

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum
Unconfirmed Minutes of the 4th Meeting held at 2pm on September 17th 2015
BBNPA Offices, Plas-y-Ffynnon, Brecon

Present

Secretary – Richard Ball (RB)

Chair – Ian Maberley (IM)

Jeff Spencer (JS)

Phillipa Cherryson (PC)

Patrick Dobbs (PD)

Dave Sharman (DS)

Debbie Hughes (DH)

Jon Everington (JE)

Denis Murphy (DM)

John Crellin (JC)

Colin Woodley (CW)

Observers

Lisa Lloyd (LL) Rights of Way Assistant BBNPA

Eifion Jones (EJ) Rights of Way Officer BBNPA

Jane Tibbot (JT) Welsh Government

1. Welcome and Apologies

RB welcomed members and observers. Apologies for absence were received from Julian Atkins, Phil Stone – NRW, Eric Davies, Carmarthenshire LAF and Fiona Ford – Torfaen CBC.

2. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman

RB had not received any expressions of interest. Members were asked if there was any expression of interest for either position, none was received. Members were asked if they were happy for IM to continue as Chair and members voted unanimously. IM asked if members were happy for JA to be re-elected as Deputy Chairman, if he was happy to continue. CW asked if there was a conflict of interest electing JA as deputy Chairman. It was agreed that there was no conflict of interest and members voted, with one abstention, in favour of the re-election of JA as Deputy Chair.

(IM chaired the rest of the meeting.)

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meetings held on 11th February 2015

The minutes of the 3rd meeting were accepted with one alteration and it was agreed that IM should sign them as a true record.

4. Matters Arising Not Otherwise Appearing on Agenda

RB informed members that the LAND project had not been successful.

RB said that NRW is not going ahead with the dedication of any of their land as CROW Access land.

5. Glastir Access

IM welcomed Jane Tibbot (JT) from Welsh Government.

JT gave a presentation to the LAF, with a brief overview of the Glastir Scheme and clarification on the information required from the LAF with regard to the permissive access element.

Members had a number of questions that they put to JT.

JT confirmed that Welsh Government would still like the LAF's to provide suggestions for permissive access on an annual basis, however, Glastir Contract Managers will be advising landowners interested in providing permissive access to contact the LAF directly to seek support from it, this will be done on an ad hoc basis. JT confirmed that landowners that have not had permissive paths put forward as suggestions by the LAF would not be at a disadvantage as they would be able to contact the LAF directly at any point throughout the year to seek the support of the LAF.

IM thanked JT for attending the meeting.

JT left the meeting.

6. Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for Responsible Recreation (Green Paper Consultation)

EJ gave members some background to the consultation and guided members through the consultation document. Each of the twelve questions was discussed.

IM agreed to formulate a response from the LAF and this would be forwarded to members for comments before submitting. IM reminded members that the closing date was 2nd October.

EJ said that members could see the consultation response from the three park authorities, and reminded members that the document was a draft and had not been formally agreed. LL agreed to email the document to LAF members.

7. Beacons Way Steering Group

IM welcomed Richard Tyler (RT), BBNPA Sustainable Tourism Manager, to the meeting. RT told members that currently it is difficult for the BBNPA to promote the Beacons Way because some sections only suitable for confident navigators. The current alignment won't fit the 'Wales Trails' criteria due to lack of way marking on upland areas.

A funding application has been partly successful (i.e. an award of just over half of what was requested) and will be used to employ a consultant to examine options that may include realigning some of the current route. It is likely that the Eastern section will not require many changes but the western section may look to avoid the section in the Carmarthen Fans for example.

DM said that it would be a shame to lose the original route. RT agreed and said that they would hopefully look at keeping it as an alternative more challenging route.

The grant would be used to employ a consultant to look at the current route on the ground, pull expertise together to look at alternative routes and a small amount for promotion.

PC asked if there was anything that LAF members could do to help.

RT said that there may be a need for volunteers to walk sections to trial route descriptions and that the LAF would be consulted on proposals.

LL to provide RT with members email addresses for invitations to be sent out for the workshops.

IM thanked RT for attending the meeting and for his update on the Beacons Way.

8. Rights of Way Consultations

EJ gave a brief outline of the two recent consultations.

Members agreed that the application to divert a footpath in Llanddeusant seemed a sensible proposal and agreed that the LAF should give its support.

PC said she had concerns about the type of surface to be used on the section of bridleway at Cefn Cemetry, Merthyr Tydful. Often grit type surfaces are used like on cycle ways,

however, this can cause problems for horses and therefore she would like to see a different type of surface used.

9. AOB

LAF Conference

IM and RB had attended the LAF conference earlier in the week and IM agreed to send out the papers to LAF members.

Blaen y Glyn

RB said that Peter Seaman, Talybont, has contacted the LAF regarding the kissing gate at Blaen y Glyn which leads to the water falls on Welsh Water land. The gate went missing earlier in the year and has been replaced by a section of wire fencing. There is a stile close to the road bridge but this does not provide easy access for people with mobility impairments and may present a greater risk in terms of potential road traffic accidents. He has had no success in getting Welsh Water to re install a gate.

Members that attended the LAF site visit in June were familiar with the path and agreed that a gate would be preferable and make access easier. It was agreed that the LAF would write to Welsh Water asking them what they propose to do with the access point.

Path at Pwll y Wrach, Talgarth

JC told members that Pwll y Wrach Nature Reserve is owned by Breconshire Wildlife Trust and they had contacted him looking for advice from the LAF regarding the removal of a handrail along the path leading from the road down into the reserve. The handrail is currently in a bad state of repair and would need to either be removed or replaced.

EJ confirmed that the path is not a public right of way and RB suggested that the Wildlife Trust should carry out a risk assessment to assess the need for a handrail on safety grounds.

10. Date of the next meeting

26th November 2015, 2pm - Venue to be confirmed.

