



WLAF 30

WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Thirtieth meeting of the forum held at Overton Village Hall, Overton, Wrexham on Thursday, 7 August 2008

25/08 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance:

ACTING CHAIR

Mabyn Pickering

SECRETARY

Emma Haldane

MEMBERS

John Cooper-Poole

Sue Gittins

John Marchant (WCBC)

Shelagh Roberts

Gerald Moss

Edward Wardle

Karl Prakel

NON MEMBERS

Sean Hanratty (WCBC)

Alek Coulson

Alun Price (CCW),

Tim Stratton (rider)

Peter Cade (RECAP)

Janet Williams (BDS)

Ken Farrell (volunteer path worker)

Apologies: Tim Rosselli, Margaret Murphy and Mavis McBride,
Also Martin Howorth, (non-member)

26/08 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 May 2008

15/08 Cross Border Issues

Wrexham were keen to forge closer ties with other LAFs. One suggestion was to joining working groups to look solely at the issue of cross border paths between Wrexham and neighbouring counties. This was felt to be a way of instigating closer working.

Secretary had written to Denbighshire, Flintshire, Powys and Cheshire LAF secretaries and had received a positive response from Cheshire, Powys and Denbighshire:

- Cheshire - Amy Rushton, Countryside Access Development Team Leader had put the joint working proposal to the Cheshire LAF and two members have volunteered for the Cross Border Working Group.



- Powys had indicated that they were interested in working together, but would prefer to wait until their new members were in post following LAF member re-appointments later in the year.
- Denbighshire also have two members which have volunteered for the Working Group.

AGREED: Action to be agreed at next meeting in November

27/08 Chairman's Report

Secretary had written to members in July informing them of Clive Menzies resignation as Chair due to a spell of ill health.

In a letter received by the secretary, Clive had felt that he could no longer execute the duties to the level and professionalism that he felt the LAF deserved and wanted to make a public expression of thanks to his colleagues on the WLAF. He felt that it was their support, drive and determination in his opinion has made Wrexham LAF one of the most effective in the country. He also wished to thank all the staff of the Rights of Way section for their sterling work in sometimes difficult circumstances and had always appreciated their efforts.

ACTION: Secretary to send a letter of thanks on behalf of WLAF

Prior to the Forum meeting members had participated in a led walk around Overton by Ken Farrell, voluntary footpath worker and Walley Wilton, voluntary secretary for Ramblers' Association.

Chair thanked Ken and Walley for their time and hospitality given.

The council had worked in partnership with Ken for many years and his hard work has helped bring Overton's 40 mile network of interconnecting public footpaths and bridleways reach a wider audience.

Ken stated that he would be retiring from his volunteer work shortly and hoped that his footpath work would be taken over by another local resident.

ACTION: Secretary would write to Overton Community Council to ask for suggestions.

Shell Brook

The footbridge at Shell Brook near its confluence with the Dee has been subject to problems for some time due to movement following flooding. The bridge, part of the Maelor Way, has been unusable since late 2007. The route had now been temporarily diverted onto the B5069, Overton to St. Martin's road, which was felt to be unsafe for walkers.

Gerald had received a letter from Kevin Jones, Countryside Access Team in Shropshire, who stated that Shropshire and Wrexham Council officers had conferred in an attempt to resolve the ongoing problem. Mr Jones stated that it was intended that an officer from Wrexham would negotiate with the land-holders in the area in an attempt to re-route the footpath (Maelor Way) to a different location, where the bridge could be installed in a more secure manner. However a different route had been negotiated with the bridge staying at the same location and the problem remains unresolved.

John felt that as this was a cross border issue and an outside body such as the LAF may be able to help solve the problem.

Edward stated that he would make some enquiries on behalf of the WLAF.

ACTION: Gerald to forward Shell Brook correspondence to Edward

28/08 Secretary's Report

- **Annual Report**

A draft copy of the 2007/2008 was distributed to members for approval in July.

ACTION: Annual Report Agreed.

Secretary to make final amendments and forward to CCW

- **WLAF Membership**

Secretary explained that the second 3 year term would draw to a close in November and a new forum would be appointed. All existing members are invited to re-apply for WLAF membership for a further term and would receive an application form in due course.

- **2009 Meeting Timetable**

As part of the Communication Strategy, secretary agreed to organise a meeting time table for 2009 to present at the next meeting in November.

29/08 Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Howorth. Nothing to report to date.

Sean Hanratty was keen to look at the potential of creating/upgrading new bridleway links. It was for the forum to help decide what bridleway links were needed. Janet Williams, British Drivers Society North East Wales asked for provision for carriage drivers to be considered and would speak with Sean after the meeting.

Sue Gittins stated that Erddig was now hosting and promoting carriage drivers' events, which have proven to be very successful in attracting drivers from all over the area.

Concerns had been raised around safe access to bridleways. Tim Stratton stated that he would identify the problems found and report back to either John or secretary with his findings.

John felt that a representative from highways at a future meeting may prove useful in helping to identify problems and voice members concerns.

**ACTION: John to invite highways representative to a future meeting
Secretary to note for a future agenda**

30/08 Report from Access Rangers

John Marchant presented a report by rangers Dave Smith and Sion Roberts and Alison Whitley of work currently underway in the County:

Sion Roberts reports that he has been working on organising various jobs that are to be done as a result of receiving additional money from the Welsh Assembly Government to implement the ROWIP.

- A 10 metre galvanised footbridge was to be installed on footpath 12 in Minera together with two galvanised green bridges on bridleway 17 in Halghton. The bridleway bridges would have a horse friendly rubber coating applied to the surface.
- A 9 metre galvanised footbridge was due to be fitted on path 20 in Penley, together with a 4 metre footbridge near to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. Sion reported that these bridges would be more vandal resistant and low maintenance than previous structures.
- Sion would be leading another walk around Llanarmon in September. Details of this can be found in the Wrexham Parks, Countryside and Public Rights of Way Service guide.

Dave reports that a recent BVPI survey for the half year gave a 58% pass rate, but it must be remembered that it is not statistically sound. Even so, when combined with the second half it should still be a reasonably high number showing steady progress.

- He reported that all works have been identified for this year's Offa Dyke maintenance. The grant application form should be ready to fill in next month.
- He is in the finishing stages of redesigning the signpost flag template and is preparing for the opening of a new Heritage Trail – the Wats Dyke Way – which has its opening ceremony in October.

Alison Whitely reports that she has been surveying Gwersyllt's paths and working with local people to involve them in the process. She has provided individuals with maps and has helped them with their surveying techniques where necessary.

- Alison has recently written to a local landowner where problems have been found with extremely narrow stiles and will do the same for any other major problems that are found that cannot be remedied as part of the project.
- Alison has been following up on issues in Coedpoeth with landowners, contractors and Ground work Wrexham and Flintshire and checking works are nearly completed. She will be checking completed works in Coedpoeth in the forthcoming weeks.
- Alison was the back-up leader for the Rhos circular walk in July. Unfortunately because of time constraints Alison has not been able to follow up on cropping complaints this year

Charlotte Flett, reported that work on republishing the Maelor Way on the web was going well and that most of the 5 year survey had been completed.

31/08 Countryside Council for Wales

Alun Price, gave his latest report to the forum.

He reported that there had been no exclusions or restrictions reported in the North Wales area.

32/08 Any Other Business

- **Tree Wardens**

Peter Cade, RECAP (Rossett Environmental Community Action Programme), was looking for volunteers to help set up a Tree Warden Scheme within the County Borough. Warden volunteers would have the opportunity to get involved in certain projects such as planting, caring and protecting trees and to help gather information in the local area. He asked that any interested parties please contact the secretary and she would forward their details on.

- **Path near Legacy Station**

Chair publically thanked Clive Menzies for all the time and effort he had put into Legacy. She would be meeting with the local community council in September to discuss further.

33/08 Items for Next Agenda

- Cross Border Working Group
- Safer Access to Bridleways

34/08 Date and Location of Next Meeting

Friday, 14 November 2008 at 2.00pm in the Guildhall