



# WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MINUTES

Thirty-fourth meeting of the Forum held at Erddig Hall Meeting Room,  
Erddig, Wrexham on Thursday, 6 August 2009 at 1.30 pm

## 22/09 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

### Attendance:

#### PRESIDING OFFICER AND SECRETARY

Carla McCusker

#### CHAIR

Mabyn Pickering

#### MEMBERS

John Cooper-Poole  
Martin Howarth  
Edward Wardle  
Gerald Moss  
Tim Stratton  
Janet Williams  
Mary Roberts  
Guy Springett

#### NON MEMBERS

Sean Hanratty (WCBC)  
Alan Price (CCW)

**Apologies:** Natalie Edwards, Gwynfor Jones, John Evans, George Kinder, Shelagh Roberts, Sue Gittins (Deputy Chair)

## 23/09 Presentation by Steve Griffiths, Countryside Manager, Erddig Estate

Steve Griffiths was unable to attend the meeting but he will be invited on another occasion.

## 24/09 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 May 2009

### **Erbistock Footpath Survey**

Now completed thanks to Honor Mostyn.



### **Digital Maps for Members**

Martin Howarth informed the group that it will cost approximately £500 in total (£30-£40 per person) to provide WLAf members with a definitive map. It was suggested that members download an online copy which will be available online in the Autumn. The definitive map will include footpath numbers and it will be possible to zoom in at 1:10,000.

**ACTION: Members to contact Secretary if they have difficulty accessing the online map.**

### **New Member Induction**

A discussion took place regarding training / induction for new and returning LAF members.

Mary Roberts questioned the remit of the LAF and requested a steer from the Chair regarding the purpose of the Forum and ideas for training. It was agreed that a programme of staggered training sessions be arranged during the forthcoming year. Ideas for training were suggested by members at the meeting, as follows:

1. Definitive map training (Sean Hanratty);
2. Access Rangers – roles and remit (Sion Roberts);
3. Information on Council structures / departments that have an interface with access (Martin Howarth);
4. Information on how the LAF can access disabled / ethnic minority groups - it was suggested that Celia Gibson (Equality Manager for WCBC) should be invited to a future meeting to provide an overview. (Celia Gibson).

**ACTION: Chair to give consideration to ideas for training / induction. It was agreed that Celia Gibson will be invited to a future meeting – Secretary to liaise with Chair.**

### **25/09 Chair's Report**

Thanks were extended to Emma Haldane for her excellent support and efforts during her years as Secretary to the Forum. The Chair informed the group that Carla McCusker was recently appointed as the new Secretary. The Chair had been present on the interview panel.

### **26/09 Secretary's Report**

Carla introduced herself as the new Secretary. Carla advised that the LAF email account has been transferred over to her.

**ACTION: Secretary to email contact details to the group for information.**

**27/09 Projects for Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

Sean Hanratty, Rights of Way Team Leader, was in attendance to discuss current projects in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Specific reference was made to two bridleways which are currently included in the plan. The first is a short section in Allington which comes in from Cheshire and is situated near to Meadow Farm. This project will involve the upgrade of a short section footpath. The second bridleway is in Llanarmon DC, where there is a missing link between two bridleways. Sean explained that he would like to approach the land registry to ascertain who the landowners are. It was agreed that the Chair would draft a letter to the landowners, once they have been identified, on behalf of the Forum. The letter will make a request for a public bridleway to be put in place. If this is acceptable to the landowners, the Local Authority will need to draw up a dedication agreement for the landowners to sign. Sean advised that the process should take approximately three weeks if the landowners give consent. If the landowners do not wish to dedicate, a creation order can be made and it is likely that the landowner would object to the order, leading to a public inquiry.

Progress will continue to be made at Allington and Llanarmon until March 2010 as they are included in the current Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Copies of the plan are available from Martin.

Martin stated that £60,000 of funding for Rights of Way should be available for another year if the Welsh Assembly Government honours their three year commitment. The majority of this money needs to be allocated towards improving footpaths as current targets are not being met. Martin explained that there are difficulties with performance indicators across Wales. Wrexham are strict in comparison to other authorities. More work needs to be done with footpaths in the coming year in order to improve statistics.

Reference was made to the Moss Valley and Minera areas. Tim Stratton and Sean Hanratty will liaise in this respect. Reference was also made to the Esclusham Mountain. Sean Hanratty agreed to look into this and report back to the group.

Tim Stratton informed the group that the end of bridleway number 13 from Vicarage Lane in Gresford has been blocked. It was proposed that Sean would look into this if sufficient progress is not made with Llanarmon and / or Allington.

Some footpaths are inaccessible owing to vegetation. Volunteers are being used to cut back vegetation, however contractors need to be employed for stiles and finger posts. Tim questioned how people would go about volunteering for projects.

**ACTION: Martin to enquire about the process for volunteering for projects.**

**ACTION: Sean to liaise with Chair regarding outcome of enquiries into ownership of land at Allington and Llanarmon DC. Chair to draft letter to landowners on behalf of LAF and email to group for agreement.**

**ACTION: Sean to look into Esclusham Mountain and liaise with Tim Stratton regarding the Moss Valley and Minera areas.**

**28/09 Improvements to Bridleway Network**

Discussed under item 27/09.

**29/09 Report from Access Rangers**

Martin Howarth presented a report by rangers Alison Whitley, Dave Smith and Sion Roberts, in relation to work currently underway in the County.

**Alison reports that:**

Alison has been working with Groundwork surveying the paths in the Broughton Community area and has been putting together a road side signpost list for Gwersyllt.

Charlotte Flett (Modern Apprentice) has been working with the Plas Bennion Adopt-a-path volunteer to improve the network of paths in the Plas Bennion area. New stiles and signposts were erected last year and so not many problems were reported this year. Those that were will be inspected and have the relevant works issued. She has also received feedback on Marchwiel paths and will start to process the information when the survey maps are received.

As well as volunteer work, Charlotte has been helping the Definitive Map team by producing maps for the Application Register that will be introduced to the website once complete.

A Bridge Register is also being created to help improve the maintenance of larger bridge's on Public Rights of Way across the county with the help of the Bridge Management team. Charlotte has been using the team's database to create a list of PROW's that have bridges, and printing maps with the locations marked. These will then be used to inspect the bridges and determine who would best maintain them.

**Dave reports that:**

Dave is continuing with many maintenance issues on promoted routes as reported by the team of volunteers, and has already started to issue work to contractors as soon as landowners have been visited.

He has altered the Mines Moorland and Mountain walk directions to take into account the change of forest edge and also to avoid the lek.

He was successful in obtaining almost £5000 worth of extra money for Offa's Dyke Path and work has already started. Finally, he is happy to report that Shropshire County Council has recently installed a new footbridge over Shell Brook.

**Sion reports that:**

Sion has been working on this year's Rights of Way Improvement Plan work together with dealing with general complaints. Some of the ROWIP work has already been completed including a new wooden footbridge near Caia Farm in Rhos.

After liaising with the landowner in Bronington, work has been carried out to improve the well used footpath number 36 near the Church. The landowner has now unlocked the field gate allowing easier access for users. New stiles have also been installed on adjoining paths.

Sion will be leading a walk starting at Llanarmon DC at the end of August details of which can be found on the Council website or the Countryside Parks / Rights of Way booklet.

### **30/09 Countryside Council for Wales**

Alun Price updated the group on news from the CCW. There have been no formal requests to restrict access on open country in the Wrexham area. The CCW are looking to review maps in 2011-2012. Guidance is awaited from the Assembly in this respect.

### **31/09 Any Other Business Draft Annual Report 2008/09**

Thanks were extended to John Cooper-Poole for his help with the Annual Report.

It was suggested that when new members are appointed onto the LAF, the Annual Report should include member names. The group agreed that the report for 2008-2009 should be amended to include these details and to reflect recent changes in WLAf membership. This protocol will be adopted in future Annual Reports.

The word 'Forward' will be amended to 'Foreword' in the title of the opening section.

The report was agreed as final with the above amendments.

**ACTION: Secretary to arrange translation once amendments have been made and post on internet.**

### **Cross Border Issues**

Tim Stratton questioned the progress of arranging a meeting with other authorities to discuss cross border issues. A meeting date has not yet been arranged, although previous contact was made with Denbighshire, Flintshire, Powys and Cheshire earlier in the year. It was agreed that Denbighshire and Flintshire should be contacted again in the first instance.

**ACTION: Secretary to contact Denbighshire and Flintshire with a view to arranging a meeting. Secretary to keep Tim and Sue informed of progress.**

### **World Heritage Status – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen**

The Chair reported that World Heritage Status has been awarded to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in Llangollen, although no extra funding is due as a result.

Concern was expressed regarding the condition of footpaths in the area, as there is likely to be an influx of tourists. A number of footpaths need attention, particularly in the Dee Valley and Ceiriog areas.

### **Permissive Bridleways**

Tim Stratton questioned how permissive and public bridleways get onto an OS map and how changes are made to maps. Sean advised that information is not sent from the authority as there is nothing in writing at the Council. It was suggested that information may be held at the Planning Department within the authority.

**ACTION: Sean to investigate where information / paperwork comes from in reference to the above query.**

### **Legacy Path**

It has now been established that one section of the old Legacy railway is privately owned by two people in Tanyfron and the other section by National Grid. The process of establishing who the land belongs to has taken over a year, owing to misleading information in the initial enquiry. The Chair commented that the land registry should have been contacted from the onset to identify ownership of the land. It was noted that the authority sold some of the land approximately one year before the WLAF was established (circa 2000-2001).

The group agreed that WLAF should contact the National Grid and the private landowners in Tanyfron to request designation as a bridleway. It was agreed that the letter will need to explain what the LAF is to the landowners and explain the purpose of the request, that is, to improve rights of way and access for the public. Witness statements are likely to need re-visiting, if the landowners do not agree to dedicate the land in question.

**ACTION: Chair to draft letter to landowners on behalf of WLAF and forward to Sean Hanratty. The letter will request a response to the Chair.**

**ACTION: Community Council to be kept informed.**

**ACTION: Chair to provide progress update at next meeting.**

### **Horsediving Trials**

Janet Williams advised that the recent horseriding trials were very successful with 93 entrants taking part. No problems were encountered in terms of footpaths.

### **32/09 Items for next agenda**

- Access Rangers
- Cross Border Issues

### **33/09 Date and Location of Next Meeting**

Guildhall - Committee Room 1  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009  
1.30pm