



FLAF02



## FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes - 11th July 2023

Greenfield Valley

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**Present** – Julian Pellatt, Huw Morgan, Neville Howell, Jeff Shone, Shirley Fermor, Sarah Hampson, John Holiday.

**Officers in Attendance** - Tom Woodall, Derrick Charlton, Natalie Davies, Adrian Owen Hibbert, Suzanne Williams, Mike Taylor, Rob Nursaw, Richard Flood.

**Observers** - Ian Hughes (NRW), Eileen Morgan, Cathy Harrington

**Apologies** – Jonny Hulson, Marjorie Thompson, Councillor Dave Evans,

### 1/ Welcome -

TW as Secretary to the Local Access Forum and in absence on an elected Chair, welcomed everyone to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the LAF. Introductions were given by all present and apologies received.

**Action** - Name cards to be produced for next meeting.

### 2/ Election of the Local Access Forum Chair -

TW introduced this item, he explained that following the last meeting where members we asked to consider taking on the role of Chair and Vice chair, no-one had indicated a wish to volunteer to put their name forward. TW had informally asked JP and HM to consider putting their names forward. JP and HM confirmed that they would be happy to do so. TW asked the Forum if there were any other names proposed. No further proposals were received, and JP and HM were duly elected.

JP and HM gave a brief overview of their experience and interests. TW thanked them both.

### 3/ Minutes of previous meeting –

The Minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> April were agreed as written.

#### 3.a Matters Arising

Members were asked to review the draft Terms of Reference. Members adopted the terms with no amendments.



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#### **4/ An overview of Active travel and cycling –**

Richard Flood, Flintshire Transport Manager, gave a verbal report and update on Active Travel and cycling in Flintshire. He explained that the Authority has 2 active travel plans - an existing and a proposed network. He said the council does not have the same funding which has been available in the past, so they bid for future funding for new projects. They must show how they meet the Equalities Act to meet requirements for future bids.

RF gave an overview of some of the projects such as the Chester to Connah's Quay railway track which was converted into a cycling route and the River Dee cycle track. He explained that the active travel is to encourage people to get out and about and use different ways to travel to access towns, schools and places of work. It is also important to connect towns and counties and not stop at the English border. By working with other counties, Transport for Wales and Sustrans they have been more successful with bids for grants.

RF gave an update on the introduction to the 20 mph speed limit which will be implemented on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Consultation begins w/c 31/7/2023, further information can be found on the Flintshire web pages:

<https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/roads-affected-by-changes-to-the-speed-limit-on-re/>

He also explained how Exception Orders work and how they must meet specific criteria to be implemented.

Questions by the FLAF members revealed that:

Annual bids are for approximately £1.5 - £2million

Planning gain 'Section106 payments' from developers are proportional to the size of the development, Development Control generate this money.

Capital money from Welsh Government cannot be used for the maintenance of roadside footpaths created by Active Travel.

RN gave an overview of projects:

Airbus to Saltney ferry has been completed.

Greenfield Valley phase 1, 2 &3 complete, now working on the next phase to Bagillt and Flint from Greenfield business park.

Aston Hill link to Alltami phase 1 & 2 complete, now working on Ewloe and Wylfa roundabout.

The purchase of Lower Aston Hall Lane to provide access by Hawarden High School.

In the process of buying a 9-meter strip of land in Sandycroft for an off-road path.



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Beginning to look at Ewloe to Alltami link

They have funding for improvements to access to 2 Flint schools and 2 Holywell schools, consultation w/c 4/9/2023

NH asked if a system similar to CAMs could be used online reporting of problems on the cycle network

RF explained that you can log onto Flintshire website to make complaint about active travel. Reporting complaints online helps prioritise areas that need maintenance.

NH called for active travel to look at routes that will link up with public footpaths.

JS Asked about schemes to link Buckley and Ewloe. Even though schemes have not been chosen in the past, RN will re visit for future potential.

### **5/ Access Barrier Review –**

TW gave an overview and background in regard to the document which was sent out with the agenda. TW explained the difficult position the Authority is in, trying to balance the need for control of illegal usage of paths with the requirement and wish for improved accessibility. He added that this commissioned report was an attempt to move forward to try to improve the situation. This report would be considered by Cabinet and the views of the Forum would go forward to inform their decision on the recommendations.

North Wales Police are of the opinion that barriers should remain otherwise criminal activity will increase.

MT explained that we have 47 barriers in the county and said that every case is different and that no single solution suits every case. We could look and compare with other authorities as to what they have done.

EM highlighted some of the issues she faces being a disabled bike user. She said the purpose of the gates are to stop motorbikes etc. but this should be policed correctly rather than restrict legitimate users as they are causing major obstruction to many people. If more walkers and mobility aid users have access to the paths there is less likelihood motorcycles will be interested in attempting to use them and fear having equipment confiscated.

EM stated that Sustrans have a minimum width for barriers to be 1.5m but Flintshire's are 90cms or less, therefore non-compliant.

EM, referring to the specific recommendations on the report, said there should be a 'swept path analysis' and more consultation with disability groups. She added that many disabled people aren't able to use Radar locks and is therefore discriminatory and Radar keys are available on the internet, anyone can buy them, and radar gates would be open to abuse.



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CH mentioned that she was carrying a load in bags on the side of her bike and was unable to get through the gate and she is able bodied. CH felt that there were two separate issues, 1. Giving legitimate users access and 2. Enforcement to control the motorbikes.

RF felt that there is discrimination as North Wales Police were not able to enforce illegal use of the paths and that there needed to be more work to understand the issue with specific user groups.

MT mentioned about children getting knocked over of the path because of speeding cyclist who failed to stop after knocking over the children. He said that slowing cyclists down with chicanes has helped the police catch motorbike users in the past.

JH mentioned that he had taken volunteers out every week and had experienced trouble getting through the barriers.

JP asked if the use of bylaws could be explored. RF responded that legislation was already in place.

JP thanked members for their views and commented that it was a challenging issue. Although supportive in principal that the Authority was trying to move forward to improve access, the forum would encourage the council to undertake more consultation with specific user groups.

**Action** – TW to forward the views of the LAF to Cabinet

## **6/ Network Management summary -**

DC and ND gave an overview of the figures relating to network management and the removal of obstructions.

EM highlight that kissing gates can present an obstruction to some disability users and there needs to be consideration given to all users before installation.

JS asked if a percentage of the overall figure of outstanding issues could be shared

**Action** - ND will look to provide a percentage and send out the summary figures as presented.

## **7/ Inspectors report -**

AOH gave an overview of recent works to improve the network

**Action** - The document is to be emailed out with the minutes.



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## 8/ AOB

JS mentioned that there was a request being made for multiuse pathways between Pen y Ffordd and Broughton by the Penyffordd community council. This will filter through to the HA in due course. JH said it was proposed years ago but had been shelved.

TW gave a brief overview of Greenfield Valley Heritage Park and it's management and new 10 year strategy.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.30pm.

The members took a walk around Greenfield Valley.

The next meetings due - 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.  
6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.