



## **WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM CONFIRMED MINUTES**

**Thirty-fifth meeting of the Forum held at Committee Room 1, Guildhall,  
Wrexham on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 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)

Shelagh Roberts (SR)

Mike Crawshaw (MC)

John Evans (JE)

Natalie Edwards (NE)

George Kinder (GK)

Mary Roberts (MR)

#### **NON MEMBERS**

Sean Hanratty (SH) (WCBC)

Sion Roberts (SR) (WCBC)

Alun Price (AP) (CCW)

**Apologies:** Gwynfor Jones (GJ), Edward Wardle (EW), Guy Springett (GS)

### **34/09 Attendance and Apologies**

Noted as above.

### **35/09 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 August 2009**

An amendment was noted in the previous minutes under item 31/09: 'Horsediving Trials' should read 'Horseriding Trials'.



### ***Definitive Map***

The Chair advised that there are four hard copies of the definitive map which will be available shortly for LAF members to borrow and return. It is hoped that the map will also be available online in the near future.

A request was made for hard copies to be brought to LAF meetings for reference during the meeting. This was agreed by those present.

### **36/09 Chair's Report**

The Chair, Vice-Chair and MH had met for an informal meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009, to discuss the way forward for the Wrexham LAF and its role as a statutory committee. It had been agreed that Senior Local Authority Officers (SR and SH) would be in attendance for the first hour at LAF meetings from hereon in, to answer any questions raised by those in attendance.

A discussion took place regarding the LAF Terms of Reference, which may need updating. Any amendments will need to be signed and accepted by LAF members.

#### **Action**

Terms of Reference to be reviewed.

The Chair questioned whether new members had received hard copies of LAF booklets. It was agreed that the booklets should be posted on the internet for members to access.

#### **Action**

Secretary to post LAF booklets on the internet and send members the link.

### **37/09 Secretary's Report**

The Secretary reported that the Flintshire LAF and Denbighshire LAF Secretaries have been contacted with a view to setting up a meeting regarding cross-border issues. Denbighshire LAF has not yet responded, however a response has been received from David Davies in Flintshire. David had suggested that an initial meeting be held between LAF Chairs and Secretaries in County Hall, Mold.

#### **Action**

Secretary to liaise with SG, TS and David Davies to arrange a convenient meeting date.

**38/09 Meeting of Chair and Vice-Chair with MH**

See Chairs Report.

**39/09 Role of Maintenance and Enforcement Team**

SR, Maintenance and Enforcement Team Leader, was introduced to the group. SR has taken over from John Merchant on the maintenance side. There are currently four members in the team (Sion, Alison, Dave and Charlotte). It is hoped that a further part time access ranger will be appointed in the near future.

SR explained that 40% of ROWIP work will be completed by the end of November 2009. Work with Groundwork is due to start in Broughton. Improvements have been made on Offa's Dyke where new galvanised kissing gates have been erected. Work is continuing in relation to the repair of footbridges. There are a number of volunteers working on various projects. A web page is in the process of being set up to give credit to the volunteers.

It was noted that guided walks take place on the first Thursday of every month from April to September. An average of 10-15 people usually take part in the guided walks.

Reference was made to the downgrading of a bridleway to a footpath in Brymbo. TS advised that a padlock needs to be unlocked to allow horse riders through.

**Action**

TS and SR to liaise on this issue.

The Chair requested that members report any broken signposts to SR so that he may deal with the matter accordingly. SR can be contacted at Abbey Road on 01978 729766.

The Chair extended thanks to SR for his input at the meeting.

**40/09 New Member Induction – Definitive Map**

SH carried out a presentation to the group. A handout was distributed for information.

SH informed members that his department is responsible for overseeing the definitive map and keeping the definitive map and statement together. If there is evidence to say that there should not be an order, this can be removed from the map, however the correct legal process would have to be followed. Any changes to the map require a process that is similar to a planning application. An informal discussion takes place initially with the landowner, followed by consultation with community groups, such as Ramblers.

A notice is placed in the local papers with a deadline for submission of objections. Notices are also placed at the beginning and the end of any footpaths that merge along the way.

Members of the group questioned whether there is any liaison with OS and whether members of the public have access to the definitive map. SH responded by stating that if the Local Authority makes an order they are legally bound to inform OS. The definitive map will be available online in the near future for access by members of the public.

SH can be contacted at Abbey Road on 01978 729761.

The Chair extended thanks to SH for his input at the meeting.

#### **41/09 Report from Access Rangers**

Covered under items 39/09 and 40/09.

#### **42/09 Countryside Council for Wales (Alun Price)**

AP updated the group on recent news from the Countryside Council for Wales. Alun reported that the CCW and Wrexham are working together - the CCW are granting aid and working within the Countryside Service section.

However, in light of the current financial climate budget cuts are imminent. The CCW usually work on a three year programme, which is agreed in advance, however, central CCW funding will decrease from £7 million to £5 million.

MC raised concern at the amount of damage caused by walkers on the Berwyn ridge. AP explained that remedial works have been carried out previously on the ridge, however this may need to be looked at again.

SG questioned whether a consultation paper had been issued regarding the inland water report, as some LAFs had not received a report. AP advised that there should be specific pilot areas looking at this.

#### **Action**

AP to look into whether Wrexham are part of the pilot.

#### **43/09 Recent Developments re: Dogs and Public Rights of Way**

A document was circulated to the group on behalf of GJ.

SG provided an overview of the Chairs meeting that she had recently attended on behalf of the Chair in Builth Wells. The main theme of the meeting had been centred on dogs in the countryside and the fact that there is a need for all dogs to be insured and micro-chipped and for the Countryside Code be amended to include a comprehensive section on dogs. These recommendations are to be taken to the National Access Forum in Bangor on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

SG reported that an outdoor recreation survey carried out in Wales found that 31% of people only go out walking because of their dog and that they are most likely to be walking in woodland or forest.

Research has also been carried out across authorities in Wales regarding Dog Control Orders and the Clean Neighbourhood Act. The only authorities who have adopted the legislation are in coastal locations, where there are by-laws to prevent fouling on beaches.

MH confirmed that the authority has adopted Dog Control Orders on bowling greens, football pitches and children's play areas in Wrexham. In certain areas the authority can request that dogs are put on leads, particularly if they are causing problems, however this can lead to an abusive response from the public. Members of the group suggested that awareness raising is needed, for example, educational films and sign posting in dog-friendly areas. MH stated that signs do exist in parks however the public does not always adhere to them.

It was noted that dogs are meant to be placed on a lead whilst on open access land however this is difficult to legislate as there is a lack of wardens to police and reinforce the situation. JE advised that bilingual yellow signs are due to be put up with the words 'Your dog can scare or harm farm animals' - copies of the signs were circulated.

AP advised that there the CCW have issued guidance on dogs and public rights of way. The guidance has been through CROW legislation.

#### **44/09 Any Other Business**

##### ***The Ceiriog Valley Trail***

GM suggested that a sub-committee be established to walk the footpaths in the Ceiriog Valley. It was agreed that GM would liaise with JCP, GK and NE in this respect.

##### **Action**

GM to forward reports relating to the Ceiriog Valley Trail to Secretary for circulation to members before the next meeting. This item is to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

##### ***Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007***

The ROW Improvement Plan 2007 is now available on the internet. A hard copy can also be obtained from MH. The authority is currently looking at Chirk as a community footpath scheme. It is hoped that the Ceiriog Valley will be looked at in the future, but it is likely that the programme will be in stages, owing to the size of the valley.

**Ramblers**

JCP suggested that Ramblers attend a LAF meeting to provide training. The group agreed that this would be beneficial to members.

**LAF Chairs Meetings**

The Chair advised that LAFs can only send the Chair or Vice-Chair to LAF Chairs meetings. SG attended the last meeting in Builth Wells on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009, on behalf of MP who was unable to attend.

**National Access Forum Meetings**

This meeting is open to all LAF members. TS volunteered to attend the next meeting on 10th November 2009 in Bangor.

**Northern Marches Cymru**

SG informed members that Northern Marches Cymru approves and distributes rural development money. There are currently two projects running, one of which is an equine safety project co-ordinated by Yvonne Palmer, an Equine Safety Officer at AVOW. Yvonne is happy to attend a LAF meeting to provide information on the project, which is designed to promote safer riding by encouraging the riders of Rural Wrexham to participate in the BHS riding and road safety training and test which will be run at local riding centres. The project also aims to raise the awareness of other road users to the needs and safety of riders.

**Action**

Secretary to invite Yvonne Palmer to a future meeting.

**Off-roading**

GM made reference to a group founded by Max Grant called NWAIMOR which has been established in Wales to address issues with off-roading. GM suggested that Max Grant be invited to a future meeting.

**Action**

Secretary to invite Max Grant to a future meeting.

**Landscape Planning Officer**

The Landscape Planning Officer is to be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on areas of outstanding beauty in the county.

### **Highways**

TS raised concern at the poor response that some Bridleways members have received regarding slippery surfaces on unclassified roads. Concerns are currently being address on an informal basis, however if there is a need to adopt a more formal approach, the LAF may need to become involved. It was suggested that Highways are invited to attend a future meeting.

### **Free Walks in Wrexham**

NE informed members that funding for free walks in Wrexham ends in March 2010. NE will provide a full update at the next meeting.

### **Outdoor Meetings**

TS commented that outdoor meetings are very positive, particularly when engaging with outdoor people. It was suggested that the relevant Community Councils are informed prior to a LAF meeting taking place outdoors.

### **Action**

Secretary to contact relevant Community Councils when LAF meetings are due to be held outdoors.

### **45/09 Items for Next Agenda**

- NE - Free Walks in Wrexham
- Ramblers - Training
- Off-roading – Max Grant

Please send agenda items to Secretary at least two weeks before the next meeting.

### **46/09 Dates and Locations of Next Meetings for 2010**

5<sup>th</sup> February 2010, 1.30pm, Guildhall

14<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Nant Mill Education Centre, Coedpoeth, time T.B.C

6<sup>th</sup> August 2010 – Tir Gofal, Ceiriog Valley, time, T.B.C

12<sup>th</sup> November 2010 – Venue and time T.B.C.