

FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
MONDAY 2nd FEBRUARY 2015

Minutes of the fifty fourth meeting of the Flintshire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Mold, on Monday 2nd February, 2015

PRESENT:

Mr. T. Birtles, Mrs. V. Darby, Mr. S.M. Gladwin, Mr. B. Harrison, Mr. J.A. Holiday, Mr. N.J. Howell, Mr. D.M. Hýtch, Mr. M.W. Moriarty, Dr. J. Rosenfeld, Mr. G.B. Scragg, Mr. E.G. Williams and Miss. J.O. Williams.

APOLOGIES:

Mrs. A.J. Chamberlain and Mr. H. White.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. D.M. Davies, Secretary to the Forum; Mr. T. Woodall, Acting Head of Countryside Services; Mr. S. Jones, Rights of Way Officer; Ms. S. Aldridge, Access Officer; and Miss. S Thomas, Committee Officer

The Secretary welcomed everybody to the meeting. He said that he would be chairing the meeting as the Chair and Deputy Chair would not be appointed until the next meeting.

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The Secretary reported that the new membership was set out within the Agenda and informed Members that their three year term of office began from the date of this meeting. The Secretary had prepared brief notes, copies of which were circulated at the meeting, on the purpose of the Forum; how the Forum was appointed; the term of membership; the termination of membership; how often the Forum met; and the topics of discussion at the meetings.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Secretary invited each member of the Forum to give a brief presentation regarding their background and interests, so far as they related to the functions of the Forum.

The Secretary advised that members were able to contact him if they wished to raise any issues and that his role on the Forum was due to cease on 31st March 2015.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the fifty third meeting of the Forum held on 6th October 2014 had been previously circulated to Members.

Matters arising

Minute Number 1 - Minutes/Matters Arising Review of Local Access Forum Working Practices

Dr. Jean Rosenfeld advised that he would be able to report back to the next meeting on the data analysis exercise, as this was on the agenda for the Local Access Forum Chairs' meeting in February 2015.

Dr. Rosenfeld to report back to the next meeting of the Forum on the outcome of the data analysis exercise by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

Mr. Neville Howell sought progress on the proposed route to link the Coastal Path with the Offa's Dyke Path. Mr. Tom Woodall advised that Mr. Mike Taylor, Senior Ranger, had been scoping available routes over the Christmas period to enable first stage works to be carried out before the end of the financial year. An update on the route would be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Woodall to provide an update on the proposed route to link the Coastal Path with the Offa's Dyke Path at the next meeting.

Minute Number 2 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

Mr. Howell asked who was dealing with the completion of the Argoed footpath project in the absence of Mr. Garry Hughes. The Secretary advised the Forum that Mr. Hughes had retired from the Council. Mr. Stuart Jones agreed to check on the position and provide an update at the next meeting.

Miss Janet Williams thanked Mr. Jones for his demonstration of the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) to her and Mrs. Vera Darby.

Dr. Rosenfeld enquired if any officer had taken over the initiatives promoted by the Forum with town/community councils following Mr. Hughes's departure. The Secretary said that, prior to the next meeting, he would raise the matter with Mr. Andy Farrow, Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), along with the awaited review of the working relationship between the Council and the Forum, which presumably would determine the appropriate level of input by officers. Mr. David Hÿtch commented on the need for the continued availability of officers at meetings of the Forum as this had proved useful.

In response to a proposal by Dr. Rosenfeld, the Secretary agreed to contact Mr. Hughes to pass on the appreciation of Forum Members for his active support of, and participation with, the Forum.

During an update on CAMS, Mr. Jones advised that he had held a session with the Ramblers' Association before Christmas and asked members of the Forum to contact him if they wished to take part in a similar session, perhaps in small groups. Whilst some improvements had been made to the system,

costings for some updates were still outstanding and would need to wait until the next financial year. The Secretary said that the Forum had previously been advised that faults on CAMS needed to be ironed out, but once that had occurred, a demonstration for the Forum could be arranged. Members indicated their continued wish for such a demonstration.

Mr. Jones said that feedback was being received from CAMS users so that adjustments could be made prior to a demonstration at the Forum. He suggested that the meeting to be arranged for April 2015 would be best to receive a demonstration. The Secretary advised that future meeting dates would be set at the next meeting, in consultation with the Chair, once appointed.

Mr. Jones to seek an update on progress on the completion of the Argoed footpath project, and report back to the next meeting.

The Secretary to raise with Mr. Farrow the question of which officer(s) had taken over the responsibilities previously lying with Mr. Garry Hughes, and the review of working relationships between the Council and the Forum.

The Secretary to relay to Mr. Hughes the appreciation of the Forum for his active support and participation.

The demonstration of CAMS to be scheduled for the April 2015 meeting.

Minute Number 6 - Possible Future Agenda Items

The Secretary agreed to pursue a response awaited from the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) on (a) a presentation on the provision of roadside footpaths and pavements in rural areas, and (b) the point raised by Mrs. Darby on the need to maintain roadside verges as a matter of safety, particularly on the eastern side of the county.

The Secretary to send a reminder to the Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation) requesting a response to the two issues raised.

It was agreed that the minutes of the fifty third meeting of the Forum held on 6th October 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Secretary in his capacity as the person presiding at the meeting.

4. EXPLANATION OF THE APPOINTMENTS PROCEDURE FOR THE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE FORUM

A report of the Secretary regarding the appointment procedure for the Chair and Deputy Chair, copies of which had been previously circulated, was considered.

The Secretary asked to receive nominations for both roles up to and including 20th February 2015, i.e. the Friday before the next meeting, and that it would

be assumed that those asking to be considered for the post of Chair would also wish to be considered for Deputy Chair if unsuccessful for the former. He suggested that if members were to nominate other individuals on the Forum, they should ensure that the individual was aware of the nomination by, for example, copying the e-mail to that person.

It was agreed that nominations to the two posts of Chair and Deputy Chair would close on Friday 20th February 2015 in readiness for the appointments at the meeting scheduled for Monday 23rd February 2015.

5. POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Secretary reported that this was a standard agenda item, providing members with an opportunity to suggest items for future meetings. He invited members, notwithstanding this standard item, to contact him direct in the event that they considered that a particular topic should be the subject of a report to, or discussion by, the Forum.

The Secretary said that the following were standard agenda items which would appear on all future agendas:-

- ROWIP
- Cycling Provision in Flintshire
- ROWIP Equine Sub-Group

The following would be the subject of reports to the Forum in due course:-

- (a) Presentation on CAMS live (April 2015 meeting)
- (b) Review of Working Arrangements between the County Council and the Forum
- (c) Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013
- (d) Provision of roadside footpaths and pavements in rural areas
- (e) WG Green Paper on access (February 2015 meeting)
- (f) To invite a representative from the Shropshire Parish Path Partnership (the Wrexham Local Access Forum member to supply a contact name to the Secretary) to discuss the success of their work on footpaths, together with a member of the County Council's Rights of Way team
- (g) Review of the consultation process with the Planning section on applications relevant to the Forum
- (h) Access to the Coastal Path and plans for further improvements
- (i) NRW coastal protection from flooding

Mr. Michael Moriarty referred to damage to the Coastal Path as a result of previous flooding in the county and suggested a presentation about the Shoreline Management Plan which had recently been adopted by the County Council. Following a suggestion by Mr. Woodall, the Secretary agreed to contact Mr. Ruairi Barry of the County Council's Drainage Section for further information.

Mr. Hÿtch asked whether this item could also include discussion on the proposal to move the cycle path in the vicinity of the Hawarden Bridge owing to flooding of the route. The Secretary said that he would establish whether Mr. Barry was the appropriate person to provide that information.

The Secretary to establish who would be the appropriate officer to attend a future meeting in relation to this issue.

(j) Engagement with town/community councils

A brief discussion took place regarding improving the engagement of the Forum with town/community councils so as to encourage those councils' involvement in public rights of way in their areas. Mr. Howell suggested a more detailed open discussion about the issue at the next Forum meeting. **This was agreed.**

The Forum agreed to note these items for consideration at future meetings.

6. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Secretary reported that the next meeting of the Forum had been arranged for Monday 23rd February 2015 at 2.00pm and that, so far, meetings had tended to be held quarterly. If the Forum wanted to meet more frequently, it could do so as necessary.

The Secretary asked if any Members would prefer to receive electronic copies of the agenda, in addition to those who had already so informed him. Messrs. Stephen Gladwin, John Holiday and Gareth Williams, replied that they would, and duly provided their e-mail addresses.

The Secretary informed Members that, previously, meetings had been held on Monday afternoons at County Hall, and that attendance had generally been good. He appreciated that each Member had different commitments and asked if there were any views on changes to this arrangement.

Some Members referred to the arrangements in place at Wrexham Local Access Forum where meetings were held in locations around the county. Whilst the benefits of this were acknowledged, this raised issues in relation to attendance by officers, parking availability and cost implications.

Mr. Barry Scragg suggested that County Hall could be regarded as the main base for the Forum, with perhaps consideration given to one or two meetings held externally during the year. Mrs. Darby spoke in support of this view.

Members commented on the need to raise awareness of meetings of the Forum to encourage attendance by the public and the possibility of sharing minutes/agenda items with the local press to generate interest. The Secretary agreed to follow up this suggestion with the local press and to establish the cost of any advertisement.

In response to comments on raising awareness of the work of the Forum through an annual report to full Council, the Secretary pointed out that the minutes of meetings of the Forum were available through a link on the County Council's website.

Following a suggestion by Mr. Birtles about the use of community newsletters to publicise information on the Forum, the Secretary agreed to include an agenda item on engagement with the Forum at the next meeting.

The Secretary to enquire whether or not the local press would be interested in receiving information relating to the Forum for publication and to ascertain if there would be any associated costs. An agenda item on enhancing the profile of the Forum to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

The Forum agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Monday 23rd February 2014 and to continue to meet on Monday afternoons at County Hall.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Hýtch reported on progress with the Joint Committee for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which had representation from Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire Councils. The Committee had sought to appoint individuals (rather than representatives) to the AONB Partnership, which was to replace the previous Joint Advisory Committee, and this created an opportunity to maintain a link between the Forum and the AONB. Some members indicated that they had submitted an application for membership of the Board within the deadline.

A suggestion was made by Mr. Howell that contact details of Forum members to be shared. The Secretary agreed to circulate these by e-mail.

The Secretary to circulate contact details between Forum members.

8. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and finished at 3.05 p.m.

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Secretary (as the person presiding at the meeting)