



## WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM CONFIRMED MINUTES

Thirty-sixth meeting of the Forum held at Committee Room 1, Guildhall,  
Wrexham on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 1.30 pm

### ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

#### Attendance:

#### PRESIDING OFFICER AND SECRETARY

Carla McCusker (CM)

#### CHAIR

Mabyn Pickering (MP)

#### MEMBERS

Sue Gittins (SG) (Deputy Chair)

John Cooper-Poole (JCP)

Martin Howorth (MH)

Gerald Moss (GM)

Tim Stratton (TS)

Janet Williams (JW)

Mike Crawshaw (MC)

Natalie Edwards (NE)

George Kinder (GK)

Peter Cade (PC)

Edward Wardle (EW)

Guy Springett (GS)

Gwynfor Jones (GJ)

#### NON MEMBERS

Sean Hanratty (SH) (WCBC)

Sion Roberts (SR) (WCBC)

Alun Price (AP) (CCW)

**Apologies:** Shelagh Roberts (SR), Mary Roberts (MR), John Evans (JE)

### 01/10 Attendance and Apologies

Noted as above.

## 02/10 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 October 2010

**Definitive Map** – Thanks were extended to Charlotte in the Rights of Way Department for preparing the definitive map.

**Ramblers Training** – It was agreed that it would be appropriate for a LAF member who is also a member of the Ramblers Association to arrange training if LAF members feel that this would be useful. JCP advised that training can be arranged via Mike Mills in the Cardiff office. It is likely that there would be a charge for the training. Alternatively, interested members could attend a training day similar to the one held in Llandudno in March 2008.

## 03/10 Chair's Report

The Chair advised that contact has been made with the National Grid after several months and some progress has been made.

## 04/10 Secretary's Report

Richard Sumner (Landscape Planning Officer) is happy to attend a future LAF meeting to discuss areas of outstanding natural beauty in the County.

## 05/10 Report from Access Rangers

All of 2009 / 2010's Rights of Way Improvement work has now been completed. We are now currently working on a new list of work / projects for the coming year.

Alison has now taken over the majority of the general complaints and has been concentrating mainly on those. She has also been working on the Broughton community footpath project of which the majority of the work is now completed. Development of a completely stile free circular walk is also under way.

New signposts with destinations on are due to be installed around Gwersyllt towards the end of this month. The signs will contribute to our target of installing 100 signs every year.

Dave has been working on a schedule of works to be carried out on Offa's Dyke this year, together with overseeing our BVPI performance Indicators. He will be approaching Chirk Community Council in the near future to see whether or not they are interested in working with us and Groundwork on a community footpath project. Dave will be leading a guided walk on Thursday April 8 (Mountain Reservoirs) with everyone to meet at the Sun Inn, Hall St, Rhos.

Charlotte continues to log all the general complaints we receive regarding maintenance on to our cams database. Using information from our database she's managed to create a bridge register / list of the majority of different bridges we have on Public Rights of Way so that they can be inspected for safety / condition. Sometime within the next couple weeks she will be meeting up with our web team to arrange for our volunteers web page to go live on our web site.

Over the last week or so she has been working hard to get copies of the Definitive maps printed off for today's Local Access Forum meeting.

TS questioned the progress of work on bridle paths in Brymbo. It was reported that number 9 and 10 are temporarily closed owing to a problem with drainage. Number 12 is in process of being converted from a bridle path to a footpath. TS questioned whether it is still locked. SH confirmed that it is still locked as there are stiles on it. Concerns were raised among LAF members regarding the downgrading of this path. SH informed colleagues that the owner has requested that the path is downgraded, however the LA is currently looking at the evidence impartially. Clarification regarding the width of the footpath is needed.

### **Action**

A ranger will visit the site to measure the width of the footpath. TS will walk the footpath on behalf of the Forum and report back to the next meeting.

JW made reference to recent papers received from the LA regarding Plas Bennion Road. JW questioned whether this could be upgraded to a multi-user route. SH advised that the land is owned by a sole private owner. An original application was submitted requesting that one path be deleted, however, following a public enquiry the Inspector ruled that there should be two paths. SH added that the application was received at the LA in 1991 and that the order has only recently been confirmed.

JCP queried the bridle path at Burton Meadows, Rossett. SH advised that he has now received the land registry information and this is in hand.

The Chair extended thanks to MH, SR and SH for their efforts on behalf of the Forum.

## **06/10 Walkabout Wrexham – Natalie Edwards**

NE circulated a programme to members regarding 'Walkabout Wrexham'. NE explained that the programme is funded by the Big Lottery. Funding ends in March 2010. There are currently 13 weekly walks. The weekly walk in Acton has been the most popular walk, with between 30 and 50 walkers involved. Most walks have between 10 and 20 walkers participating.

The Chair extended thanks to NE for her presentation.

## **07/10 Improving Riding Opportunities Project – Yvonne Palmer**

Yvonne Palmer, Equine Safety Officer, was in attendance to provide a presentation to the group regarding a project to improve riding opportunities. A handout was circulated for information. YP explained that the aim of the project is to promote riding and road safety by encouraging riders to take part in BHS riding and road safety training and tests, and to promote awareness of equestrians to other road users. The project is a joint endeavour involving AVOW and the Rights of Way Department.

The Chair thanked YP for attending the meeting.

## 08/10 Countryside Council for Wales (Alun Price)

AP reported that the CCW is suffering cuts in public spending. A grant budget of £50k has been allocated to assist the LA with grant work during 2010-2011. This is a cut of approximately £20k in comparison to last year. The CCW and LA are working on a 3 year programme.

The Chair made reference to footpaths that were previously under Glastir, questioning whether they will now continue under the new Glastir Scheme. AP advised that this scheme has been taken over by the Welsh Assembly and questions should now be directed to them.

## 09/10 Any Other Business

**LAF Chairs Meeting, Builth Wells** – SG reminded the group on issues raised at the LAF Chairs meeting in October, which mainly related to dogs in the countryside. Public films and leaflets are due to be reissued as part of an educational awareness exercise. SG has several documents on this subject if anyone would like further information. Reference was made to an incident in Cumbria where a vet was killed by a cow when her dog ran between the cow and her calf. GJ informed members that the NFU have published notices asking people not to use footpaths if they have a dog with them and cattle are present. GJ clarified that the Animals Act, 1970, places strict responsibility and liability with the owner for their livestock, and some farmers have been sued. However, Section 5 of the Act states that if a person knowingly enters into a risky situation then strict liability does not apply to the farmer. Section 2 of the Act may be subject to revision, however signage is crucial in the interim period, in order to raise public awareness of the potential risks.

**Cross Border Issues** – TS and SG met with Jean Rosenfeld (Chair of Flintshire LAF) and David Davies (Secretary of Flintshire LAF) on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The meeting was very positive and informative. The Chair and Secretary outlined how the Flintshire LAF operates. It was noted that their LAF have a sub-committee, which works directly with the Flintshire Rights of Way Department regarding footpath maintenance. TS commented that the Wrexham LAF meeting should be strategic rather than tactical, as some issues would be better discussed at a sub-committee level. TS added that cross-border issues may be better discussed at a sub-committee level with Flintshire and Wrexham Rights of Way Departments, particularly as Flintshire are willing to look at specific areas of concern. Jean Rosenfeld is also the Chair of the National LAF in Wales. He has offered to come to a Wrexham LAF meeting to talk about the National LAF. It was agreed that this would be a useful opportunity to obtain information about the National LAF and guidance regarding dogs in the countryside, 4 by 4s in the countryside, budgeting and LAF sub-groups. Flintshire have also invited Wrexham to be involved in a joint meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010, however the purpose of this meeting needs clarification.

### Action

Secretary to contact Flintshire to clarify the purpose of the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April and to invite Jean Rosenfeld to LAF meeting in Wrexham.

**Denbighshire LAF** – Members of the Denbighshire LAF have not yet been re-elected.

**National Access Forum** – TS attended the National Access Forum meeting in November and provided an update to the group. TS expressed concern regarding communication between Forums. It is apparent that issues do not appear to be discussed bilaterally by members with relevant groups, and there a lack of co-ordination with funding sources. These concerns will be raised with Jean Rosenfeld.

**Definitive Maps** – Four copies of the definitive map were divided among members as follows:

- GM, Whitchurch
- JW, Bwlchwyn
- SG, Wrexham Centre
- MP, Wrexham South

The copies are available for all LAF members to loan. Please contact the LAF member living nearest to you from the above list. A copy is also available on the Wrexham Council website, under Rights of Way.

**Terms of Reference** – SG has reviewed the LAF Terms of Reference. It is unlikely that the document will need updating.

**Inland Water Report** – Confirmation is needed from AP (CCW) as to whether Wrexham are part of the pilot.

### **Action**

Chair to raise point with AP at next meeting.

**Minutes and Matters Arising** - A change of procedure was discussed in respect of 'Minutes and Matters Arising'. It was agreed that in future the accuracy of minutes will be discussed at the start of meetings and matters arising will be discussed at the end of meetings.

### **10/10 Items for next agenda**

- Richard Sumner – Areas of Outstanding Beauty
- Jean Rosenfeld – Chair of the National LAF

### **1/10 Date and location of next meeting**

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Nant Mill, 2pm.