

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum
Unconfirmed Minutes of the 9th Meeting held at 2pm on Thursday 13th
November 2019 at BBNPA Offices, Brecon

Present

Ian Maberley (IM) - Chairman	Denis Murphy (DM)
Richard Ball (RB) - Secretary	Ruth Pickvance (RP)
Pam Bell (PB)	Tracy Purnell (TP)
Philippa Cherryson (PC)	Paul Sinnadurai (PS)
Debra Hughes (DH)	Chris Waterhouse (ChW)
Siôn James (SJ)	Kathryn Whitrow (KW)
Ian Jenkins (IJ)	Colin Woodley (CW)
Hywel Morgan (HM)	

Observers

Eifion Jones (EJ)	Rights of Way Officer BBNPA
Lisa Lloyd	Rights of Way Assistant BBNPA
Sarah Tindell	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies

IM welcomed members and observers to the meeting. Apologies were received from, Josie Pearson, Dave Sharman, Toby Veall and Steve Rayner.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of 8th Meeting held on 8th July 2019

The minutes were accepted and the Chairman authorised to sign them as a correct record.

3. Matters arising not otherwise appearing on agenda

Llyn y Fan Fach - IM sent a letter on behalf of the LAF to Jonathan Jones, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW), regarding the access at Llyn y Fan Fach. No response has been received. RB to contact DCWW to find out who the contact is for the area.

Llyn Y Fan Fach Car parking – RB said that the planning application for the expansion of the car parking area had not been resubmitted.

Area Statements – IM said that he plans to arrange a meeting with the Chief Executive of NRW and one of the issues he hopes to discuss would be the Area Statements. SJ said that following a re-jig of staff he now only has to deal with one NRW officer for the BBNPA area when seeking permission for use of NRW land. HM attended the NRW workshop which was held in Aberaeron, no further information received regarding Area Statements since then.

4. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) update

EJ advised members that the National Park Authority had adopted the ROWIP at the meeting on the 29th October. The document would be sent to a graphic designer before launching publically. EJ will send a copy of the plan to LAF members.

IM thanked EJ and LL for the work that had been put into producing the ROWIP.

5. Enabling Natural Resources and Well Being (ENRAW)

RB advised members that the Step Changes ENRAW bid that had been submitted earlier in the year was unsuccessful and Welsh Government had given feedback. There is an opportunity to resubmit before the deadline at the end of November. Realistically it would be difficult to resubmit before the deadline this time around due to the internal application process.

RB asked members to give some thought to possible projects that can be prepared and ready to submit when grants become available.

IM said that during the Welsh LAF Chairs conference it had been highlighted that over 60% of the ENRAW bids had been unsuccessful and consequently a lot of time and effort had been wasted. It was also noted that of the successful projects there was a very small access element. The LAF chairs would be writing to WG to raise their concerns.

PS suggested LAF members gave some thought to potential rural active travel projects. There are only 3 areas within the National Park covered by Active Travel and we need to start thinking of how we can link some of the smaller villages and settlements with towns and each other. The proposed Hay to Brecon cycle path was highlighted as an example.

6. Waterfall Country Project

James Lawrence (JL), BBNPA Visitor Management Officer, attended the meeting to provide members with an update on the project. The partnership will submit an expression of interest before Jan 2020 to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. They would enter into more formal discussions prior to submitting a formal application in summer 2020 should the EOI be successful.

If successful the grant money would go towards improvements to car parking and facilities and also improvements to trail infrastructure as well as biodiversity improvements. In due course there will be an exercise to determine what changes and improvements are needed to the trail infrastructure and proposals will be brought back to the LAF for comments.

Eleanor Flaherty has been appointed as a Community Development Officer for the Waterfall Country Partnership Project and will be engaging and liaising with the community groups, local authorities and other parties in supporting community initiatives.

Members commented on the issues of road signage and asked if visitors could be directed away from the narrow back lanes and onto the main roads, JL said that project was working with the Highways Authorities to look at signage. Members also queried if safety around the Waterfalls would be considered as part of the project following a number of incidents. JL

responded to say that safety and education would be built into the project and community liaison.

IM thanked JL for attending the meeting and providing an update.

7. BBNPA Restructure

PS provided members with an update on the proposed restructure of the Authority. The Authority is working towards a potential 10% budget cut and staff have been consulted on the proposals.

Members agreed that the LAF should write to the Authority and formally request to be consulted on the restructure proposal.

8. Welsh Government Access Reform Advisory Group (ARAG)

EJ provided members with the details and explained the recruiting process of applying for membership of one of the three expert groups, as part of the ARAG, that are being formed as a result of the Deputy Ministers statement regarding the progress with the reform of access in Wales. Any LAF member looking to apply to one of the expert groups could apply either as an individual or a LAF representative but they would need to provide evidence of how they would disseminate the information to the group or groups they would be representing. If they represented the LAF they would need the LAF to formally approve them as a representative.

9. Welsh Local Access Forums Conference

IM provided members with an update from the conference.

10. Welsh Government additional funding

RB informed members that WG have given the BBNPA just over £600,000 of additional funding which is to be committed by the end of March 2020. £170,000 has been allocated for access work and a project to carry out path repairs and habitat restoration on the Ffwyddog ridge in the Black Mountains was prepared and ready to go ahead.

11. Any Other Competent Business

IJ asked if the BBNPA would be interested in collaborating on a project to collect data on rights of way and visitor spend. He is looking to work with universities. It was suggested that a proposal could be submitted for unfunded pressure money.

HM asked for advice regarding the poor condition of a road near Usk reservoir which had been brought to his attention by a local horse rider. The road was the responsibility of the local authority and DCWW. HM was advised to raise the issue with the Community Councillor.

CW informed members that the concordat between the BHS and NRW, which allows horse riding on NRW land, was signed off at The Royal Welsh Show. They are now looking at a mechanism for reporting and solving problems encountered on the ground.

PC asked if there was an update on the Definitive Map Modification Order application submitted in the Goetre Fawr Community and EJ confirmed that a new application had been received.

RP raised concerns regarding event organisers using indelible paint as route markers. Members agreed that there was a wider problem with a number of events across the park using this form of marking.

DM asked if the planning application consultations that the LAF had previously asked to be consulted on could be filtered by EJ so that only the applications with a direct effect on rights of way were forwarded to LAF Members for comments. EJ agreed that he would filter the consultations.

ST advised members that the Neath Port Talbot ROWIP was currently out to consultation and that there may be a crossover and links in the document to the Waterfalls project.

Date of the next meeting

20th February 2020, Venue to be confirmed.