



CAERPHILLY LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH 2009 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Mike Johnson – Chairman
Lorraine Howells – Vice Chairman

Barry Clarke, Glyn Davies, Councillor Ron Davies, Sylvia Dolbear, Keith Donovan,
Robert Jones, William Lindsay, Alison Palmer, David Parry, Maggie Thomas & Nigel Yates.

Together with:

Norman Liversuch (Secretary), Phil Griffiths (Assistant Secretary), Andy Powell (Countryside
Access Officer), Adrian Sander (Senior Assistant Engineer, ROW), Sharon Kauczok
(Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

Sarah Tindal (CCW).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Andrew Edwards, Keith Green and Elaine
Gwynne.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2008 were approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING - MEMBERSHIP

Confirmation was received that Barry Clarke had been re-appointed to the Forum to represent
the Caerphilly Access Group.

5. PRESENTATION - WELSH NATIONAL ACCESS REGISTER

The Forum welcomed Sarah Tindal, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). Sarah
demonstrated the various features of the national access register map based system via

CCW's internet website. Basically, it is a map-based system that enables you to find out what access opportunities there are in Wales. It is interactive and has a map measuring facility for planning walks etc.

Development of the site is ongoing and CCW are currently looking at providing access to water information i.e. river courses, facilities for canoeing etc together with information about accommodation provision. Consideration is also being given to grading routes to enable users of the site to have an idea of how difficult a particular route might be.

Members of the Forum were invited to refer any feedback on the system to Jill Mayer, the person responsible for the project at CCW. Ms Mayer would be at the National LAF Conference in May where she would demonstrate the system in more detail.

The Chair thanked Sarah for attending the meeting and for her informative presentation.

6. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ROWIP)

Adrian Sander, Senior Assistant Engineer (Rights of Way), updated the Forum on works undertaken during this financial year and proposals for next year.

For the period 2008-09 Caerphilly CBC had received an initial grant of £63,288 from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) followed by an additional £5,000.

The Forum was advised that it was likely that the initial grant from WAG in 2008-09 would be repeated in 2009-10.

7. ANNUAL LAF CHAIRS' CONFERENCE

Mike Johnson briefed the Forum on the key issues that were discussed at the recent Annual Chairs' Conference held at Llanelwedd, Builth Wells on 24th February 2009: -

- CCW were asked to update the advisory papers and make them available for the new members.
- Clarification was sought as to how up to date the definitive maps were. A questionnaire was being sent out to all Local Authorities requesting this information.
- Relationships with other LAFs – do we need to nominate members to receive papers from adjoining LAFs.

The Secretary advised that Caerphilly LAF used to nominate members to attend meetings of adjoining LAFs. He would discuss the matter further with the secretaries of the relevant LAFs and report back to the next meeting.

- Section 106 Agreements. Some LAFs in Wales have an agreement that their Planning Department will advise the LAF Secretary of any applications that might be of interest to the LAF.
- Cycle routes – are walkers/horse riders using them? There were no real problems reported by those members present.
- Disabled access – quality and quantity. Reference was made to the work of the Fieldfare Trust.
- Dogs in the countryside and landowner insurance. Discussion on this subject was

inconclusive but there should be a more productive debate at the meeting on 7th May.

- Questionnaires were being sent out to the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Secretaries of all the LAFs to try to coordinate and assess patterns and progress.

Other items discussed at the meeting included maintenance backlogs and the closure by Powys and other local authorities of many of their public conveniences.

The Secretary advised the Forum that Jean Rosenthal has been appointed to represent the LAFs on the National Local Access Forum.

8. OFF-ROAD SEMINAR

Andy Powell briefed the Forum on an all-Wales off road seminar organised on behalf of WAG that he had attended with Norman Liversuch and Lorraine Howells (representing the Farmers Union of Wales) in February. The seminar and workshop was facilitated by CCW to explore opportunities to contribute to the management of motorised recreation in the countryside through the encouragement of responsible behaviour. Details were as follows: -

The morning session was effectively divided into 3 presentations followed by workshops in the afternoon.

The first presentation explored the current policy and practice around motorised recreation in the countryside. The second gave examples of successful projects in Wales with significant educational and training elements aimed at delivering behavioural and attitude improvements and reducing conflict. The third presentation looked in some detail at the Tread Lightly Programme as a mechanism for users, agencies and landowners to work together to find a lasting solution to the issues surrounding motorised recreation.

Peter Owens, City and County of Cardiff Council, informed the attendees of a very successful scheme being developed in Cardiff, in liaison with the Police, to educate those who had been referred by the Police for irresponsible biking in an urban setting. Since the scheme's implementation anti-social behaviour associated with off road biking had dropped dramatically.

Dyfed-Powys Police drew attention to issues in rural areas and Ian Dutch, Ceredigion County Council, referred to the Cambrian Mountains motorised recreation pilot project.

Mark Margetts gave an overview of the Tread Lightly Programme. Tread Lightly is a non-profit making organisation whose mission is to protect recreation access and opportunities in the outdoors through education and stewardship. The programme was set up in the USA where there are similar problems with 4 x 4s.

The Forum discussed the various initiatives being undertaken and it was suggested that arrangements be made to visit the Cardiff project. The Secretary agreed to liaise with Cardiff Council with a view to arranging a visit at a mutually convenient time in the future.

The Forum was advised that the key issues arising from discussions at the seminar were: -

- Education
- Enforcement
- Provision

The full findings of the workshop sessions would be reported back to the Forum in due course.

9. FUTURE FUNDING

Phil Griffiths briefed the Forum on schemes that have been completed or are underway, the various grant bids that are being submitted and potential other sources of funding.

It was noted that a significant amount of work was being undertaken in the north of the county borough through funding schemes, in particular, the Heads of the Valleys project. Funding bodies are now requiring less match-funding from the voluntary sector.

Half a dozen large scale schemes had been approved in the summer and these were either completed or in the process of being constructed i.e. Argoed cycleway, HoV cycleway study, Aberbargoed Grasslands, Parc Cwm Darren cycleway, Bargoed Country Park and extensive works between Rhymney and Bargoed.

The Department was successful in securing an additional £100,000 this year from WAG, £80,000 of this had been allocated to access projects. These included 2 projects in Rhymney, one at Argoed (steps upgrade) and 1 at Hollybush (the Ancient Druid). Work was also underway at Penyfan Pond via a £50,000 WAG environmental grant. Following on from Objective 1, the RDP is also starting to impact with works already planned for the Gren Way and several trails in Machen.

The Forum then received a summary of the following: -

- HoV funding continues although news coming in implies that changes will be made to the way in which it is allocated.
- Holistic Area Plans (HARPs) - community driven plans - are also being looked at. The Authority is well represented in terms of having projects on paper that can be submitted for funding.
- Valleys Regional Park – the brief for the Caerphilly Basin. A 10 year strategy to tap into.
- The Forestry Commission is looking at another initiative similar to Cydcoed. The Environment Agency is looking at riverside projects.
- Community funding streams are becoming available. This covers areas in the mid and south where communities have developed action plans. It was suggested that Tina McMahon, Senior Community Regeneration Officer, be invited to a future meeting to explain the action plans in more detail.
- Support is still being received from the WDA in terms of the second phase of Penyfan Pond.
- Officers are looking at health funding with Brian Begg and his team.
- A European programme called Life Plus.
- PONT – a biodiversity led project across the uplands of South Wales. The brief is currently being finalised by consultants.

It was noted that officers were also keeping a close watch on other possible funding opportunities that could be tapped into.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary reminded Members that the following dates had been agreed for future meetings of the Forum.

- Friday, 19th June 2009.
- Friday, 25th September 2009.
- Friday, 11th December 2009.

It was agreed that the Secretary would liaise with the Forestry Commission and CCBC's Tourism Section with a view to arrangements being made for the Forum to visit Cwmcarn Scenic Drive prior to the June or September meeting in order to view the improvements that have been undertaken there. The visit would be followed by a formal meeting of the Forum.

The Secretary would confirm the arrangements for the next meeting as soon as possible.

Recreation and Access Newsletter (Winter/Spring Edition 2009)

Copies of the latest edition of the newsletter were tabled at the meeting.

Walk In Event

It was reported that entry forms are now available for the event, which starts at Cwmcarn Forest Drive on Saturday, 9th May 2009

LAF National Conference

It was agreed that Mike Johnson, Lorraine Howells and Norman Liversuch would represent the Forum at the National Conference on 7th May 2009.

The meeting closed at 11.40 am.