

National Access Forum Written Contributions

NAFW 72: 5 July 2022

Introduction

This note is collated and edited by NRW from submissions from Forum members and NRW staff prior to National Access Forum Meetings to facilitate the sharing of information.

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The British Horse Society: Helen Donnan

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Volunteers

We currently have 36 volunteer Access Officers, and 2 volunteer researchers. We are commencing a recruitment drive for more volunteer Access Officers across Wales.

We have five equestrian access groups in Wales, which are affiliated to the British Horse Society.

Policy and Legislation

Active Travel

We continue to work to ensure that equestrians are not disadvantaged by Active Travel schemes and are included in these, so that equestrians are not left on the road with fast moving cars and lorries while walkers and cyclists are provided with safe routes.

The British Horse Society [accident statistics](#) show that since 2010 in the UK there have been

- 8,561 road incidents involving vehicles and horses
- 44 people have lost their lives and 1453 injured
- 502 horses have been killed and 1,311 horses injured
- 85% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too closely to the horse
- 75% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too quickly.

The [Welsh Government Active Travel Act Guidance 2021](#) includes the following reference to Equestrianism:

‘1.3.6 Equestrianism is overwhelmingly for leisure purposes rather than as a mode of transport as it rarely displaces a car journey. Forms of equestrian travel (horse riding, carriage driving, pony and trap etc.) are not considered forms of active travel. However, in delivering the provisions of the Act, local authorities should be aware that equestrians are vulnerable road users and should not restrict equestrian access to routes that they currently enjoy. Bridleways can be used by equestrians, walkers and cyclists and so may form part of an active travel route. Enhancements to bridleways should not impede equestrian use or require them to use a less safe route instead. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for all users if separate provision is made for walkers, cyclists and equestrian users. **Where active travel routes are planned on an alignment for which there is also high demand from horse riders, the feasibility of accommodating them should also be assessed.**’ (Our emphasis)

The British Horse Society could help in sharing this information and so work towards better communication partnerships with local authorities and the equestrian community. Sharing Active travel routes would help reduce equestrians vulnerability on the roads.

The act requires local authorities to consult with members of the public and key stakeholders when local authorities are updating their active travel network maps (see section 5.1 The duty to consult in the guidance). It also requires local authorities to engage with all persons who have requested that they be consulted and places a duty on local authorities to promote active travel.

The online consultations do not always reach the desired audience for different reasons in Wales. The British Horse Society could help to deliver this to the equestrian community.

Campaigns and Events

Llandrindod wells.

The British Hore Society is supporting an Access Volunteer in progressing a 'Horse Park' in Llandrindod Wells so that horse and carriage drivers can proceed to Actively travel to their choice of destination and park their horse safely whilst running some errands in town.

The BHS would like to see better policies for LA'S to manage unclassified highways. This would greatly increase accessibility for carriage drivers if routes were able to be maintained.

Look out for Laura

The British Horse Society (BHS) is urging drivers to humanise horse riders with the launch of it's '[Look Out for Laura](#)' video campaign. This is an extension of the hugely successful 'Dead Slow' campaign which the BHS launched in response to the alarming number of incidents between horse riders and vehicles on the roads.

Riding to promote Access

The BHS's Ride Out UK (ROUK) campaign celebrates the joys of riding out whilst fundraising for the [BHS Ride Out Fund](#), which helps protect and extend safe places to ride and carriage drive off-road.

Running from May – October, our series of exciting Ride Out UK events and the Rideathon Adventure are perfect for you and your friends to saddle up and explore off-road.

Rideathon Adventure

If you love to hack, enjoy spending quality time with your horse, or want an adventure, then [Rideathon is for you!](#) Start your Rideathon Adventure and [sign up today](#). It's free to sign up and anyone can take part, whether you're hacking out, going for a walk or cycling, so why not raise money while exploring the great outdoors?



Canoe Wales: Phil Stone

Phil.stone@canoewales.com

General interest

Membership

Our membership continues to rise and we are at just under 4,700 this month. A 40% rise on a year ago.

Campaigns and Events

Roadshows

We held a series of roadshows around Wales to hear about the issues that concern our members. Amongst others, two areas of concern are the issues that are still faced in trying to access water for recreation and current quality of many of our rivers.

Big Paddle Cleanup

In conjunction with British Canoeing we promoted a week long campaign to clear up our rivers. We offered clubs and members cleanup kits that consisted of litter pickers, bags, baghoops and gloves so that they could get out and fill as many bags of rubbish as possible. We sent kits out to 32 of our clubs. Not only did many get out during the week in June they all intend to be taking part in clean-ups all year round.

<https://www.canoewales.com/glanhad-mawr-wrth-badlo-the-big-paddle-cleanup-2022>

She Paddles

Canoe Wales organised a two day She Paddles Cymru festival at Plas y Brenin at the start of May. It was a fantastic event attended by 75 women and girls getting on the water to take part in workshops in Kayak, Canoe, SUP, Kayak Freestyle, Planning and Navigation, safety and rescue, rolling clinic and a SUP yoga session followed by talks from RNLI, Peak on the history of Peak, Lowri Davies former European champion and British freestyle kayaking champion about her journey as a female in elite sports. The Sunday followed with full day trips sea kayaking, white water kayaking, SUP journey and Canoe

journey with the chance for children and beginners to stay on site.

<https://www.canoewales.com/shepaddlescymru>

Members safety engagement workshop

Because of concerns of safety with the massive increase in numbers of people taking up paddlesports, Canoe Wales have teamed up with the RNLI to encourage experienced paddlers to give safety advice and help to new and inexperienced paddlers.

<https://www.canoewales.com/member-safety-engagement-workshop-on-12-july>

New paddle trails launched

We have recently introduced a number of new paddling trail guides for Llangollen Canal, Mon & Brec Canal, Mawddach Estuary, Ilandegfedd, Llyn Tegid, Teifi Estuary, lake Vyrnwy and Llynnau Mymbyr. <https://www.canoewales.com/paddling-trails>

Cycling UK: Gwenda Owen

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General interest

Trails

With some delays caused by Covid restrictions, Cycling UK last year completed a heritage project titled 'Tales of the Trails', in conjunction with two local communities and funded by the Heritage Lottery, to promote community routes in and around Ynysybwl and Clydach Vale. <https://www.cyclinuk.org/talesofthetrails>

This offers a useful example of how promoted routes can engage communities and help them share their stories of the local history and nature.

In conjunction with the Valleys Regional Park, we are currently exploring the possibility of a longer multi-day route in order to promote sustainable cycle tourism in South Wales building on our experiences of route developments such as King Alfreds Way and the West Kernow Way

Finally, we would like to invite National Access Forum members to respond to a consultation on a proposed regional level off-road cycle route in Snowdonia (aimed at gravel riders and bikepackers) from Machynlleth to Conwy, which has been under development in conjunction with NRW.

English: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2142f4879b7a4a1997fbad7d6719f057>

Welsh: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/482819c7f3af4e32a065a24fb9724f57>

Sport Wales: Steven Morgan

Email: steven.morgan@sport.wales Head of Operations Plas Menai

General interest

Environmental Matters

The Sport Wales National Outdoor Centre, Plas Menai is in the process of installing a closed loop ground source heating system. This will be supported by an additional air source pump and two 50KwP Solar Arrays that were installed in 2020 and 2021. Technical consultants working with us estimate that the new heating system for the main Centre that replaces 3 ageing oil fired boilers will save Sport Wales £25-33K a year when it is fully commissioned.

The construction process involves the drilling of 68 boreholes ranging from 160 – 102M in depth. These will be connected into 5 different well fields and connected to 5 Ground Source Heat Pumps.

This may be of interest to members as a future presentation.

Policy and Legislation

School Sport Survey

One of the world's biggest surveys of young people, the 2022 School Sport Survey, is currently live and as of Monday 27th of June, over 70,000 young people have completed the survey that will give young people a voice on sport and wellbeing.

This year, the survey will be more important than ever as it will provide invaluable insight about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people's activity habits.

The School Sport Survey gives us and the sector a rich insight into participation levels, behaviours and attitudes. It started in 2011 when 110,000 children and young people took part. We have been taking the survey to 1000 schools across Wales on a regular basis ever since.

The depth of evidence means that we – and our partners – can make more informed decisions about future investment resources. We can analyse emerging trends and develop sport in a format that motivates children and young people today. It also allows us to examine under-represented groups and we use the evidence to tackle some of the barriers that prevent children and young people taking part.

This year children aged between 7 and 16 will be invited to complete the survey in their schools between 28 March and 22 July 2022. We will be releasing the results in the Autumn.

Sport Wales is asking all partners in the sector to encourage schools and that they work with to contribute to the survey.

For more information contact: owen.hathway@sport.wales

Funding & Resources

Sports Partnerships

There is continued progress in terms of our plans to establish five Sport Partnerships across Wales.

Sport North Wales is up and running as the first of these partnerships, and we continue to support them as they engage regional stakeholders to share insight and learning and drive towards a collective Vision to meet the needs of communities in North Wales. Manon Rees O'Brien has been appointed as the new Director of Sport and is currently developing an action plan with stakeholders in the Region

We have also seen significant progress in terms of the development of the emerging Mid Wales and West Wales Sport Partnerships -they will be the next regions to follow North Wales followed by Gwent and Central South regions who are currently in the early development stages.

For more information contact jane.foulkes@sport.wales

NRW: Wales Coast Path

Eve Nicholson Wales Coast Path (marketing): eve.nicholson@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Wales Coast Path 10th anniversary of the path in 2022

On the 5th May 2022, the Wales Coast Path (WCP) celebrates it's 10th anniversary.

There is a task and finish group led by Visit Wales to deliver a well rounded and inclusive campaign. Visit Wales are leading on the global and national PR and media through their digital channels.

The WCP team are working collaboratively with Visit Wales as well as local authority tourism partners, National Trust, Refill Cymru and more to deliver a suite of activity.

Celebrations will be held throughout 2022 and activity to date include:

April

- [Promoted 20 new itineraries developed with Cadw](#)

- Shared social media content of [Sarah Williams](#), podcast host of [@ToughGirlsChallenge](#) and ambassador of women in the outdoors walking the entire path between April and June to promote the 2nd edition of Ciccerone guidebook to the Wales Coast Path.

May (birthday month)

- 5th: WCP's 10th birthday activity: [Happy Birthday video](#) shared on social media and celebrating walkers who finished/started the path 10 years ago.
- 11th – [First Minister visit to Chepstow](#) to celebrate the path's birthday.
- [Wales Coast Path shop now open for business](#)
- Commissioned the National Poet of Wales to create a "[Wales Coast Path blessing](#)" – an inspirational poem to wish people well on their journeys on the path.
- Supported through promotion several walking festivals which featured the path.

June

- 1st - [Commission of art and poetry project](#) - Announcement at this years Hay Festival of 10 artists and 10 poets from Wales will create artistic responses to the Wales Coast Path – to inspire and connect people to the path.
- 16th – Marked [International World Refill Day](#) with a [specially commissioned sand art project](#) to highlight reducing single use plastic on the path and use the Refill App to to refill bottles of water along the way. A great example of partnership working between WCP, National Trust, Refill Cymru and Ceredigion County Council.
- 21st – Business Engagement event in Nant Gwrtheryn, Llŷn Peninsula to give an update on the 10th anniversary plans, guest speaker from a coastal business owner and a guided walk to show off what the path has to offer to the hospitality and tourism trade in Gwynedd. It wa a well received event.
- 30th - Partnership event in Cardiff Bay with the Urdd to launch two fun and useful resource packs, based around the path at the two coastal Urdd residential centres - Llangrannog and Cardiff Bay. The event highlighted partnership working with the educational sector to to encourage younger people to visit and connect with the path in an inspiring way. Guest speakers included the Urdd, NRW Educational Team and Wales Coast Path officers whose areas cover the two residential centres.
- Commissioned 2 articles about walking the path using public transport and campervan

NRW: Nature and Us

Russell De'ath

Over the last few months, the **Nature and Us** project has led a national conversation, involving lots of people from across Wales. The purpose of the national conversation was to take the first steps to developing a shared vision for the future of the natural environment for Wales

During the national conversation, the **Nature and Us** website was visited by more than 50,000 people, with more than 3,000 sharing their views via an online survey. People also attended online webinars, workshops and focus groups

We've now analysed the feedback from the public and drawn out the main messages from the research about what concerns people about the natural environment, what they wish the future of the natural environment to look like and how they think we, as a society, need to change. The summary report is being signed off and will be circulated shortly.

We now want to test out some of these important findings and messages with members of the public to find out what various audiences think of them. We are targeting under-represented groups and areas of Wales, where participation was proportionately lower, as well as seldom heard voices. We will host focus groups over the summer months where we will playback people's visions for the future and see what opportunities and challenges they might present.

We are working towards a vision in which all parts of our society are included, empowered and enabled to come together to take action for the natural environment – and will share that vision by March 2023.

Welsh Government: Designated Landscapes & Countryside Access Branch (DLCA)

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Access Improvement Grant

The aim of the Access Improvement Grant (AIG) is to support improving access to/on the Public Rights of Way network, open access land, green and blue space in Wales. It was established in 2020-2021 providing funding to local authorities (and Pembrokeshire and Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities). A further £5.6 million has been allocated in 2022-2025 to enable these improvements to continue.

The budget will be allocated to authorities via a formula, based on length of Public Rights of Way, total access land and population.

The funding can be used to support projects in the following areas:

- Physical improvements to existing routes (e.g. surface, furniture)
- Improvements to information and promotion (e.g. signage, way marking, leaflets, panels)
- Improvements to access/egress points to open access land and green space
- Improvements to accessing water for water related recreation (e.g. access/egress points, new signage/information, wash down facilities)
- Increasing under-represented groups' access to the outdoors (e.g. accessibility improvements, information)

Two funding conditions will come into existence from 2023-24:

- the existence of a fully functioning Local Access Forum
- authorities must have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) in place (fully signed off/approved by respective cabinets)

Funding allocations will be reduced by 25% for each element – so if an authority is non-compliant on both then their allocation will be reduced by 50%. Any savings will be reallocated to other authorities.

Access Reform

We have commissioned and received some legal advice relating to a number of the options identified in the ARAG report and had initial scoping discussions with NRW about next steps on developing some of these. NRW is currently recruiting staff (funded by WG) that will enable further work to be done during 22-23 on some of these. This work area, however, is significantly resource constrained at present.

In 2021-22, we commissioned NRW to do further work on a number of the reform proposals from the 2017 consultation that were not considered by the ARAG - namely, dogs on leads, the operation of Local Access Forums, and, review requirements for open access land mapping.

Given the constraints on internal resources and lack of legislative slot for significant reforms, there has also been an emphasis on other shorter-term means of improving access. This has included developing the Access Improvement Grant that funds improvements in access authorities and input into the development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Access to water

The Deputy Minister for Climate Change met with angling stakeholders in February and is due to meet with the Chair of the National Access Forum for Wales in the near future, to discuss access to water.

Whilst the Deputy Minister responded to NAFW that he had reservations about the model put forward within the *'Access to Water report'* (2021), DLCA are working with the Deputy Minister to consider potential future activity in this area.

The Access Improvement Grant for 2022-25 includes provision for funding projects that make improvements to accessing water for water related recreation. A number of authorities have advised that they will be undertaken projects in this area.

Water Branch are in early policy development for increased designation of inland bathing waters in Wales. As part of this policy development they are considering a broad range of issues around the designation of inland bathing waters, including issues of access to water and water safety.

Sustainable Farming Scheme

The next phase of co-design will launch in the summer once the Sustainable Farming Scheme outline has been published. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to share their ideas on the practicality of proposed actions underpinning the Sustainable Farming Scheme and the wider scheme structure and processes.

The Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd intends to introduce the Agriculture Bill in Autumn this year.

The proposed National Minimum Standards will not form part of the Agriculture Bill but it remains the intention for these to be implemented in time for the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Wales Coast Path

The Deputy Minister for Climate Change commissioned an independent rapid review of the Wales Coast Path to coincide with the 10th Anniversary, led by Huw Irranca-Davies MS. The Review Report was published on 11 May; the Deputy Minister welcomed the report.

[A Review of the Wales Coast Path on its 10th Anniversary \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

END.