

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum
Confirmed Minutes of the 1st Meeting held at 2pm on Thursday November 13th
2014 at Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Headquarters, Brecon

Present

Presiding – Eifion Jones (EJ)

Jeff Spencer (JS)
Hilda Williams (HW)
Colin Woodley (CW)
John Crellin (JC)
Phillipa Cherryson (PC)
Ian Mabberley (IM)
Patrick Dobbs (PD)
Dave Sharman (DS)
Debbie Hughes (DH)
Pam Bell (PB)
Julian Atkins (JA)

Observers

Phil Stone (PSt)	Natural Resources Wales
Judith Harvey (JH)	Warden Manager BBNPA
Paul Sinnadurai (PSi)	Conservation Manager BBNPA
Lisa Lloyd (LL)	Rights of Way Assistant BBNPA
Dave Coombes	Brecon Mountain Rescue
Martin Gregory	Brecon Mountain Rescue

1. Welcome and apologies

EJ welcomed members and congratulated them on their appointment to the LAF. RB sent his apologies for not being able to chair the 1st meeting due to being delayed at an earlier meeting. Mark Stafford-Tolley sent his apologies.

2. Introduction of Members

All members provided brief introductions.

3. LAF Business and Administration

EJ led members through the LAF Terms of Reference which had been previously circulated and suggested that the document be discussed in more detail in the 2nd meeting when the members will be asked to agree on the terms of reference.

4. An overview of the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) and current issues affecting it.

JA provided members with a presentation giving an overview of the BBNP. JA outlined the purposes and statutory duties which set out the remit of the BBNPAs work as well as the structure and corporate goals of the BBNPA. He went on to discuss the coverage of access

with the BBNP and highlighted some of the main challenges and pressures currently faced along with the priorities of the Countryside and Land Management Department.

PD asked JA how the income highlighted in the presentation was generated. JA confirmed that most of the income came from grant funding, sales at the Tourist Information Centres and also the Visitor Centre tearooms.

5. BBNPA Wardens Service – An Introduction

JH, Warden Manager, gave a presentation to Members outlining the work carried out by the BBNPA Wardens Service. JH emphasised how varied the work was and included conserving and enhancing the countryside through assisting with Glastir projects, maintenance of rights of way, assisting with filming requests, litter picking and guided walks to name a few. JH gave examples of the work carried out with various groups and volunteers and how the Warden service have worked together with other groups such as in the Waterfalls Area where alongside the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG) and NRW the Waterfalls Management Plan and Gorge Walking Code has been produced which is helping to minimise the impact activities have on the very sensitive site.

Dave Coombes from Brecon Mountain Rescue commented on how the improved numbering of way markers along paths in the Waterfalls area as part of the management plan has helped the team in accessing the area and locating people in need of assistance.

6. Access Management in the BBNP

EJ gave members an overview of the access and rights of way management in the BBNP. The LAF will be consulted on applications for restrictions on access land which would last for more than 6 months and also applications on changes to the rights of way network. EJ told members that details of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) can be found in English and Welsh on the Website or by using the following link: <https://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/environment/planning-access-and-row/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/> It is likely that there will be a review of the ROWIP and that the LAF would be heavily involved in this process.

EJ told members that additional information on the processes for Access and Rights of Way consultations will be forwarded with the minutes of the meeting.

JA added that Members of the BBNPA make decisions on changes to the Rights of Way network at the Planning and Rights of Way Committee (PAROW). JA has delegated powers to make and confirm the order when applications are non-contentious. The LAF is a consultee in the process.

7. Presentation from Brecon Mountain Rescue

Dave Coombes and Martin, Gregory both members of the Brecon Mountain Rescue Team, attended the meeting to give a presentation to members outlining the work they carry out.

The LAF was shown a short promotional film and Dave Coombes went on to explain how the BBNP is covered by four mountain rescue teams: Brecon Mountain Rescue, Western Beacons, Central Beacons and Longtown who form part of South Wales Search and Rescue Association (SWSARA). Figures collected from callouts since 2000 highlighted a trend showing an increase in callouts year on year, this is also evident nationally. The highest numbers of callouts were to people in difficulty while out mountain walking and figures showed that 44% of casualties lived outside the NP while 56% lived in or very near the NP. It was highlighted that it cost £39,000 each year to fund the work of the team (who are all volunteers) and the equipment and that they rely heavily on donations.

PD suggested warning signs should be erected at sites where accidents frequently occur, there was some discussion on this topic and the general consensus was that there should be more emphasis on educating the public on how to stay safe and to make sure they are well equipped. DC said that part of the role of the Mountain rescue teams is to visit schools and groups to provide education and advice.

JA suggested that it may be a good idea if the Mountain Rescue Team gave the same presentation to the National Park Authority members.

HW said the members of the Mountain Rescue Teams should be commended for all their hard work.

EJ thanked Dave and Martin for their well-received presentation.

8. Any Other Business

There was no further business and EJ explained that following a short break the LAF would reconvene for the second meeting when the election of Chair and Deputy Chair would take place. The meeting was closed.