the whole county. Victoria compared the previous and current structures and highlighted that many officers now have a much wider remit. Maintenance officers now cover rights of way and highways.

The aspirational plan included 13 staff and a £1 million budget to put the network right and £500,000 to keep it going.

The new plan for 2019-29 is funded from existing budgets as no grant funding available. It aims to use volunteers and the third sector more. Victoria added that they are currently at point 4 in the RoWIP timetable and wished to thank Cllr Milne for his support through the process. Victoria is waiting for the final nod from Cllr Milne before publishing the draft for a 3 month consultation period, which will run to mid-June.

### The 5 main aims of the plan are:

1. **Ensure the prowl network is open and available for use** through surveys, least restrictive options, inspecting promoted routes, , vegetation clearance
2. **Provide an up-to-date and widely available definitive map and statement** looking to improve online map and system for reporting issues
3. **Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network** working with active travel colleagues
4. **Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network** improve targeting information on internet and support voluntary groups – huge project but very beneficial
5. **Encourage greater community involvement** promote community maintenance scheme and explore/develop volunteer groups

Victoria would like the LAF to get involved with the delivery work plans, which will look to deliver the 5 aims. These will be reported back on each year. The work plans needs to state the resources required, outputs and timescale.

Please submit comments by 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to [erf@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:erf@conwy.gov.uk)

<b>Action 10.3</b>	<b>HA to circulate digital copy of the document</b>
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Paul asked how the LAF will be engaged in the delivery work plan. The LAF is a large group and it can become just a discussion. Was there a plan to develop a smaller group? Victoria thought that she would have a slot on each meeting agenda to discuss and update the LAF. It was felt that having a sub-group with selected members wouldn't be inclusive of the whole LAF.

Tom W suggested that when it gets to the detail it may be the time to speak to specific members; however at the moment it is more relevant to the wider group.

Tom G added that much right of way work is reactive and it's not possible to list all we will deal with.

Tom G sees the delivery plan as a process to assess the 5 aims set and allocate resources according to broad properties in the delivery plan.

Don added that this document is setting the overall concept and method of how these will be delivered in the future – how will this go forward. A group view is required now on whether the outlined plan and approach will work, is it the right structure and then specialist knowledge will be required further down the line.

Tom W asked if it is within the plan that members can comment on specific priorities. Victoria said the statement of action p13 gives the 5 aims, broken down in following pages in the current state and what Conwy propose to do. For example 3.1.1 surveys – continue current surveys. So the LAF can assess these (3.1.1, 3.1.2 etc.) and give feedback on these.

Peter asked whether with Brexit and expected changes in legislation regarding rights of way, if anything was built into the document to prepare for this. Victoria said this will be more in delivery plans – the living document, rather than main plan. Peter added that sub-groups work well to focus on specific issues. Victoria said that Conwy don't have the staff resources to deal with this. Victoria tries to set one day a week to deal with all rights of way issues. Caroline is the only full rights of way staff member. Pete sees that it will help the Forum considerably.

Jo thanked Vicky for the acknowledgement for horse riders to be able to use the verges on page 17.

**Date of forthcoming meetings:**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (please note amended date emailed)

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019

DRAFT