

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

Thursday 22nd July 2010

Held at Tumble Hall, Tumble 6.00pm

Present:

Members:

Karen Burch (KB) - Vice Chair
Glyn Evans (GE)
Mark Hadley (MH)
David Foot (DF)
Keith Morgan (KM)
John Eric Davies (JD)

Pauline Sykes (PS)
Cllr Clive Scourfield (CS)
David Hunter (DH)
Roy Jones (RJ)

Jonathan Tudor (JT) Secretary
Eirian W James (EWJ) CCC

Apologies (Members)

Geoffrey Williams (GW) - Chairman
Pat Arlette (PA)

Advisors/ Observers/Members of the Public

Gareth Bryant – Water sports Development Officer for Carmarthenshire
Ian Morgan (IM) – CCC Coastal Access Officer
Cllr Phil Williams – Llannon CC
Kevin Thomas - CCC

	ACTION
Item 1 Vice-Chairs Welcome - the Vice Chair Karen Burch thanked all for attending the meeting.	
Item 2 Apologies and confirmation of Minutes of Meeting 29th April 2010. Item 4 change 'National England' to 'Natural England'. Item 5 correct spelling 'Routes'. insert 'by' before 'North Somerset'. Insert 'road' before 'safety leaflets'. Item 10 change 'Treat Lightly' to 'Tread Lightly' change 'Senior' to 'Principal' correct spelling of 'Nant Gornw' to 'Nant Gronw' The minutes were checked, amended accordingly and accepted as correct.	
Item 3 Matters Arising Brechfa Forest Wind Farm KB advised the latest scheduled meeting had been postponed. 08/09 Annual Report JT confirmed that it was now on the web site and had been circulated to all LAF members. 12 month Annual Work Programme Further lists to be submitted – item to be carried forward to next agenda. Natural England Report/ Website - Lost Ways – DF asked for it to be carried forward to next LAF Agenda. Item 6 Countryside Recreation and Access Unit – new officers and associated roles – maps of Ranger areas to be available by early September. A request was made for the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the Legal Team to be supplied in addition. Item 9 Meet & Greet meetings – general feedback was positive. Item 10 Nant Gronw - it was reported that a meeting with the Forestry Commission had taken place and some top dressing would be carried out soon.	EWJ

<p>Item 4 Short Introduction/Presentation by Jonathan Tudor (JT) – Principal Rights of Way Officer For Carmarthenshire County Council and Secretariat to Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>JT introduced himself as the new Principal Rights of Way Officer and Secretary of the Local Access Forum. He thanked the previous LAF Secretary Gary Carlsen for his contribution to the work of the Forum and stressed that he remained an important member of the Public Rights of Way Legal Team at Carmarthenshire County Council.</p> <p>JT explained that he and the Legal Team were in the process of reviewing their existing systems and procedures and integrating the new members of staff into the Team. A number of areas were being examined including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Access and Management System (CAMS) – how it can be developed and used more effectively. • Training – staff will attend Public Inquiries in nearby authorities to improve their knowledge and skills. • Team Reorganisation – looking at reorganizing the legal team into 4 geographical areas possibly reflecting the new ranger areas. • RoWIP Targets and existing Order backlog. <p>MH asked if there was liaison between the legal team and the rangers. JT stressed that there was close cooperation between the Legal Team and the Ranger Service. KB observed that there did seem to be more joined up thinking and coordination.</p> <p>DF referred to a meeting of the LAF on 14.05.09 in which Gary Carlsen (GC) stated that CCC would survey the whole of the County Walks and address problems of insufficient way marking, replacement of stiles with gates and removals of obstructions. GC had also confirmed that he was drafting a protocol for prioritising Public Path Orders and Definitive Map Modification Orders and also working on a 'Checklist' for PROW Officers to refer to when processing an application. JT said that prioritisation and checklists would form part of the ongoing review of the Legal Teams' practices and procedures.</p>	<p>JT</p>
<p>Item 5 Update on 2010 LAF (Wales Conference) Builth Wells (JT & KB)</p> <p>JT provided a brief summary of the main topics discussed at the conference and referred to the e-mail which had been circulated from Jo Ronald providing detailed notes on the conference and various appendices of particular presentations including Glastir and Tread Lightly.</p> <p>It was suggested that Mike Margetts from the Tread Lightly Campaign be invited to the next LAF meeting in October. It was already also planned to invite a representative of the Welsh Salmon and Trout Association to address the LAF at the October meeting.</p>	<p>EWJ/ JT</p>
<p>Item 6 Presentation by Gareth Bryant (Water sports Development Officer for Carmarthenshire) – response to recent National Assembly for Wales Inquiry into Access to Inland Water in Wales (June 2010)</p> <p>GB stated that canoeist and kayakers only have access to approximately 2% of rivers in Wales. Contrastingly, in Scotland there is relatively unrestricted access as of right which is amongst the best in Europe.</p> <p>The difficulty lies in the fact that the land surrounding many inland waters is privately owned and to canoe or kayak on them without permission could constitute an act of trespass. Further, if there is no public launching point it is necessary for the paddler to get permission to cross private land to access the water.</p> <p>In addition, on many rivers there is also an historical conflict between fisherman, who often have to pay to fish on a particular stretch of water, and canoeists with free access.</p> <p>The paddling community has been campaigning for some time for better legal rights to use rivers. However, the campaign has so far proved unsuccessful. It was hoped that the National Assembly for Wales Inquiry into Access to Inland Water in Wales would provide a way forward. However, it recommends that the Voluntary Agreement with landowners route is pursued. Such agreements can work but the success rate has been variable.</p> <p>GB said that he and many paddlers would even be prepared to pay to use rivers in the same way that fisherman do.</p>	

<p>In Carmarthen, paddlers can only use the tidal stretched of the Tywi, have no access to Llyn Brienne reservoir, and can only access 500 metres of the river Teifi. They do have access to the Lower Lledi reservoir, Swiss Valley in Llanelli.</p> <p>In the question and answer session CS said that the Welsh Assembly had fudged the issue in their report.</p> <p>All agreed that it was unfortunate that the situation could not be resolved amicably between the different interest groups involved: landowners, fishermen and paddlers. GB was thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.</p> <p>A representative from the Welsh Salmon and Trout Association would be invited to the next Local Access Forum Meeting in October.</p>	EWJ/ JT
<p>Item 7 Proposed Horse Riding Strategy for Carmarthenshire – tabling of prepared report and discussion by Karen Burch (KB)</p> <p>KB presented a paper on a proposed horse riding strategy for Carmarthenshire based on a strategy adopted by North Somerset County Council. KB had recently met Richard Workman (Director of Technical Services) to discuss the proposed strategy. It was agreed that Carmarthenshire County Council has already addressed some of the aspects of the proposed strategy. A number of existing Council strategies already refer to the interests of, for example, walkers and horse riders.</p> <p>The fundamental aim was to ensure that the Council considered the needs of the equestrian community in all their policies and procedures, particularly in relation to planning applications and changes or improvement to the road network, alongside those of other vulnerable road users.</p> <p>KB also wanted recognition of the substantial contribution that equestrians and equestrian tourists make to the local economy. There are 20,000 passported horses in Carmarthenshire. The cost of keeping a horse is about £4,000 on average. In addition, there is the income generated from riders coming into the county with their horses.</p> <p>In the discussion following the presentation, KB requested that the signposting of bridleways and way marking in the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) should be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting.</p>	EWJ/ JT
<p>Item 8 Terms of LAF Reference (JT &KB)</p> <p>The attention of members was drawn to the Terms of Reference for the LAF which were distributed with the meeting papers and are available on the Council's web site. It was a useful reminder of the primary functions of the LAF</p> <p>It was pointed out that some members had now missed a number LAF meetings. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to them reminding them that it had previously been agreed that a member who missed 3 meetings or more may have their membership of the LAF ended.</p>	JT
<p>Item 9 Update on Countryside Recreation & Access Unit – Completed staffing structures and outcome of countywide Meet and Greet evenings – Eirian James (EWJ)</p> <p>EWJ stated that in total 66% of Community Councils had attended one or other of the 6 Meet and Greet Events. Unfortunately, 24 had not attended any of the available meetings. The feedback from Community Councils and members of the public attending the events to the new staffing structures and maintenance arrangements had on the whole been positive.</p> <p>It was felt by some members that the working relationship between Brecon Beacons National Park and Carmarthenshire County Council could be improved. It was suggested that a representative from Brecon Beacons National Park be invited to a Local Access Forum Meeting.</p>	EWJ/ JT

<p>Item 10 Any Other Business</p> <p>MH asked if it would be possible for the public or users to be made aware when a particular path or route had been cleared or re-opened and was usable. Discussion ensued as to how it would be possible to do this. How could such information be disseminated, to whom and where? Possibly on the Council's web site. No clear conclusions were reached.</p>	
<p>Item 11 Date and Venues of next and subsequent meetings</p> <p>The following provisions dates and venues were given:</p> <p>14th October 2010 Bronwydd Village Hall (NB Venue now changed to LLanpumsaint Church Hall)</p> <p>20th January 2011 Garnant Golf Club (NB Venue now changed to Black Mountain Centre, Upper Brynaman)</p> <p>07th April 2011 Laugharne Millennium Hall</p> <p>30th June 2011 Llanpumsaint Church Hall (NB Venue now changed to Bronwydd Village Hall)</p> <p>22nd September 2011 Cwmifor Village Hall</p> <p>15th December 2011 Tumble Hall</p> <p>The above may be subject to change depending on the availability of venues.</p>	