

CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2008

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08

Contents:

- 1. Introduction-Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum**
- 2. Local Access Forum Membership**
- 3. Review of Local Access Forum Activities, 2007-08**
- 4. Presentations to the LAF**
- 5. Work Programme 2007-08**

Foreword to the Annual Report 2007-2008

Unlike the five previous forewords that I have written as Chairman I have tried in this one to outline the composition of the Forum, the part that it plays in improving access to the countryside in Wales and how the matters for discussion are chosen.

The twenty six Forums in Wales are all Statutory Bodies set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Their members are all volunteers and have expertise in outdoor activities such as walking, horse riding, cycling, farming and the community generally. The Forums look after the interests of all users of the countryside, of less able bodied members of the community and the effect that access to the countryside may have on the farmers and landowners. The subjects on which the Forum can make recommendation to the County Council are chosen from amongst those brought forward by the members, those on which the Council Officers need opinions and from bodies such as the Countryside Council for Wales and the Welsh Assembly. Matters may also arise from the discussions of adjoining Forums such as that of the Brecon Beacons National Park and also arising from joint meetings of all the Welsh Forums and countryside conferences .The Forum is constantly having to react to and take into account the differing ways that access to the countryside is developing .It represents the interests of all those living and working in the County.

Geoffrey Williams.
Chairman of the Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

It seems like only weeks ago that I was writing my first foreword as secretary to the LAF, but, here I am writing my second foreword to the annual report for 2007-08. The past year has seen a noticeable increase in the volume of work of both the Carmarthenshire Countryside Unit and the LAF. This is reflected in the number of LAF meetings held each year, which increased from 4 to 6. In last year's foreword I identified the priority to complete the Assessment Report of the ROWIP. The LAF devoted a significant amount of their time in contributing to the public consultation exercise that was carried out. It was considered a valuable exercise as many of the LAFs comments and proposals were incorporated into the final report which then formed the foundations and basis on which the draft Action Plan was produced. The LAF were again involved in holding regular sub committee meetings to agree proposals and recommendations followed by meetings with myself and colleagues to discuss and agree amendments to the final plan. The plan was approved by the Executive Board of Carmarthenshire CC on the 17th March 2008. The official deadline for completion and approval of the ROWIP was November 2007, however many Local Authorities in England and Wales did not meet the deadline due to the scale of the work involved. I would therefore like to thank the LAF for the effort, time and commitment that they have made over the last year, and particularly in guiding the production of an invaluable ten year strategy document which will dictate and guide Carmarthenshire in the way it manages future public access to the Carmarthenshire countryside.

**Gary S Carlsen,
Senior Public Rights of Way Officer**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum was established in September 2002, and covers the County of Carmarthenshire, excluding the area of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for which their Western Area LAF has responsibility. The Local Authority had a statutory duty to establish the LAF as required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 1.2 The statutory function of the Forum is to advise the authority, the Countryside Council for Wales and others as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, with regard to the needs of land-management and the natural beauty of the area.
- 1.3 The remit of the Forum is now widened to advise not only the appointing authority (in our case the Carmarthen County Council), the Highway Authority and other bodies as may be prescribed by regulations but to advise on the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Wardening, the making of bylaws and long term exclusions and restrictions on access.
- 1.4 The views of the Forum should be sought on any new regulations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, the management of the new rights of access, the strategic priorities for the public rights of way and cycle networks and all other forms of open air recreation.
- 1.5 Forum members are committed to attend outside groups if appropriate and are encouraged to do all they can to engage with the public.
- 1.6 All meetings of the Forum are open to the public. The Forum has a policy of meeting at various locations across the County, subject to access for disability. All meetings have translation facilities available. Minutes of meetings and other LAF details are available on the CCC website
<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/leisure/countryside/forum/pages/agenda,minutesandmeetings.aspx>
- 1.7 The National Assembly for Wales regulations¹ require appointing authorities to prepare an annual report for each LAF for which it is responsible as soon as possible after the end of the financial year. This report incorporates the Countryside Council for Wales'

¹ The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

guidance on the production and content of Local Access Forum Annual Reports.

- 1.8 The annual report will serve several purposes:
- a) A summary record of the previous year's work. Minutes of individual meetings and other documents produced will give greater detail but the annual report will summarise the LAF's work.
 - b) A work plan for the coming year. This will be the plan agreed between the LAF and the appointing authority, in accordance with regulation 16(2)(b). It is acknowledged that changing priorities and pressure of other work may prevent the plan being adhered to in full.
 - c) A 'publicity' document. The annual report must, by statute, be made available for public inspection and it must be available for the public to buy.

2.0 LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The County Council (as appointing authority) is responsible for selecting Local Access Forum members. The forum comprises a chairperson and vice chairperson and between 10 and 20 other members. The authority is required to appoint members who are representative of users of public rights of way or access land; owners/occupiers of access land or land over which public rights of way pass, and others with interests relevant to the County.

In selecting members the Authority has sought to ensure a balance between users of rights of way and access land and owners/occupiers. The criteria adopted by the Council for appointment to the forum are contained in appendix II. Details on the present membership are to be found in appendix IV. Details on attendance at meetings can be found in appendix V

3.0 THE YEAR REVIEWED

3.1. REPORTING ON THE STATUTORY FUNCTION

3.1.1 This section of the annual report focuses upon the LAFs performance of its statutory function during the year ending 31st March 2008. This function, as included in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 is to advise -

- (a) the appointing authority.
- (b) any body exercising functions under Part I in relation to land in that area,

- (c) if the appointing authority is a National Park Authority, the local highway authority for any part of that land, and
- (d) such other bodies as may be prescribed.

as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.

3.1.2 The bodies mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d) (above) shall have regard, in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them by a local access forum under this subsection or any other provision of this Act.

The Access Forum held six meetings in the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. These meetings can be summarised as follows:

1. Meeting 20 26th April 2007 @ St Clears Leisure Centre.
2. Meeting 21 12th July 2007 @ Abergolech Church Hall.
3. Meeting 22 11th October 2007 @ Dragon Hall, Drefach
4. Meeting 23 15th November 2007 @ Shire Hall, Llandeilo.
5. Meeting 24 10th January 2008 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.
6. Meeting 25 13th March 2008 @ Civic Hall, Llandeilo.

3.2. **MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE LAF (in the period 01/04/07-31/03/08)**

- i) Topic Considered: **Coastal Access**
 Date(s) Considered: 26th April 07; 12th July 07; 15th November 07; 10th January 01.

 Summary: LAF proposals, coastal zone, multiuser routes.
- ii) Topic Considered: **Nantgronw Woodlands**
 Date(s) Considered: 26th April 07; 15th November 07; 10th January 08; 13th March 08.

 Summary: continued dissatisfaction of LAF with FC in resolving the access problem. FC admission to not having access rights for all and a need to negotiate access/compensate.
- iii) Topic Considered: **Carmarthenshire ROWIP**
 Date(s) Considered: 12th July 07; 11th October 07; 10th January 08; 13th March 08.

 Summary: discussions leading to production of final ROWIP Action Plan. Executive Board approval and adoption by CCC as a strategic 10 year plan for access to the countryside.

- iv) Topic Considered: **Performance Indicators**
Date Considered: 26th April 07.
- Summary: PIs showing an annual upward trend.
LAF Disappointment in signposting
- v) Topic Considered: **Quiet Lanes**
Date(s) Considered: 26th April 07.
- Summary: Discussion on the merits of introducing the scheme on some of the quieter roads in the County. Drawbacks to the scheme.
- vii) Topic Considered: **TROs on Gaspipeline**
Date(s) Considered: 26th April 07; 13th March 08.
- Summary: use of TROs during gas pipeline construction. Completion of scheme & reinstatement of affected PROW network.
- viii) Topic Considered: **PROW Furniture Designs.**
Date(s) Considered: 12th July 07.
- Summary: poor design & quality of dog stiles.
LAF member wanting to be consulted on designing. FC footbridges vs CCC designed FBs
- ix) Topic Considered: **Countryside Unit Structure.**
Date(s) Considered: 10th January 08.
- Summary: New structure considered. Members Concerns on not filling posts.
- x) Topic Considered: **Cambrian Mountain Pilot Project**
Date(s) Considered: 15th November 07.; 13th March 08.
- Summary: Secretary & Vice Chair reported on a public meeting held in Llandovery to launch the project. Reports on consultative & stakeholders mtgs outlining 10 management issues & methodology of survey techniques etc.
- xi) Topic Considered: **Gating Orders**
Date(s) Considered: 15th November 07; 10th January 08;
13th March 08.

- Summary: Secretary reported on progress in setting up a 'working group' to investigate merits of using 'gating orders' to tackle urban based problems. LAF adopted as statutory consultee.
- xii) Topic Considered: **Public Path Orders**
Date(s) Considered: 10th January 08.
- Summary: Presentation by Forum Member on diversion orders and associated furniture.
- xiii) Topic Considered: **Signposting Programme**
Date(s) Considered: 10th January 08; 13th March 08.
- Summary: Unauthorised removal of signs and posts. Response by Countryside Manager to press articles.
- xiv) Topic Considered: **Wheelchair Accessible Walks**
Date(s) Considered: 10th January 08.
- Summary: Members request to link all 'national walks' through CCC website.
- xv) Topic Considered: **Membership**
Date(s) Considered: 26th April 07;
Summary: Discussions on non attendees and their membership termination due to non contribution to the forum.
- xvi) Topic Considered: **Welsh LAFs national representative.**
Date Considered: 11th October 07.
- Summary: Members agreed to support

3.3 OTHER CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR LAF ACTIVITIES

3.3.1 List of other engagements carried out by the Chairperson /Deputy of the Carmarthenshire Forum in pursuance of the aims of that Forum:

DATE	EVENT ATTENDED	NATURE OF ATTENDANCE	ATTENDED BY
06.06.07	BBNP LAF	Observer	Chair (GW)
15.06.07	Welsh LAFs Conference, Builth	Represent the Carmarthenshire LAF	V/Chair (JS)
23.07.07	Royal Welsh Show	Represent the Carmarthenshire LAF	Chair (GW)
26.07.07	ROWIP S/cttee	Discuss ROWIP	Chair (GW)

		Draft	V/Chair (JS)
08.08.07	ROWIP S/cttee	Discuss ROWIP Draft	Chair (GW) V/Chair (JS)
24.08.07	Pont ar Cothi Workshop	Observer	Chair (GW)
11.09.07	Cambrian Mt Project@ Llandovery	Represent the Carms LAF	V/Chair (JS)
20.09.07	Welsh LAFs Chairs Conference, Builth.	Present a paper	Chair (GW)
25.09.07	Mtg with Carms ROW Managers	Discuss LAF matters	Chair (GW)
01.10.07	WAG mtg in Builth	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
12.10.07	BBNP LAF	Observer	Chair (GW)
01.11.07	Carms ROW Mtg	Discuss LAF matters	Chair (GW)
13.12.07	ROWIP s/committee	Finalising ROWIP	Chair (GW)
25.01.08	Carms Leisure Forum	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
29.01.08	Carms LDP consultation	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
14.02.08	Carms LDP consultation	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
22.02.08	BBNP LAF	Observer	Chair (GW)
27.02.08	Cambrian Mt Project. Consultative Forum, Llandrindod Wells	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
28.02.08	Carms LDP consultation	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)
28.03.08	Welsh LAFs Chairs Conference, Bridgend.	Represent the Carms LAF	Chair (GW)

4.0 LAF COMMITTEES

4.1 LAF regulation 13 allows for the establishment of committees of a LAF. The Forum continued with the ROWIP sub committee to oversee and advise on the draft action plan. Dr D Hunter, Karen Burch, David Foot were appointed with Jamilah Samuel to chair.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS TO THE LAF

No presentations were made to the LAF meetings in the year 2007-08.

6.0 WORK PLAN 2008 – 2009

6.1 Regulation 16(2)(b) requires that a LAF annual report includes a programme of works which has been agreed between the forum and

the appointing authority which the Forum plans to undertake during the twelve months commencing immediately after the 31st March 2008. No specific work plan agreed.

6.1.1 **Items expected to be referred to LAF by other bodies.**

None at the time of production of this report,

6.1.2 **Local Authority**

.The following are items that Carmarthenshire will be referring to the LAF for their views and comments. **(1) Cambrian Mountain Project.** This is a pilot study project looking at the sustainability of vehicular use of the unmetalled road and track network in the mountains. It is a joint study involving Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Powys. It is anticipated that a draft strategy document will be put out to consultation in the coming year.**(2) ROWIP Implementation.** The 10 year action plan for PROWs and access to the countryside will be completed and approved**(3) Countryside Unit half yearly progress reports** on progress made on (i) opening and improving rights of way (ii) processing legal orders to maintain the definitive map and statement (iii) grant aided projects. **(4) LAF annual report.**

6.1.3 **Items Proposed by LAF members and others**

No proposals.

6.1.4 **Welsh Assembly Government & Countryside Council for Wales**

The following are matters that CCW & WAG anticipate that they will refer to LAFs during the year. This is for guidance only and may change to reflect work priorities. **It should not be taken as definitive.**

Topic	Referred by	Approx Timing	Nature of Referral	Which LAFs?
Coastal Access – new legal provisions for access	WAG	Summer 2008	Work with coastal local authorities and the two national parks to look at legal provisions for public access to the coast.	Those with coastal areas

Topic	Referred by	Approx Timing	Nature of Referral	Which LAFs?
ROWIP Review – telephone questionnaire for LAF Chairs	CCW	Group A Summer 2008 Group B Autumn 2008	Review of how the ROWIP process has worked, what LAF members think of the ROWIP and the LAF involvement in the process.	(Timing depends on completion date of ROWIP) <u>Group A:</u> Powys, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Gwynedd, Anglesey, Monmouthshire, Brecon Beacons, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Newport, Wrexham. <u>Group B:</u> Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Ceredigion, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend
ROWIP Review – web survey for all LAF members	CCW	Survey will be publicised at relevant time and available on line between May and Oct 2008	Review of how the ROWIP process has worked, what LAF members think of the ROWIP and the LAF involvement in the process	All
Welsh National Access Register (WNAR)	CCW	Summer 2008	Review how your local authorities agreement to display their promoted routes and sites through the CCW countryside access maps (WNAR) has worked. Provide feedback on this and encourage those that haven't yet signed agreements to do	All

6.2 Meetings Schedule for 2008 -09

The outline schedule for meetings in 2008/09 is May 2008, July 2008, September 2008, November 2008, January 2009 and March 2009.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - APPOINTING AUTHORITY DETAILS

Name of Appointing Authority:	Carmarthenshire County Council
Area covered by LAF:	The whole of Carmarthenshire except that part which lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park.
Secretary:	Gary S Carlsen, Senior Rights of Way Officer, Countryside Recreation Unit, Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park, Hirwaun Olau Rd., Tumble, Carms. SA14 6HU
Tel :	01554 747530
Fax :	01269 841655
E-mail:	GCarlsen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX II-CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP SELECTION

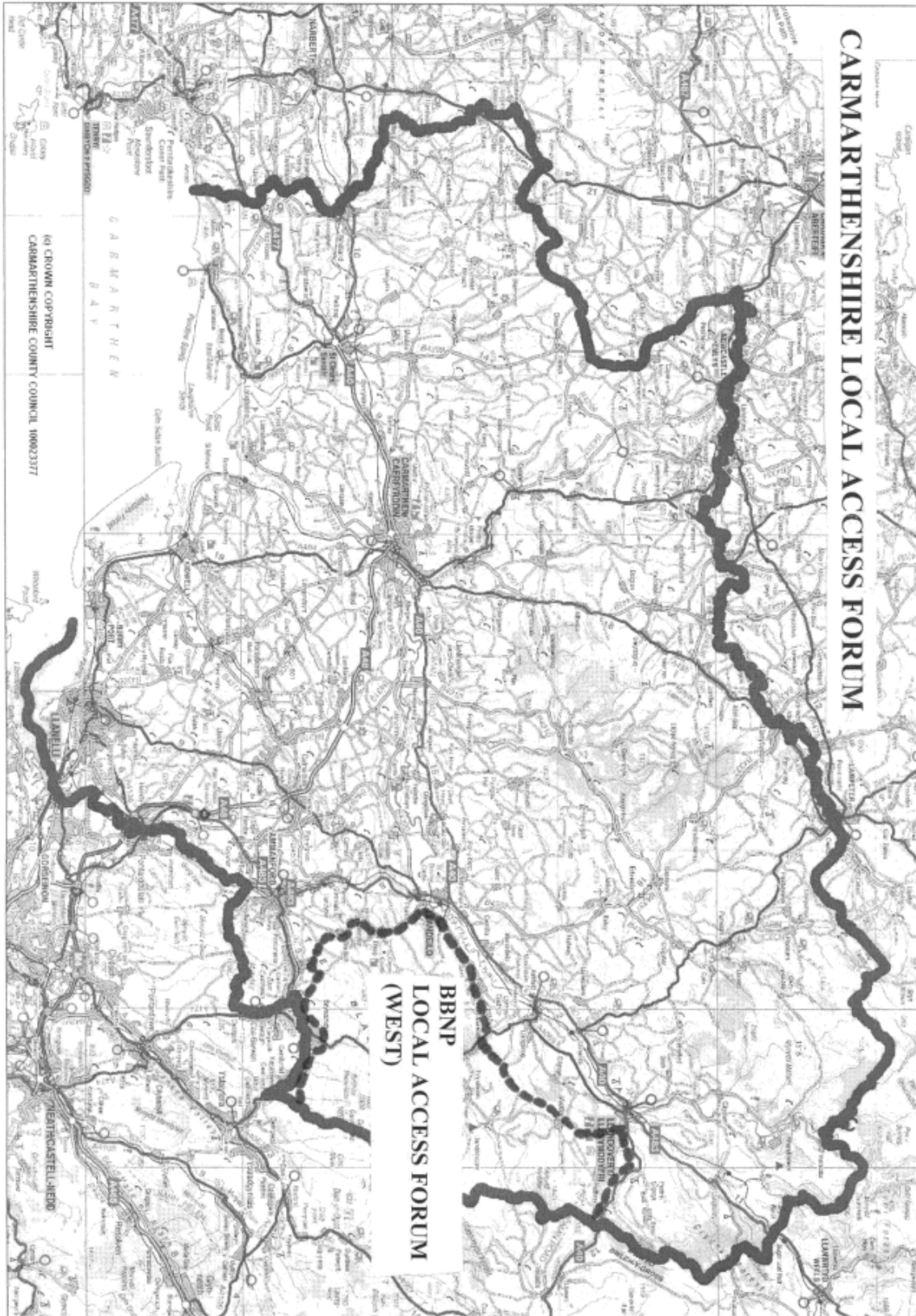
Local Access Forum members should:

- a. be committed to the functions of the forum
- b. be willing and able to play a full part in all aspects of a LAF's work;

It is also desirable that LAF members will:

- have a wide range of experience of access issues in the area.
- Have experience of working on, and contributing to similar forums previously.
- Reside in, be very familiar with, or have interests relevant to the area covered by the forum i.e. Carmarthenshire.
- Be able to network with a wide range of organisations and individuals, with the aim of disseminating the LAF's work.
- Be able to attend all meetings of the forum (deputies are not permitted).

APPENDIX III – MAP OF LOCAL ACCESS FORUM AREA



APPENDIX IV – MEMBERSHIP/RECRUITMENT DETAILS

In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001, all members of a forum are appointed for three years from the date of the first meeting of a three year cycle that a forum exists for. In July 2005 saw the completion of the first three year cycle of the forum. On 28th September 2005 the County Council Executive Board Member approved all of the applications for membership to the new forum. Following the resignation of three members since the 29th September 2005, three new members were appointed to the forum. Geoffrey Williams and Jamilah Samuel have been re elected unopposed as Chair and Vice chair respectively.

Name	Date Appointed to LAF	Date LAF Membership Terminated	Brief Background Details
Geoffrey Williams (Chair)	28.09.05	N/A	Ramblers Association/Walker/Smallholder
Jamilah Samuel (Deputy Chair)	28.09.05	N/A	Member of Public/Horserider/Landowner
Alun Richards	28.09.05	06.07.07	Farmer
Eric Jones	28.09.05	N/A	Farmer, grazier, community councillor, NFU member
Roy Jones	28.09.05	N/A	Farmer, FUW Rep
Rosemary Jones	28.09.05	N/A	Farmer/Rural Tourism Business
Karen Burch	28.09.05	N/A	British Horse Society/horserider
Edward Harris	28.09.05	N/A	Land Owner/Member of CLA
Alan Richards	28.09.05	N/A	Founder of a Walking Club
David Judd	28.09.05	06.07.07	Cyclist
David Hunter	14.12.06	N/A	Walker
Kieth Morgan	15.09.06	N/A	Community Councillor
Pauline Sykes	28.09.05	N/A	Access Tourism Business, walker
Pat Arlett	14.12.06	N/A	Ramblers Association
Llew Thomas	28.09.05	N/A	Farmer, walker,forester
David John Hughes	28.09.05	13.03.08	Horserider,cyclist, walker,landowner
David Foot	28.09.05	N/A	Ramblers Association, Member of CPRE, NT, Wildlife Trusts
Christine Rankin	28.09.05	N/A	British Horse Society/horserider/walker/Director Symud Ymlaen
William Theophilus	28.09.05	N/A	Farmer, Graziers Association Member
Brian Hancock	28.09.05	N/A	Land Manager
Cty Cllr. Clive Scourfield	28.09.05	N/A	County Council Representative
John Hollies	14.12.06	N/A	Farmer,walker,disabled Rep

CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – ADVISERS

Name	Organisation
Phil Snaith	Carmarthenshire County Council (Cycleways)
Ed Sanders	Forest Enterprise
Andrew Russ	Disabled Access Officer, CCC
Louise Austin	Cambria Archaeology
Christopher Horden	Crown Estate
Mandy Jones	Endurance Riding GB
Phil Stone	Countryside Council for Wales
Eirian James	Carmarthenshire County Council

APPENDIX V- LAF MEMBERS ATTENDANCE RECORD

01.04.07-31.03.08

MEMBER	DATE OF LAF MEETINGS					
	26.04.07	12.07.07	11.10.07	15.11.07	10.01.08	13.03.08
Alun Richards	X	Membership Terminated on 06.07.07				
David Judd	X	Membership Terminated on 06.07.07				
Geoffrey Williams	√	√	√	√	√	√
Jamilah Samuel	√	√	√	√	√	X
David Hunter	√	√	√	√	X	√
Clive Scourfield	√	√	√	√	√	√
John Hollies	√	√	√	X	X	X
Alan Richards	√	√	√	√	√	X
David Hughes	√	√	X	X	X	X
Llew Thomas	√	√	√	√	X	X
David Foot	√	√	X	√	√	√
Eric Jones	√	√	X	X	X	X
Pauline Sykes	√	√	√	√	√	√
Karen Burch	√	√	√	√	√	√
Edward Harris	√	√	X	√	X	√
Roy Jones	X	√	X	X	√	√
Keith Morgan	X	√	√	√	√	√
Rosemary Jones	X	√	X	X	√	X
William Theophilus	X	√	√	√	√	√
Chris Rankin	X	√	√	√	√	√
Brian Hancock	X	√	√	√	X	X
Par Arlette	X	X	X	√	√	X
Glyn Evans	Not Appointed until 13.12.07				√	√
Mark Hadley					√	√

APPENDIX VI

LAF ANNUAL REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

CCC Web site
CCC Libraries
CCC Customer Care Centres
Community & Town Councils
CCC Members
CCC Chief Executive & Directors
Antur Teifi
Carmartheshire Tourist Association
Amman Valley Enterprises
Cwm Gwendreath Community Development
Prince's Trust Cymru
Foothold Community Specialists
Ceredigion Ramblers Association
Pembroke Ramblers Association
Llanelli Group Ramblers Association
Dinefwr Group Ramblers Association
Carmarthen Group Ramblers Association
Lampeter Group Ramblers Association
Carmarthenshire Riders (BHS)
Sustrans
Forestry Commission Wales
Cycle Touring Club
Llanllwni and Llanfihangel Rhos y Corn Graziers Association
Mynydd Betws Graziers Association
Mynydd Mallaen Graziers Association
Farmers Union of Wales
National Farmers Union
Knight Frank(Crown Estate)
Llangadog Court Leat
CLA

APPENDIX VII
FURTHER READING

LAF Annual Reports

All appointing authorities are required by statute to produce annual reports to cover the year ending 31 March. These can be obtained from the relevant LAF Secretary. Agendas, minutes and other papers are also available for individual LAF meetings.

Government Act

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; The Stationery Office Limited (2000).

National Assembly for Wales

The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums)(Wales) Regulations 2001; The Stationary Office Limited (2002).

Countryside Council for Wales

LAF Guidance 1: The Establishment of Local Access Forums – Advice & Best Practice Guidance (2002).

LAF Guidance 2: The Role Duties and Functions of Local Access Forums (2002).

Local Access Forums in Wales Annual Report & Directory 2003 (2004).