



CAERPHILLY LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON THURSDAY, 6TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Glyn Davies, Keith Donovan, Andrew Edwards, Keith Green, Lorraine Howells, Mike Johnson, Robert Jones, William Lindsay, Alison Palmer, David Parry, Maggie Thomas & Nigel Yates.

Together with:

Norman Liversuch (Secretary), Phil Griffiths (Assistant Secretary),
Sharon Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

1. WELCOME

Norman Liversuch, Principal Planner and Secretary to the Local Access Forum (LAF), welcomed both new and former members to the third Caerphilly Local Access Forum. He explained that at this first meeting of the new Forum he would act as Chair until item 4 had been dealt with.

2. APOLOGIES

The Secretary advised that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ron Davies, Sylvia Dolbear, Elaine Gwynne, Andy Powell, June Piper and Adrian Sander.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Members and Officers present introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their role and/or interest in the Local Access Forum.

The new Members to the Forum are as follows: -

Glyn Davies, Sylvia Dolbear, Andrew Edwards, Elaine Gwynne, Maggie Thomas, Nigel Yates and Councillor Ron Davies (Council representative).

The re-appointed Members are: -

Keith Donovan, Keith Green, Lorraine Howells, Robert Jones, Mike Johnson, William Lindsay, Alison Palmer, David Parry.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mr. Liversuch advised that he had received expressions of interest in the posts of Chairman and Deputy Chairman from Lorraine Howells and Mike Johnson, who had served as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively during the term of the last Local Access Forum. Lorraine had confirmed that she would be happy to be considered for the post of Vice Chair and Mike had confirmed that he would be happy to be considered for the post of Chair.

Mr. Liversuch therefore proposed that Mike Johnson, former Deputy Chairman, be appointed to the post of Chairman and Lorraine Howells, former Chairman, be appointed to the post of Deputy Chairman.

The Forum endorsed the recommendation and AGREED that Mike Johnson be elected as Chairman and Lorraine Howells be elected as Deputy Chairman for the Forum's term of office.

Mr. Johnson took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

5. INVITATION TO OBSERVERS

It was noted that the Council, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have the right to send observers to meetings of the Local Access Forum.

In addition, in the past, an invitation has also been extended to the Forestry Commission, as major landowners in the county borough, to nominate a representative to sit on the Forum.

It was AGREED that the Secretary would invite the Forestry Commission to nominate a representative to participate in the new Local Access Forum.

6. THE WORK OF THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Phillip Griffiths, Principal Planner and Assistant Secretary to the LAF, gave a brief outline of the background and work of the Caerphilly Local Access Forum since its establishment on 14th June 2002.

The Forum is a statutory body required under the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. Its function is to provide advice to the Local Authority, CCW and others on improvements to open access, open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area in general. It is also a statutory consultee on documents relating to the Rights of Way Act and identifies where extra funding can be brought in.

It was noted that this is the third Caerphilly LAF and much effort has gone into ensuring a balanced membership.

The Forum has played an important role in various issues including the Open Access Management Plan (OAMP) and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Maps showing open access land sites within CCBC were tabled at the meeting for the benefit of the new members. Copies of the OAMP and ROWIP were also available if required.

Another major issue for the LAF has been anti social behaviour in the countryside, in particular, the illegal practice of off road motorcycling. A special sub group had been established to consider the problem in detail.

Mr Griffiths also referred to the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the LAFs and the LAF Chairmen's AGM, which helped to give an insight into the issues that might be emerging for the Forum in the future.

The Forum had been asked to look at access for the less able and another two significant issues that were currently coming to the fore related to access in the Heads of the Valley area and the Caerphilly Ridgeway. The Forum would also have a chance to comment on the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the implications for access.

7. DATES AND VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that under the Regulations a Local Access Forum must meet at least twice a year. Caerphilly LAF has generally met on a quarterly basis and there have also been opportunities for members to become involved in the various sub-groups that have been established to consider specific issues in greater detail.

Mr. Liversuch advised that whilst meetings of the Forum had generally been held at 10 am (or at 2pm if preceded by a field trip), in order to accommodate those who have daytime commitments, the last Forum had agreed that at least one of the quarterly meetings should be held late afternoon or evening.

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at Penallta House on Friday, 12th December 2008 at 10am. Dates and venues for future meetings would be discussed further at that time.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that a number of members of the previous LAF i.e. Barry Clarke, Angela Giddings, Graham Hosgood, Sue Steer and Malcolm Tucker, had not re-applied for membership of the new Forum. It was agreed that the Chairman would send a letter to each of them on behalf of the LAF, thanking them for the contribution they had made to the Forum during their membership.

In addition, it was reported that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Countryside, Councillor Ron Davies, had requested that these former members be invited to the launch of the Rural Development Plan at Llancaiach Fawr on 4th December 2008.

The Forum endorsed the above proposals.

The meeting closed at 10.45 am.