

WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**Minutes of the Sixty Nineth meeting held on Friday 1st
December 2017 at Ty Mawr Country Park, Cefn Mawr**

01/11 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance:

SECRETARY:

Caroline Selby (CS)

CHAIR:

Tim Stratton (TS)

MEMBERS:

Penelope Coles (PC)

Edwina Hart (EH)

Sharron Jones – until 11.05am

Mike Crawshaw (MC)- from 10.25am

Gerald Moss (GM)

Edward Wardle (EW)

Martin Howorth (MH)

NON-MEMBERS:

Sean Hanratty (SH) WCBC

Sion Roberts (SR) WCBC

Alun Price (AP) Natural Resources Wales – from 10.10am

David Collins (DC) Observer

Jean Rosenfeld (JR) – Flintshire LAF

Apologies:

Mabyn Pickering

Bill Stephens

Mari Jones FUW

TS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

02/11 ASSESSMENT OF ROWIP

MH circulated the following, Conditions Survey, Summary Review of 2017 Review of Bridges and Public Rights of Way Consultation Survey Results.

AP arrived at this point in the meeting.

MH then went through the paper.

Only one bridge has undergone significant work this year.

MH said that all of the above information would be included in ROWIP, the draft of which should be ready in March / April 2018.

The last ROWIP has been worked on thanks to the Rights of Way team and capital funding.

TS – is there a position to seek funding for work to be undertaken?

MH – next year there will be the possibility of working together and in future years.

JR – strategies are going to be different.

MH – there shouldn't be much difference and it is a ten year Plan.

JR – other Plans eg Active Travel will impact and this means that other departments need to be actively involved.

MH – all documents will be broad and will include other departments.

EH – was there feedback from where tracks cross borders?

MH – no, but this will be mentioned, though not in detail.

GM – a lot of tracks cross borders.

MH – it is progressing well.

JR – the initial draft, will it have at least three years of Action Plans?

MH – no. Under Guidance this is separate. Action Plans are to be developed at a later stage. Also this is not in the time scale, possible summer 2018. It won't be ready to include sufficient information but should be in next year.

TS – I thought it would be good to get information from other groups.

JR – it will probably be 2019.

MH – yes, 2019.

MC arrived at this point of the meeting.

JR – there is a need to separate Strategies and Action Plans as Action Plans can be more flexible.

GM – will anything be included about Cross Wales?

MH – as it is a ten year plan then it will need to be broad as things come in during the ten years or go out. I advise you all to look at the Drafts when published.

TS – a draft strategic Rights of Way should be undertaken, from a LAF perspective.

MH – the Draft will go to Scrutiny in March then a Statement of Action will be drafted with a three month public consultation. The first Action Plan should be ready October / November 2018.

TS – in terms of process, who will see it first, LAF or Scrutiny?

MH – it depends on logistics but I would hope to send it to both at the same time. It is a WCBC document but LAF input is important.

TS – in terms of consistency, the new LAF should be formed in time.

JR – it is premature to talk about a joint LAF as Flintshire LAF have not been consulted.

MH – WCBC has agreed and, as far as I am aware, Flintshire CC has also agreed.

MC – what is the advantage?

MH – it will be better as a strategic body. WCBC have decided that it will go ahead and will better reflect the AONB structure.

JR – it will be difficult to manage as a larger LAF. I am not against change and change is not necessarily a bad thing.

MH – this is raised in all departments where changes are underway.

JR – how big do you envisage the new LAF?

MH – no work has been undertaken at this point, but there is the need to form a more strategic way of working. All Councils are under extreme pressure to save money, though the costs may not initially be lower.

JR – will there be a sharing of resources?

MH – where possible, but discussion is needed.

TS – when first set up, the LAF's were local, so amalgamation runs against the initial vision.

MH – it says that there will be one LAF for each Local Authority area.

TS – it says the opposite in the Guidance.

MH – no it doesn't.

03/11 CHAIRS REPORT

The main topic has been discussing the proposed merger and I have a copy of the draft minutes of the meeting held on 29th November. (Copy attached). The meeting reflected what has already been said. Neither Flintshire nor Wrexham LAF members could see any advantages and they had not been consulted either. No members could support the proposed merger as no advantages could be seen. This should have been put on WCBC website.

JR – I was disappointed at the lack of representation from WCBC. The LAF chairs can call an official meeting at any time.

MH – the chairs can call meetings but the Local Authority do not have to attend.

TS – I find it regrettable that since the reconstitution there have been no representatives from Denbighshire attending other LAF meetings nor invitations to attend their meetings.

I attended a meeting of the Dee Valley Basin Management Committee where the question was raised re NRW and access. There is no map or other information re what is owned by Welsh Government.

Reese Heath College – Maelor area - a Water Management Plan is to be drawn up as current access is causing stress in some areas.

MC – things are fine except where land is farmed, as through lack of management by WCBC, small streams are being polluted causing problems plus large ditches are being formed by 4 x 4s etc.

TS – United Utilities know about this and if everyone would work together it would help. Also a police matter.

MC – there was a meeting on site with police and council representatives to show how much damage there is. It is only a matter of time before a vehicle falls into a stream and dumps fuel causing further pollution. In a very few years, some parts will be impassable. The police have been involved and have been informed that it is only a matter of time before there is an accident.

TS – what, if anything, will be in ROWIP re this?

MH – all the right people have been involved. It needs to be in the Asset Plan but lack of finance is a problem. A roads will take priority as are being used more and others will become a lower priority due to diminishing resources.

EH – there is a risk to waterways in the area.

TS – there are risks to highways, public health and safety, waterways and ROWIP needs to include the risks from all appropriate sectors. This may result in being able to obtain funding from NRW.

MH – put these comments in the draft ROWIP and if additional funding can be obtained that would be advantageous.

TS – ROWIP should be used to obtain funding from other bodies. Funding will come from other sources and not the local authority.

MC – gates are being driven over, fences cut plus abusive drivers and riders. The problem is getting out of hand.

EH – people “playing” can cause problems and pollution but farmers can be prosecuted.

TS – EH found footage on You Tube. Can any of it be used?

MC – Green Gates are worried as the organisation is getting a bad name. It is trying to make wildlife cameras tamper proof.

EH – we had a website which has closed due to the abuse being posted by others. This is a tragedy for the countryside.

04/11 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the last meeting, I have typed and circulated documents and information

- Agenda
- Minutes
- Information received re meetings, papers, inc. National LAF, LAF Chairs, etc

Contacted by letter, email or telephone

- Alyn Waters Country Park re booking
- Ty Mawr Country Park re booking
- Denbighshire and Flintshire LAFs
- Members re Joint Meeting with Flintshire LAF

Circulated information re

- Update on Commissioning – NRW
- National Access Forum Meeting

Attended:

- Restructure Meeting

I have received copies of the following:

- Broughton 50 and Brymbo 43 Public Path Diversion Order 2017

05/11 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

It was noted that there are no new documents nor reports of progress on any of the current documents.

06/11 NEW LAF ARRANGEMENTS

This was discussed under 02/11.

MH will meet with his counterpart in Flintshire in the new year to discuss the matter further.

07/11 NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

The new funding process was launched last Thursday and the grant application process is available.

NRW are looking at:

- Area Statements from 2019 / 20
- Working as larger teams over larger areas

2018 – Area Challenges have been set out by NRW and are available on the website.

Areas are - North west – north east - mid. Challenges are ones that require a solution with partners. Looking for co working and co partnership.

Need to find which of the Challenges answers LAF requirements and proceed with an Expression of Interest.

There has been a cut in the budget – approximately £280,000 for the northwest and £280,000 for the north east.

There will be an eighteen month period up to 2019 / 20.

EH – will partners need to bring funding?

AP – they will need to bring something to the table.

SJ left at this point of the meeting.

TS – I can see that LAF has a role in bringing together interested bodies so that there is a common approach. I can see ROWIP as a valuable document to use when making applications.

MH – yes, that is a possibility.

AP – Expressions of Interest need to be in by 14th January 2018 and will be considered by internal panels. If successful, then will be asked to complete an application form.

TS – Could north east Local Access Fora submit a E of I?

AP – in 2019 it will be a different funding structure.

JR - unlikely to submit an E of I because of the timescale.

TS – I agree.

AP - a document of information is on the website. There are caveats as to what constitutes an organisation. There will be an Assessment Panel and Finance Scrutiny.

TS asked those present if their organisations would be looking to working together to make approaches and using ROWIP as a document,

EH – yes.

JR – need to find partners able to put up 10% of funding.

TS - it would be easier the more partners work together. Eg. partner organisations could fund signage in specific areas that reflect their interest.

MH – WCBC is unable to submit applications as there is no capacity for follow up. Would have to be a sub committee eg Ramblers to take the lead. LAF cannot submit an application but it can work with other organisations. WCBC would be a partner and check work is being undertaken correctly.

TS – if government is looking for collaborative working then it is up to organisations with representatives here to take it back to see what the response to working together would be.

AP – I emailed a list of Action Plans and map of NRW holdings to CS.
CS – these were forwarded on to members.

08/11 MODIFICATION ORDERS UPDATE

SH circulated a paper with updated information.

Current cases as of 01 December 2017

MODIFICATION ORDERS

Glyn Ceiriog 11

Investigation report sent out. Decision meeting held – further decision meeting required. Decision notice signed off. Decision letter to be sent out, order to be made for a restricted byway. Order made, objections received, case to be sent to Planning Inspectorate.

Legacy

Investigation to be carried out and report written. Report sent out, decision meeting to be held.

Glyn Ceiriog 50

Investigation carried out and report to be sent out before Christmas. Investigation report sent out. Decision meeting held – further decision meeting required. Further decision meeting held. Decision to be sent out.

Penycae 8

Investigation report sent out. Decision meeting to be held. Decision to make order as requested.

DIVERSIONS

Broughton footpath 50

Consultation completed - order requires drafting. Order made – no objections. Developer to carry out works to bring the route up to a satisfactory standard, then order to be confirmed. Development on ground differs from plans therefore order incapable of confirmation. New order made and advertised.

Minera 29

Consultation letters sent out to user groups, statutory undertakers, etc. Order to be made.

Brymbo 89

Consultation completed. Waiting for order to be made. Order made and advertised. Objection received. Order to be sent to Planning Inspectorate requesting confirmation.

Cefn 54 (part extinguishment)

Consultation completed – order requires drafting.

Worthenbury 3

Diversion order made. Order being advertised next week

TS – this is the end of the term of office for this LAF. Sean Hs reporting of WCBC work is good, as we can see what progress has been made.

JR – in Flintshire, the backlog of DMMOs has largely been cleared but MOs and Diversions are not discussed the same, only the numbers of outstanding cases are given at meetings.

TS – how many new applications per year?

SH – approximately 3 per year and 3 are completed per year.

TS thanked SH for the information presented to LAF meetings.

09/11 ACCESS RANGERS REPORT

Photos and maps of work undertaken were circulated.

DC – lots of work has been done on gates. Will this continue next year?
MH – yes, if in ROWIP and if funding is available.
SR – when I walk in March, I will see what is needed and gates can be ordered.
SR – a bridge has been built in Worthenbury.

10/11 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8th SEPTEMBER 2017

Page 7 05/11 delete Leaning insert Learning

With this correction, the minutes were proposed by Pene Coles, seconded by Edward Wardle, agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

11/11 MATTERS ARISING

- a) Page 4 response was circulated
- b) Page 6 application to be made to Welsh Ministers for an extension
- c) Page 9 no response submitted as no comments were received

All other actions from the meeting were undertaken.

12/11 ANNUAL REPORT

TS – will there be an Annual Report?
MH – not this year.
TS – NRW expect an Annual Report
MH – one hasn't been asked for previously but arrangements would be made.

13/11 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

It is not known when the new LAF would meet.

MH – I thank everyone for being members. We may not always agree but all the time and effort that is put in is appreciated.

I will write once the arrangements for the new LAF are known and your input would be welcomed.

TS – with the encouragement of LAF members in Ceredigion, there is a Memorandum of Understanding which is different from Terms of Reference. This may be applicable as Terms of Reference for a joint LAF may not be available.

MH – there will need to be an Agreement between Wrexham and Flintshire then Terms of Reference will be drawn up by the new LAF. I will look at a Memorandum of Understanding being drawn up.

JR – it would be useful as both LAFs operate very differently. I would like officers from other departments to attend as this is extremely useful.

MH – there is a quarter of the staff in Wrexham as there is in Flintshire.

TS – will Public Service Groups be involved in some way?

MH – I am not sure and will have to investigate.

JR – education of the outdoors is important for children and those with disabilities. I would like the new LAF to continue the work begun by Flintshire in these areas.

TS - we are moving into a new term. If assistance is needed with drawing up Terms of Reference, etc. then please contact members who have information and are willing to help. Lessons learnt previously can be passed on. The first meeting, in Wrexham, of a new LAF term works well.

14/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) PC – can we ask the police to attend LAF meetings re problems with 4 x 4s etc. and prosecutions?

MC – no, as problems occur on private land. Evidence is needed. A new law is coming in which might help.

15/11 NEXT MEETING

Date, time and venue – to be confirmed.

TS – I would like to thank everyone for attending meetings and all the work undertaken on behalf of Wrexham LAF. I think we have all worked together well, as a team.