

WREXHAM LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

CONFIRMED MINUTES

of the twenty fourth meeting held at Guildhall, Wrexham on 26 January 2007.

01/07 ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

Attendance:

CHAIR

Clive Menzies

ACTING SECRETARY

Katie Birks

MEMBERS

Gerald Moss
Margaret Murphy
Sue Gittins
John Cooper-Poole
Mike Crawshaw
Karl Praker
Mavis McBride
Edward Wardle
Tim Rosselli

NON MEMBERS

Aaron Sollis
Martin Howorth
Peter Bland
Dave Smith
Alun Price

Apologies: Ieuan Lewis, Gwynfor D Jones and John Marchant.

02/07 Matters Arising from Minutes of Meeting of 10 November 2006.

36/06 Insurance clarification

Members were directed to correspondence from Powys County Council which indicated that although voluntary workers are not necessarily supervised by a Council employee, Powys would insist that they held public liability insurance.

The Forum agreed that this issue had been explored to its conclusion.

39/06 Members training

Forum members were pleased with the FAQ document that John Marchant had issued, and agreed it was a good introduction into access issues.

However, Sue Gittins felt the last section, on page 10, was slightly unclear, and it needed to state new paths would be as near to the original as possible (and terminate at the same point) and that if objections were raised, the case may go to a Public Enquiry.

The Forum felt overall the document was sufficient for new members.

ACTION: JOHN MARCHANT TO ALTER FAQ DOCUMENT ACCORDINGLY.

40/06 Youth involvement

Clive Menzies will make contact with Juliet John, Facilitator of the Wrexham Youth Forum to arrange a meeting between forums to discuss countryside recreation and access.

53/06 Lay-by Parking / Rural Development Plan Consultation

Alan Evans from Highways is going to have a look at the area in question then respond to the Forum in due course.

Sue Gittins reported that the Northern Marches Partnership compiled a draft Rural Development Strategy which has gone to the Welsh Assembly – at present there are no further developments. Once feedback has been received it may be possible to start putting forward potential projects.

Karl Prakes attended the Ceiriog Valley visioning event last November. Karl reported that he felt the old valley Welsh families were not well represented at the event, and most issues were not relevant to the LAF remit.

The spare copy of the Visioning document will be held by the LAF Secretary if members would like to view it.

54/06 Dogs in the Countryside

Clive reported there is much concern about dogs in the countryside at national level and at the last National Access Forum, the NFU produced a report about the issue and identified two areas that could be used to help control dogs. The first is Section 27 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and the second being the Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act 2005.

Clive had researched this, and there have been no applications of Section 27 of the Road Traffic Act, partly as local authorities believe the cost to be prohibitive. Clive disagreed, and stated it would not be expensive, as it would not require national advertisements, applications could be looked at and published locally.

This would then allow landowners put signs up on rights of way over their land, stating dogs must be kept on their leads.

Clive stated it would be an interesting test for an individual to make an application to the authority to test this.

Clive further asserted that under the Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act, Councils can put a block application. As an example, Weymouth Council has put in an order which restricts dogs to being kept on leads on any highway within that Borough.

Clive suggested that in rural settings, Community Councils could consider. He also suggested that this might be an area, which the Highways authority could refer to the LAF for consideration.

56/06 Environment Agency Wales “Strategic Planning for Water-related Sport & Recreation” workshops.

The workshop dates have yet to be set, but the Forum will be contacted by the Environment Agency Wales in due course.

61/06

- *LAF Profile-raising Strategy*

Clive Menzies reported he had had some difficulty in composing a Profile-Raising Strategy as there is a dispute nationally on where the LAF's are going.

Smaller authorities would like the LAF's to be involved in broader issues, whereas the larger authorities would like to keep the LAF as a strategic body, so there has been little progress at present.

- *“Connect” publication and press release*

Members were directed to the draft copy poster text/ Connect magazine text.

Mavis McBride stated she would like to see “horseback riding and carriage driving” mentioned.

There were no other comments and the Forum was happy for John Marchant to produce them for members to distribute in their communities.

ACTION: John Marchant to amend draft text and produce posters for distribution by members.

- *WCBC Events Programme publication*

Forum members received the 2007 Wrexham Parks, Countryside and Public Rights of Way Service “Information and Events” publication.

66/06 Interactive Maps

The Forum wrote to Wrexham Council asking them to look into this issue. The Council responded with a very positive letter.

Clive suggested members view the suggested websites, with a view as to whether they are useful or not.

Pete Bland stated public rights of way were not on WCBC website at present, but after some research Pete has ascertained that the ‘engine’ is suitable for adding rights of way information. It would need to make some modifications, however, and the Rights of Way staff would need to double check the information – this would obviously take time. Pete estimated that interactive mapping may be possible between 12-18 months.

ACTION: Members to look at SHROP MAP and Planning Map on the Flintshire County Council website ready for next Forum meeting.

03/07 Chairman’s Report

Acting Chair, Clive Menzies reported that Ieuan Lewis was currently away, and no issues had come to light since the last LAF meeting.

04/07 Secretary's Report

Katie informed the Forum that Emma Haldane would be returning to work on February 12th 2007.

Katie thanked the Forum for all of their support and enthusiasm during her time as Acting Secretary, and that Emma would be in touch when she was back in post.

The Forum thanked Katie for her efforts over the past six months.

05/07 Aaron Sollis (Ordnance Survey Wales)

Aaron from the Data Collection and Management side of OS Wales presented on the role and function of the organisation.

Aaron discussed the many organisations that use OS Wales geographical information to run their businesses.

Aaron stated the Ordnance Survey has a total of 320 field staff in the whole of the UK, with some managerial grades and administrative roles. In Wales there are 20 surveyors and 4 administration/managerial roles, with offices in Cardiff, Llandrindod Wells and Conwy.

The OS largely surveys 'change' such as houses, roads, field boundaries – topographical features. They also collect networks for satellite navigation to use and address points.

The OS "imagery layer" is ascertained from their flying department or external sources. There are 440 million objects in the core data set at Southampton, that are updated everyday.

In England (not Wales or Scotland), data sets also are used so the government can plot 'life cycles' of land.

Aaron stated the processes the OS team uses today are much more efficient than in the past. These days every surveyor has PC laptop and updates information on-site, and one in two surveyors has access to GPS kit.

Ordnance Survey processes 5,000 changes each day; the changes go into the data sets, are validated, then released to customers.

The organisation aims to map majority of major change within 6 months, and from 'change' to product takes 3-4 months.

Largely Ordnance Survey work in the 2 dimensional environments usually, but more and more clients are asking for 3D for more intelligence – a service the OS will be expanding over the next few years.

They are also increasingly investing in new technology, like wireless, LIDAR (radar), and video vans.

Aaron also recommended the OS Customer Services department in relation to questions and queries:

Ordnance Survey Customer Care,
Romsey Road,
Southampton,
SO16 4GU.
Tel: 08456 05 05 05.

06/07 ROWIP (Martin Howorth)

Martin stated that ROWIP draft will go to internal WCBC officers across February, and to Environmental Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, hopefully on March 28th.

Martin said that the Scrutiny Committee will consider the plan before it goes out to public consultation.

The date for Forum members to go through the draft ROWIP at Alyn Waters Country Park was set for **Friday 9th March 2007 at 1.30pm**.

If Forum members are unable to make the date and wish to comment on the plan, the document will be going out to public consultation for comment, during the early spring/summer (statutory public consultation May-July)

Martin suggested sending it out on CD to cut down on expense. Comments received from the consultation will also need to go on the WCBC website.

Martin envisaged potential Executive Board approval around September, before the document is published October (before the November deadline).

Martin also stated the Chair/ Deputy Chair may wish to attend the Environmental Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Martin said they would not be guaranteed the right to speak, but Clive agreed it would be a good idea for leuan or himself to attend to hear the discussion.

ACTION: Members to contact Secretary with which format they wish to receive the ROWIP draft in.

Clive and leuan are to arrange attendance at Scrutiny Committee.

07/07 Report from Access Rangers

Sion has been spending much of his time dealing with complaints and liaising with contractors. Work has recently been started to erect approx 50 new signposts with destinations printed on in various locations through the county. Clearance and surfacing work has been carried out on Bridleway No. 18 in Worthenbury which runs from Threapwood to Mulsford Lane.

Clearance work and erection of new bridle gates on Bridleway No. 29 in Willington (which runs from the A525 to the lane near Hillside Farm) is scheduled for February.

After Bryn Alyn Secondary school raised concerns about members of the public cutting across school grounds, due to the original right of way being blocked, Council has been working to restore the right of way.

Sion will be leading a guided walk on Wednesday 14th February starting at World's End car park, details of which can be found in the Wrexham Parks, Countryside & Public Rights of Way Service "Information and Events" 2007 booklet.

Alison has been liaising with Groundwork about the Brymbo Community Path Project, where work is now underway.

Contractors are firstly working on vegetation clearance before installing stiles/bridges. Once the contractors start installing the stiles Alison will arrange publicity for the project.

Alison is looking at options for the next project, which possibly may involve the Coedpoeth or Rhos/Penycae areas. Coedpoeth would be ideal as it can be linked to the Brymbo project. It will depend on the response the project gets from the local communities.

After the inclement weather, Alison has also been dealing with general complaints about fallen trees over footpaths, and dealing initially with diversion requests before passing them to Pete Bland.

Dave Smith reported he had been investigating 'dog signs' that neighbouring counties use. Little variation is shown in North Wales, with the majority of landowners using the FUW signs.

There is also a small deployment of specially designed ones. Dave has been quoted £10.20 each copy of the special Aardman Animation signs.

Regarding open access work, Dave has been working closely with a contractor in identifying and planning both current and future open access improvement works. However, work is moving slightly slower than anticipated due to Groundwork relocating from Borrass to the Plas Power site.

Dave has been wardening the area every other weekend, and can report no major issues. On New Years Eve, the entire Ruabon Mountain area was busy.

08/07 Countryside Council For Wales

Alun Price reported that CCW's Bala office was due to close the following week and queries should now be directed to Bangor Headquarters or the local office.

Alun also reported CCW was increasingly involved in coastal access partnerships.

09/07 Any Other Business

Mabyn Pickering raised possible issues with the former Eco-Centre at the Legacy site and the gate at Bonc yr Hafod Country Park.

Mabyn stated a footpath at the closed Eco-Centre connects up to footpath on definitive map from Rhostyllen, and wished for further clarification from Rights of Way department.

Regarding Hafod, a local resident had also approached Mabyn about access, stating that the security barrier had not been unlocked on more than one occasion by the contractor.

Martin Howorth responded that the Council was aware there was an issue at Hafod, and it was being looked into.

On a different note, Karl asked how the voluntary surveying was going, and Clive said he would respond to Karl in person, as he was going to see John Marchant.

ACTION: Dave Smith and Pete Bland to pursue Eco-Centre query for the next meeting.

10/07 Items for Next Agenda

Clive will produce annual report, circulated via Secretary.

ACTION: Secretary to circulate.

11/07 Date and Location for Next Meeting.

Committee Room 3, Guildhall on Friday 4th May 2007 at 1.30pm.