

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum
Confirmed Minutes of the 4th Meeting held at 2pm on Thursday 3rd March 2022
Via Microsoft Teams Video Conference

Present

Ian Maberley (IM) – Chair Eifion Jones (EJ) – Secretary Pam Bell (PB) Rachel Chapel (RC) Philippa Cherryson (PC)	Karen Harris (KH) Nick Lancaster (NL) Denis Murphy (DM) Roz Smart (RS)
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Observers

Jodie Bond	BBNPA (Item 5)
Helen Lucocq	BBNPA (Item 8)
Judith Harvey	BBNPA (Item 12)
Lisa Lloyd	BBNPA
Phil O'Shea	Brecon Beacons Park Society

1. Welcome and Apologies

IM Welcomed members and observers to the meeting. Apologies were received from Steve Rayner, Sion James, Ian Jenkins, Hywel Morgan, Paul Sinnadurai and Richard Ball.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of 3rd Meetings held on 2nd December 2021

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

3. Matters arising not otherwise appearing on agenda

Keepers Pond – The work to replace the bridge and improve the surface of the path has been completed.

Llyn y fan Fach – DCWW are still going ahead with planned works to the dam.

4. Safety Issues Relating to Cows and Calves (Kath Whitrow)

KW was unable to attend the meeting, so the Agenda Item was postponed.

5. You Gov Visitor Survey Results (Jodie Bond)

IM welcomed Jodie bond (JB) to the meeting. JB presented Members with an overview of the findings of the You Gov survey commissioned by Snowdonia National Park (SNP). Approximately 2000 visitors to SNP were interviewed about behaviours in the countryside such as litter, dogs, wild camping and other activities. JB will circulate the full survey results and summary document to LAF Members.

The 3 Welsh National Parks are planning a summer messaging campaign based on the results of the survey. Visit Wales have provided funding and a creative agency is being recruited to run a media campaign through the summer.

KH raised the issue of parking apps which often give out incorrect information and suggested that campers often want to do the right thing and camp in authorised locations rather than illegally.

RC suggested that messaging should be linked in with Visit England as the issues are the same across all English National Parks. JB agreed that it would be good to see joint messaging and suggested National Parks UK would be best placed to lead and coordinate a campaign.

IM thanked JB for attending the meeting.

6. Issues Regarding Tree Planting on Access Land (Kath Whitrow)

KW was unable to attend the meeting, so the Agenda Item was postponed.

7. Progress on Access and Well Being Research (Ian Jenkins)

IJ was unable to attend the meeting, so the Agenda Item was postponed.

8. BBNP Management Plan Feedback (Helen Lucocq)

HL attended the meeting to provide LAF members with feedback following the recent consultation. Deep Dive online seminars were held for each of the 21 topic based polices to attempt to find common ground with all stakeholders. The sessions looked at what was already happening, enablers and barriers to delivery. The consultation report is due to be published at the end of March along with a renewed timetable for the adoption of the plan.

IM thanked HL for providing the LAF with an update.

9. Countryside Code (Chairman)

IM highlighted that the countryside code has been updated by Natural England with involvement from Natural Resources Wales, the update provides new guidance for visitors to the countryside which hopefully will help to address some of the ongoing issues.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code-advice-for-countryside-visitors>

NRW are currently going through a Wales wide consultation - called Nature and Us. LL will circulate links to the consultation and details of the online stakeholder workshops.

KH advised that she will be attending the webinar and stakeholder session and is happy to forward information if anyone is unable to attend.

10. Canals, Countryside and Wellbeing (ENRAW) Update (Phillipa Cherryson)

Richard Ball provided LAF members with a written update on the ENRAW grant.

- Practical works are due to commence on April 1st 2022

- Interviews for the ENRAW Officer role are being held tomorrow (4th March).
- Powys CC and BBNPA are required to consult with various groups with regard to the access improvements that are proposed as part of the project.
- Two advisory groups are required as a condition of the grant. PC is representing the LAF on the group covering the BBNPA area.
- Circa £200,000 to spend on works, some of the spend will be on the Brecon & Mon Canal towpath
- Still waiting to hear from Welsh Government about final budget as we've requested the budget be reprofiled due to the late approval date.

PC said that she had attended the 1st meeting of the advisory group. The project covers an area 5km either side of the canal from Brecon to Abergavenny. The project will see resurfacing work, interpretation, invasive species control, improved disabled access routes and promoted walks (including guided walks). PC will forward information on individual projects/proposals when available.

11. Rights of Way Consultations (Eifion Jones)

Three row consultations (one diversion and two creations) have been sent out and a number of queries were raised, LAF Members were satisfied with the proposals once details had been clarified.

DM said he had visited the Crickhowell High school path and spoke to local residents who highlighted the muddy condition of the existing path and the need for improved drainage or additional surfacing. EJ confirmed that he is minded to include a condition that Powys County Council installs a stone surface before we formally adopt the route as a footpath.

KH asked if there could be a condition that a fine gravel surface is specified so that access is easier for pushchairs and wheelchair users. EJ confirmed he would discuss the type of surfacing material with Powys CC.

EJ confirmed that the temporary closure of FPI 69 in Govilon has been extended for a third time as developers have been unable to proceed with the building work. They have agreed to proceed with the installation of the footpath so that a further extension won't be required.

DM raised the issue of access along the road between Glangrwyney and Gilwern. The road has been closed to vehicles following storm damage several years ago and has now become very popular for walkers. The road is usually unsuitable for pedestrians as it's narrow and it would be good to see pedestrian friendly multiuser access created when the road is reinstated for vehicular access. PB agreed and said it would be useful to have a cycle route joining Govilon with the A40 and Crickhowell. This was raised by local residents in the Active Travel consultations.

PC asked for an update on the DMMO to upgrade a footpath to a bridleway at Craig yr Allt, Llanover. EJ said that the order needs to be confirmed and NRW will be installing horse stiles to overcome the communities fear of illegal motorcycle access.

12. Access and Rights of Way Projects – Update on Current and Proposed Projects

JH provided LAF Members with an update on Warden projects connected to access in the countryside and completed during 2021/22 with AIG (ROWIP) and SLSP funding amounting to approx. £400k.

- 16 bridges installed throughout the National Park
- Treescapes project removing dangerous trees suffering from Ash dieback disease, on National Park owned land.
- Veteran Tree Project - Wardens and Volunteer Tree Wardens have been provided with equipment to record important veteran trees with in the BBNP. Future projects will look into gathering seed and setting up tree nurseries with landowners.
- Resilient Heritage project on Bryn Oer Tramroad – Commissioned Assessment and report of historic features, surface and drainage improvements, protection of archaeological features and cutting back of overhanging trees and vegetation.
- Resurfacing of car parks including Herbert’s Quarry
- Keepers Pond – resurfacing and new bridge on disabled access path.
- Waterfalls Four Falls Trail – consultants looking at improvements to the trail, the report will be used to gain funding for future path improvements and nature conservation.
- Gunpowder Works – working with Civil Engineers to carry out work on a section of the access track which has suffered from a landslip and is preventing access to the site.
- The works on the diversion at Hendre Bolon in the Waterfalls area is almost complete and is a huge improvement to one of the main access routes into the Waterfalls from Cwmporth.
- Plans to refurbish the toilet block at Cwmporth.
- Self-closing pedestrian and bridleway gates have been purchased to install at various locations to improve accessibility on the row network.

POS asked if there were any plans to carry out work on the section of the Bryn Oer Tram Road at the top of Dyffryn Crawnnon which is suffering from erosion. EJ said that the rock face is eroding back and the recent felling of forestry has exposed the rockface and it appears to be accelerating erosion. The public have been diverted onto the lower path and this route needs to be formalised. Ramblers Association have not been keen to close the route due to the historic nature of the path. JH added that the bridge was replaced on the lower footpath and was built to bridleway specification to accommodate horse riders.

13. Any other competent business

IM said that Francesca Bell has emailed her thanks to the LAF for the letter of support provided for the Changing Places application to provide Disabled Toilets and Trumper hire at NPVC.

IM advised that there is a review of the Wales Coast Path and he will circulate a link to the consultation.

Date of the next meeting – 30th June 2022