

**CYFARFOD CADEIRYDDION FFORYMAU MYNEDIAD LLEOL CYMRU  
ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE CHAIRS OF THE LOCAL ACCESS  
FORUMS IN WALES**

MEETING NOTES OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING HELD AT HAFOD A HENDRE, ROYAL WELSH SHOWGROUND, BUILTH WELLS ON 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2012.

Present:

Chair

Jean Rosenfeld	National Representative for the Local Access Forums in Wales & Chair of Flintshire LAF
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Members

Vincent Mears	Chair, Arfon Dwyfor LAF
Mike Scott Archer	Chair Brecon Beacons LAF & Dep. Chair Powys LAF
Andrew Fleming	Blaenau Gwent LAF
Rowland Pittard	Dep. Chair, Bridgend LAF
William Lyndsey	Chair, Caerphilly LAF
Robin Simpson	Dep. Chair, Cardiff & Rhondda Cynon Taff LAF
Karen Burch	Chair, Carmarthenshire LAF
John Morgan	Chair, Ceredigion LAF
Max Grant	Chair, Conwy East LAF
Dewi ap Rhobert	Chair, Isle of Anglesey LAF
John Harvey	Chair, Monmouthshire LAF
Arthur Thomas	Member, Newport LAF
Peter Harwood	Pembrokeshire LAF
Hedd Pugh	Chair, South Snowdonia LAF
Paxton Hood-Williams	Chair, Swansea LAF
Edwin Gulliford	Chair, Torfaen LAF
Frank Coleman	Chair, Vale of Glamorgan LAF
Sue Gittins	Wrexham LAF

Guests

Gwenda Owen	Ramblers Cymru
Elly Hannigan Popp	Ramblers Cymru
Sue Rice	CCW
Richard Owen	CCW
Chris Heaps	CCW

## Event Support

Carys Drew

CCW, Recreation and Access Advisor  
(Secretariat)

Lucy Swannell

CCW

Gwilym Lovgreen

Translator

## **INTRODUCTION & OUTLINE OF THE DAY**

Jean Rosenfeld welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves briefly for the benefit of those who were attending for the first time.

Carys Drew then updated the group on action points from the last meeting - those actions which had evolved or were yet to be addressed were:

**Action 1.1: Highways and Transport Bill – Llyr Jones hadn't been able to provide an explanatory note, however CCW was preparing initial advice to Welsh Government on what they understood to be the proposals. To support this the NAFW had set up a subgroup to discuss and advise on the topic. Carys would circulate the note of the meeting and CCW's initial advice paper to the LAF Chairs with the minutes.**

**Action 3.1 LAF Conference was yet to be arranged and this was a topic for consideration during this meeting.**

**Action 4.1 Llais y Goedwig would be dealing with Glastir staff directly rather than via the LAFs. Carys had been involved in some discussions around Glastir consultations and had been told that WG were planning to issue a briefing note for LAF involvement soon.**

**Action 5.1 Report on the economic value of cycling will be circulated by Carys following the meeting.**

## **1. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CCW & LAF MEMBERS**

### **Enjoying the Outdoors Newsletter**

Michael Smith of CCW had recently set up an electronic survey targeted at the readership of the Enjoying the Outdoors Newsletter which is produced by CCW three times a year with the aim of keeping LAF and NAF members updated on access, recreation and engagement initiatives carried out by CCW and it's partners.

The results of the survey showed that overall people were happy with the newsletter's content and especially value examples of practical access improvements.

The newsletter is sent as a pdf and a web link to LAF secretaries to forward on to their members however the survey showed that a number of LAF members were seeing it for the first time.

## **Discussion**

It became apparent from the discussion that while some attendees had only become aware of the newsletter recently there were examples where the secretary forwarded it on regularly to all members.

Rowland Pittard suggested numbering the newsletter so that readers could be aware of whether they have missed any editions.

Hedd Pugh also felt numbering was important as it is difficult to tell currently whether all editions are being sent on.

Vincent Mears said that the secretary prints hard copies of the newsletter so it is available at LAF meetings to members without computers and this saves on postage.

Sue Gittins highlighted the importance of receiving the newsletter as CCW staff are not always able to attend LAF meetings on a regular basis.

Carys Drew replied that CCW saw the newsletter as the minimum basis for keeping LAFs informed and involved with CCW work, this was of particular importance where restricted resources meant that CCW staff weren't able to attend every meeting. It was important to CCW to keep in touch with LAFs and the newsletter provided up to date information with contact details of staff leading on work in the articles so that readers could follow up with staff for more information.

Jean Rosenfeld concluded that LAFs cannot expect CCW to maintain an address list for all LAF members in Wales and that it was the responsibility of the secretaries to ensure that LAF members receive the newsletter. Jean advised that each Chair should discuss the newsletter with their secretary to improve the situation.

**Action 11.1: Chairs to discuss newsletter communication with their secretary to ensure that the newsletter is being passed on to all members.**

## **2. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTPATH WORKING GROUPS THROUGHOUT WALES**

Gwenda Owen of Ramblers Cymru (RC) gave a presentation on the work being carried out by RC to support and develop footpath working groups within Wales. RC have a range of new resources available to existing groups including organising training days, giving advice on health and safety, advice on suitable funding streams and being a provider of insurance cover for working groups. RC are also working with IPROW (Institute of Public Rights of Way) who support rights of way officers to establish guidelines on volunteering. This is to make it easier for volunteers and local authorities to work together and help RC achieve their overall aims of protecting the walking environment and getting more people walking.

RC want to find out what volunteers are doing in each community and provide assistance where needed. Gwenda acknowledged that each community is very

different and the RC recognises this by adjusting the levels of support according to the needs of each individual group.

Gwenda asked the LAFs to help inform RC what was happening on the ground so that the best value can be obtained from limited resources.

### **Discussion**

Edwin Gulliford asked how this work helped improve access for people with disabilities.

Gwenda Owen replied that volunteer groups replace stiles with gates and wheelchair accessible gates where appropriate to make routes more accessible for all.

Edwin Gulliford asked how are disabled users were supposed to be aware of such improvements?

Sue Rice said that providing this information was something that we all needed to do better and that there isn't a place where all this information is captured.

Mike Scott Archer suggested that the Enjoying the Outdoors newsletter could have a section on what routes had been made available in each area.

Jean Rosenfeld reported that in Flintshire they are trying to get information standardised and developing some specialised promotional material to target people with disabilities and carriage drivers. He added that a pack on how to do volunteering would be a very useful. Flintshire LAF are also keen for community councils to enter discussions on using volunteers.

Gwenda Owen acknowledged that community councils are key and in some areas community walks have been developed for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Jean Rosenfeld agreed that many communities would like to develop routes that start and finish there and link to neighbouring settlements.

Dewi ap Rhobert added that Isle of Anglesey LAF are also looking to increase contact with community councils.

John Morgan reported that a study of footpath volunteers is being carried out in Ceredigion. The effective use of volunteers in Ceredigion has meant that ROWIP targets have been met and they were also crucial to the development of the Ceredigion Coast Path. There is a good supply of volunteers as people enjoy coming out especially those who may have spent their working lives behind a desk. Currently two local authority officers go out with each group for health and safety reasons which is a demand on a staff time, the study will recommend how volunteers can be used more efficiently. Projects such as constructing bridges also need a lot of supervision whereas maintenance is much easier to carry out independently.

Jean Rosenfeld added that the CAMS system used by many local authorities could be used with an additional software module to manage volunteer

activities, highlighting the work that needs to be done and allowing the volunteers to report work they plan to or have carried out. In connection with the project to involve local communities in volunteer work, recently launched by the Flintshire LAF together with the Flintshire rights of way officers, the authority is considering the feasibility of purchasing the additional software. He emphasised that rights of way officers should remain in charge of the overall process.

Gwenda Owen hoped that working with IPROW to produce guidelines would reassure local authorities that it volunteers can be left alone to carry out practical works.

Vincent Mears said that it took a long time to convince Gwynedd of the benefits of using volunteers on maintenance and to explode the myths surrounding insuring volunteers.

Gwenda Owen said that in Northampton there are some highly specialised groups of volunteers and one group only carries out works to install steps.

Peter Harwood reported that volunteering is viewed positively in Pembrokeshire and the local RC working group have worked closely with Pembrokeshire County Council and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to promote the concept of volunteering. People with disabilities are represented on the LAF and are consulted on easy access projects so they know what's needed. He added not all disabled users want the same things and some want the machinery to fit the path rather than the other way around.

Max Grant reported that the process of setting up a volunteer group in Conwy was still ongoing. The LAF has formed a volunteering subgroup to advise the local authority on how this can best be taken forward.

Gwenda Owen said that this is what RC are here for and something that they could help with.

Jean Rosenfeld said that he would like to see RC working with the LAFs so that other users such as horse riders and cyclists can be taken into account when path improvements are being carried out by volunteers.

Dewi ap Rhobert said that it was important to remember that many volunteers were older people without internet access and to communicate with them through paper mailings.

Mike Scott Archer reported that Brecon Beacons National Park Authority delegated a certain level of maintenance to volunteers. He added that at a time when there are so many unemployed young people who are desperate to fill their time there should be willingness on the part of authorities to recruit and train absolute beginners. Local universities also provide groups of students to carry out practical improvement works.

Gwenda Owen reported that Anglesey County Council have used Welsh Baccalaureate students as volunteers.

Arthur Thomas cautioned the over use of volunteers as this could disadvantage the chances for young people to gain paid employment.

Jean Rosenfeld agreed that volunteers should not be a replacement for paid professional staff.

Gwenda Owen agreed that volunteers should not be a substitute for staff and added that the economic value of volunteers hasn't been measured.

Frank Coleman reported that core funding for Valeways (a volunteer based project for the maintenance, protection, preservation and promotion of public rights of way in the Vale of Glamorgan) had ceased which is a great disappointment at a time of reducing budgets.

Paxton Hood-Williams reported that volunteer groups are very active in the Swansea area and well represented on the LAF.

John Harvey reported that in Monmouthshire volunteers had been asked to adopt sections of the definitive map and walk them regularly. This feeds back lots of useful information to the rights of way teams.

Vincent Mears said that in Gwynedd the maintenance budget had been reduced to cover only 40% of rights of way. He had tried engaging with the probation service to offer offenders an opportunity to volunteer and gain skills for employment. He asked if RC could help with this?

Gwenda Owen replied that this would need to be a distinct project as it is too complex to integrate into existing volunteering groups but it was worth exploring the idea to see whether it would work.

Mike Scott Archer said that volunteering was a theme that was deserving of regular attention in the Enjoying the Outdoors newsletter.

Jean Rosenfeld suggested that volunteering should be added to the agenda of each LAF's next meeting to establish how LAFs and the local authority can help and support volunteers.

**Action 11.2 All LAFs to discuss supporting and developing the effective use of volunteers at their next meeting.**

### **3. WALES COAST PATH (WCP)**

Sue Rice gave a presentation to update on progress and the countdown to the launch on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May.

The WCP is already attracting lots of accolades. The Lonely Planet named the Welsh Coast the number one region to visit in the world in 2012 because of the WCP. The WCP is also reaching an international audience with articles appearing in the NY Times, the Chicago Tribune and National Geographic Traveller.

On the launch date there will be 3 main events in Cardiff Bay, Flint Castle and on Aberystwyth promenade. Each event will have a stage with entertainment and associated marquees showcasing what the Welsh coast has to offer. Coastal communities and charities will be involved in the event. Ramblers Cymru (RC) are organising the Big Welsh Coastal Walk with a whole range of walks on the WCP aimed at different types of users. LAFs can organise walks and register them on the RC website. CCW are also encouraging local authorities to hold their own celebratory events around Wales not only on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May but throughout the summer, CCW has grant aid available for local authorities to support their events.

Over 96% of the WCP has been completed. Practical works are still ongoing on the ground and there will be one more year of funding in 2012/2013. CCW encourages volunteers to go out and check sections of the WCP have been adequately waymarked in advance of the launch.

The WCP will be split into 8 sections for promotional purposes so that more detailed information can be provided on each area.: Region A - North Wales Coast and Dee Estuary, Region B - Isle of Anglesey, Region C - Menai, Llŷn & Meirionnydd, Region D – Ceredigion, Region E – Pembrokeshire, Region F – Carmarthenshire, Region G - Gower & Swansea Bay, Region H - South Wales Coast & Severn Estuary Ultimately there will be official WCP guidebooks corresponding to each area but they don't intend to replace them where they already exist. In the meantime there are downloadable maps and leaflets on CCW's website. A separate website [www.walescoastpath.gov.uk](http://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk) will be launched in April that will include interactive maps. The WCP is also being promoted on social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority have been contracted to manage the marketing and Quadrant have been contracted to manage public relations and maximise publicity both within Wales and around the globe.

Arry Beresford Webb, CCW's Health & Well Being Officer, will be doing the Dragon Run – running 1027 miles around the whole perimeter of Wales on the WCP and Offa's Dyke to raise money for two charities close to her heart – Velindre Cancer Centre & Gozo CCU Monitors Foundation. Arry begins her epic journey on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March and she is due to arrive back in Cardiff on the launch day after completing a staggering 39 marathons in 42 days. Also Dave Quarrell will begin a walk of the entire WCP to raise money for Cancer Research Wales in memory of his father Gerry Quarrell who some of you may remember was Head of Access Policy in WG and instrumental in getting the WCP project off the ground in the early days. If you would like to sponsor Arry or Dave you can do so via their websites:

<http://dragonrun1027.wordpress.com>

<http://walkwales1027.com/about.htm>

Improvements to the WCP will be needed beyond the 5<sup>th</sup> of May and beyond the end of March 2013. CCW are working with WG to advise them on the future management

of the WCP. The opening of the WCP will make Wales the first country to have a path around its entire coastline and, together with the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, the first country to have a path around its entire perimeter.

### **Discussion**

Max Grant asked whether CCW were advising the WG to grant the WCP National Trail status.

Sue Rice replied that CCW were advising on funding requirements not whether the WCP becomes a National Trail (NT) which isn't a prerequisite for funding. CCW and WG are keen to ensure that the WCP has a secure funding stream.

Jean Rosenfeld said that the next phase of the WCP should concentrate on integrating it into the local rights of way network and developing links and loops between the WCP and local communities.

Sue Rice agreed that this should be addressed but added if circular walks had been developed at the start of the project then it would not have been possible to have a continuous WCP in place now.

Gwenda Owen added that the interest generated by the WCP should help it to secure further funding for future development.

Vincent Mears expressed doubts about the ongoing maintenance of the WCP as Gwynedd struggle to maintain their existing rights of way network.

Sue Rice replied that because the WCP was such a big tourism product then it would be a national embarrassment if it wasn't maintained properly. CCW advice to WG on future management of the path would include recommendations regarding maintenance. Monitoring and evaluation will also quantify the economic benefit of the WCP which will help secure the support of politicians.

Karen Burch asked whether it would be possible to ascertain which sections of the WCP were available for horse riding.

Sue Rice replied that the interactive mapping on the WCP website will ultimately have layers that will categorise the WCP according to user.

Arthur Thomas reported that Newport had problems with free roaming horses and cattle and asked who would police animals on the WCP that shouldn't be there.

Sue Rice acknowledged that this was a big problem and because of grazing rights it was difficult to know which animals were allowed to be there and to enforce any restrictions. She added that it wasn't a problem that the WCP project could address.

Jean Rosenfeld advised that it was an issue that could only be resolved by the local authority and the police setting up a meeting with local graziers.

Mike Scott Archer said that an article on the WCP was in the current edition of Walk magazine.

#### **4. TEN YEAR REVIEW OF THE OPEN ACCESS MAPS**

Richard Owen, CCW's Project Manager for Open Access, gave an update on the 10 year review of the countryside access maps that show areas of registered common land and areas of open country (mountain, moor, heath and down). CCW have a duty under section 10 of the CROW Act to carry out a review by 2015. The review of the maps will involve public consultation and CCW want to know if there have been any changes in the seven years since the original maps were issued.

A presentation has been prepared for CCW regional access staff to take to the LAFs to give more information on the review so that it can be discussed at each individual LAF.

Since the conclusive maps were confirmed in 2005 there have been some changes. Access land was originally mapped to OS Landline but the software has changed to Mastermap which has resulted in many very minor changes. CCW staff observations since the maps were issued have also led to some amendments of which the vast majority are very minor. There are also some pending representations made over the last 7 years which CCW are looking at before issuing the new draft map. The new draft map will be issued on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2012. At this stage anybody can make a representation to add or delete land on or before the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012. A provisional map will be issued on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2013 at which stage only people with a legal interest in the land can appeal against land being shown as access land. The deadline for appeal applications to the Planning Inspectorate is 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2013. The All Wales Conclusive Map will be issued on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

Maps will be available online and both maps and representation forms can be downloaded and printed at home. CCW will also provide hard copies for people without computers or printers at home.

The LAFs are statutory consultees and each LAF will be provided with a set of A1 paper maps for their area so that they can make representations as a LAF if they so wish.

It is not anticipated that the review will result in major changes as the original mapping was carried out to a high standard. The staff resource is very low compared to the original mapping process although on a positive note the staff who will be involved in the review were members of the team who mapped access land the first time around. It is hoped the LAFs can act as a filter for representations and ensure that only those areas that qualify as registered common land or mountain, moor, heath or down have representations to add and only those areas that no longer qualify as registered common land or mountain, moor, heath or down have representations to delete.

#### **Discussion**

Jean Rosenfeld asked what the scale of the maps provided to LAFs would be as the maps for the Glastir consultation were inadequate.

Richard Owen replied that the A1 paper maps would be at 1:25000 scale.

Sue Gittins asked whether the formation of the Single Body would affect the mapping review.

Richard Owen replied that the law requires the review so function would be carried forward into the single body and should not affect progress.

Rowland Pittard asked whether land identified had to be a minimum size.

Richard Owen replied that if any new areas of open country (mountain, moor, heath and down) were identified of less than 5 hectares they would need to serve a useful purpose.

Jean Rosenfeld pointed out that during the Glastir Targeted Element access consultations some LAFs negotiated access to electronic maps. In Flintshire the local authority converted LAFs suggestions into an electronic layer that was compatible with WG mapping software.

Max Grant added that LAFs are currently being asked to advise on access to woodlands under Glastir and asked whether Welsh Government (WG) and CCW's mapping systems were compatible.

Richard Owen said that any representations would need to have a representation form and that CCW were happy to receive maps where areas for addition/deletion were marked with pen. He added that WG's mapping system had been developed specifically for Glastir and that there was already a function on CCW's website that generated maps.

Max Grant asked whether LAFs needed to contact CCW regarding the mapping review presentation or whether CCW would approach each LAF.

Richard Owen replied that LAFs could contact CCW if they so wished to let them know dates of impending meetings.

John Morgan asked whether a list of changes that CCW had made to the current conclusive map could be made available so that LAFs could know where things had changed.

Richard Owen replied that this would be difficult, as there are thousands of very minor boundary shifts resulting from transferring from OS Landline to Mastermap. But it is possible for CCW to provide the changes for larger areas. CCW is not expecting LAF's to review the minor positional shifts, but to suggest new areas which can now be considered for adding to, or deleting, from the draft maps.

Jean Rosenfeld suggested classifying the changes into very minor, minor, significant etc. to aid the LAFs when they are looking at the maps. He added that advance notice about the mapping review was very welcome.

**Action 11.3 Richard Owen to investigate feasibility of providing LAFs with a list of CCW changes to the current draft map.**

**Action 11.4 All LAFs to add the mapping review to their agenda and invite their regional CCW contact to give a more detailed presentation on the mapping review.**

## **5. UPDATE ON THE SINGLE BODY**

Carys Drew gave an update on the creation of a single body previously referred to as 'single environment body' but now referred to officially as 'single body'.

The new single body will bring together CCW, FC and EAW into one organisation. A shadow single body is expected to be formed by summer 2012 and become fully functional in April 2013.

A consultation on the creation of the single body is on the Welsh Government website and runs from the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2012 until the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012.

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/singlebody/?lang=en>

The single body will be responsible for delivering the Natural Environment Framework – a more integrated approach to environmental management. This has now moved on to a Green Paper – Sustaining a Living Wales and is open for consultation until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May on the WG website.

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/sustainingwales/?lang=en>

Carys encouraged the LAFs to respond to both consultations.

### **Discussion**

Vincent Mears added that although the consultation documents were lengthy it was very important that LAFs make some comments on the Green Paper as there is virtually no mention of access.

John Morgan understood the Green Paper to be a methodology for making decisions rather than covering specific topics such as access. He also expressed concern that rights of way wouldn't have much of a profile in such a large single body.

Jean Rosenfeld recommended remaining cautiously optimistic until more was known and that if the same access staff remain in post following the creation of the single body this should give the LAFs cause for hope.

Sue Gittins thought the process could be quite messy as all the legislation needed for the merger isn't currently in place.

Rowland Pittard said that access needed to be included in other initiatives in addition to the single body including Visit Wales initiatives, the health agenda and the Highways & Transport Bill.

Peter Harwood suggested that LAFs would always need to emphasise the benefits of joined up thinking and different departments talking to each other.

Frank Coleman said it was important to ensure that access isn't given less priority in the new system, and that the single body should aim to maintain the current very good working relationships and communication between CCW and its partners.

Carys Drew said that access and recreation is a core function for CCW and should form part of the functions of the new single body. There have been some high profile positive initiatives such as the Wales Coast Path and the Rights of Way Improvement Plans and associated funding programme that have demonstrated the level of interest in and the value of delivering access and recreation work.

Sue Rice added that CCW was the only one of the three organisations with access as a core function therefore it was very important for external organisations such as the LAFs to input into the process and highlight the importance of access.

Richard Owen said that the formation of the single body will include a review of CCW regulations such as the 10 yearly requirement to review the maps of open country and common land which may not be the most effective way of managing changes to the map.

**Action 11.5 All LAFs to look at the Single Body and Sustaining a Living Wales consultations and consider formulating a response.**

## **6. PROW/ROWIP FUNDING**

Carys Drew gave an update on the ROWIP funding programme. This funding was originally set up as a 3 year programme but WG have secured an extra year's funding of 1.4 million for the financial year up until the end of March 2013. WG hope to replace the ROWIP funding programme with another rights of way targeted grant but as it is early days nothing has been agreed with the Minister. The Minister is very impressed with what ROWIP funding has achieved on the ground and the annual ROWIP reports prepared by CCW with information from local authority rights of way staff have been a key part of convincing those higher up of the importance of well targeted funding for rights of way.

## **Discussion**

Mike Scott Archer thought the LAF Manifesto drafted before the elections last year had been effective in highlighting the multiple benefits of a well resourced rights of

way network and added that LAFs should continually highlight the progress being made to AMs.

Sue Rice said that the ROWIP funding programme annual reports referred to by Carys collate statistics and highlight good news stories and CCW would be happy to share this information with the LAFs.

Jean Rosenfeld said the LAFs needed to be careful not to move into politics but couldn't see any harm in LAFs making a presentation to their local AMs.

John Morgan said that the vast majority of Ceredigion's access funding comes from grants with a limited time span and applying for and administering these funds can be a lengthy process. He expressed concern that if a new form of targeted rights of way funding wasn't linked to the ROWIP then this could jeopardise the plan.

Carys Drew replied that currently ROWIP funding can pay for anything that is in a ROWIP however after 2017 the current 10 year lifespan will have come to an end ROWIPs will not be a statutory duty after this and LAFs might want to start thinking about what happens after that and whether anything was needed to replace it.

Jean Rosenfeld emphasised the need for continued centralised funding for rights of way as the local authorities don't have the financial capacity to do it themselves.

Vincent Mears reported that rights of way officers in Gwynedd and Snowdonia National Park view ROWIP funding as highly effective as it has allowed them to carry out capital improvements where paths had fallen into serious disrepair and needed more extensive works to bring them up to standard. He echoed the need for this sort of funding to continue as local authorities don't have the financial capacity to start directly funding rights of way.

Sue Gittins asked whether ROWIPs could be amalgamated into the Highways & Transport Bill.

Jean Rosenfeld replied that the National Access Forum Sub-group had suggested that the concept of transport within the Bill should be extended to access to the countryside for recreational purposes and that all non motorised users should be considered within the Bill.

Mike Scott Archer suggested renaming the current funding programme to include maintenance as the emphasis was on improving rights of way.

Carys Drew replied that it was already possible to use ROWIP funding for maintenance works.

Paxton Hood Williams reported that more and more people are coming to the Swansea area for walking holidays therefore maintaining existing rights of way is key to ensuring that visitors have a good experience.

**Action 11.6: Jean Rosenfeld to seek advice on whether it is politically acceptable for LAFs to invite AMs to meetings.**

## **7. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT BILL**

Carys Drew gave an update on discussions surrounding the Welsh Government's intention to draft a Bill to make it easier to cycle in Wales. CCW have been given an early opportunity to contribute to the process and to help form their advice a subgroup of NAFW was set up. The subgroup meeting notes will be circulated with the minutes of the this meeting together with CCW's initial advice paper which took into account the subgroup's discussion.

The draft Bill is currently being considered by officials in Transport Branch and is changing a lot at the moment but it is expected that a final draft should be available for public consultation during spring 2012.

Carys outlined some of the key points from CCW's initial advice to WG including:

- The Bill should not be defined according to the purpose of the journey (eg. journeys to commute to and from and work only).
- A new duty should be accompanied by funding for delivery

### **Discussion**

Jean Rosenfeld pointed out that the appendix to CCW's advice paper helpfully sets out how the proposed Bill relates to WG's Programme for Government.

Sue Gittins suggested that new cycle routes could be created by reclassifying unclassified country roads as restricted byways which would make them available for non motorised users only except where motorised users owned or had the owner's permission to use routes.

John Morgan asked what was the legal status of a cycle route.

Carys Drew replied that this varied from route to route and was currently a very complex situation. Very few Cycle Track Orders were made in Wales so she understood that most routes did not have clear legal status or were provided by permission of private landowners with agreements which were for limited periods of time. She hoped that the opportunity would be taken in the Bill to resolve current issues on the matter by providing greater clarity and requiring routes to be recorded and legally protected. Cycle Tracks or permissive cycle routes are not currently shown on the definitive map and this was another point which had been raised by the NAFW subgroup.

Jean Rosenfeld added that this has created a situation where there are whole areas of cycle routes that no-one has a legal responsibility for.

Vincent Mears said that most cycle tracks were owned or leased from the local authority through permissive agreements and asked what the status of new cycle routes would be.

Jean Rosenfeld concluded the discussion by saying the opportunity for the NAFW subgroup to influence the draft Bill at an early stage was very valuable.

## **8. THEFT OF GATES ON BRIDLEWAYS & OTHER RIGHTS OF WAY**

Edwin Gulliford raised the issue of newly installed gates being stolen for scrap metal which is currently attracting a high price. In one instance this has meant that livestock have been able to stray and could get onto a busy road but as he understands things the farmer isn't allowed to block access to the bridleway to stop animals straying while the situation is resolved. Edwin asked the group whether there was a temporary measure that could be applied.

Max Grant said that an emergency TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) can be applied to stop access until the gates have been replaced.

Edwin Gulliford expressed concern that these could only be used where health and safety of users was an issue.

Andy Fleming added that emergency TROs were used a lot in Blaenau Gwent to stop access where trees had fallen.

Edwin Gulliford suggested that the Enjoying the Outdoors newsletter could include a section on the issue that included security advice on how to make gates less susceptible to theft as local authorities struggle to find funding to replace gates.

Carys Drew suggested that the authority in question could raise the issue at the next meeting of the Welsh Rights of Way Officers Working Group (formerly the CSS).

Vincent Mears suggested that Edwin Gulliford contacted the Institute of Public Rights of Way (IPROW) who have a wealth of information on rights of way law and good practice guidance.

Jean Rosenfeld added that he would raise it at the impending NAFW meeting and enquire whether TRO's could be applied to prevent the straying of livestock.

**Action 11.7: Jean Rosenfeld to raise theft of gates and whether there were any restrictions on the application of TROs at the NAFW meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012.**

**Action 11.8: If action 11.7 doesn't answer Edwin's query then he should suggest to his authority that they raise the matter through the WROWMWG.**

## **9. ELECTION OF NATIONAL LAF REPRESENTATIVE & DEPUTY**

Carys Drew said that the current arrangement of having a national and deputy national representative to ensure LAFs interests are represented at a higher level is very useful for example representing LAFs at meetings of NAFW. At the last meeting Geoffrey

Williams stepped down from his role as deputy national representative and in addition Jean Rosenfeld has been national representative for the full 3 year period of election. In theory Jean Rosenfeld could continue as national representative but he would need to be re-elected first. Therefore an election needs to be held for both roles.

Only current LAF Chairs or Deputy Chairs can nominate and are eligible for nomination and it is possible to nominate yourself.

If there is more than one nomination, then a postal ballot would need to be held. Only current LAF Chairs can vote in a ballot.

Following discussion by the attendees it was decided to postpone the election until the next meeting. Any nominations need to be sent to Carys Drew by the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2012.

Mike Scott Archer volunteered himself as Deputy National Representative in the interim period before the election.

More information on the roles will be re-circulated with the meeting notes.

**Action 11.9: Current LAF Chairs/Deputy LAF Chairs to send any nominations for the roles of National LAF Representative and/or Deputy National LAF Representative to Carys Drew by the 7<sup>th</sup> of August.**

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Robert Derbyshire had asked Carys to request in his absence whether anyone with an interest in access to inland water could attend the next Water Recreation Ministerial Advisory Group in Aberystwyth on the 23 April 2012.

Carys Drew gave a brief update on behalf of Joe Roberts of CCW on the development of specific water activity codes that will fit it in under the countryside code. Consultations on the draft codes for canoeing, angling and wild swimming will be on CCW's website for 12 weeks from the beginning of March.

Carys also asked on behalf of Jill Meyer and CCW if any LAF could suggest promoted routes especially multi user ones that might be suitable for a mobile phone app that CCW is working on in conjunction with Bangor University.

Jean Rosenfeld raised that the current location of the LAF Chairs Meetings in Builth Wells made it a long journey for attendees from the north and it isn't a location accessible by public transport. The attendees discussed the pros and cons of the current location and it was agreed that the current location was a bigger ask for those in the north. It was decided that to trial holding the October 2012 meeting in Newtown and the February 2013 meeting in Aberystwyth which are both more accessible by public transport

**Action 11.10 Carys Drew to circulate details of the meeting to try and find someone who can attend instead of Bob Derbyshire on behalf of the LAFs.**

## **LAF Conference Topics**

The group discussed possible topics for the LAF Conference which will be held during the week beginning the 11<sup>th</sup> of June. An invite will be sent to the Minister to give the keynote speech and depending on his availability a date in that week will be fixed in the near future. Providing the Minister is available the LAFs would like an opportunity to ask the Minister questions following the keynote speech.

Suggestions for possible topics are as follows. The viability of each topic will be explored further by the person named in brackets...

**Highways & Transport Bill Update** (Carys Drew to approach WG)

**10 year Review of the Open Access Maps Update** (Carys Drew to approach Richard Owen)

**Equestrian Trail being developed by BHS** (Jean Rosenfeld to approach Jeanne Hyett)

**A Council Leaders Perspective on the importance of access to the countryside** (John Morgan to approach Leader of Ceredigion County Council)

**Mosaic Project run by Campaign for National Parks** which aims to remove cultural barriers to countryside recreation (Jean Rosenfeld to approach Helen Jackson)

**Health & Outdoor Recreation** (Carys Drew to approach Arry Beresford Webb)

**Designing rights of way that are accessible for all** (Jean Rosenfeld to approach Fieldfare Trust)

**LAF Secretaries – their role and their concerns** (Vincent Mears to approach Peter Rutherford)

**Action 11.11 Named persons to further explore the viability of suggested topics and feedback responses to Carys Drew.**

**Action 11.12 Carys Drew to send another request for topics to give people who weren't present at the meeting to suggest topics.**

**Date of next meeting** - this will be held during the first two weeks of October in Newtown – date and venue tba.

Jean Rosenfeld then thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.