

# WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## CONFIRMED MINUTES

*of the twenty fifth meeting of the forum held in Committee Room 3 at the Guildhall, Wrexham on Friday, 4 May 2007.*

### **12/07 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES**

#### Attendance:

#### CHAIR

Ieuan Lewis

#### SECRETARY

Emma Haldane

#### MEMBERS

John Cooper-Poole

Sue Gittins

John Marchant

Clive Menzies

Gerald Moss

Margaret Murphy

Karl Praker

Shelagh Roberts

Mabyn Pickering

Edward Wardle

#### NON MEMBERS

Martin Howorth

Alun Price (CCW)

Sion Roberts (Access Ranger)

Apologies: Mavis McBride and Gwynfor Jones

### **13/07 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting on 26 January 2007**

The draft minutes were distributed to members on 12 February 2007. A few minor amendments were made and the minutes were confirmed on 26 February 2007.

#### **40/06 Youth Involvement**

Clive Menzies had made contact with the Wrexham Youth Forum Facilitator after numerous e-mails and telephone calls. Clive was asked to complete a document, which had been returned some time ago, but had received no response to date. John Marchant would be contacting the Facilitator for an explanation on why a response had not been received.

Members felt that Katie Birks, in her capacity as a student, may have some suggestions in promoting 'Youth Involvement'. Environment Students at N.E.W.I. may also express an interest.

**SECRETARY TO CONTACT KATIE BIRKS AND N.E.W.I. FOR IDEAS**

### **66/06 Interactive Maps**

Members were asked to look at 'Shrop-Map' and Planning Map on the Flintshire County Council Website at the last meeting. Clive had looked at this site and proposed for this item to be brought forward to the next meeting for discussion

**AGREED: NEXT AGENDA ITEM**

### **53/06 – Lay-by Car Parking**

Sue Gittins reported that Northern Marches Cymru had made a current bid for funding for rural projects and that a Business Plan was being prepared to carry forward the programme to 2013. There had been no indication to date of the value of money available.

This was a European Community Initiative for assisting rural communities in improving the quality of life and economic prosperity in their local area and funded through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and matched by Welsh Assembly Government.

Northern Marches Cymru was therefore seeking suitable projects in rural communities that could help the development of tourism through access to the countryside.

'Off Road Parking' had been identified previously as a problem in some rural areas, especially where they link to Access Land and National Trails.

Sue Gittins felt that community councils, with the backing of the Local Access Forum in making bids, would be looked upon more favourably.

All agreed that by writing to the community councils at this early stage may help identify projects in good time.

**SECRETARY TO WRITE TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

### **14/07 Chairman's Report**

- On behalf of the Forum, the Chair congratulated Clive Menzies, Deputy Chair, on becoming the National Representative for Local Access Forums in Wales.
- The Wrexham County Borough Development Plan 2006/21: Pre-deposit Participation (Consultation Period) had recently completed a series of engagement events whereby key stakeholders and other consultees considered issues and strategy options. A summary of key findings had been produced and a full copy could be obtained on the Council's website [http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/planning\\_portal/plan\\_policy/local\\_development\\_plan.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/planning_portal/plan_policy/local_development_plan.htm) and from the Planning Department.

Chair asked whether the forum felt that they should be involved.

Edward Wardle stated that a public meeting had recently being held in Bronington where a Wrexham County Borough Council representative had attended to give a presentation and answer questions. John Cooper-Poole felt that there was more opportunity now to make representations than later on in the plan.

**ALL AGREED: Item to be placed on a future agenda.  
Interested members to keep updated on progress.**

- Chair informed forum that he would be moving out of the area shortly and due to work constraints asked to relinquish the Chair of the WLAF after the meeting, but would still continue to sit as a member of the Forum. Chair asked what the process was in nominating and voting a new chair.

### **Secretary to Advise**

He thanked members of the last and present Forum for all their help and support over the past few years and congratulated Emma, John and Katie for their invaluable work and efforts. He felt that this Forum and its work was held in very high regard within Wales and that the staff of Wrexham County Borough Council had contributed to this.

### **15/07 Secretary's Report**

- The LAF 2007 Conference is due to be held at the Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells on Friday, 15 June, 10.30 am to 4.30 pm. Three places were available for each LAF. Interested parties to contact Secretary as soon as possible.
- **WLAFF Logo**  
Secretary felt that a logo may help raise the WLAFF profile. Suggestions/ideas asked for to discuss at the next meeting.

### **AGENDA ITEM - NEXT MEETING**

### **16/07 Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

Martin Howorth, Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Manager, reported that a special meeting on Rights of Way Improvement Plan, had been held on 9 March at Alyn Waters for LAF members to attend. Minutes had been distributed previously. He informed the group that in the next week the Plan would be published with a Statutory Public Consultation period to finish on 17 August 2007. The Plan would be sent out to all community councils in the area and Council members, together with people who responded in the first phase. The final version would be published by November 2007, after being discussed at the Council's Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Martin felt that it would be beneficial to discuss findings at the next meeting, possibly before September.

**AGREED: To discuss findings after consultation period at next meeting.**

### **17/07 Report from Access Rangers**

- Sion Roberts, Access Ranger, presented a report of work currently underway.  
Sion explained that he had been spending time recently dealing with complaints received and liaising with contractors. The Council was due to erect two new footbridges over the summer months on a path that runs from Worthenbury to Shocklach. Strimming would be taking place shortly on approximately 60 paths within the County and they will also be strimmed again in August as part of the annual strimming programme.
- Alison had been concentrating on the works at Brymbo for the footpath project. Publicity had been distributed to the general public. Alison, as part of this year's footpath project, had attended a community council meeting in Coedpoeth. The community council had shown interest in the Brymbo project. Since this meeting much interest has been generated and a meeting was due to be held on 9 May 2007 at Nant Mill between Alison and potential footpath surveyors of Coedpoeth. Alison would also be concentrating on cropping and ploughing issues over the next few months.
- Dave Smith continues to warden the area every other weekend and reported no major issues. Since the last crackdown on scramblers in mid March (a partnership project with Denbighshire Countryside Services and North Wales

Police), 7 cautions and 'section 59' notices were given to people on moorland near the Ceiriog Forest. Reports of scramblers have since dropped drastically.

- A new version of the 'No Dog' signs has been designed by Dave, which will be cheaper to produce (only one colour to print) and be more visible to walkers.

### **18/07 Countryside Council for Wales**

Alun Price, CCW reported that a lot of his time recently had been spent dealing with coastal issues and coastal access.

Two fires had been reported in the uplands. Alun explained that by using the Met Office Fire Severity Index to assess information such as wind speed, temperature, time of year and rainfall would help identify high-risk periods, such as those present in 1976 and in the spring of 2003. He felt that 'Access Land' could possibly be closed for safety during high-level risk periods.

### **19/07 LAF Annual Report 2006/2007**

Annual Report agreed. 'Forward' to be provided by Council and secretary to proof-read for errors.

The Forum thanked Clive Menzies for all his hard work preparing this year's report.

### **20/07 Access to Access Land in the Ceiriog Valley**

The LAF was in receipt of correspondence from member Gerald Moss, outlining various difficulties with obtaining access to access land in the Berwyn Mountains. Some of these issues such as signage were being addressed with Wrexham County Borough Council.

Difficulties noted were:

- Maengwyn - grid reference SJ145325. This adjoins a huge area of Open Access and blocked by a single fence at grid reference SJ133323.
- At Cefn Cwm-y-Geifr - grid reference SJ120337, which has a section of access land and no public access.
- Lastly an area of Access Land, which leads to Cadair Bronwen, which cannot be accessed directly from the valley. There is a public right of way to Cwm Canol grid, reference SJ110345.

**AGREED: Clive Menzies to write to the Clerk to Ceiriog Uchaf Community Council with concerns and advice on how these issues could be resolved.**

### **21/07 Definitive Map Modification Orders**

For a number of years the LAF had raised concerns over the situation regarding DMMOs in the county. This item had been previously discussed at its meeting on 5 May 2006 with an agreement to bring forward for discussion in 12 months time. Clive Menzies explained that the Definitive Map was the legal record of all Public Rights of Way (PROW) in the county. Alterations occur when a PROW requires amendment through development or for other reasons that meet the criteria of the respective legislation. Other cases of DMMOs known as 'Public Interest' cases,

occur because of errors or omissions that occurred in the creation of the original definitive map, or because the status of a PROW has changed.

Self-funding DMMOs seem to be processed within acceptable timescales; however this is not the case concerning the "Public Interest" DMMOs.

Clive reported that currently there was a backlog of thirty two DMMOs and that these had been assessed by the Council and placed in priority order. In the past three years none of these "Public Interest" DMMOs had been processed.

It was again suggested that the authority appoint a person to deal specifically with DMMO issues with defined productivity targets.

**Agreed: Clive Menzies to write to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council with the forum's concerns and recommendations.**

## **22/07 Any Other Business**

- It had been previously reported to members that Tim Stevens had offered his resignation as LAF member representing motoring interests. Tim felt that as he was now not living in the area and a lot of his time was taken up with local activities, none of which were of particular relevance to Wrexham. Secretary asked members to approve a previously prepared letter, thanking Tim for all his help over the past years.

**AGREED: Secretary to send**

John Marchant confirmed that Tim would not be replaced at this present time.

- **Public Rights of Way – 5 Year Survey**

John Marchant reported that:

- **Bronington and Isycoed** - All maps completed for Gerald Moss. John gave thanks for all the hard work and time Gerald had given completing these surveys.
- **Penycae** – Maps had been completed for Clive Menzies
- **Glyn-traian** – Maps nearing completion for Karl Prakes

John explained that producing individual maps for each path was time consuming and asked members if they could provide him with a date when they would like their survey's to be completed by.

- Mabyn Pickering reported that a stile had been erected recently in her area. People had commented on the quality of the stile and wanted to thank whoever had erected it on doing an excellent job.
- Mabyn was impressed with the amount of access available on the Wynnstay Estate and felt that the permit passes were well worth purchasing.
- On behalf of the forum, Clive thanked the Chair for all his hard work and efforts over the past few years.

## **23/07 Items for the Next Agenda**

- Interactive Maps
- Planning Applications
- WLAF Logo

## **24/07 Date and Location of the Next Meeting**

Committee Room 3, Guildhall on **Friday, 31 August 2007 at 1.30pm**