

WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

CONFIRMED MINUTES

of the twelfth meeting held at Guildhall, Wrexham on 17 September 2004

54/04 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attendance:

CHAIR Ieuan Lewis SECRETARY John Marchant

<u>MEMBERS</u>	Sue Gittins	<u>NON-MEMBERS</u>
	D Gwynfor Jones	S A Marriott
	Andrew Kelly	Edwina Hart (Denbighshire LAF)
	Naomi Klenerman	John Pugh
	Dave Liddy	Quentin Grimley (CCW)
	Gerald Moss	Iestyn Thomas (CCW)
	John L Roberts	
	Colin Simpson	
	Edward Wardle	

Apologies were received from members Harry Prankard, Mabyn Pickering, Shelagh Roberts and Michael Edwards.

The chairman welcomed Quentin Grimley from CCW and Edwina Hart from Denbighshire Local Access Forum.

55/04 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF WLAF 11 (9/7/04)

The minutes were circulated on 19 July and confirmed on 9 August .

42/04 (32/04) The meeting about Equestrian Strategy and the Rights of Way improvement Plan had not yet taken place. When it does AK will report to the forum.

43/04 The secretary had not written as suggested because just after the last meeting the Council had been informed that it was to receive a grant of up to 75% (£10,000) to help implement improvements to open access.

56/04 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There was a LAF conference at Builth Wells on 13 October. IL and CS were going to attend.

British Telecom had responded by telephone to the Chair's letter about the proposed removal of the telephone box in Pentre. The telephone will now be retained.

57/04 SECRETARY'S REPORT

The members' contact details required updating.
Rights of Way section had had some good publicity about the Holt Footpath Project.

58/04 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Quentin Grimley's presentation explained the background to ROWIPs and explained why they were needed and how the Local Access Forum should get involved. (Members will be sent a copy of the presentation notes. Non-members can refer to the CCW website www.ccw.gov.uk and follow links "Our Work" --- "Access and Recreation" --- "Rights of Way Improvement Plan").

SG asked if the Council had the resources necessary for the ROWIP.

CS responded saying that a service pressure will be raised for additional staff and monies next year.

SG proposed that the forum writes to the Council asking that the necessary resources are made available. AK seconded. The proposal was carried unanimously.

Action: Secretary to write to Council asking that resources are made available to fulfil its obligations to produce and implement the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

59/04 'MEANS OF ACCESS' CONSULTATION

This Welsh Assembly Government consultation concerned proposals for Regulations under section 38 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – Appeals relating to 'Means of Access' Notices.

Proposal 1: IL felt that 21 days was not long enough. CS explained that that was a minimum period and the local authority could allow a longer period. However, to reach this point some time would already have elapsed during which the landowner / farmer would have been aware of the situation.

Proposal 2: It was felt that it was too onerous on the appellant to have to provide a location map of a scale of not less than 1:10,000. A map at 1:25,000 should be sufficient.

Proposal 3: This was felt to be acceptable.

Proposal 4: This was felt to be acceptable.

Action: Secretary to respond appropriately to the consultation.

60/04 MOTOR VEHICLES AND THE CEIRIOG WAY

AK declared an interest in this subject as he was instrumental in the creation of the Ceiriog Trail and the Upper Ceiriog Trail.

Edwina Hart of Denbighshire Local Access Forum presented the case of their Publicity Sub-Group concerning that part of the Ceiriog Trail in Denbighshire i.e. "Three Trees" unclassified county road from Carreg y Big down to Pengwern Vale and "Green Mountain" Byway Open to All Traffic from the Three Trees road near Pen-yr-allt back up the hill towards Blaenau Uchaf.

Ms Hart states that because of inappropriate use by motorised vehicles the routes have become unsafe for use by any of the recreational categories targeted by local tourism interests. A series of photographs were shown to the members depicting severe rutting and erosion on the two routes. Ms Hart said that local people had lobbied Denbighshire Highways Department requesting action to protect the roads. She thought that they should use Traffic Regulation Orders to limit use to certain categories and also take action to repair the damage.

For clarity, CS pointed out that the motorised use of both routes was legal. However, off-road drivers had few places to pursue their interest. EH said that Green Mountain was used by a 4x4 hire business and convoys of up to 8 vehicles may be met with and there was nowhere to take refuge. This was not 'sharing' the route. GM added that these people were destroying the natural environment and it cannot be allowed to continue. DG thought that there should be a way to tax companies exploiting minor roads in this way.

AK said that as a bridleways contact he had received calls from people all over the country about the poor state of the routes, not only those in Denbighshire but also those in Wrexham, which were just as bad. Members should bear this in mind and act to protect Wrexham routes as well as being involved in seeking to protect those in Denbighshire.

Observer John Pugh told the forum about his problems as a responsible 4x4 off-road driver and asked that a distinction be made between that and the irresponsible behaviour of others. He said that he only knew about one case of an (unsealed) unclassified county road being maintained in ten years.

CS requested that anyone seeing mis-use of a right of way should contact the Council.

The Forum decided to write to Denbighshire Local Access Forum saying that it had seen the presentation, was concerned about the erosion and had appointed AK to look at the whole of the trail. Further action will be delayed until he had completed the survey and reported back to the next meeting.

Action: Secretary to write to Denbighshire Local Access Forum

Action: AK to survey the Ceiriog Trails and report back to the Forum

61/04 'PUBLIC PLACE' CONSULTATION

The forum considered the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on CROW Act 2000 Regulations under section 42, i.e. whether land will constitute a public place for the purposes of other legislation, but had no observations to make.

62/04 THE BERWYN

The forum considered the letter from Denbighshire County Council regarding links between the Local Access Forums covering parts of the Berwyn Range.

AK suggested that the four LAFs involved should form sub-committees and these should meet each other on a regular basis to discuss matters in common.

The secretary read out a transcript of a telephone conversation with absent member SR. She was on the Denbighshire LAF and had been appointed its Berwyn liaison officer. The forum agreed that SR should also be Wrexham's Berwyn liaison officer.

NK reminded the forum that the proposed wind farms were an issue affecting the Berwyns and were a cross-border issue.

The forum decided to continue the exchange of LAF agendas, minutes etc. and have a member (SR) providing input into matters affecting the Berwyn Range.

JLR thought that Ruabon, Esclusham and Minera Mountain did not form part of the Berwyn Range and differed from it in many ways. The forum agreed that it should use the full title when referring to the area in future.

Action: Secretary to respond appropriately

63/04 PUBLICITY

The forum was satisfied with the present level of publicity. QG from CCW confirmed that it was better in Wrexham than with most LAFs.

64/04 COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

IT announced that the conclusive maps for the Berwyn, Llantysilio and Ruabon Mountains had been issued and were available to view at the Council's offices and at www@ccw.gov.uk. The conclusive maps for Northeast Wales (covering the rest of Wrexham) will be released on 15 October.

CCW were now looking at Access Land management issues – restrictions, publicity, training, guidance for Local Authorities etc.

Further information: Iestyn Thomas 01352 706600/ I.Thomas@ccw.gov.uk

65/04 NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM

SG had attended the NAF in Prestatyn recently and she presented her report.

66/04 AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

AK said that he thought that training should be discussed. Common Land was one topic that would be of interest.

67/04 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) **Letter from all Welsh Local Access Forums to Carwyn Jones regarding national concern over rights of way funding.** The members of the forum were satisfied with the draft of this letter.

Action: Secretary to advise Mike Ogden that the Forum approves the draft letter.

- b) **Welsh Assembly Government consultation on rights of way across school property.** CS expressed concern about meeting the costs of extinguishment or diversion orders. IL thought that the Education Authorities should pay and the forum members agreed.

Action: Secretary to respond to consultation accordingly.

68/04 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was now fixed for 26 November. It was decided that the following meetings would be on the 4th or the 11th February 2005 and then on the 8th or 15th April 2005.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.