



FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024 -2025

Chair's introduction

I am pleased to present the 2024/25 annual report of the Flintshire Local Access Forum [LAF].

LAFs are statutory bodies constituted under the provisions of Section 94(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Although independent of the Local Highway Authorities (i.e. County Councils), LAF business is conducted in close association with these. Flintshire County Council provides administrative support to the Forum. Although LAF Members sit as individuals, legislation requires that there should be a balance of representation of users of access land and rights of way, and owners and occupiers of access land and land over which rights of way run.

Members have considered a variety of reports and papers during the course of the past year and have fed back comments and observations to the Highway Authority and other bodies in relation to these subjects. At each meeting we have also received updates on the status of the rights of way network, works undertaken and tasks outstanding.

Given the budget available to this statutory function by the County Council, the officers of the Access & Natural Environment division are to be commended for their efforts in making progress with maintenance and repair, though the backlog remains a challenge. I should like to thank Members for their commitment and valuable contributions to the important work of the Forum over the past year.

Julian Pellatt

What is the Local Access Forum (LAF) ?

The Flintshire Local Access Forum is a statutory body established as the County's Local Access Forum under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, to provide advice on access to the countryside. The primary purpose of the Forum is to provide advice to Flintshire County Council, and other bodies, such as the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Community Council's and other government department as appropriate, on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open air recreation, in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests.

The Forum meets four times a year to receive and consider presentations and reports from members of the Forum and external speakers. Responses and comments on consultations and issues arising are delivered as to help Flintshire County Council and other bodies to improve countryside access for the benefit of local communities.

Forum Membership

The Forum membership is for a three-year period and the Council (as the appointing authority) must appoint members to sit on the Forum. The Forum should comprise between 10 and 22 members, including the Chair and Vice Chair (who are selected from LAF members by the forum itself). In appointing Forum members, the authority must ensure that there is a reasonable balance between the interest of users of rights of way and access land, and the owners and occupiers of access land or land over which public rights of way subsist.

In addition, the authority should seek to ensure that fair balance between persons of different genders, races, ages, disabilities, and other characteristics.

The Regulations also provide for observers from the Welsh Assembly Government and Natural Resources Wales to attend Forum meetings. In addition, the Chair can invite other observers to Forum meetings to advise on specialist topics or to represent interests.

Introduction to members of the LAF and their interests.

Julian Pellatt – Chair. Julian worked in the local authority sector at director level, with responsibility for Rights of Way. He has a great interest in walking.

Huw Morgan – Vice chair. Is a local landowner and Chair of Nannerch Community Council, and work for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape.

Jeff Shone. Enjoys walking for leisure and is interested in promoting more access routes for work. He has an interest in historical routes / maintaining existing or reopening former rights of way.

Shirley Fermor. Is a Clwydian Rambler.

Councillor Dave Evans. Is FCC nominated member and is the Chair of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Marjorie Thomson. Is a Rainbow Rambler. She is also a Community Councillor for Gwernymynydd.

John Holiday. Represents cycling interests which stretch from roughly Abergele to the Chester border & inland and is interested in any developments that are cycling related in a wider context.

Alan Neale. Is interested in the Holywell area. He plans and leads walking groups.

Ian Gibbons. Former Walkabout Flintshire.

Nia Thomas. Works with Public Health NHS Wales.

Johnny Hulson. Wildlife interest. Works across North Wales for the North Wildlife Trust.

Miranda Dechazal. Interests include landownership, Farming, Education and Walking.

Ed Swan. NFU member, Landownership, Farming.

Moel Arthur looking towards the Vale of Clwyd



The Year Reviewed

Meeting Diary

5th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park Garden Room.

13 People in attendance and 7 apologies.

Members reviewed the first year of the LAF. They carried out a discussion on future agenda items such as interaction with the planning department. Received a presentation on the use of the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS). An item on improving behaviours in the countryside was discussed with member views on incidences of poor behaviours heard with options to address them.

6th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park Garden Room.

16 people in attendance and 3 apologies

Members were shown maps from the map consolidation review and had the opportunity to discuss the process with officers. Topics of discussion for this meeting were ploughing and cropping and accessibility on Public Rights of Way, members put forward issues they had and solutions were found.

7th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park Garden Room.

11 people in attendance and 3 apologies.

Members were given an update on Access Barriers, having discussed it in 2023, looking into solutions for improving accessibility on the Wales Coastal Path. Topic of discussion was a budget update and impact this will have on the team. The meeting was closed with a review of the chair and it was decided that everyone was happy with things how they are.

8th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park Garden Room.

15 people in attendance and 3 apologies.

Members were given an overview of the Welsh Government Access Improvement Grant, which included an overview of the work the team had completed and highlighted the criteria for 2025/26 funding. There was a presentation of the Hynet project. An update of the map consolidation was given and members were asked their thoughts on making open sessions available to view the maps. The meeting closed with ideas for future agenda items.

Forum members have continued to receive regular progress reports on the following:

The Legal Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way

A Definitive Map consolidation exercise is currently being undertaken by the Access Team. This will enable the Definitive Map to be kept up to date, deal with applications from residents, businesses, and landowners to add new routes or change their alignment and resolve any errors.

Hynet Northwest CO₂ Carbon Capture Pipeline

The 60km pipeline will collect CO₂ produced at industrial plants at Ince and Stanlow in Cheshire and transport it to the Point of Ayr terminal at Talacre where it will be stored offshore in depleted gas reservoirs owned by Eni.

The Padeswood Carbon Capture Scheme.

The facility aims to capture and store up to 800,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year from the existing cement works, which will be transported via the HyNet North West

Uniper Connah's Quay Power Station Low Carbon Project.

The new power station would connect into nearby CO₂ transport and storage infrastructure as part of the HyNet industrial cluster.

The Access Team have been working closely with colleagues in the Minerals & Waste Planning Services to identify all the Public Rights of Way affected by all of the proposals and make provisions for temporary diversions during construction.

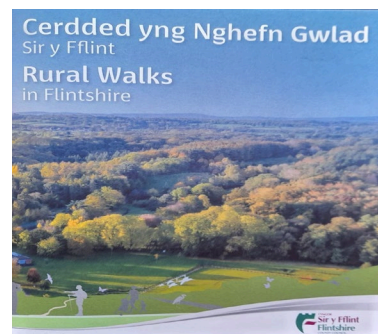
Flint Dock

Welsh Government Access Improvement Grant (AIG)

Delivering over £75,000 of Access improvement Grant works on various capital schemes. During 2024 2025 funding was provided to local authorities from the Welsh Government through an Access Improvement Grant (AIG). The purpose of the grant was to support improvement of access to our Public Rights of Way network, open access land and green space. This funding has enabled Flintshire's Access Team to carry out several improvements on the network which have included replacing several stiles with kissing gates or self closing gates, construction of stone steps, wooden boardwalks & surfacing paths with stone or tarmac.

The Forum continued to monitor the delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The Access Team have installed 43 kissing gates to improve accessibility to the countryside and improved the surfacing and route standards of over 3000sq m

The Rural Walks booklet has been produced by the Access and Natural Environment Service to showcase a diverse range of some of Flintshire's most beautiful walks. The new Rural Walks in Flintshire Booklet has updated walks reflecting the changes to the infrastructure on the network. 19 walks across Flintshire's varying countryside make up the new booklet.



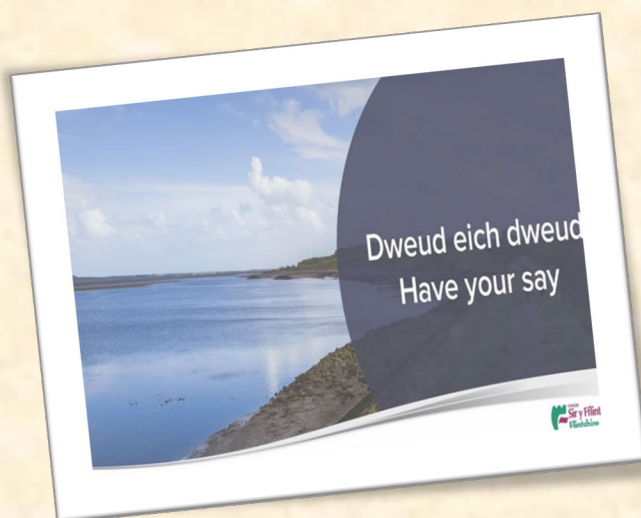
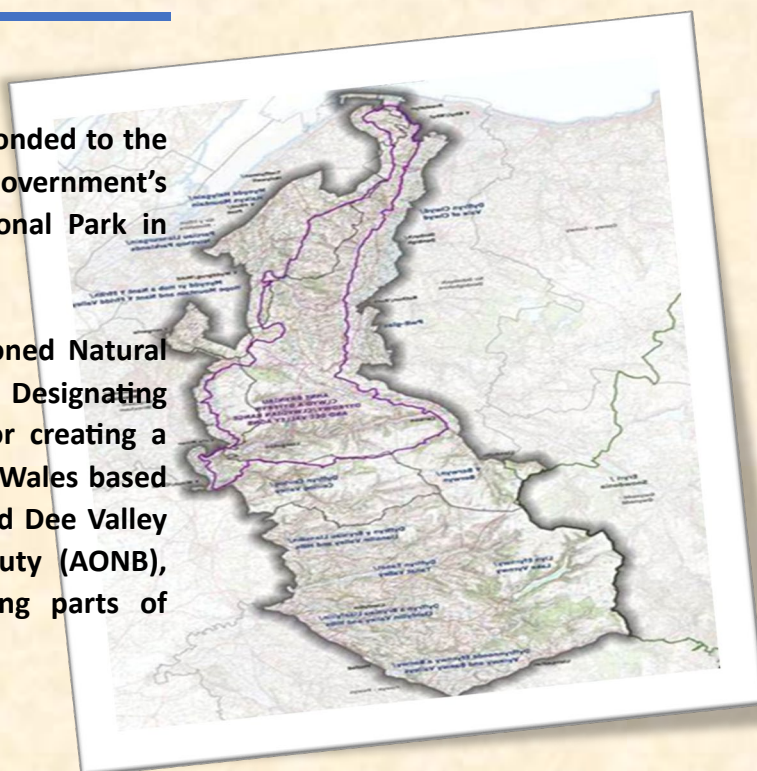
Forum members were given updates on The removal of Access Barriers having discussed it in 2023 looking into solutions for improving accessibility on the Wales coastal path.

Moel Arthur looking from Pen Y Cloddiau

New National Park

Forum members debated and responded to the public consultation on the Welsh Government's proposal to establish a new National Park in North East Wales.

The Welsh Government commissioned Natural Resources Wales (NRW), as the Designating Authority, to evaluate the case for creating a fourth National Park in North East Wales based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with potential areas encompassing parts of Denbighshire and Flintshire.



Forum Members considered Linking Connah's Quay to the Wales Coast Path – Walking, Wheeling & Cycling Survey.

Currently, accessible walking, wheeling and cycling links between Connah's Quay and the Wales Coast Path are not well developed, with the town largely separated from the Deeside coast.

Working closely with Local Transport Projects the Council is inviting locals to put forward their views on accessible walking, wheeling & cycling issues in the area & ideas for improvement.

Flintshire Coast Park 'Connecting Coast to Countryside Project'

The Coast Park reaches across the Flintshire coast from Saltney to Talacre, taking in the Northern Gateway and Garden City, Connah's Quay and Shotton, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield, Llanerch-y-mor and Mostyn, and Gronant. The Flintshire Coast Park project has benefited from £396,580.37 from Flintshire's allocation of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which further improved the Flintshire Coast and connections with the surrounding countryside. The funding enabled Flintshire County Council to create the building blocks for the Coast Park, including planting over 400 trees, improving and creating new footpaths, enhancing habitats for the protected Natterjack Toad colony and creating a plan for the next 5 years.



For more information about the Local Access Forum and how you can get involved please contact the Flintshire Local Access Forum:

rightsofway@flintshire.gov.uk



Access and Natural Environment are social, follow Countryside and Coast.

