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Date: 16th November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

A digital meeting of the **Caerphilly Local Access Forum** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Friday, 26th November, 2021 at 10.00 am** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council [website](#). You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so.

Yours faithfully,

PHILLIP GRIFFITHS
SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of Interest.	
Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.	
3 Minutes of the Caerphilly Local Access Forum held on 3rd September 2021.	1 - 10

A greener place Man gwyrddach



- 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes.
- 5 To appoint a Vice Chair to the Caerphilly Local Access Forum.
- 6 National LAF Chairs Meeting - 9th Nov 2021.
- 7 General Rights of Way Update.
- 8 Natural Resources Wales Updates.
- 9 To review proposed modifications to PROW at Cwmcarn Forest (presentation attached).
- 10 Planning.
- 11 Transport for Wales Level Crossings in the Rhymney Valley.
- 12 Grants/Funding.
- 13 Dates and Format of LAF Meetings for 2022.
Friday 4th March 2022;
Friday 17th June 2022;
Friday 16th September 2022;
Friday 25th November 2022.
- 14 Any Other Business.

11 - 20

Circulation:

Councillor N. George, M. Benjamin, Mr B. Clarke, Mr G. Davies, Mr K. Donovan, Mr A. Edwards, A. Evans, Mrs E. Gwynne, D. Hale, Ms L. Howells, D. Llewellyn, J. Morgan, Mrs A. Palmer, M. Pointon, R. Stones, Ms M. Thomas, W. Williams, A. Wilson and Mr N.D. Yates

Ms S. Tindal (Natural Resources Wales) and Ms C. Deller (Welsh Government)

And Appropriate Officers

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CAERPHILLY LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON FRIDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 10.00 A.M.



PRESENT:

M. Benjamin – Chair

B. Clarke, Councillor N. George (Cabinet Member for Waste, Public Protection & Street Scene), A. Edwards, D. Hale, D. Llewellyn, J. Morgan, M. Pointon, R. Stones, M. Thomas, A. Wilson, W. Williams and N. Yates

By Invitation: G. Drinkwater and S. Tindall (Natural Resources Wales)

Together with:

P. Griffiths (Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager), S. Denbury (Countryside and Rights of Way Assistant), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer)

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed and would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would take place via a show of hands up.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from G. Davies, K. Donovan, A. Evans, E. Gwynne, L. Howells and A. Palmer.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 4TH JUNE 2021

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2021 be approved as a correct record and a show of hands up (and in noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly Local Access Forum held on 4th June 2021 (minute nos. 1 – 13) be approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A Member referred to Minute No. 5 (Active Travel Plan) in relation to concerns raised over the increased usage of walking paths by cyclists. The Member highlighted a walking area in Machen and the recent increased presence of catering trailers and other vehicles in this area, explaining that this can be off-putting for walkers.

Phil Griffiths (Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager) confirmed that he would take these comments on board and explained that proposals are underway with Welsh Government in relation to extending the usage of footpaths for other types of users. It was explained that currently these paths are being used for means other than walking despite whether they are suitable for this purpose, and there are issues that fall upon the local authority in terms of increased maintenance for additional users as well as conflicts of interest regarding the use of these paths which leads to increased pressures for Rights of Way staff.

Another Member referred to conflict between cyclists and walkers on paths and discussions between Rights of Way Officers and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) arounds unauthorised trails in the Medart area of Risca. She asked if the LAF could put pressure on NRW to put limitations on cycle tracks (such as chicanes) before negotiations begin with the local cycling club regarding work to these trails. It was noted that Natural Resources Wales representatives would give an update on this matter later in the meeting.

Mr Griffiths also referred to Minute No. 7 (Council Representative) and introduced Councillor Nigel George (Cabinet Member for Waste, Public Protection & Street Scene) who has recently replaced Councillor John Ridgewell on the Local Access Forum following a change in Cabinet Members. Members were advised that traditionally the council representative has taken on the role as the Vice Chair of the LAF, but this is not set in stone, although Councillor George has already indicated that he would be willing to take up the position if required.

As it is a statutory requirement for the LAF to have a Vice Chair and in order to give other LAF Members the opportunity to put themselves forward for the position if they wish to do so, the matter of electing a Vice Chair will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting on 26th November 2021.

The Local Access Forum noted the updates provided and there were no other matters arising.

5. ACCESS REFORM BRIEFING

Members welcomed Stefan Denbury (Countryside and Rights of Way Assistant) to the meeting, who works in the Council's Rights of Way Team alongside Phil Griffiths and Andrew Fleming and has involvement in many of the items brought to the LAF meetings.

Phil Griffiths (Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager) provided an update taken from the most recent NRW Briefing Paper in relation to Welsh Government's Access Reform Programme. LAF were reminded of the report presented to them in March 2021 which detailed the developments made across the Access Reform Programme since its inception in 2017, and were also reminded of the Access Reform Advisory Group set up by WG in 2020 to consider the wider changes to Public Access in Wales and which will provide expert technical advice on the implementation of potential access reform proposals.

Mr Griffiths gave an overview of the composition of the Group, which comprises expert representation from stakeholders, and he also outlined the 3 main areas under examination by the Group: (1) increasing the range of activities permitted on CROW land, (2) increasing the range of activities on public rights of way and the procedures for managing rights of way and issues such as stock control and (3) improving communication generally through methods such as online access maps. The Group have now prepared a whole range of reports which have been submitted to WG, with the final advice report submitted to WG Ministers in May 2021. This report made a number of recommendations to WG who have asked for further investigation on certain elements.

LAF were advised of appointments that have been made to the National Local Access Forum which represents all 22 LAFs across Wales. The National LAF have been seeking representatives to give views from local LAFs and the National Chair is now being supported by two local LAF Officers from Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire LAFs. There is also support ongoing for NRW through consultations who have asked for two further representatives from LAFs across Wales.

In regards to the next steps on the Access Reform Programme, WG have asked NRW for further advice on 3 specific topics: (1) the enforcement of keeping dogs on short leads when in the vicinity of livestock at all times of the year, which is a change to the current legislation and has been supported by the majority of the Caerphilly LAF (2) the review of CROW access maps (3) reviewing the roles and regulations relating to LAFs themselves. The work relating to dogs on leads and LAF roles is being led by NRW outdoor access and policy teams, who have set up groups comprising landowner and public sector representatives to look at these matters. NRW will address the review of CROW access maps, in a slightly different way.

NRW are intending to carry out an initial stakeholder exercise on the above topics over the next couple of months, although it is unclear at this stage if individual LAFs will be consulted or if this will go straight to the National LAF meeting in October. There will also be some stakeholder meetings in October, followed by some options/solutions papers for comment towards the end of year. It is anticipated that by February 2022, stakeholders (including Caerphilly LAF) will have input into the draft report that emerges from this consultation and will then be forwarded onto WG for their consideration. Overall, it is anticipated that some form of consultation is expected to come to Caerphilly LAF on all three topics which will come in via the Chair. It was noted that even though the Access Reform is not being widely reported, progress is being made in the background and is proceeding at pace.

Following the update, a Member enquired around the composition of the groups being set up by NRW, suggesting that it was important for someone with a nature background to participate in the group relating to dogs being kept on leads. Mr Griffiths confirmed that the expert groups at the earlier strategic level (which included wildlife representatives) have been stood down, and that the only guidance on the groups suggest landowners, public sector and recreational users. However, given the context of the reform, this is all under natural resource management for which wildlife forms a huge part, but Mr Griffiths confirmed that he would take this query to the Chair of the National LAF for consideration at their October meeting.

A Member referred to dogs on leads and livestock worrying and highlighted the uncertainties surrounding the proposals from Welsh Government as the matter is not a devolved issue. Mr Griffiths explained that his understanding was that the CROW Act makes provision for some devolved elements to amend that legislation through Welsh Government.

Following consideration of the item, the Local Access Forum noted the contents of the update.

6. GENERAL RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE

The LAF received an update from Stefan Denbury (Countryside and Rights of Way Assistant) in relation to the work being undertaken by the Council's Rights of Way team. It was noted that the department are currently undergoing a number of free training opportunities, including definitive map modification applications, diversion orders, and highway creation, adoption and extinguishment. Mr Denbury will also be attending training relating to definitive map modification order, and public path orders and modifications.

Across their day-to-day work, the team continue to carry out conveyance searches and introduced a web map search on the Council's website early in the year which has now been adopted by the majority of personal search companies and has reduced Officer search time. In regards to public path obstructions, the ROW team recently imposed two Section 137 notices and the current position and action taken in relation to these cases were outlined to the LAF. Work continues on planning applications and the Council also recently undertook a call for candidate sites (for potential inclusion in the 2nd Replacement LDP), with the Planning department consulting with the ROW team on the applications received. The ROW team will also use this as an opportunity to seek improvements to existing rights of way where needed.

Work also continues on Public Rights of Way registers, including definitive map modification orders, land declarations and public path order applications, and it was noted that the ROW team currently have 92 definitive map modification orders which are in need of investigation with one currently with the Planning Inspectorate and will be pushed forward as soon as possible. There are currently two active Section 31(a) landowner deposits but the ROW team have received interest from other landowners, so it is expected that others will follow. There are 9 outstanding public path orders with the ROW team, one of which is nearing completion, and others in various orders of progression, and will be reported to the Cabinet Rights of Way committee or the Head of Service as appropriate in due course.

Mr Denbury was thanked for his update and a query was received around illegal obstructions and how these are followed up by the Council. Mr Denbury outlined the Council's statutory duty to take action on all obstructions and outlined the limited resources available at this time but gave assurances that such instances will be tackled. It was noted that the current matters are historic and the one instance was brought to the Council's attention by way of a planning application, which is being followed up by the ROW team as a priority and with their comments passed to the Planning department.

Following consideration of the item, the Local Access Forum noted the contents of the update in relation to General Rights of Way matters.

7. NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

Mr Griffiths introduced the item and highlighted a consultation currently being undertaken by NRW on Area Statements, which are the strategic documents that influence natural resource access management throughout Wales. He drew LAF's attention to a webinar being held by NRW on Tuesday 7th September which will provide more detail in this regard, and with the aim to review these documents during September. Further detail is available on NRW's website.

The LAF welcomed Geminie Drinkwater and Sarah Tindall from Natural Resources Wales, and received an update from Ms Drinkwater into the work being carried out by Natural Resources Wales across the Caerphilly county borough in relation to LAF matters.

Ms Drinkwater explained that she has been working at Cwmcarn for the last couple of years with a focus on reopening the Forest Drive following the completion of tree-felling works

arising from larch disease. The Forest Drive has now reopened to the public and is now being managed by CCBC on a day-to-day basis through a partnership arrangement with NRW.

Members were advised that although Ms Drinkwater is still working on aspects of the Forest Drive project, the focus has now moved to the wider Cwmcarn Forest and the neighbouring Abercarn Forest, primarily looking at the footpaths throughout both forests to see what needs to be done to bring them up to standard as a leading visitor attraction and a meaningful site for local people to use on a day-to-day basis. It was explained that many of these paths became overgrown when resources were diverted to the tree-felling works and the priority is to reinstate rights of way across these areas. NRW are also undertaking a wider review of the footpath offer at Cwmcarn and Abercarn Forests, which will include looking at opportunities to develop new paths where appropriate to create more loops and links to improve the overall walking offer. One large piece of work being carried out by NRW is to look at the safety of all forest users and address the conflict between cyclists and other users of trails, and they are currently liaising with Stefan Denbury and Torfaen Council, together with local stakeholders, to see what can be done to address these issues and protect rights of way from speeding bikes. Ms Drinkwater welcomed LAF's views and input on any proposals and modification orders in this regard, and it is expected that NRW will be able to provide a further update report to LAF Members before their next meeting.

LAF discussed the update and a query was received regarding access for horse riders across Cwmcarn and Abercarn Forest. Ms Drinkwater explained that NRW met with the ROW team to discuss access and ensure routes are appropriately marked; however, it is felt that the horse-riding offer would be better placed on the West End side of Abercarn Forest as the Cwmcarn side is already heavily congested with other users.

Clarification was sought on the replanting scheme at Cwmcarn Forest Drive to replace the trees removed through larch disease. Ms Drinkwater explained that a Forest Resource Plan has been established with a diverse range of species to be planted, and that information display panels outlining these plans will be installed at the entrance to Cwmcarn Forest Drive so that these can be viewed by the public.

A Member emphasised a need for user signage around trails to be clear and prominently displayed, and Ms Drinkwater emphasised that it will be an integral part of the NRW project to notify users of the purpose of each trail. Work has already started on this but there are complexities around the huge number of paths and interactions by users. Another Member asked about funding and timescales for the delivery of this project. Ms Drinkwater confirmed that funding is in place to take this project forward, and given that NRW have invested heavily in the reopening of the Forest Drive, the surrounding area also needs to reflect this level of investment. It is anticipated that the project will be achieved over the next year to two years.

The LAF congratulated Ms Drinkwater and NRW on the achievements to date at Cwmcarn Forest Drive and made reference to the overwhelmingly positive reception from visitors to the site. In response to a query from the LAF, it was confirmed that the Forest Drive would be open during the weekend only in winter months (1st October to 31st March). Ms Drinkwater also paid tribute to the involvement and commitment of local people in delivering the successful project and increasing the accessibility of the Forest Drive.

A Member asked if there is any funding available for the top end of the Sirhowy Valley (around Argoed, Markham and Hollybush) as there are a number of bridleways requiring cutting back, and this area also suffered the loss of trees due to larch disease. Ms Drinkwater confirmed that she would pass the query onto her colleagues who manage that area and are already aware of the issues within their land management areas. Another Member asked about forestry maintenance in the Gwyddon Valley Forest in Abercarn and Ms Drinkwater confirmed that this would be carried out as part of the NRW project to encourage users to connect with

the countryside on their doorstep. A Member highlighted problems in relation to off-road motorbikes and the damage caused to land, and Ms Drinkwater confirmed she would arrange for the email contact for reporting such instances to be circulated following the meeting.

Ms Drinkwater also provided an update on unofficial trails in response to the query from a LAF Member earlier in the meeting. She confirmed that chicanes will be placed on the unofficial trails at Cwmcarn in the next two weeks, and that it has been emphasised to the local cycling club concerned that this is a temporary measure for visitor safety whilst NRW examine the longer-term future of the site. The LAF Member confirmed she was satisfied with this response and the action taken by NRW.

Mr Griffiths sought clarification on whether NRW are looking for a LAF representative to be part of the project. Ms Drinkwater explained that NRW are seeking the views of LAF as a whole and that she would be looking to send LAF Members the details of proposals in relation to the footpath project ahead of the next meeting. She emphasised that the unofficial trails are a separate piece of work for which NRW are continue to liaise with relevant officers, and that any concerns in relation to unofficial trails should continue to be reported to these officers.

The Local Access Forum thanked Ms Drinkwater for her update and noted its contents.

8. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO RIGHTS OF WAY

Stefan Denbury presented an update on Integrated Impact Assessments in relation to Rights of Way. He explained that following a change to council report templates in March 2021, which will include reports to the Cabinet Rights of Way committee and Heads of Service under delegated powers, the Equality Impact Assessment previously completed for such reports has now been replaced by an Integrated Impact Assessment. This is a similar process to the EIA but goes into more detail. The IIA will apply to reports on matters such as general public path orders and definitive map modification orders. It is a requirement for these IIAs to be consulted upon, and it was explained that the LAF may have a role in this consultation to fulfil the legislative requirements of the IIA, instead of consulting with the wider public at large, given the short timescales for consultation and the limited resources available.

A Member asked if this change would preclude consultation with The Ramblers, Open Spaces Society and British Horse Society, and emphasised that she was attending the LAF as an individual and not as a representative of these whole societies. Mr Denbury highlighted the wide mix of stakeholder representation through LAF and the need to carry out consultation in a timely manner, and Mr Griffiths added that a separate report on the technicalities would be presented to LAF for their consideration in due course.

Following consideration of the update, the Local Access Forum noted its contents.

9. PLANNING

Mr Griffiths gave an update on Planning matters and reminded the LAF of the call for candidate sites to be submitted as part of the 2nd Replacement Local Development Plan. It has been observed that as part of the Wales Development Plan, initial proposals have been put forward regarding renewable energy schemes across the county borough, including a solar farm, wind farm, land restoration schemes, and coal recovery works. Mr Griffiths explained that some of these larger-scale proposals could lead to implications around public access. Clarification was sought on the location of the coal recovery works and it was confirmed that these were located at Bedwas tips on the mountain top above Bedwas itself.

Following discussion, the Local Access Forum noted the contents of the Planning update from Mr Griffiths.

10. TRANSPORT FOR WALES LEVEL CROSSINGS IN THE RHYMNEY VALLEY

Mr Stefan Denbury gave an update in relation to the South Wales Metro Scheme and its implications for railway level crossings. He explained that a presentation had recently been received from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) which outlined health and safety considerations across British railways and level crossings. Caerphilly Council has a number of public rights of ways on the rail line from Cardiff to Rhymney which cross at the level crossing, and these will be looked at and assessed from a health and safety point of view. It was explained that effectively the rail authority are looking to mitigate increased perceived dangers as a result of new train proposals which include faster and more frequent services and the electrification of lines.

Mr Denbury confirmed that the Council have been approached by a consultant from Transport for Wales to ensure that the relevant level crossings across the county borough have been correctly highlighted. 5 level crossings which serve public footpaths have been identified and TfW are currently carrying out investigations on these regarding the safety risk assessments. It is not yet known what TfW will propose but it is expected that mitigation of hazards will be on a case by case basis, including the diversion of paths to another route where needed. TfW are in the process of reconsulting with the Council and a further update will be brought to the LAF when available.

Discussion took place on an application to extinguish a right of way in the Van area of Caerphilly as a result of the environmental impact to residents with trains sounding their horns. Mr Denbury provided further details of the circumstances around this application and confirmed that this particular site is located at Van just north of the Caerphilly tunnel. It was observed that this particular instance may set a precedent regarding TfW proposals but nothing has been set in stone. Mr Denbury also outlined the other level crossing locations at Llanbradach, Tiryberth and Rhymney, with the Council waiting for further information from TfW on the way forward.

The Local Access Forum thanked Mr Denbury and noted the contents of the update.

11. GRANTS/FUNDING

Mr Griffiths delivered an update in relation to grants and funding. He explained in terms of grants, the Council has been awarded an Access Improvement Grant from Welsh Government which is in the region of £65,000 and is spread across the whole of the county borough. The Grant is primarily geared towards access/accessibility improvements and will be used to replace wooden footbridges, replacing stiles with gates and removing some barriers.

It was noted that no new specific funding applications have been submitted recently, but there may be some additional funding coming in from internal sources and previously successful grants. The ROW team have also submitted a bid for a shared apprentice for two years to support their work and are waiting to see if this application is successful. In addition, the Gwent Green Grid partnership have 4 apprentices coming forward on rights of way which will be overseen by a Countryside Ranger Co-ordinator post which is currently out for recruitment. Caerphilly Council are very keen to acquire at least one of these trainees and Mr Griffiths encouraged LAF Members to let him know of anyone who may be interested in these posts to provide the opportunity for a trainee with knowledge of Caerphilly-based rights of way matters.

Further to this, the Caerphilly Public Services Board may also have some funding coming through for green access infrastructure, and although this is not guaranteed in view of the move to a Gwent Public Service Board, it is hoped that the environment in Gwent and health and wellbeing and the use of the outdoors will be very strong themes across the Board.

LAF Member David Llewellyn (Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) was invited to give an update to the LAF on some initiatives and schemes in progress by the health board. Mr Llewellyn explained that a pilot is being rolled out across the CCBC area with GPs and psychological wellbeing practitioners to connect these with outdoor activity providers and put together a package of activities that people can be referred to by their GPs or other practitioners. The pilot has been ongoing over the last few weeks and is now being evaluated in light of the evidence collected. The idea behind the pilot is to encourage greater use of available green spaces to improve health and wellbeing, particularly following the increased uptake in outdoor activities which became evident during the pandemic. It is realised that some people are not as engaged in realising where these opportunities are and so the pilot seeks to provide assistance in outlining these spaces through a simple referral system. There has been a good uptake through the pilot and the feedback received has been very positive. Mr Llewellyn expressed his thanks to all those involved in the pilot and referenced the significant role played by country parks and Cwmcarn Forest Drive in the scheme. It is hoped that the success of the pilot to date will continue and assist in promoting the health and wellbeing of local communities across Wales.

Mr Llewellyn was thanked for the update and Mr Griffiths then resumed his update. Confirmation has been received for the proposed Penallta Visitors Centre to also be partially used as a health club. Bids are currently out for tender and an update is expected in about a month, with funding expected to be in the region of £1m-£1.5m. Developments are also progressing in regards to the Mynydd Maen Adventure Triangle joint project between Caerphilly and Torfaen Councils. Contracts have been signed and it is expected that local contractors will be on site by the date of the next LAF meeting.

Mr Griffiths also referred to an archaeological dig recently carried out by the Twmbarlwm Society and encouraged LAF to look at their website, as it details some of the interesting finds discovered in relation to population and how that site has developed over the millennium. The Archaeological Trust will also return to the site next year to carry out further digging.

There were no questions received and the Local Access Forum noted the updates from Mr Griffiths and Mr Llewellyn.

12. RAMBLERS VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE

Mr Griffiths provided an update in respect of the Ramblers Volunteer Initiative and explained that the update had been prepared following queries from the Chair on the role of Caerphilly volunteers to the Initiative. He explained that Ramblers Cymru have been successful in securing funding for a "Paths to Wellbeing" project. It was reported some years back that LAF were supporting the Ramblers project but at that time the scheme was not successful. It was agreed at that time that Caerphilly would host one of their operatives to develop community links to improve access and rights of way.

Mr Griffiths was pleased to confirm that this application has now been approved and Officers are now in place to get communities involved in rights of way work, such as creating new paths, restoring paths, maintenance, signage and general environmental work. Mr Griffiths asked the LAF to support the work of The Ramblers and further detail can be found on their website. It was noted that GAVO have expressed their strong support for the initiative.

There were no questions received and the Local Access Forum noted the details of the update from Mr Griffiths.

13. CAERPHILLY CHALLENGE WALK

Mr Griffiths provided LAF with an update on the Caerphilly Challenge Walk which was held on 10th July 2021 in the north of the borough around the Rhymney area. Mr Griffiths highlighted the logistical challenges around the event as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and expressed his thanks to Ali Evans (Health and Safety Team) and all the volunteers who had helped to make the event an overwhelming success. It was noted that the location would revert to the Twmbarlwm Trek for the 2022 event.

There were no questions received and the Local Access Forum noted the details of the update from Mr Griffiths.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A LAF Member, having lost their Teams connection during the discussion on Agenda Item 11 (Grants/Funding), asked if there was any funding available for maintenance of paths. Mr Griffiths confirmed that there is no real additional maintenance budget in place, and although best efforts are made to secure grant funding to support schemes, it is very difficult to obtain a separate maintenance pot of funding.

The Member highlighted the Council's statutory duty to maintain paths. Mr Griffiths confirmed that these are maintained to the best of the Council's ability, and that one initiative taken has been to split Rights of Way into a legislative arm which is administered by the Rights of Way department, and a maintenance arm which is administered by the Parks department due to the greater level of resources available in that section. The Member suggested that there had been a noticeable drop in maintenance since this was taken on by Parks and Mr Griffiths confirmed that he would pass these comments onto his colleagues in the Parks department as the core funding and allocation for Council rights of way maintenance is managed by them.

A Member asked if an Officer from Parks could attend the next LAF to talk about rights of way maintenance and clearance and Mr Griffiths confirmed that he would pass this request on to them. Mr Griffiths also provided an overview of the interactions between the ROW team and Parks team in relation to rights of way. Comments were received on the Council's schedule of clearance works, with it felt that grass maintenance teams should be tackling those areas most in need across the county borough, and a query was received on statistics in relation to cutting/ clearance works for rights of way. A Member also referred to an underspend in the rights of way budget and expressed the need to seek clarity on the reasons for this underspend in view of the large number of overgrown paths across the county borough. Mr Griffiths confirmed that the queries and concerns raised by the LAF would be passed to the Parks department.

A Member referred to the removal of a barrier in the forest area of Machen which had been causing access issues for walkers, and thanked NRW for taking action on this matter.

Mr Griffiths also provided an update which had arisen from discussion with the British Horse Society. He explained that the Society have been seeking WG guidance and a definitive answer on how amendments to the CROW Act, in terms of the ability to claim rights of way, are likely to affect Wales. The amendments will impose a 2026 deadline for all outstanding

claims to be submitted to local authorities and after this date, no new rights of way can be claimed on a historic basis. WG have since replied to confirm that this particular part of the legislation is not going to be applied to Wales as they felt it might be detrimental towards encouraging people to use the countryside. So therefore 2026 is not a cut-off date as Wales are not adopting this aspect of the legislation, and it is therefore business as usual on this matter.

There were no other items raised and the Local Access Forum noted the updates received.

The Chair thanked all parties present for their attendance and contributions and the meeting closed at 12.04 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2021.

CHAIR

Cwm Carn Forest PRow

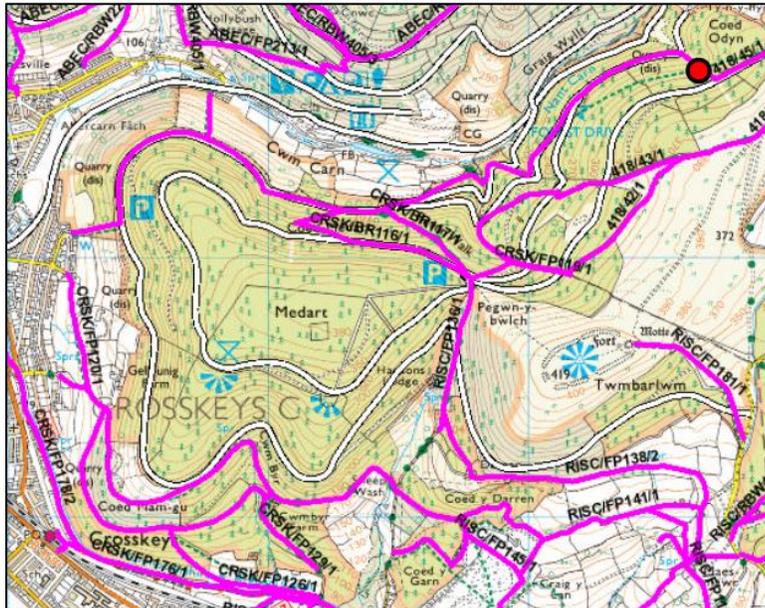
Route Modification Proposals October 2021



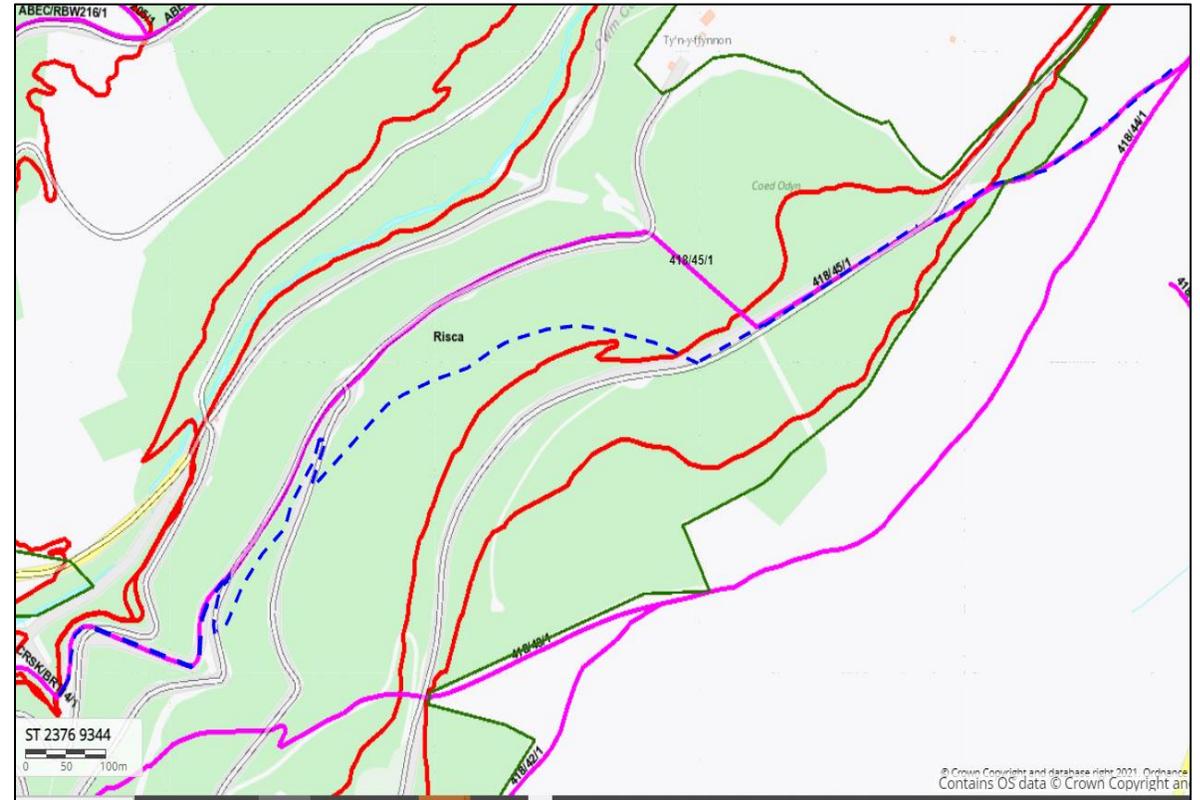
Modification Proposals CRSK FP 418/45/1

Submit application to modify Definitive Map so that map reflects established route on ground (blue dashed line), providing a route that is largely away from the forest drive.

Location Map



Map of proposals



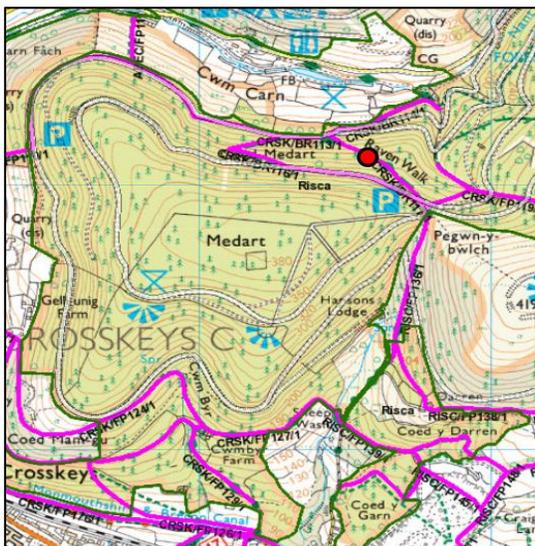
Key	
PRow routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

Modification Proposals CRSK BR117/1

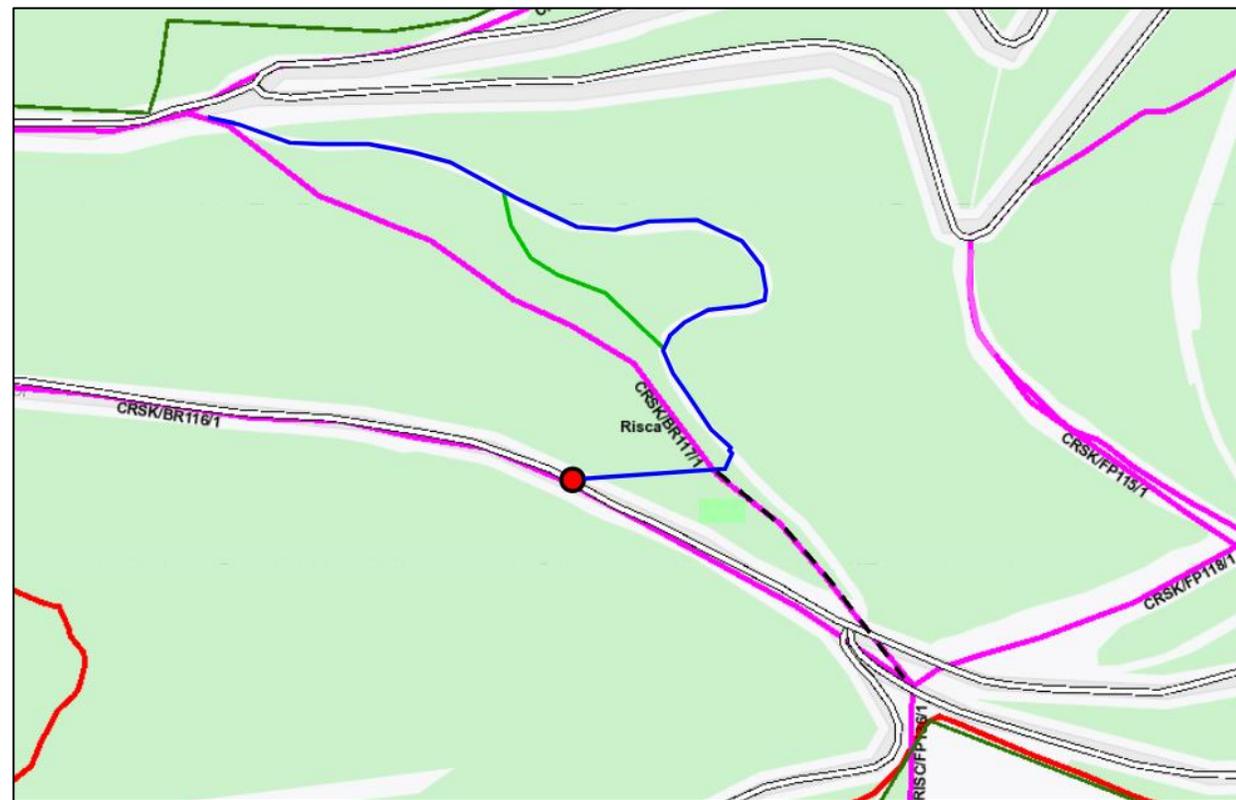
1. Submit application to modify Definitive Map to reflect established route on ground including creating a new entrance location (red dot) achieving a shallower, safer descent from the Meddart. Blue line shows proposed modified brideway route.
2. Remove existing steep, narrow entrance section (dashed line).
3. Remove unauthorised trail section (green line)

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Location Map



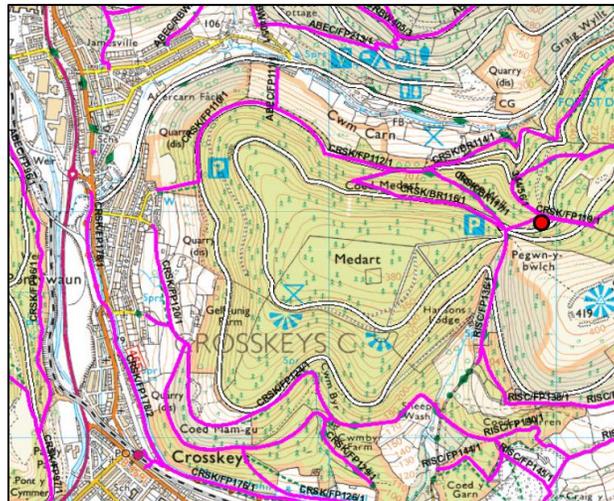
Map of Proposals



Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

1. Submit application to modify Definitive Map so that map reflects route on the ground (blue dashed line.)
2. Alter angle of path as it joins FP119/1 so that a shallower, safer approach is achieved to/from forest drive (yellow dot)
3. Create permissive path (orange line) to link up CRSK FP118/1 (white dot) with proposed new entrance of CRSK BR117/1 (red dot) providing a traffic-free, pedestrian route adjacent to the forest drive.

Location Map



Modification Proposals: CRSK/ FP118/1

Map of Proposals

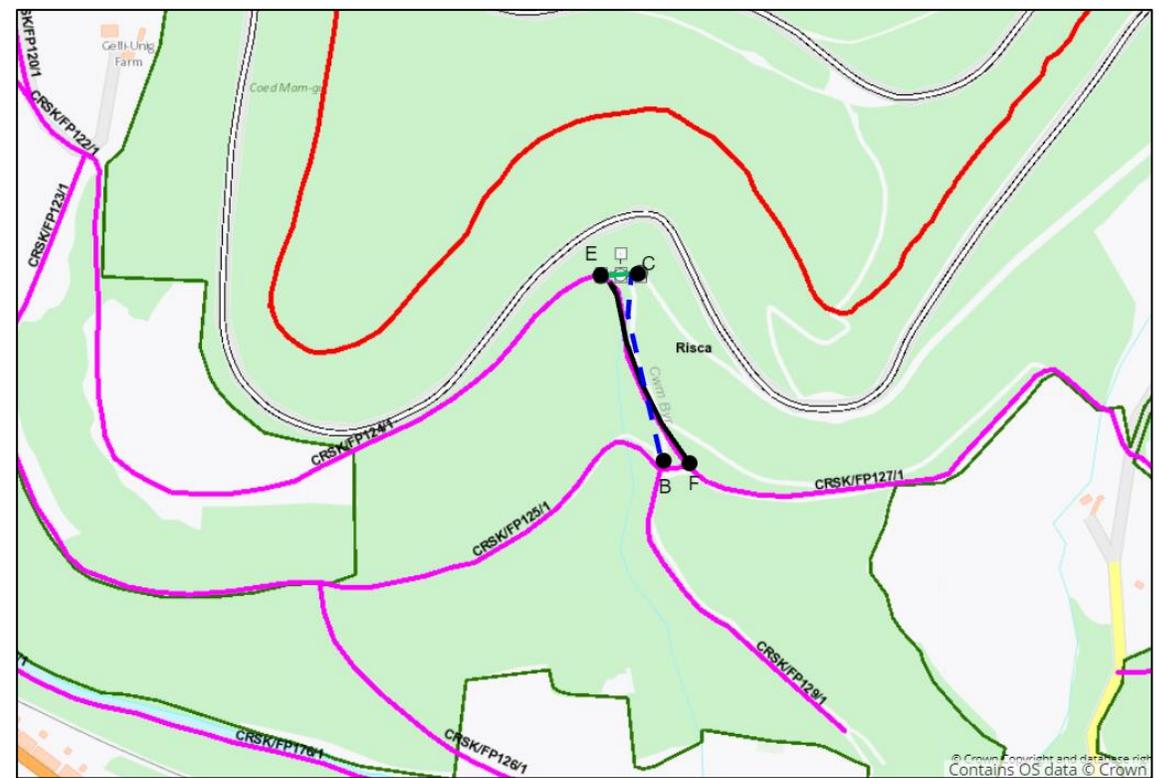


Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

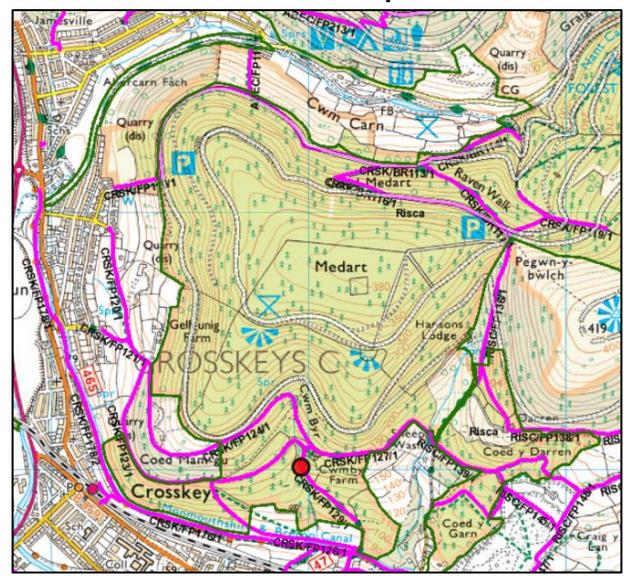
Modification Proposals CRSK FP 129/1 and CRSK FP 124/1 (relates to slide 6)

1. Create new bridleway B-C (dashed line)
2. Divert CRSK FP124/1 E-F (black line) to E-C (green line) but Bridleway will be needed to be created first.

Map of Proposals



Location Map



Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

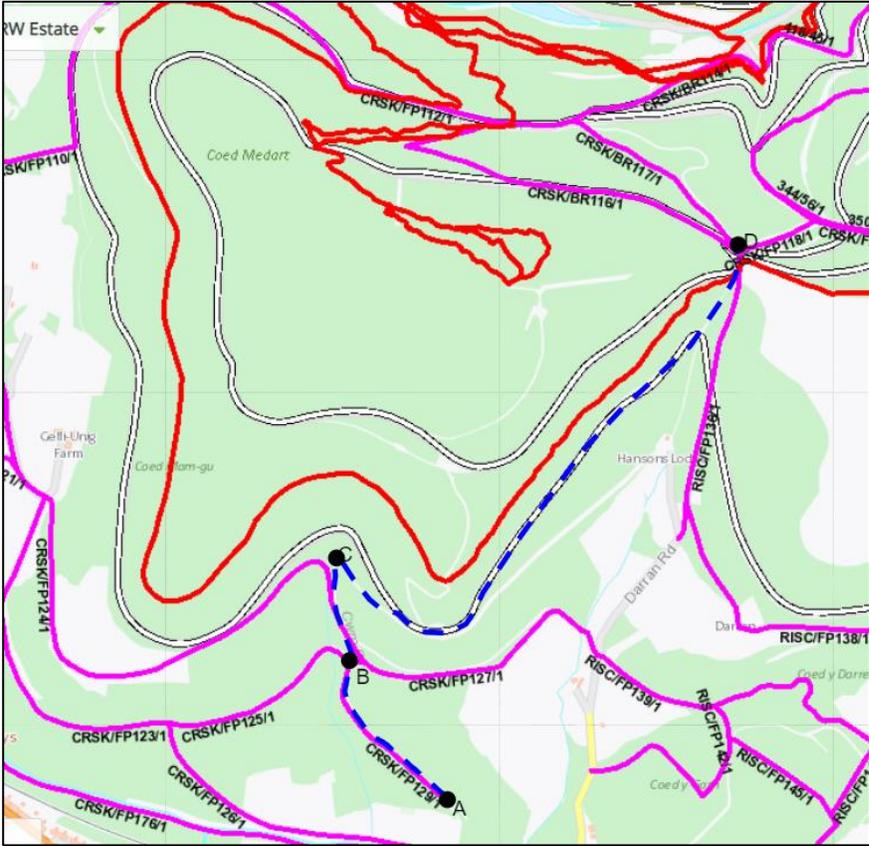
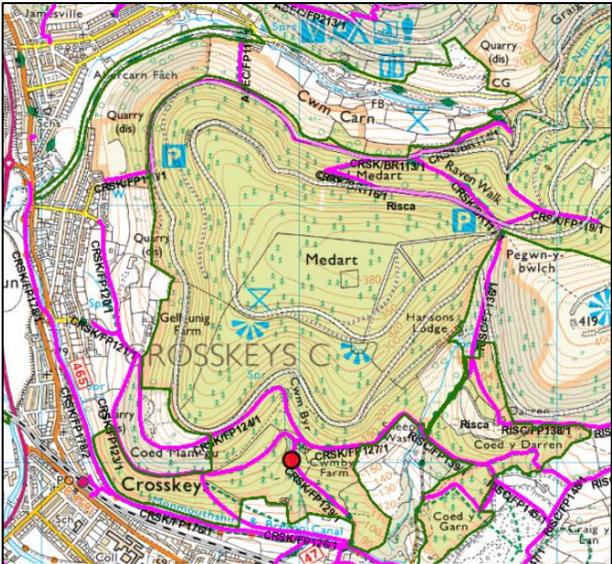
Modification Proposals CRSK FP 129/1

Map of Proposals

1. Upgrade CRSK FP129/1 to a bridleway (A-B)
2. Create new bridleway B-C-D joining up with BR117 at top end by D
3. Establish designation of route linking green meadow bridge with bottom end of CRSK FP 129/1

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Location Map

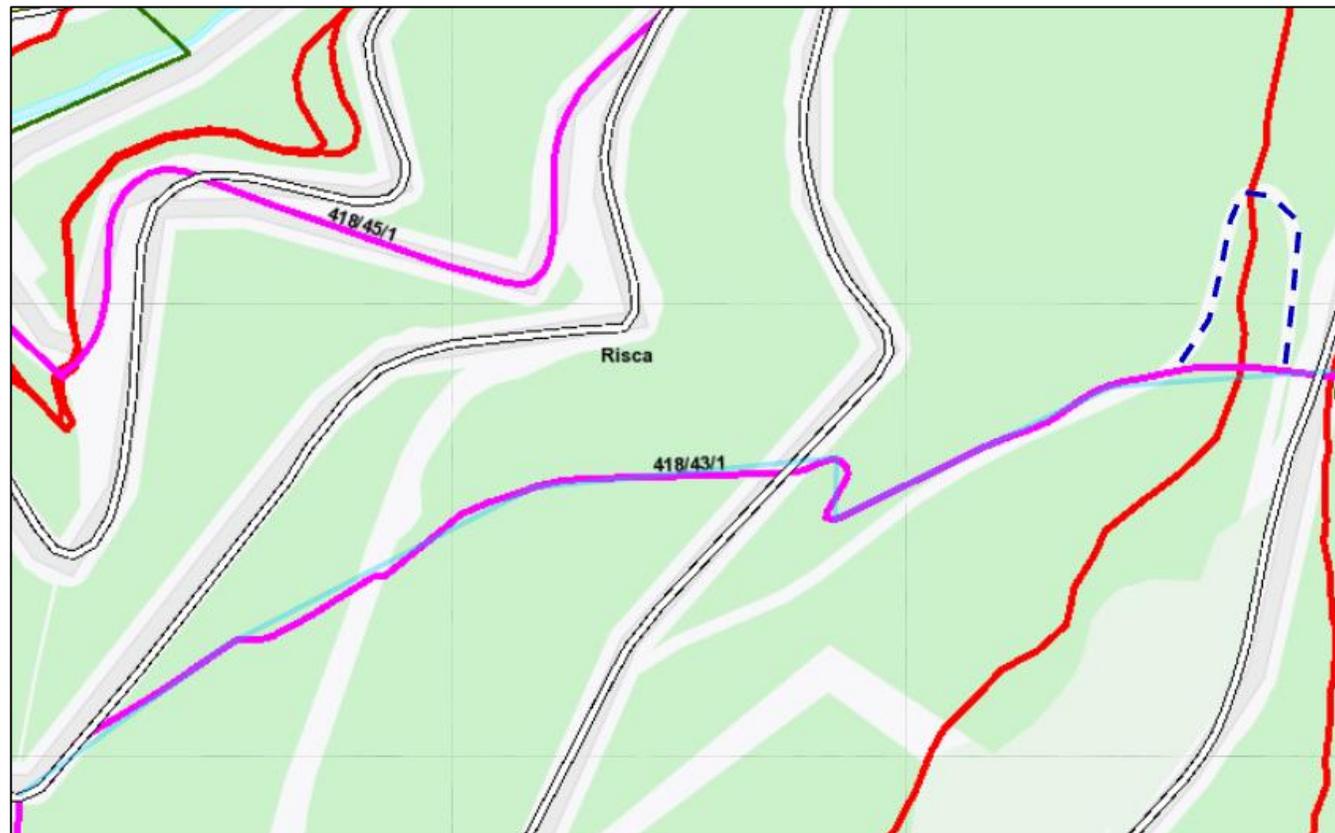


Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

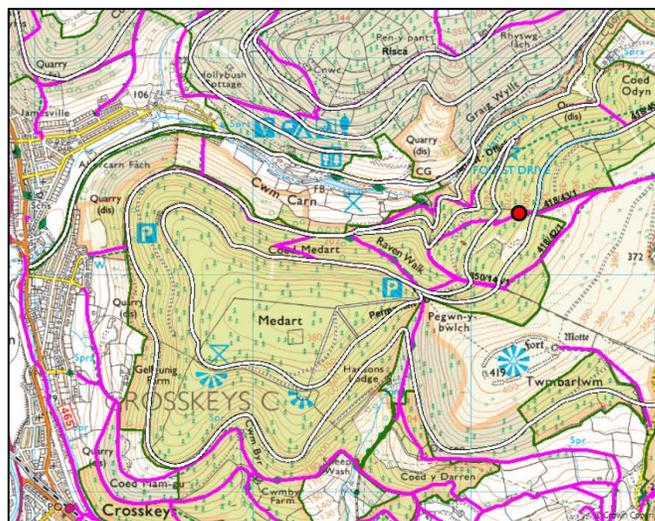
Modification Proposals RBW 418/43/1

Map of Proposals

1. Reinstate Restricted Byway so that the definitive route is reflected on the ground.
2. Submit application to modify upper part of byway so that it follows established track on the ground (blue dashed line)



Location Map



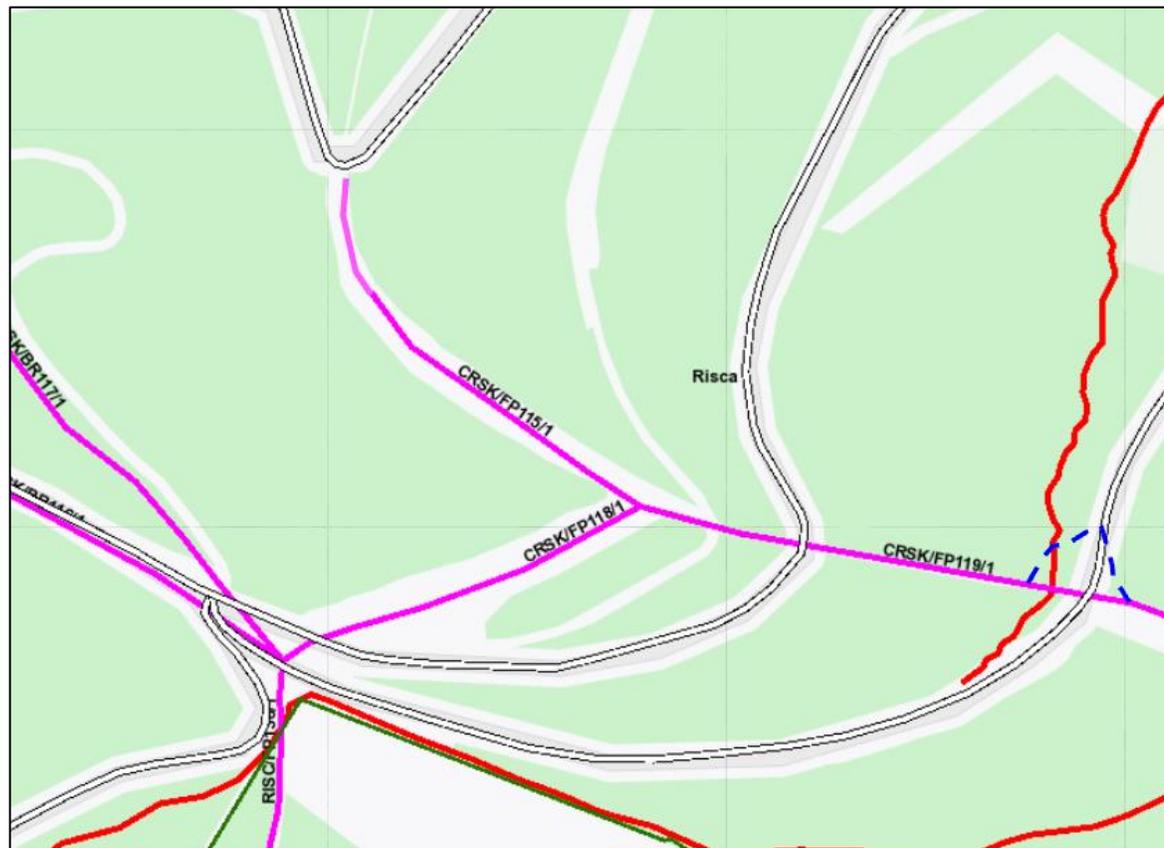
Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

Modification Proposals CRSK FP 119/1

Map of Proposals

Apply for modification to alter angle of route at top end of footpath (blue dashed line) to achieve a shallower and safer approach to/from forest road, improving line of sight for walkers and road users.

Location Map



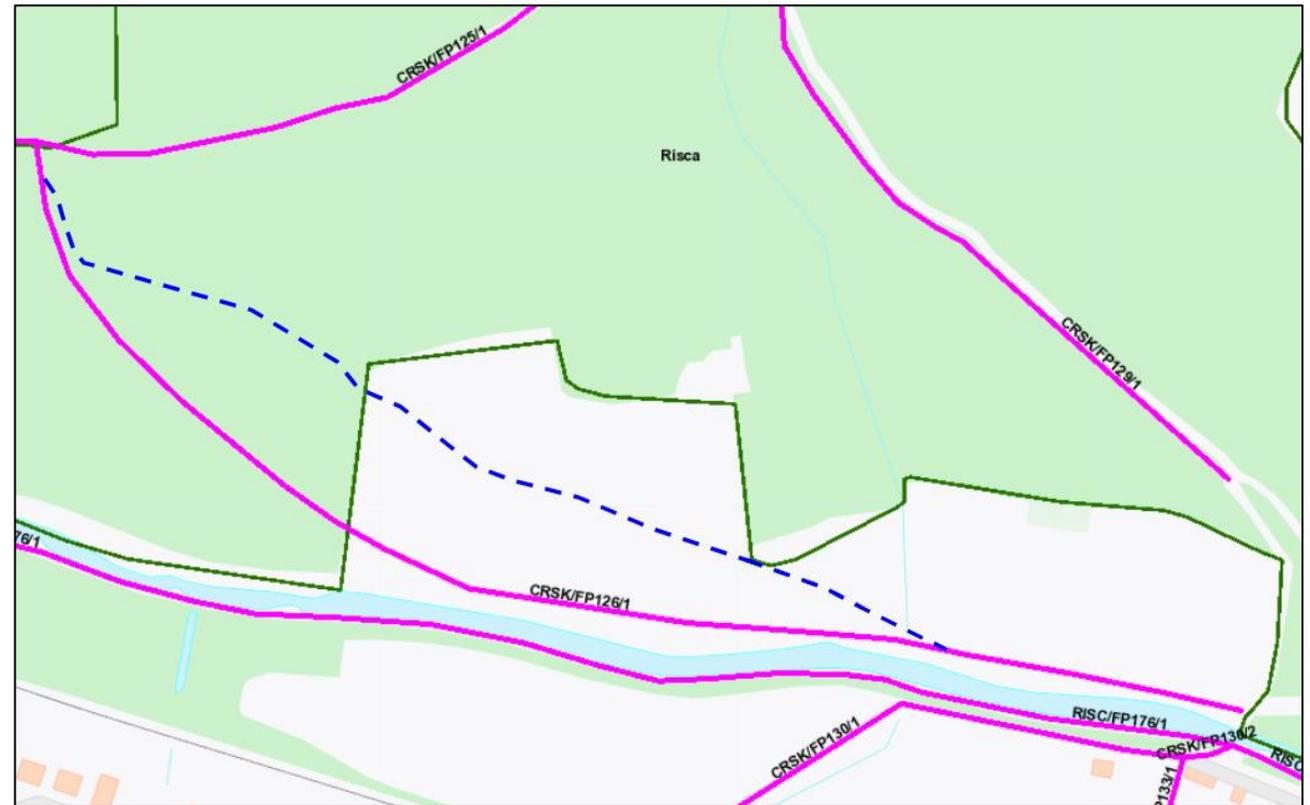
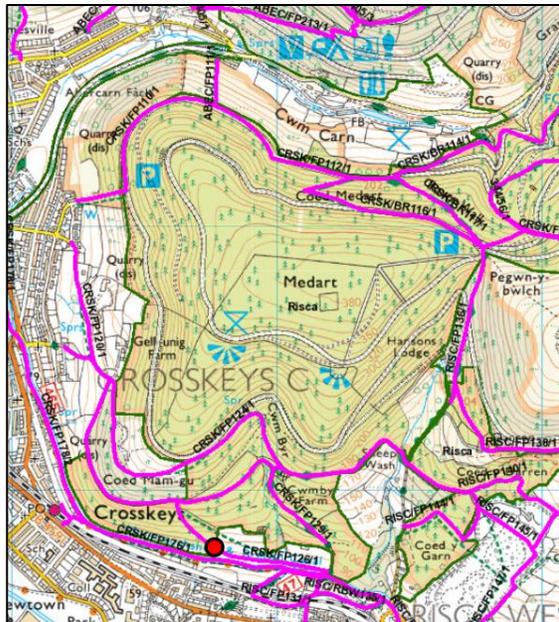
Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

Modification Proposals CRSK/ FP126/1

Map of Proposals

Submit application to modify Definitive Map so that map reflects route on the ground (blue dashed line)

Location Map



Key	
PRoW routes	
Authorised MTB Trails	
Forest Roads	

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