

FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ANNUAL REVIEW 2025 -2026



Chairman's Overview

The is my final annual report at the conclusion of my three-year term of office as Chairman of the Flintshire Local Access Forum [LAF]. Forum members have been positively engaged, and I thank them for their contributions and commitment.

I wish to acknowledge the support I have received during this period from the Council's Access and Natural Environment officers and support staff, and to pay tribute to the excellent work they do with limited resources. Indeed, it is to their ongoing credit that they achieve so much with so little. Flintshire is fortunate to have such a dedicated and competent team.

A highlight of the year was a significant boost to the Access Improvement Grant that enabled significant progress in addressing rights of way issues around the network.

The role of the Local Access Forum

The LAF is a statutory body whose purpose is to provide advice on the management and improvement of access to the countryside, ensuring a balance between the needs of users (walkers, cyclists, horse riders, etc.) and landowners. It advises the Highway Authority (Flintshire County Council) and other governmental bodies on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), access restrictions, byelaws. It considers related development issues and strategies and comments on these as appropriate.

I believe it is an important function of the LAF to monitor the resourcing of the PROW and countryside services by the County Council and to monitor budget provision from one year to the next, and to make representations if necessary.

Forum Constitution

The Flintshire LAF is constituted under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 and is one of twenty-three such bodies in Wales.

Membership comprises 12-20 volunteers selected for their experience in countryside access and management. Members should reflect a balance between landowners and users and the broad diversity of the community that the LAF serves. Meetings are held 3-4 times annually and are generally open to the public as observers.

Julian Pellatt

Chairman, Flintshire Local Access Forum

February 2026



Introduction to members of the LAF and their interests.

Julian Pellett – 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.

Meeting Diary.

The Forum continued to monitor the delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) projects and the annual report of the Public Rights of Way team, including Officer and financial resources. Updates included a number of access improvement projects funded by Welsh Government contributions, Welsh Government's proposal to establish a new National Park in Northeast Wales.

Several Carbon Capture pipeline schemes being undertaken in Flintshire affecting the rights of way network, progress of the digital map project and definitive map consolidation exercise. The Forum continued to highlight the value of the Public Rights of Way network, Countryside Ranger Service sites and wider Green Infrastructure within the county and beyond its boundaries as key routes for public active travel and leisure purposes.

The importance of continuing to invest in those networks was flagged as therefore, key to the delivery of the Council's Active Travel Plan objectives.

9th LAF Meeting – Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve.

10 people in attendance, 5 apologies and 1 observer.

This meeting covered LAF Annual report, Hynet Update, Digital map project, Definitive Map consolidation and a presentation by Richard Sumner from NRW about the New National Park. Members took a walk around Rhydymwyn Valley.

10th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park.

13 people in attendance, 3 apologies and 3 observers.

The members watched a presentation from Lee Shone, Transport Strategy Manager about Active Travel and Safer Routes. The New National Park for North East Wales was discussed.

11th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park.

14 people in attendance, 4 apologies and 2 observers.

There was an update on the Coast Park, shared prosperity fund, access improvements by Isobel Smith the Countryside and Coast development Officer. It was the completion of the local access forum term.

Guest Speakers and Advice.

Lee Shone – Transport Strategy Manager– Active Travel and Safer Routes.

Isobel Smith – Connecting Coast and Countryside development Officer – Flintshire Coastal Park.

Richard Sumner – National Resources Wales – New National Park.

Improvements to the network.

Item	2018 data (recorded on CAMS)	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2026	+/- (for 2025/26)
Stiles	3316	3129	3084	-45
Kissing Gates	506	751	786	+35
Gaps	186	226	239	+13
Gates (<1.2m)	152	181	185	+4
Roadside signs	1992	2068	2079	+11
Sleeper Bridges	58	65	66	+1
Other bridges	336	346	343	-3
All gates (excluding Kissing gates)	1501	1507	1512	+5

Issues

1 st Quarter (1 st April – 30 th June)		2 nd Quarter (1 st July – 30 th September)	
Issues reported	82	Issues reported	98
Issues reported previous ¼ (1 st Jan – 31 st March)	114	Issues reported previous ¼	82
Issues resolved	68	Issues resolved	63
Issues resolved previous ¼	163	Issues resolved previous ¼	68
3 rd Quarter (1 st October – 31 st December)		4 th Quarter (1 st January – 31 st March)*	
Issues reported	63	Issues reported	54
Issues reported previous ¼	98	Issues reported previous ¼	63
Issues resolved	89	Issues resolved	113
Issues resolved previous ¼	63	Issues resolved previous ¼	89

All issues logged 25/26 **297** (444 in 2024/25)

All issues completed 25/26

333 (430 in 2024/25)

YEAR	PROW NETWORK SURVEYED (KM)	+/- (on previous year)
25/26 1st Quarter	28.2	-1.2
24/25 1 st Quarter	29.4	
25/26 2nd Quarter	22.8	-2.8
24/25 2 nd Quarter	25.6	
25/26 3rd Quarter	41.1	-6
24/25 3 rd Quarter	47.1	
25/26 4th Quarter	89.4	-5.3
24/25 4 th Quarter	94.7	

PROW Network surveyed 2025/26 – **181.5km**

PROW Network surveyed 2024/25 – **196.8km**

Rural Walks in Flintshire Booklet

During the 2025-26 year, the Access and Natural Environment Service launched the newly-revamped Rural Walks booklet. The booklet showcases a diverse range of some of Flintshire's most beautiful walks for people to enjoy.



As well as the Clwydian Range, people can explore the quiet riversides, wooded valleys, and rolling farmland of Llanasa, Ysceifiog, Sychdyn, Whitford, and Caergwrle. There are also wildlife-rich coasts at Talacre, which continue along the Dee Estuary, and the rich stories of industrial heritage at Halkyn Mountain, Greenfield Valley, and the Buckley Heritage Trail.

It includes some of the best walks in the county and is illustrated with maps, route directions, photographs, with bits of history thrown in for good measure.



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

roghtsofway@flintshire.gov.uk