

**4. Minutes of meeting of Arfon and Dwyfor Local Access Forum  
Meifod Hotel, Bontnewydd  
23 June 2015**

**Present:**

**Members:** Vincent Mears (VM. Chair), Peter Rutherford (PR) , Richard Parry (RP), Emlyn Jones (EJ), Mike Vitkovitch (MV) , Dafydd Thomas (DT), Malcolm Winstanley (MW), David Medcalf (DM1), Denise Meldrum (DM2), Eurwyn Edwards (EE), David Jones (DJ), Vin West (VW), Gruffydd Williams (GW)

**Gwynedd Council Officers :** Wyn Williams (WW), Dewi Owen (DO), Rhys Roberts (Rh R), Colin Jones (CO)

**NRW :** Molly Lovatt (ML)

**National Grid :** Gavin Crook (GC), Eloise Frank (ef), Nicola Brownbridge (NB)

**Apologies:** Noel Davey, Peter Hewlett, Bob Lowe, Dewi Roberts, Morgan Jones-Parry, Elis Gwyn Jones,

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>  The chair welcomed members and officers to the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Personal Interest</b>  No declaration of interest was made.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Urgent items / Chair's announcement</b>  There were no urgent items.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2015 at Caerwylan Hotel, Criccieth</b>  DM: item 6 – should have been included in Planning sub-group  DM: asked about progress at Glan y Don, Pwllheli, the right of way through the boat yard was dangerous and not signed. DO: the matter had recently been raised with the Regeneration and Economic Department and those proposals to create two bunds to identify the path and segregate walkers from the boatyard had been put forward. Following this work the path could be signed.  SW : asked about progress at Penrhyn Quarry  WW: explained the Quarry operators intend within the next few months to present an application to the Council to extend the quarry's operational period this will include extending the closure period for the footpaths. The Forum agreed to wait for the formal consultation of the application and comment on the implications to the footpaths.  A discussion followed on the LAFs role in responding to Planning application.

	<p>WW. to contact members who had put their names forward for the Planning sub group</p> <p>RP. Noted that they would have to arrange more frequent meeting in order to respond to planning applications.</p> <p>PR. Noted that a similar issue with regards to Planning matters exists in the Park, but overall has improved in recent years.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation by National Grid</b></p> <p>Gavin Crook (GC), National Grid Project Manager for North Wales Connection gave a presentation on NGs role and its current proposal's affecting North West Wales. The role of NG is to provide electricity generating operations with connection to the National UK grid.</p> <p>GC explained that in Anglesey and Gwynedd they are currently looking at connecting the proposed New Horizon power station at Wylfa with the Pentir station as well as two off shore Irish wind farms with Pentir.</p> <p>The current proposal for the Wylfa to Pontir connection was to cross Anglesey overhead but to go underground, under the Menai Straits with a further overhead connection to Pentir. In addition two sealing end compounds would be required either side of the Straits along with modifications at Pentir.</p> <p>This had been identified as the shortest route with the least visual impact.</p> <p>GC further explained that work was also underway to look at options for improving and renewing the cables connecting Trawsfynydd to Pentir, including a new sub-station at Bryncir.</p> <p>GC explained that they will assess the impact on access and PROWs and would wherever possible keep paths open whilst work was underway but would make alternative temporary provision to maintain public safety.</p> <p>Further public consultation on the proposals for Wylfa to Pentir will take place before the end of 2015.</p> <p>NB. Concluded by saying that they would be happy to return to the LAF at a future date.</p> <p>Summary of questions asked by Forum members.</p> <p>VW. The Celtic Array wind farm proposal has been shelved, is it possible for another company to resurrect the project?</p> <p>GC. Yes in principle but major technical obstacles would have to be overcome.</p> <p>Are the proposals linked to the Gwynt y Mor wind farm?</p> <p>GC. No, Gwynt y Mor connects to the grid near to Bodlelwyddan.</p> <p>EE. Would the proposed connection from the Irish wind farm come along the Menai Straits?</p> <p>GC . No details yet available.</p>

	<p>RP. Is a new sub-station at Bryncir still being looked at? GC – Yes it’s still under consideration.</p> <p>ML. Asked, could the existing cables across Anglesey remain and wouldn’t a subsea connection a better option. GC – Yes, the cables would remain as they would still be required following completion of the new Wylfa Power Station. A subsea connection has been considered as part of a “hybrid” option between Wylfa and Pentir or potentially to Deeside. GC explained that the technology for such a connection was not yet available.</p> <p>DM. asked if undergrounding was possible at the Glaslyn. GC. Work was being carried out to assess if this was possible and mentioned that 15 similar schemes at sensitive locations across the UK were being considered.</p> <p>GW. asked who would make the final decision on the proposal GC. The final decision would be made by the secretary of State in Westminster and not by the Welsh Government.</p> <p>DJ .when would the final decision on Wylfa be made. GC. A decision is expected in 2019.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>LAF Action Plan for 15 / 16</b> VM. Noted the requirement for the Council to produce an annual report and that Gwynedd had not prepared a report for a number of years.</p> <p>PR. Mentioned the need to develop better relationship with Community Councils. VM. agreed, previous contact had been useful and mentioned that Community Council had the power to raise their own funds for rights of way.</p> <p>GW: Nefyn Town Council did raise its own funds and had been awarded a grant of £300,000 towards path improvements including the coast path between Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn. The difficulty of creating new access or diverting existing paths was discussed and the possibility of new legislation to make these processes easier was raised.</p> <p>EE. Asked how matters could be raised at the LAF.</p> <p>VM. The LAF is a public meeting and that members of the public could attend as observers. If members wished to raise any issues they should contact the chair or the secretary. However, issues relating to individual paths should in the first instance be reported to the Council.</p> <p>WW. Distributed contact details for the Countryside and Access Unit.</p> <p>VM. explained that the LAF had a valuable role in lobbying for resources for access works</p>

	<p>and in assisting the Council to address difficult issues on the ground.</p> <p><b>Review of ROWIP</b></p> <p>PR. A meeting of the 3 LAFs would be arranged, possibly towards the end of July. VM and DM to attend on behalf of the A&amp;D LAF</p> <p><b>Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales</b></p> <p>VM. A response on behalf of the LAF had been prepared and sent to WG. Copy provided.</p>
7.	<p><b>ROWIP work plan for 2015 /16 – presentation by Dewi Owen, Senior Rights of Way Officer</b></p> <p>WW. Explained the background to The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The production of ROWIP plans was a requirement in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</li> <li>- The Gwynedd Plan was prepared between 2005 and 2007, and adopted in October 2007.</li> <li>- ROWIP plans are required to be updated with new guidance being produced.</li> <li>- WG have provided funding for LAs to deliver ROWIP work programme.</li> <li>- The Gwynedd allocation for 2015 / 16 is £76,500</li> </ul> <p>DO. Presented information on ROWIP funded projects in Arfon / Dwyfor completed in 14 / 15 that included work on paths at: Llandygai, Buan, Nefyn, Aberdaron and Llanbedrog.</p> <p>ML. Commented on the use of tarmac in a number of projects including at Aberdaron and questioned whether it was appropriate.</p> <p>GW. Noted that the use of tarmac was a matter of opinion and that it was often the best option.</p> <p>DO. Explained that the part of the work at Aberdaron was on an area used by traffic and any other type of surface would soon be damaged resulting in more maintenance costs. Two local businesses had contributed £3,000 towards the work.</p> <p>MV. Asked if a path modification order had been made for the path in Llanbedrog as the improvements had been made slightly off the “definitive line”.</p> <p>DO. Answered that no order had been made as the path had remained within what was a reasonable interpretation of the line shown on the definitive map.</p> <p>VM. commented that this was a common sense approach but issues could arise if the land was sold at some point in the future.</p> <p>DO. projects included in the ROWIP programme for 15 / 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhiwlas to Beran Garage: improve path to provide better links between the village of Rhiwlas and the Beran Garage Shop. Project developed with local</li> </ul>

	<p>community and landowner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waunfawr: replacement footbridge following damage during the extreme weather in 2012.</li> <li>• Rowen, Y Felinheli: existing unofficial path in the process of being registered, path a popular link to Menai Straits.</li> <li>• Penmorfa / Porthmadog : replacement gates on bridleway. Existing gates are very difficult to use by horse riders and others. MV. Noted that BHS could advise on best practice for equestrian gates. DO. said that DM2 had offered to help to ensure that the new gates met the needs of riders.</li> <li>• Towyn / Tudweiliog : improvement to access ramp onto popular Towyn beach damaged during winter storms. Project delived as part of the wider Coastal Communities initiative.</li> <li>• Ty Moelwyn, Porthmadog : design of path to rear of Ty Moelwyn creating a link with existing Cob Crwn footpath and the Cob footpath / cycle path that had been the subject of a S26 creation order. DO. Explained that at this stage it was only feasible to prepare the scheme drawings in anticipation of funding becoming available.</li> </ul> <p>MV. asked if the creation order had been confirmed as BHS had made representations on the basis that the path should be a bridleway.</p> <p>WW. the process had been dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate by written representations and confirmed late 2014. WW. enquire about the comments made by BHS.</p> <p>MV and DM(2) : emphasized that the new path should be made available to horse riders as should the path alongside the Cob.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back up projects – Cefn Emrys / Llandwrog improvements Signage and new furniture along the 4 Valleys path</li> </ul> <p>MV. Asked if the projects had been identified as priorities in the ROWIP plan.</p> <p>DO. These projects met the priority actions in the plan as well as meeting local need.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Active travel : Colin Jones ,Parking and Road Safety Manager</b></p> <p>CJ. Explained that the purpose of the Active Travel Act is to encourage and provide facilities for people to walk or cycle to the essential services they use such as schools or hospitals.</p>

	<p>Under the Act Local Authorities must firstly identify and survey routes that meet the Active Travel standards within settlements. The settlements have been chosen by Welsh Government based on their population. There are 11 Active Travel settlements in Gwynedd, however as the budget for the current year is only £7,000 only 3 will be looked at in detail during 15/ 16, these are Bangor, Caernarfon and Porthmadog .The other settlements are – Dolgellau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Barmouth, Tywyn, Pwllheli, Y Felinheli, Bethesda / Rachub, Caeathro.</p> <p>So far the survey appears to show that most of the routes identified are close to meeting Active Travel standards.</p> <p>The next stage is a process of public consultation on the proposed routes. Maps and a questionnaire will be on the Council’s website from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Drop in events for the public will be held in the main settlements along with consultation with schools and youth organisation from September.</p> <p>MV. is Active travel only looking at paths within the communities or will links into the communities be considered.</p> <p>CJ. Active Travel routes must be within the settlement areas and Active Travel journeys should take no more than 45 minutes, therefore links such as between Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog could not be considered as Active Travel routes.</p> <p>PR. Asked if Active Travel extended to the provision of cycle racks.</p> <p>CJ. Yes, options for cycle parking is included in the Act</p>
9.	<p><b>Coastal Path – Update by Rhys Roberts, Coastal Path Project Officer</b></p> <p>RhR. reported that the grant offer for 15 /16 Coast Path had not been received. However, NRW had indicated that the offer letter would be sent to the local authorities in early July. Welsh Government has allocated £900k to the WCP for 15 /16 and was in discussion with NRW about the how the money is to be used. The delay is thought to be due to ongoing discussions between NRW and Welsh Government. Because of the delay the work programme for 15 /16 had not yet been started, however the Council has taken the risk of starting essential maintenance.</p> <p>The main projects in the 15 / 16 projects are :</p> <p><b>Y Felinheli</b> : a S26 creation order has been made, however agreement has been reached without the need for a public enquiry. Agreements with a further 3 parties are required before the path into the Faynol can be opened.</p> <p><b>Penarfynydd – Aberdaron</b> : creation agreements close to completion, subject to grant offer, work will take place in September and October.</p> <p><b>Llanllawen (Uwchmynydd)</b> : agreement reached to dedicate an existing permissive path</p>

	<p><b>RhR</b> explained that in the coming years the priority for the Gwynedd section of the CP would be improvements in Meirionnydd.</p> <p>VM. asked if grant would cover maintenance cost.</p> <p>RhR . NRW had confirmed that the grant would cover 75% of maintenance costs.</p> <p>DJ. Was anything being done about the path at Ynysgain ?</p> <p>RhR . Condition of the path was being monitored, but at this time was not being treated as a priority.</p> <p>EE.expressed concern about the condition of the path alongside Ffordd Yr Aber at Caernarfon and about the line of the coast path in the Llanfaglan area as it went along roads and did not use a public footpath past Foryd Farm.</p> <p>RhR. Agreed that the line of the CP should be improved in this area and that the path at Foryd Farm would be included in the programme for 16 / 17.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Proposed budget cuts</b></p> <p>WW. The Council is looking to make £11 million worth of budget cuts across Council services. Proposed cuts affecting the Countryside and Access Unit (rights of way, rural operations, Llyn AONB) amounted to £500,000 or 70% of the Units total budget.</p> <p>The Unit currently has 15 staff, 5 are grant aided and on temporary contracts. If all the cuts are implemented to Unit as a whole would be reduced to 3 or 4 permanent staff members.</p> <p>The Council will consult on the cuts, the public consultation starting in September with the final decisions expected in March 2016.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>PR. rights of way are essential to the tourism in Gwynedd.</p> <p>EE. The Council would face more claims if people are injured on paths.</p> <p>DM(2). Lack of maintenance will soon result in paths becoming unusable and the Council will face considerable costs if it has to reopen paths in the future.</p> <p>VM. many local businesses rely on tourism (information on the economic impact of tourism was distributed by WW)</p> <p>DT. Community Councils have an important role to play in maintaining paths and the loss of support by the Council for maintenance would seriously affect Community Councils ability to maintain rights of way.</p>

	VM. proposed that a letter be sent to the Council (Portfolio Leader for the Regulatory Department) and to Community Councils in the Arfon Dwyfor area.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b> It was agreed to hold the next meeting on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> of September 15, proposed location the Sailing Academy, Pwllheli.
<b>15.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> A site visit for members was proposed during the summer.