

CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2009

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

Contents:

- 1. Introduction-Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum**
- 2. Local Access Forum Membership**
- 3. Review of Local Access Forum Activities, 2008-09**
- 4. Presentations to the LAF**
- 5. Work Programme 2009-10**

Foreword to the Annual Report 2008-09

The main highlight in this year has been the participation of the members in the work of the Forum both at formal meetings and in the work that has been initiated in between those meetings

I would like to give my thanks to those who have supplied both me and the Forum Secretary Gary Carlsen with puzzles to solve and initiatives to develop .The liaison between the Secretary and the members has also been a feature of this year .The consultations and the new ways of looking at old Rights of Way problems have greatly increased .

The role of our Forum in the work of the Appointing Authority has I hope been appreciated and the serious discussions leading to recommendations have I hope born fruit when policies are being formulated .and funds are being allocated.

The members of the Forum , the public whose interests we protect and the Councillors to whom our recommendations are sent should always remember that as a body the Local Access Forum is unique as it is a statutory body set up by Act of Parliament to advise the Local Authority but not to be influenced unduly by it

Geoffrey Williams.

Chairman of the Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

Continuing on from last year, the forum has involved itself in a wide range of countryside access issues spread out over the six meetings through the year. I was pleased at the appointment to the forum of Mark Hadley to represent the interests of mechanically propelled vehicular users. The forum now has a balanced and a broad spectrum of representation of countryside managers and countryside users.

The forum carried out their last function in the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan by overseeing the publication and distribution of this very important strategic document. However, the forum's involvement in the ROWIP will continue as it has made a commitment to advise and monitor the implementation by the County of the 53 action points of the plan over the next ten years. Once again, I would like to thank each individual member of the forum for giving up their own time, commitment and hard work to the ROWIP and the many other topics covered in the last twelve months.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the Chairman for everything he has done to establish and develop the forum since its formation in 2002.

**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 2009. 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 2008 to 31st March 2009. These meetings can be summarised as follows:

1. Meeting 26 8th May 2008 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.
2. Meeting 27 10th July 2008 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.
3. Meeting 28 11th September 2008 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.
4. Meeting 29 13th November 2008 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.
5. Meeting 30 15th January 2009 @ Carmarthen LC.
6. Meeting 31 12th March 2009 @ Civic Hall Llandeilo.

3.2. **MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE LAF (in the period 01/04/08-31/03/09)**

- i) Topic Considered: **Coastal Access**
Date(s) Considered: 11th September 08; 13th November 08; 15th January 09; 12th March 09.

Summary: Progress Reports by Project Officer
- ii) Topic Considered: **Nantgronw Woodlands**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 10th July 08; 11th September 08; 12th March 09.

Summary: Progress reports on opening site..
- iii) Topic Considered: **Carmarthenshire ROWIP**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 15th January 09; 12th March 09.

Summary: Printing & Publication; Implementation update.
- iv) Topic Considered: **Signposting Programme**
Date Considered: 8th May 08.

Summary: Theft of signs & posts
- v) Topic Considered: **Cross County Gas pipeline**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 10th July 08.

Summary: Progress reports on the scheme.

- vi) Topic Considered: **LAF Handbook**
Date(s) Considered: 10th July 08.
- Summary: Usefulness of handbook as reference for LAF members.
- vii) Topic Considered: **St Illtyd's Walk.**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 10th July 08; 11th September 08.
- Summary: Advise from LAF to continue maintenance & promotion.
- viii) Topic Considered: **Wind Farms**
Date(s) Considered: 10th July 08.
- Summary: LAF objection to the Betws Mt scheme.
- ix) Topic Considered: **Cambrian Mountain Pilot Project**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 11th September 08; 13th November 08; 15th January 09.
- Summary: Updates on progress of project.
- x) Topic Considered: **Gating Orders**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 10th July 08; 11th September 08; 13th November 08; 15th January 09.
- Summary: updates on progress of working party's formulation of a policy on 'allegating'.
- xi) Topic Considered: **Strategic Trails.**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 11th September 08; 15th January 09.
- Summary: Production of promotional booklets.
- xii) Topic Considered: **Provision for the disabled in the countryside.**
Date(s) Considered: 8th May 08; 10th July 08; 15th January 09; 12th March 09.
- Summary: Design of disabled symbols. Categorising routes on degree of accessibility to disabled.

- xiii) Topic Considered: **LAF Publicity**
Date(s) Considered: 10th July 08; 11th September 08; 15th January 09; 12th March 09
- Summary: Logo designs. Roadshow to Community/Town Councils.
- ix) Topic Considered: **Greenspace Assessment Study**
Date(s) Considered: 11th September 09.
Summary: Consultants engaged to identify all greenspace areas in the County.
- x) Topic Considered: **LDP & LTP**
Date Considered: 10th July 08; 11th September 08; 13th November 08
- Summary: LAF contribution to consultation process.
- xi) Topic Considered: **TROs**
Date Considered: 10th July 08.
- Summary: Request for LAF to be statutory consultees on TRO proposals from Streetscene.

3.3 OTHER CHAIR/VICE 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
04.04.08	Welsh LAFs Chairs Conference	Vice Chair of Welsh LAFs & Chair of CLAF	Chair (GW)
12.05.08	Carms Leisure Forum	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
16.05.08	Mtg with LAF Secretary	Discussion on mtgs.	Chair (GW)
25.06.08	Conference on walking, Swansea	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
29.07.08	Mtg with Head of Countryside	Discuss work programmes	Chair (GW)
04.09.08	Walks & Trails Mtg	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
04.09.08	Cambrian Mt Pilot Project, Consultation/Open Day	Represent the LAF	Vice Chair (KB)
15.09.08	Carms Leisure Forum	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
24.10.08	BBNP LAF	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
14.11.08	Welsh LAFs Chairs Conference	Vice Chair of Welsh LAFs & Chair of	Chair (GW)

		CLAF	
01.12.08	Carms Leisure Forum	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
03.12.08	Pembs LAF	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
04.12.08	BBNP LAF	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
28.01.09	Cambrian Mt PP SWG Mtg	Represent the LAF	Vice Chair (KB)
12.02.09	Motorised Recreation Conference	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
24.02.09	Welsh LAFs Chairs Conference	Vice Chair of Welsh LAFs & Chair of CLAF	Chair (GW)
05.03.09	BBNP LAF	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
09.03.09	Carms Leisure Forum	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
10.03.09	Welsh NAF	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)
17.03.09	Walks & Trails Mtg	Represent the LAF	Chair (GW)

4.0 LAF COMMITTEES

4.1 LAF regulation 13 allows for the establishment of committees of a LAF. Karen Burch, Keith Morgan and David Hunter were appointed to the sub committee with Geoffrey Williams as Chair. Other members with expertise or specific knowledge on topics being dealt with by the sub committee would be asked to sit on the sub committee as and when required.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS TO THE LAF

8 presentations were made to the LAF.

DATE	PRESENTATION	PRESENTER
08.05.08	Survey of CCC Access Land	Mike Smith (CCC Ranger)
08.05.08	Problems with Public Path Orders	Pauline Sykes (LAF Member)
10.07.08	Cambrian Mt Pilot Project Survey Results	G Carlsen (Carms CC)
13.11.08	Countryside Access Disability Provision in Carmarthenshire	John Hollies (LAF Member)
15.01.09	Cycling: Past, Present, Future	P Snaith (Carms CC)
12.03.09	Dog Control Orders	A Evans/M Roberts (Carms CC)
12.03.09	Sustrans Cycle Routes	R Jones (Sustrans)
12.03.09	Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd	Eleri Davies (Carms CC)

6.0 WORK PLAN 2009 – 2010

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 2009. A structured work plan was not discussed.

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

No items were referred to the LAF.

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. 2) ROWIP Implementation. (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

Items and topics were raised by LAF members prior to forum meetings rather than as a list prior to the commencement of the forthcoming year 2009-10.

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?
CRoW Act 'Relevant Authority Guidance' - a statutory consultation on a revised version of the guidance regarding access land.	CCW	May to July 2009	LAFs and others will be consultees with regard a revision (by Natural England, Defra and CCW) of the guidelines used by Relevant Authorities (CCW, National Parks and the Forestry Commission) in determining exclusions and restrictions to public access on CRoW Act 'Access Land'. Feedback requested from LAFs where appropriate.	All
ROWIP implementation	WAG	Ongoing	Work with local authorities to implement the provisions of the rights of way improvement plans.	All
Coastal Access - Implementation of the Wales Coast Path	WAG	Ongoing	Work with coastal local authorities and the 2 national parks (SNP and PCNP) to ensure that locations suitable for cyclists, horse riders and disable people are identified and incorporated into the all Wales Coast Path'.	Those with coastal areas
Implementation of the Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009 - 2013	WAG	Ongoing	Support the implementation of the Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013 by supporting local and national initiatives to improve access networks and promote walking and cycling tourism.	All

Topic	Referred by	Approx Timing	Nature of Referral	Which LAFs?
Access to water	WAG / CCW	2009 - 2012	Take an active interest in promoting access to water agreements. It would be helpful if LAF considered potential areas for new or improved access to water (lakes rivers and the coast) and identified any obvious barriers that could be resolved	All

6.2 Meetings Schedule for 2009 -10

The outline schedule for meetings in 2009/10 is May 2009, August 2009, November 2009, February 2010.

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

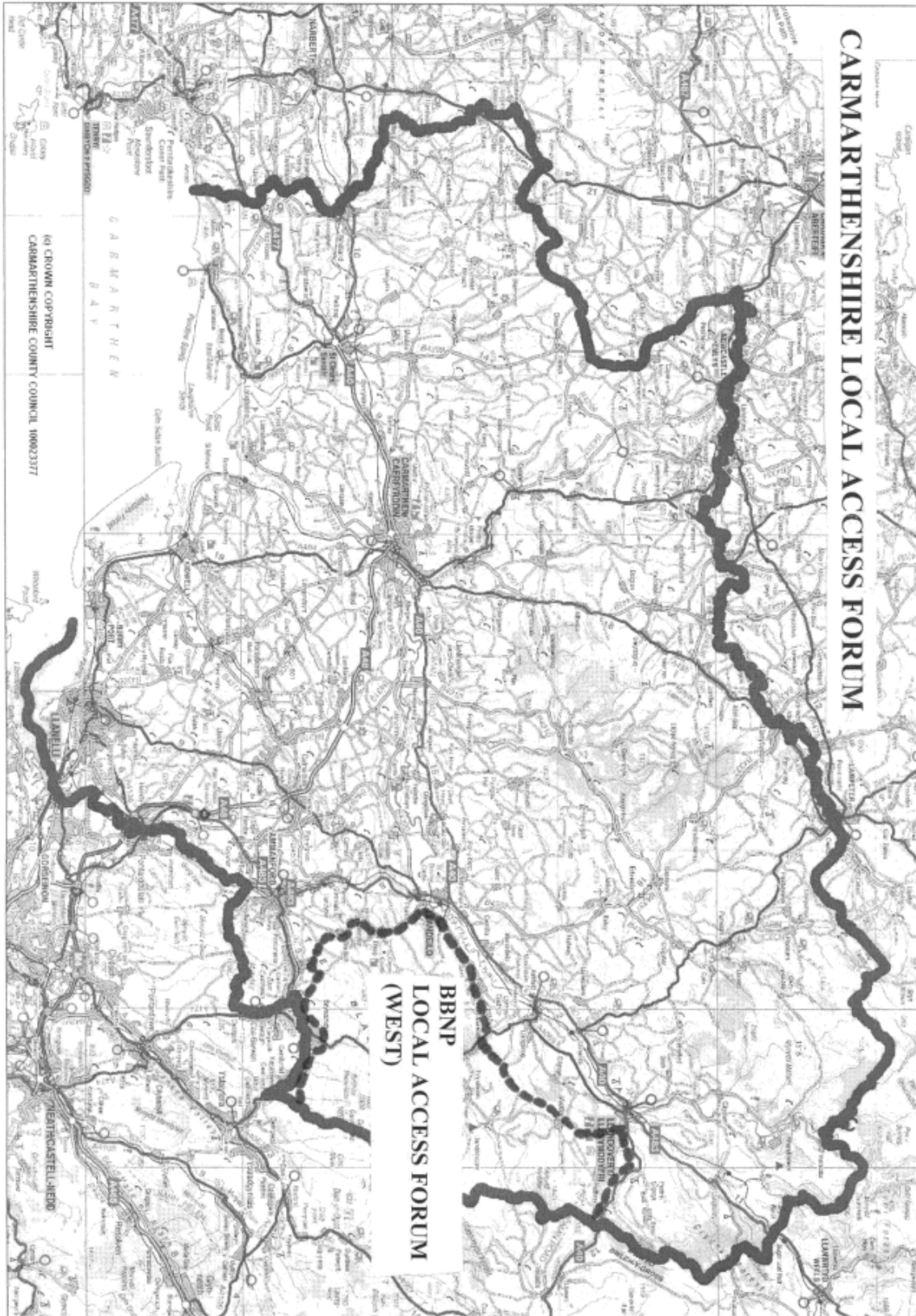
Local Access Forum members should:

- 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	Date Re-appointed	Date LAF Membership Terminated	Brief Background Details
Geoffrey Williams (Chair)	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Ramblers Association/Walker/Smallholder
Eric Davies	13.11.08	N/A	N/A	Carer of disabled/farmer/grazier
Mark Hadley	13.12.07	13.11.08	N/A	Business providing countryside activities.
Eric Jones	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Farmer, grazier, community councillor, NFU member
Roy Jones	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Farmer, FUW Rep
Rosemary Jones	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Farmer/Rural Tourism Business
Karen Burch (Vice-chair)	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	British Horse Society/horserider
Edward Harris	28.09.05	N/A	11.09.08	Land Owner/Member of CLA
Alan Richards	28.09.05	N/A	11.09.08	Founder of a Walking Club
Owen Glyndwr Evans	13.12.07	13.11.08	N/A	One Voice Wales, landowner.
David Hunter	14.12.06	13.11.08	N/A	Walker
Keith Morgan	15.09.06	13.11.08	N/A	Community Councillor
Pauline Sykes	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Access Tourism Business, walker
Pat Arlett	14.12.06	13.11.08	N/A	Ramblers Association
Llew Thomas	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Farmer, walker, forester
David Foot	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	Ramblers Association, Member of CPRE, NT, Wildlife Trusts
Christine Rankin	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	British Horse Society/horserider/walker Director Symydd Ymlaen
William Theophilus	28.09.05	N/A	11.09.08	Farmer, Graziers Association Member
Brian Hancock	28.09.05	N/A	11.09.08	Land Manager
Cty Cllr. Clive Scourfield	28.09.05	13.11.08	N/A	County Council Representative
John Hollies	14.12.06	13.11.08	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**01.04.08-31.03.09**

MEMBER	DATE OF LAF MEETINGS					
	08.05.08	10.07.08	11.09.08	13.11.08	15.01.09	12.03.09
Geoffrey Williams	√	√	√	√	√	√
David Hunter	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clive Scourfield	√	X	√	√	√	√
John Hollies	X	X	X	√	√	√
Alan Richards	X	√	Resigned	N/A	N/A	N/A
Llew Thomas	√	√	√	√	√	√
David Foot	√	√	√	√	√	√
Eric Jones	X	√	X	√	√	X
Pauline Sykes	√	√	√	√	√	√
Karen Burch	√	√	√	√	√	X
Edward Harris	X	X	Resigned	N/A	N/A	N/A
Roy Jones	X	X	√	√	X	√
Keith Morgan	√	√	√	√	X	√
Rosemary Jones	√	X	X	X	√	√
William Theophilus	X	X	Resigned	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chris Rankin	√	√	X	X	√	√
Brian Hancock	X	X	Resigned	N/A	N/A	N/A
Par Arlette	√	X	X	√	√	X
Glyn Evans	√	X	X	√	√	√
Mark Hadley	√	√	√	√	√	√
Eric Davies	N/A	N/A	N/A	√	√	√

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).