

# WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## **CONFIRMED MINUTES**

of the seventeenth meeting held at Guildhall, Wrexham on 2 September 2005

### **38/05 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES**

#### Attendance:

<u>CHAIR</u>	Michael Edwards	<u>SECRETARY</u>	John Marchant
<u>MEMBERS</u>	Paul Davies Martin Howorth Andrew Kelly Naomi Klenerman Dave Liddy Gerald Moss Mabyn Pickering Shelagh Roberts Tim Stevens Edward Wardle	<u>NON-MEMBERS</u>	Emma Haldane Paul Humphreys Alun Price (CCW) John Pugh

Apologies: Sue Gittins  
Ieuan Lewis  
John Lawton Roberts

### **39/05 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 10 JUNE 2005**

Draft minutes were distributed to members on 8 August 2005 and confirmed as correct on 29 August 2005.

26/05 Letter written to Wynnstay Estate, no reply received yet.

27/05 Workshop papers were circulated with the agendas.

27/05 Letter not yet sent to W.A.G.

29/05 Letter written to BT re. Pentre pay phone, no reply received yet.

35/05 Groundwork has been contacted about the gates.

35/05 Letter written to Council about the winter closing of the toilets in Llanarmon.

### **40/05 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mike Edwards, Deputy Chair, thanked members for their efforts over the last three years.

Martin Howorth also thanked the members on behalf of the Council.

#### **41/05 SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The access rangers contact details will be circulated to interested parties and business cards will also be produced soon.

The secretary gave details of how seats on the new forum will be advertised later in September. At the first meeting of the new forum on 25 November, each member will have an opportunity to introduce himself or herself. These introductory statements will also assist members in the process of electing the chair and deputy chair at the second meeting.

#### **42/05 MOTOR VEHICLES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Tim Stevens said that the repair work carried out on the Wayfarer track (SJ130355 to SJ091366) was 99% well done but there was a small section near the shooting hut that still needed attention, as there was standing water. It needed half a lorry-load of stone and a short length of ditch digging a foot deeper. Volunteers would be happy to move stone from a point where it could be dumped up to the point where it is needed.

**Action: Secretary to follow up this matter.**

Edward Wardle said that it was clear that many unsealed UCRs were not suitable for use by motor vehicles and users should voluntarily desist from using them so they do not get any worse.

#### **43/05 COMMON LAND**

The Chairman welcomed Geoff Pilmoor, Wrexham Council's Land Charges and Claims Manager who gave a presentation on common land.

#### **44/05 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Members now had the timetable for the ROWIP based on guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly. There were two phases: Assessment and Statement of Action and the first of these was now underway. Martin Howorth explained the work that had been carried out so far.

Consultants were being engaged to carry out a 16% sample of the rights of way network. The surveyor will be under instruction to use the same strict criteria as used by CCW a few years ago in its all-Wales survey and as used by the Council for its Performance Indicator. Gerald Moss said that standard random sampling was inaccurate because the condition of paths varied widely from community to community. A 16% sample from each community would be a more accurate method. Michael Edwards recommended that the York ROWIP be looked at.

Tim Stevens was concerned that it appeared that as far as the Council was concerned 'local paths' as defined by the Act were only of concern to local people. It was the visitors to the area that would have the greatest problems and ways to seek their views need to be found. In response to a query from Tim Stevens, Martin Howorth said that UCRs were not included in the 16% survey of rights of way but people were free to comment if they felt that UCRs helped make a better network to walk. Any such comments would be

considered. However, the guidance received from the Welsh Assembly would be followed and UCRs would not be surveyed.

Andrew Kelly felt that the LAF needed a much greater input and not just be told what had already been decided. He asked that the forum be involved with every step of the process. Martin Howorth was adamant that the Council's consultation was widespread and thorough. The reason the consultation had gone ahead without reference to the forum was simply that in the past the forum had repeatedly complained about lack of progress. When time had been found to do the consultation, it was thought better to go ahead with it rather than wait another two months for the forum to reconvene. **Proposed:** Andrew Kelly proposed that Wrexham Local Access Forum appoints representatives to sit on both the Scrutiny Panel and the Executive Board of Wrexham County Borough Council to oversee the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. **Seconded:** Gerald Moss. Martin Howorth pointed out that this would not be possible, as only elected council members could sit on the Scrutiny Panels and Executive Board. *Proposal withdrawn.* Within the present timetable, the LAF could comment on the ROWIP and those comments would go forward with the report to the Scrutiny Panel and the Executive Board. In summary, Michael Edwards appealed for greater involvement from the forum wherever possible. He stressed that the LAF was not trying to make the Council's job more difficult and the members of the forum were trying to help.

#### **45/05 COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

As regards Open Access, Alun Price reported that there have been very few cases of exclusions or restrictions in his area and none in Wrexham. There had not been the conflict that some had foretold.

Tim Stevens described how in the CCW booklet "You and your dog" it said that one could drive an off-road vehicle on a Byway Open to All Traffic. This was not helpful to the public because in fact most 'off-roaders' were moto-cross bikers and they had no business whatsoever on BOATs.

Andrew Kelly asked about access to waterways, especially the River Dee, for canoeists and similar users.

#### **46/05 NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

#### **47/05 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Andrew Kelly asked about the non-publication of Wrexham Local Access Forum Annual Reports. The secretary responded by stating that he had never yet had the time to prepare them. Martin Howorth suggested that if there was a need for the reports then maybe the members of the forum could work on them. Some members thought that the reports should still be produced, whilst others thought it would be a waste of time.

**Action: The secretary would establish if the annual reports were a statutory requirement.**

**48/05 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Edward Wardle asked if the Access Rangers could be represented at the next forum and all members supported this.

The secretary confirmed that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan would be a regular item on future agendas.

**49/05 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The first meeting of the new forum will be on 25 November but the dates and venue of subsequent meetings will be left for the members at that meeting to decide.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.