

**SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE CHAIRS OF THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS IN WALES**

**DRAFT MEETING NOTE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, Hafod a Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Powys**

<b>Present:</b>	<i>See separate attendance list</i>
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cardiff LAF
	<p><b>Introduction and outline of the day</b> Jean Rosenfeld, acting LAF National Representative</p> <p>Jean welcomed a number of new Chairs to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cardiff LAF. A number of LAFs had not replied to the invitation and it was assumed that some if not all of these were not currently in existence; despite it being a statutory requirement for appointing authorities to establish a LAF.</p>
1.	<p><b>The Access work of the National Trust in Wales:</b> Richard Neale, National Trust</p> <p>Jean had invited Richard Neale to present to the LAF Chairs following discussion and the presentation given by Richard as part of the last National Access Forum meeting. It was noted that LAFs would welcome closer working with the National Trust (NT) and that there was an opportunity to look at how this could be achieved.</p> <p>Richard provided an overview of the NT and its strategy for 2020, he noted that access work cuts across all of NT work.</p> <p>Most of the day to day management is delegated to the NT regions and countries, including Wales. The NT outdoor properties are categorised in order to prioritise resources and management as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Active’: where there is most investment, with staff, car parking, provision of activities and other facilities</li> <li>• ‘Explore’: where there was some information provided and easy waymarked walks</li> <li>• ‘Wild’: where people were reminded of NT ownership but have to find their own way around.</li> </ul> <p>Richard then showed examples of a number of these types of property across Wales, which demonstrated that NT were working beyond their boundaries and in partnership to achieve common outcomes for management. They had acquired areas e.g. Rhossili car park and car park at access to Pen y Fan, to provide a better and more informed welcome for visitors to these busy areas. The NT were also involved in the</p>

	<p>Pembrokeshire Coast Forum concordat for managing coasteering in Aberdeiddi and other Pembrokeshire sites and were working with Sport Wales to use NT properties to encourage people to become more physically active. As a landowner and as a result of the Neptune Coastline Campaign, NT were dealing with coastal adaptation on their sites with examples of managed realignment at a number of sites, including Freshwater West and Cwm Ivy, Gower.</p> <p>In preparation for talking to LAF Chairs, Richard had contacted all local rangers. Local rangers have responsibility for the range of NT work including wildlife/estate/volunteer managers as well as recreation. It was a useful reminder for NT to note that LAFs are in place and that it is beneficial to involve LAFs early on in access related projects.</p> <p><b>Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAFs should take the opportunity to make the connection with their Local NT ranger.</li> <li>• NT should think of LAFs as an additional resource</li> <li>• A number of local rangers are already involved with LAFs</li> <li>• NT rangers had some local budget for access and recreation matters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 17.1:</b> Richard Neale to provide a list of NT local rangers to Carys Drew for circulation to LAFs</p> <p><b>Action 17.2:</b> LAFs to develop contact with local NT rangers</p>
2.	<p><b>Update from Welsh Government:</b> Catrin Dellar, WG</p> <p>Catrin provided an update on a number of relevant matters:</p> <p><b>The Green Paper consultation</b></p> <p>The Green Paper consultation <i>Improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation</i> had closed in October 2015 since then, WG had been analysing the responses. A brief summary of the responses had been provided to the Minister, this would also be made available to the public in due course.</p> <p>A total of 5,796 responses had been received, which was a high number, and showed the passion that people have for access, both positive and negative aspects. Of the total responses, 5143 were submitted on templates provided by different organisations (number of responses submitted in brackets); CLA (926), NFU (128) and FUW (45) and CTC in partnership with other cycling interests (4044).</p>

	<p>Views were polarised, but were overall very positive about access and the rights of way network, but positive in different ways. Broadly speaking, the farming unions were positive about looking at and improving what Wales currently has. Cyclists wanted to see more shared use. Points were made about getting more volunteers involved but noting the resources needed to train volunteers.</p> <p>Some 203 of the responses included comments on LAFs. There was a focus on LAF membership, and how to entice more interest and younger members with some suggestion that times of meetings precluded full time staff. Comments were also received about extending membership, but this was perhaps perception of who can join LAF rather than an existing limitation.</p> <p>The Written Statement and Summary of Responses to the Green Paper is available at:</p> <p><a href="http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2016/accessgreenpaper/?lang=en">http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2016/accessgreenpaper/?lang=en</a> (follow the related link to the consultation and Summary of Responses)</p> <p><b>Rights of Way Guidance/ ROWIP Guidance</b></p> <p>The Rights of Way Guidance was with legal counsel, both of these Guidance documents need Ministerial approval but would not be released before the election. The advice from NRW on ROWIP Guidance could be shared as a starting point.</p> <p>The Guidance documents would be circulated when approved.</p> <p>WG were gathering evidence of the cost of Rights of way legislation. The future of access and recreation policy will depend on the next Government.</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of templates to respond to consultations and the way in which they are considered</li> <li>• Concern about the lack of resources available and whether authorities will be able to resource the review of their ROWIPs; resources have significantly reduced since the first ROWIPs were produced</li> <li>• ROWIP Funding was expected to be confirmed for 2016/17 and this would be of help</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>Active Travel Maps:</b> Update from each LAF on whether and how they are being consulted</p> <p>Attendees shared their experiences of development of Active Travel Maps to date. Experience and involvement varied some had received good presentations others had not been involved.</p>

	<p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the maps were not useful and were unsuitable/irrelevant for rural areas</li> <li>• That at present areas being considered were confined to places of work and it should be encouraged to connect more and look beyond boundaries</li> <li>• New routes needed to be encouraged as part of housing development</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Cambrian Way Trust:</b> A background to the Trust and the new Guidebook and website. Geoffrey Williams, Cambrian Way Trust</p> <p>The route, established by the late Tony Drake was now being overseen by a Trust which had been set up in his Will to preserve the route. As one of the four Trustees, Geoffrey Williams is responsible for publicity. He presented the newly printed Guide Book for the route. The route is being promoted as 'The Cambrian Way – the mountain connoisseur's walk' and is suitable for experienced walkers. It has its own waymark (Welsh lady's had in circle).</p> <p>Further information is available at:  <a href="http://www.cambrianway.org.uk/index.htm">http://www.cambrianway.org.uk/index.htm</a></p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The route is not shown on OS maps due to the number of route variations and the intention to keep way marking to a minimum</li> <li>• That way marking for promoted routes can remain on site for a number of years after active promotion of the route has finished e.g. the Cistercian Way</li> <li>• Different users search for routes that aren't necessarily promoted for them but are legally available to them</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>

5. **Improving effectiveness and learning from each other:** feedback from all about actions following the LAF Conference Workshops: Jean Rosenfeld/all

Jean Rosenfeld thanked NRW for the organisation and facilitation of the workshops which had been well done.

The paper 'DRAFT Local Access Forum National Action Plan' had been collated by Carys Drew from the information provided by all contributors to the workshops. As a collation of all suggestions, there were a mixture of actions that could be undertaken at the local level and those that could be taken forward at a national or regional level.

The paper was considered in some detail before deciding that all Chairs should take the document back to their LAF. To consider:

- whether any of the local suggestions would be helpful to implement in their LAF (this was a matter for each LAF) and
- what their view was of the national actions
- the next steps on page 2 of the report.

Links to community councils was noted for further possible action and Mr Lyn Cadwallader had attended the Conference and participated in the workshop.

Carys noted that her capacity to support LAFs was limited but agreed to be the central contact to receive feedback on the Draft Action Plan. LAF Chairs needed to proactively consider the Draft Action Plan and it was agreed to set up a subcommittee of the Chairs meeting to refine the Draft Action Plan and consider taking forward.

**Action 17.3:** Carys Drew: to follow up with Lyn Cadwallader and get the map of community council area committees.

**Action: 17.4** All Chairs: to take the Draft Action Plan to their next LAF meeting (or e.g. LAF subgroup) and provide feedback to Carys Drew via email.

**Action 17.5:** All Chairs: anyone interested in forming a subcommittee of the LAF Chairs meeting to refine the Action Plan and taking things forward to contact Carys Drew

**Action: 17.6** All Chairs: anyone interested in forming a group to look at guidance for LAFs and best practice to contact Carys Drew

**Action: 17.7** Carys Drew: to follow up on inactive LAFs and enforcement of statutory duty

**Action: 17.8** Carys Drew: to circulate paper to the Minister on LAFs prior to Green Paper to other Chairs for information

6.

**The role, structure, servicing and status of the LAF Chairs Meeting':**

John Morgan, Ceredigion LAF Chair

John Morgan outlined his views about the aims for LAF Chairs meeting and the need to increase formality and ambition of the meeting. The aims were to:

- provide a Forum for LAF Chairs
- receive up to date information from WG/NRW
- advise WG/NRW on issues affecting LAFs

There should be a written constitution for the meeting and he felt that it should have a statutory status. He suggested that the benefits of this would be:

- set parameters/control of meeting organisation (rather than relying on organisation by NRW that reflected staff capacity/prioritisation),
- statutory approach would require formalised secretarial assistance
- clarify the relationship between LAF Chairs and the National Access Forum for Wales.

Carys Drew responded that NRW believe that there is a benefit for LAFs to meet and NRW have supported the arrangement of National LAF meetings and an annual Conference in order to support LAFs. National meetings enable LAFs to share experiences and learn from each other. The national meetings also provide an opportunity for NRW and Welsh Government to share information with all LAFs, however she noted that NRW does not have a duty to arrange and support national meetings.

Carys then set out her view of the existing set up:

- Role: liaison and sharing good practice at a national level
- Structure: meeting format, 1 representative (Chair or Deputy) to attend from each LAF. Frequency of meetings 1-2 per year but was likely to be 1 meeting from now on together with the Conference
- Servicing: Support is limited to arranging Chairs meeting and conference and writing up the record of these meeting with some provision of information through email.
- Status of the LAF Chairs: the Chairs meeting is currently an informal network – it has no legal status. LAFs are local statutory body, but the LAF Chairs is not a statutory body.
- National Access Forum: is a separate and different arrangement, it predates LAFs and is a national non statutory forum for stakeholders with and interest in outdoor recreation and access.

There is no capacity within NRW to increase our support, rather staff resource would be reducing further with a member of the Access Team finishing as their fixed term appointment came to an end. NRW is also undergoing Business Area Reviews one of which includes looking at Recreation and Access. Capacity for NRW support for LAF meetings is limited, but there is nothing to stop LAF Chairs taking this on themselves.

7.	<p>Carys suggested that the meeting note be provided as a summary of key points and actions rather than a verbatim record this would reduce time required and enable quicker circulation. This suggestion was welcomed. Attendees should make their own notes of any specific points of interest.</p> <p><b>Action 17.9: Carys Drew:</b> aim to provide future meeting notes within 2 weeks of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Contributions from All:</b> An opportunity to share highlights from your written update on your LAF See 'LAF Chairs meeting 3 March 2016 Contributions from all'</p> <p>Tony Rooney is the new Chair for the recently formed Pembrokeshire LAF, the former Chair Henry Langden had also been the Deputy National Representative, Jean Rosenfeld noted the meeting's thanks to Henry for all of his contributions.</p>
8.	<p><b>NRW Update:</b> Short updates of NRW work of interest</p> <p>Carys provided an update on NRW work. This included the situation with regard to provision of access related information on online mapping (see separate briefing).</p> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that information should be provided with online mapping, maps provided by CCW were not being used</li> <li>• Concern that the mapping highlighted that NRW is not giving priority to access</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 17.10: Jean Rosenfeld:</b> to write to NRW to express this concern</p>
9.	<p><b>Note and Actions of last meeting</b></p> <p>Carys reminded the meeting of the actions of the last meeting noting that all specific action had been completed.</p>
10.	<p><b>Round up of the day</b> Jean Rosenfeld, LAF National Representative</p>
11.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Carys Drew, NRW</p> <p>Venues had been booked for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LAF Conference – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in the International Pavillion, Builth Wells</li> <li>- Chairs meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in Hafod a Hendre, Builth Wells.</li> </ul> <p><i>Post meeting note: It has been decided to rearrange the date for the Conference – date to be confirmed in the Autumn. The Chairs meeting will not be held in October, meeting date to be confirmed.</i></p>

