

Conwy East and Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held on
Thursday 7th June 2018
at
Hwb Dinbych at 17:30

Local Access Forum Members

Tim Faire (Chair)
Gwen Butler (Vice Chair)
Jo Hughes
Paul Frost
Cllr Don Milne
Heather Fitzgerald
Hilary Davies
Chris Marshall
Kay Culhane
Iona Pierce
Duncan Barratt

Representing Denbighshire County Council

Hannah Arndt (Access Officer and LAF Secretary)
Adrian Walls (Rights of Way Manager)

Representing Conwy County Borough Council

Sian Williams (Access Officer)
Caroline Turner (Definitive Map Officer)
Victoria Currie

Observers

Paul Mitchell (NRW)
Tom Culhane

Apologies for Absence were submitted from: -

Hugh Crosswood, Jim Gaffney, Toni Mayne, Cllr Martyn Holland, Kevin Slattery, Max Grant, John Buckley, Tom Woodall, Howard Sutcliffe.

Actions and Notes of the Last Meeting

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. HA listed the apologies received. The chair said that all members wish Max Grant a speedy recovery.

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

Proposed as accurate by Gwen Butler and seconded by Cllr Don Milne. 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	HA has contacted those outstanding.
AP 6.1	HA and GB to draft letter to Hannah Blythyn regarding the loss of RoWIP funding.	Support offered to the Chair of LAFs in Wales from CEDLAF. Most points had been answered in the 4 letters to Hannah Blythyn from other LAFs. HA has highlighted the issue with HS who meets with Hannah Blythyn on a fairly regular basis.

Take the Lead Campaign

– Presentation by Rachel Jones from the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB

The Dog's Trust believe that there are around 9 million pet dogs in the UK. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB team have seen an increase in the numbers of visitors wanting to access the countryside, including our country parks with their pet dogs. As countryside rangers we recognise that dog walking is one of the most popular activities enjoyed by visitors to our sites, however that also brings with it an increase in dog fouling, fear of dogs – be that children or adults scared of dogs, or dog owners concerned by other dogs behaviour and livestock worrying.

Last year the ranger team met with the PONT, North Wales Police Rural Crime Team, local councillors and DCC communication team to put a campaign together to address responsible dog ownership when walking in the countryside with a particular focus on Moel Famau Country Park.

This campaign involved social media posts of short films, using interviews with rangers, local graziers and the police. There were also press releases and a poster campaign at Moel Famau along the trails. Rangers have spent time talking to dog owners, explaining the issues and educating them on the consequences of a dog attack. Many do not realise that the police can seek a court order for the destruction of a dog following an attack.

Our team know of 6 sheep that were either injured or killed on Moel Famau and a couple that died from road traffic accidents in 2017. When speaking to dog owners we found many visitors had seen the social media and press releases.

The rangers now see many more dogs on leads but when you take into consideration the number of dogs that are walked up Moel Famau you only need a couple of irresponsible owners out of 100 dog walkers to have a dog worrying incident. Most of the time incidents Rachel sees are dog chasing as they get out of the car but owner manages to call them back.

This year the campaign has returned and the team are looking to widen it to cover other areas in the AONB, including Dinas Bran, Corwen and Penycloddiau. Events to engage with dog owners and then pass on information regarding the campaign to them have been held, where the rangers hand out dog biscuits, dog leads, poo bags and information.

Staff attended a talk by Stephen Jenkinson, a consultant specialist on dog walking in the countryside who says the best results he has seen are where the campaigns are positive. That is what the AONB team is trying to achieve but there are also some hard hitting posters.

Stephen suggests providing advice to owners about where they can let their dogs off leads, but keep under close control ensuring that if you put signs up saying sheep in the field and to keep dogs on leads that they are actually grazing that field at that time as people become blind to old posters and tend to ignore them.

Stephen has visited Moel Famau and other nearby areas and we are waiting on a report from him.

The AONB team have also met with a community and education officer from the Dogs Trust who we are hoping to hold joint events with over the next 2 years.

Questions to Rachel

HD asked if the dog leads being given away were fixed length. Most of the leads purchased are fixed length. There were a small number of extendable leads however when these were given out the dog owners were given advice about using them in populated area. If funding is secured for the campaign next year, all leads will be fixed length.

JH asked if there is the possibility for safe fenced off area for dogs to be exercised in the forest. These are becoming increasingly available on private land at a cost per hour. If NRW were to do this where would responsibility/liability /maintenance lie and how would it be monitored if dogs can't mix? RJ said she is working with NRW to hopefully create a route through the forest where dogs can be off the lead away from livestock.

JH highlighted that the dog show on the Great Orme will have sheep present to raise awareness. This is a joint event between the Country Park and national trust on 16th June
RJ is hoping to have sheep at the Moel Famau family fun day on 21st July

Are there issues with faeces? Yes disease can be contracted. Didn't want to take anything away from worrying campaign so this may be a future focus. JH asked about places to put poo bags.
RJ said there are two dog bins now at Moel Famau, one in the car park and one around 200 metres up the main path. The team can't cope with cost of any more bins or time to empty them. The introduction of bins has also created litter problem. Adding more bins along routes would push the issue into wider countryside.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review Update

Denbighshire County Council

No update to give at present.

Conwy County Borough Council

Victoria Currie advised that she is still working on the draft RoWIP at the moment. The assessment documents shared with the LAF members form the basis of draft for the new RoWIP and are assessments of how Conwy have progressed in last 10 years. The current situation will form the basis of next RoWIP.

AP 8.1	VC to send HA updated documents.	
AP 8..2	HA to circulate updated documents to members	
AP 8.3	Members to send comments on assessment documents to VC	

HD asked if there was any regular monitoring of the RoWIP works. VC said that annual report was submitted to WG and copy placed on the CCBC website. HD asked is the LAF could receive the annual review of progress delivering the plan and also highlighted that there is no mention of the LAF in the assessment documents.

CM referred to the mention of a cycle route from Betws y Coed to Llyn Alwen in one of the assessments but there were no details of the route or where to find it. AW added that this was part of the Triban Trail

and believes they are on the Hiraethog website. CM suggested that VC added links to the routes into the assessment documents.

PF suggested working with North Wales Tourism to promote routes.

HA added that Mountain bike routes in Conwy could be added to ridenorthwales.co.uk and MBWales.com. HA is happy to discuss further with VC and SW.

Work Plans for 2018 - 19

Conwy County Borough Council

Donate a gate: A survey of potential gates has begun, but is taking time using Symology our asset management system. SW is currently writing procedures for the scheme and sourcing contractors that would like to express an interest in being part of the scheme. Will keep the group up to date.

Wales Coast Path works: SW plans to carry out signage improvements, surfacing of path on Wildlife Trust site on the Little Orme and surfacing of path at Morfa Madryn with this year's maintenance allocation from NRW.

Cerdded Conwy Walks: SW supports a group of volunteer walk leaders as the secretary of the group to put on monthly walks programmes. They are currently applying for further Community Chest funding for walk leader training. The Group are members of the Outdoor Partnership and Conwy Voluntary Services Council. Working on improving links with providing walks for day users on the Nant y Glyn hospital and the Recover Group and Mind Llandudno.

CCBC walks website pages: SW is currently updating walking pages on the CCBC website following a website upgrade.

Clr Milne added that he will be encouraging businesses on the Wales Coast Path to become water bottle refill points. This had been recently publicised as an aspiration by Minister Hannah Blythyn to add refill points along the coast path. Clr Milne added that new water points would be added when economically feasible

Duncan asked if any Donate a gate guidance was available – SW is currently working on it.

AW asked what the policy would be around future ownership and maintenance. The landowner may consent to work now but may not want to assume responsibility in 10 or so years' time.

Denbighshire County Council

Wales Coast Path: In addition to the small maintenance budget received from NRW, HA has secured funding to improve the Wales Coast Path between NCN5 at Presthaven sands and the viewing platform for the little terns colony. This work will be part funded by the Little Terns EU LIFE+ project. Work is expected to start in September and will allow pushchairs, wheelchairs and trampers access into the dune system.

Responsible Access Campaign: The AONB have launched a responsible access campaign in partnership with Ride North Wales and Oneplanet Adventure who run the Mountain Bike Centre at Coed Llandegla. The campaign highlights the sensitive nature of heather moorland and limestone scree. It encourages users to stick to the correct routes to minimise damage and disturbance to the fragile habitats. The campaign involves a series of interviews to be published on social media and YouTube, a leaflet of the

cycle route between Coed Llandegla and Llangollen and the AONB team have been involved in group rides to speak to mountain bikers about the moorland.

Promoted Routes: HA is also working on upgrades to the Denbighshire section of the Hiraethog Trail and a revamp of the North Berwyn Way between Corwen and Llangollen. There will also be some additions to the Community Miles series of walks in the north of the county.

PF reminded the Forum of Community chest grants and highlighted that groups in Denbighshire are not taking advantage. HA to try and look into it to push it to walk groups via KD and HS.

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
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Membership review and future topics for the LAF

HA informed the Forum that the CEDLAF currently has 19 members and asked if members felt that the Forum was missing any interest areas. The balance between Conwy and Denbighshire representation is currently 9 for Conwy and 10 for Denbighshire.

HD suggested representation fishing community and AW suggested the agricultural community and put a name forward of a female farmer in the Vale of Clwyd. HD also highlighted that ethnic minorities are not represented on the Forum. PF recently met someone who works with an organisation in Penmaenmawr who work with ethnic minority groups. PF's contact to be invited to a future meeting.

The Forum agreed that HA should invite Laura Bailey to the Forum. Laura applied to the previous Conwy Forum but HA was unable to make contact with her when the CEDLAF was formed. JH had since put HA in contact with Laura. HA will also invite AW's contact to fill in an application to join the Forum to with an agricultural interest. HA is currently working on a privacy policy for CEDLAF and enlisting help from DCC to ensure all paperwork is GDPR compliant.

AP 8.5	HA to invite Laura Bailey to join the Forum and AW contact to complete application.	
AP	HA to liaise with PF to invite his contact in Penmaenmawr to a future meeting.	

Future Agenda Topics

HD suggested a talk from both of counties on how volunteers are used, how many hours, how we use them, how much is being done, what tasks are undertaken, are more needed?

DB suggested an item on lost rights of way and HF highlighted that 40 paths had been lost in Tremeirchion parish. DB has been involved in a lost ways project in Conwy called restoring the record, raising awareness of the 2026 cut-off.

Date of forthcoming meetings:

The Forum decided to continue with 4 meetings per year. The June and September will be held in early evening. The winter meetings (December and March) will be held in daytime.

- 6th September 2018
- 6th December 2018