

FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
MONDAY 18 APRIL 2016

Minutes of the sixtieth meeting of the Flintshire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Mold, on Monday, 18 April 2016

PRESENT: Mr. B. Harrison (Deputy Chair in the Chair)

Mrs. A.J. Chamberlain, Mr. S.M. Gladwin, Mr. J.A. Holiday, Mr. N.J. Howell, Mr. D.M. Hýtch, Mr. M.W. Moriarty and Mr. E.G. Williams

APOLOGIES: Dr. J. Rosenfeld, Mr. T. Birtles and Mrs. V. Darby

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. K. Armstrong-Braun; Ms. J. Thomas, Flintshire Disability Forum; Mr. T. Stratton, Chair of Wrexham Local Access Forum

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. S. Bartley, Senior Rights of Way Officer and Secretary to the Forum; Mr. A. Farrow, Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); Mr. T. Woodall, Acting Head of Countryside Services; Mr. P. Mitchell, Natural Resources Wales; Miss S. Aldridge, Access Officer and Miss. S. Thomas, Committee Officer

In response to a query, the Secretary agreed to ascertain the quorum for meetings of the Forum.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the fifty ninth meeting of the Forum held on 11 January 2016 had previously been circulated to members.

Matters Arising

Minute Number 3 - Development of a Work Plan

Following the suggestion for a representative of the 'Silver Slashes' volunteer group to attend a meeting, the Secretary advised that he had met the group and would extend an invitation to attend a future meeting.

Minute Number 4 - Update on progress on the provision of a footpath adjacent to the A494 Mold Bypass

No further progress was reported.

The minutes were agreed.

The Secretary to invite a representative of the 'Silver Slashes' volunteer group to a future meeting of the Forum.

A change in the order of agenda items was agreed to enable the Chief Officer to be present.

2. PROMOTING THE HEALTH BENEFITS IN USING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Following previous discussion, Mr. Bryan Harrison felt strongly that the Forum should make representations to the Health Board to seek funding to support the initiative.

Having made enquiries since the previous meeting, Mr. Tom Woodall advised that Karen Chambers, the lead officer for Wellbeing and Partnerships, was the most suitable contact to discuss the link between health and sport/recreation. He agreed to contact Karen, on behalf of the Forum, to progress this.

That Mr. Woodall liaise with Karen Chambers to discuss the development of links with the local Health Board to promote the health benefits in using the countryside.

3. PROGRESS REPORT ON CYCLING PROVISION IN FLINTSHIRE

The Secretary agreed to circulate the minutes of the sub-group meeting from March where the Active Travel (Wales) Act had been discussed. There was no further update following the end of the consultation period, and the sub-group had agreed to meet again in May.

That Secretary circulate the finalised minutes of the sub-group meeting to the Forum.

4. RIGHTS OF WAY AND COUNTRYSIDE WORK PROGRAMMES

Mr. Tom Woodall provided a brief overview of the main objectives and projects of Countryside Services:

- Wepre Park - use of lottery funding to carry out improvements including the achievement of an 'access for all' route to Ewloe Castle.
- Improvements along the Coastal Path under the Coastal Communities Fund to enhance the route and to create a link to Offa's Dyke.
- Improvements in Flint at Castle Park and Greenfield Dock. A route from the coast to Wepre Park was linked to another project to improve the boardwalk and landscaping along Wepre brook.
- Talacre - to seek opportunities with the Tidal Dee Catchment Partnership to use funding for landscaping improvements along the Dee estuary.
- Halkyn Common - work in partnership with Hawarden Estates on a scheme to install more cattle grids across the area.

Mr. Woodall reminded the Forum that the core funding via Natural Resources Wales had now ceased, meaning that funds were now accessed through the Environment Sustainable Development Grant which focussed on an integrated approach to improvements in the natural environment. A working group had been established to identify further integrated projects.

In response to questions from Mr. Neville Howell on access to Wepre Park from Northop Hall, Mr. Woodall explained that some work had been done along the old Wepre Lane, however there was limited scope to develop the route further. On winter damage to the coastal path, Mr. Woodall said that some minor work was needed to improve the surface. The publicised improvements to the path under the Hawarden Bridge to prevent flooding at high tide had been well received. Also, the cyclepath link to Llandegla to join Offa's Dyke was nearly complete thanks to the co-operation of colleagues in Wrexham, Cheshire West and Denbighshire. In relation to Waen-y-Llyn, annual work to control bracken would continue and funding had been secured to improve the car park.

When asked by Mr. David Hÿtch about a link from the Coastal Path to Wepre, Mr. Woodall provided explanation on the route via Taliesin nature reserve.

The Forum noted the update.

5. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY PRIORITIES AND PUBLIC FOOTPATH AND PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY MAINTANENCE STANDARDS

Mr. Andrew Farrow presented a report to seek views on the approaches to the three areas of the Public Rights of Way Service:

- Definitive map modification and public path order priorities (Appendix 1)
- Public Rights of Way maintenance priorities (Appendix 2)
- Public Rights of Way complaints priorities (Appendix 3)

Following consultation with the Forum and other relevant groups, it was intended that the priorities would be adopted as Council policy, subject to consideration by Overview & Scrutiny and approval by Cabinet in June.

On Appendix 1, Mrs. Sally Chamberlain spoke about the importance of safety for horse riders and felt that priority 5 (public path orders that are wholly or primarily in the public's interest) should be ranked higher. On Appendix 3, she felt that priorities 4 and 6 were equally important. These views were shared by Mr. Hÿtch. The Secretary explained that modification orders (priority 4) were amongst the service's statutory duties and were therefore a higher priority than public path orders which were discretionary.

Mr. Hÿtch noted the omission of the Coastal Path on Appendix 2, although this had not yet been designated, and felt that this should be the same priority as Offa's Dyke. He also thought that bridleways and multi-use routes should be given a higher priority.

On another matter, Ms. Jan Thomas of the Flintshire Disability Forum raised an issue with 'A' frame barriers along the Coastal Path. She questioned the need for the barriers as they did not allow access to mobility scooters and said that this was a breach of the law. She advised that both Denbighshire and Wrexham had made alterations to the barriers in their areas and that the same should be done in Flintshire. Mr. Harrison said that he was unaware of any such problem.

Mr. John Holiday commented that the barriers could also not accommodate tandem bicycles.

It was explained by Mr. Woodall that the barriers had been installed some years ago and had been successful in addressing the problem of speeding motorcyclists whilst affording access to mobility scooters - the sizes of which could possibly have increased over time. The barriers had been installed at considerable cost and there were no plans to adjust or remove them.

Whilst discussing the risks of removing the barriers, there were differing views on whether the legislation applied to access for both wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The Secretary noted Mrs. Thomas' comments and said that advice on the legislation could be sought from the Legal section. Mr. Stephen Gladwin offered to take a look at the barriers and record some measurements.

It was agreed that Mr. Harrison would arrange to meet with Mr. Howell, Mr. Moriarty and Mr. Holiday to consider the draft reports from Mr. Farrow so that a response could be given from the Forum by the mid-May deadline. The group would also discuss the reported issue with the 'A' frame barriers on the Coastal Path.

A sub-group comprising Mr. Harrison, Mr. Howell, Mr. Moriarty and Mr. Holiday arrange to consider the draft policy documents and respond to Mr. Farrow by mid-May. The sub-group would also consider the issue on 'A' frame barriers.

The Secretary to liaise with the Legal department to establish whether the disability legislation applies to access for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Mr. Gladwin to report back on his measurements of the barriers for access purposes.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Mr. Gareth Williams drew attention to a planning application (reference 055218) which had been submitted for Pant y Pwll colliery in Pentre Halkyn.
- (ii) Mr. Tim Stratton of Wrexham Local Access Forum referred to discussions with the Chairman about working on an integrated strategy for a recreational multi-user route from the coast to Offa's Dyke. It had been the intention for the Chairman to raise this with the Forum to help progress the initiative and to explore opportunities for a cross-border sub-group to work with Cadwyn Clwyd. Mr. Stratton agreed to email the background information to Mr. Harrison and the Secretary.
- (iii) Following discussion on the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS), Mr. Harrison asked that the presentation be brought forward to the next meeting.

(iv) Mr. Howell queried the display of a cautionary notice on only one of the three footpath crossings over the A494 Mold Bypass. Mr. Farrow noted this and would refer to the Trunk Road Agency.

(i) **The Forum noted the information.**

(ii) **Mr. Stretton of Wrexham Local Access Forum to email the background information on the integrated strategy to Mr. Harrison and the Secretary.**

(iii) **The Secretary to arrange for a presentation of CAMS at the next meeting.**

(iv) **Mr. Farrow to look into the issue raised by Mr. Howell.**

7. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Forum had been scheduled for 2pm on Monday 11 July 2016. Mr. Hýtch thanked the Secretary for bringing the date forward as requested.

8. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2pm and finished at 3.20pm.

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Chairman