



CAERPHILLY LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,
YSTRAD MYNACH, ON FRIDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10:00AM

PRESENT:

William Lindsay - Chair
Garry Lewis - Vice-Chair

Councillor Ken James

Michael Benjamin, Keith Donovan, Andrew Edwards, Roger Evans, Alison Palmer,
David Parry, Sartha Rajoo, Ruth Stones, Maggie Thomas, Nigel Yates

Together with: Officers – Phil Griffiths (Secretary/Principal Planner), Andy Powell
(ROW and Countryside Access Officer), June Piper (ROW and Countryside Support
Officer), Amy Dredge (Committee Services Officer)

Chris Heaps – Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Barry Clarke, Glyn Davies, Elaine Gwynne, Lorraine Howells

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 3RD JUNE 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd June 2016 were approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Minute no. 9)

It was suggested that Paul Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) deliver a presentation on the new Act at the December meeting. Ms Palmer confirmed that the Policy Team will be working on public events later in the year with the Public Service Board that

that includes Natural Resources Wales. The team is aiming to commence work on the Wellbeing Plan, which is a requirement of the Act, from March 2017.

5. MEMBERS TERMS OF REFERENCE

Phil Griffiths set out the Terms of Reference and explained that the function of the Caerphilly Local Access Forum is to provide advice to the relevant Local and National Park Authorities, Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and others as appropriate as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area in ways which take account of land management, social, economic, environmental and educational interests. Their role will be fulfilled by advising on issues of particular local relevance, including:

- a. supporting the implementation of the new right of access to open countryside;
- b. improving the rights of way network; and
- c. developing recreation and access strategies that cater for everyone.

The Caerphilly Local Access Forum will work to:

- a. develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside;
- b. respect local circumstances and different interests whilst operating within national guidance;
- c. provide advice on issues of principle and good practice;
- d. engage in constructive debate and seek consensus wherever possible; and
- e. where consensus is not possible, make clear the nature of differing views, and suggest how they might be resolved.

6. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT AND PLANNING DEVELOPMENT

Andy Powell updated the Forum on the second draft of '*A Guide to Building Development and Public Rights of Way*'. He thanked Roger Evans who has worked on the document during the summer months in changing the writing style to 'layman's terms'. Andy provided an overview of the guide that includes definitions and covers areas such as:

- how to avoid conflict between development and PROWs;
- consulting the Definitive Map;
- taking suitable action;
- how we deal with your planning application;
- what you should know about planning policies;
- how to get the best design and layout;
- after you get planning permission;
- other issues;
- enforcement action.

Copies of the guide were handed out and comments were requested from the Forum by phone or email by 30th September. Andy explained that he will then make the necessary amendments and would hope to present the guide to Tim Stephens (Development Control Manager) by the 21st October, then amend if necessary with the a view to distributing the final draft to members at the end of November for signing off at December's LAF meeting.

7. LANDSCAPE CRIME TOOLKIT

Phil Griffiths advised the Forum that unfortunately a meeting that had been arranged for the 6th September with the South-East Wales Uplands Landscape Crime Toolkit Partners had been cancelled at short notice. The meeting will be rearranged and an update provided to the Forum in December.

8. ROWIP FUNDING UPDATE - 2016/17

Andy Powell provided an update in terms of funding and confirmed that Caerphilly County Borough Council has been awarded grant funding to help implement its ROWIP for 2016/17. The amount of £37,480 has been received (the same amount as last year). The Rights of Way Team are currently working on targeted projects for this year. They include the Healthy Walking Project, Improved access for those with mobility issues, measures to prevent misuse to the network, improvements to the bridle network and developing volunteers.

9. ROWIP REVIEW

Andy Powell referred to a recent guidance note received from Welsh Government (that replaces the guidance note from 2002), for *Local Authorities on Rights of Way Improvement Plans* (ROWIPs). The context and scope of ROWIPs were set out including the statutory framework that confirms under Section 60 of the CRoW Act (2000), each local highway authority was required to publish a ROWIP for all of their area within 5 years of commencement (2002). Caerphilly published in 2007. Authorities are then required to make a new assessment, review their ROWIP and decide whether or not to amend it not more than ten years after publishing their previous plan. The following legislation will be incorporated into new plans:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (*ROWIPs will present opportunities to contribute towards the 7 goals*)
- The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 (*Duty to create Active Travel routes*)
- The Equality Act 2010

An overview was provided in terms of funding and resources and developing and implementing the ROWIP. The timetable of the process was set out.

Andy explained the role of Local Access Forums and confirmed that they must be consulted prior to the review of a ROWIP. There is an expectation that they will be involved throughout the process and kept informed of progress with the development and subsequent implementation of the plans. It was suggested that an update be provided at December's meeting.

10. FUNDING UPDATE

Phil Griffiths updated the Forum in relation to current funding and confirmed that no new grants have been received since the last meeting. In terms of the Rural Development Plan (RDP), there are 2 streams of funding namely Community and the Sustainable Management Scheme. Phil advised that he attended a constructive meeting with Welsh Government where they discussed individual applications and he explained that although some applications scored less than others there is a good chance that some of the applications could be successful at the next round. The most likely contenders being SE Caerphilly and Merthyr/Gelligaer Common and the intention is to revisit and submit these. Further to this there would likely be a regional bid for upland improvements. An update shall be provided at the December meeting.

11. VOLUNTEERS

Andy Powell confirmed the call for volunteers is ongoing. Several new individuals have assisted the Rights of Way (ROW) Warden during the summer months and a meeting has been arranged with a new group via Keep Wales Tidy in the Caerphilly area next week. The Forum was pleased to note that a group from National Resources Wales (Geo Science) took part in a team building day maintaining a right of way. Details were set out on how groups and individuals can volunteer.

12. WALKING FOR HEALTH PROJECT

Phil Griffiths provided an update in terms of the Cardio Walks organised by Brian Begg and confirmed that following negotiations with Aneurin Bevan Health Board his role will continue on a 2 day per week basis. There are currently 3000 people registered for the walks. The Forum was advised that next year's annual walk has been arranged for the 6th May 2017 around the Rhymney area of the Borough and it is hoped that the number of participants will increase again next year.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting is scheduled at 10.00am on Friday 9th December 2016 at the Conference Room, Tredomen House, Tredomen Business Park.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am.