

**FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**  
**MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2016**

Minutes of the fifty ninth meeting of the Flintshire Local Access Forum held at County Hall, Mold, on Monday, 11 January 2016

**PRESENT: Dr. J. Rosenfeld (Chair)**

Mrs. A.J. Chamberlain, Mrs. V. Darby, Councillor D. Evans, Mr. B. Harrison, Mr. D.M. Hýtch, Mr. M.W. Moriarty, Mr. G.B. Scragg, Mr. H. White, Mr. E.G. Williams and Miss J.O. Williams

**APOLOGIES:** Mr. T. Birtles, Mr. S.M. Gladwin and Mr. J.A. Holiday

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor V. Gay; Mr. E. Owen and Mr. K. Armstrong-Braun

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. S. Bartley, Senior Rights of Way Officer and Secretary to the Forum; Mr. A. Farrow, Chief Officer (Planning & Environment); Mr. T. Woodall, Acting Head of Countryside Services; Mr. P. Mitchell, Natural Resources Wales; Miss S. Aldridge, Access Officer and Miss. S. Thomas, Committee Officer

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the fifty eighth meeting of the Forum held on 12 October 2015 had previously been circulated to Members.

**Accuracy**

**Minute Number 2 - Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013**

Mr. Howard White referred to the definition of terminology of users within the presentation, ie to exclude motorised cycles, mobility aids and scooters. He stated that this information was inaccurate as electric bicycles etc were permitted on pavements.

**Minute Number 3 - Progress Report on Cycling Provision in Flintshire**

Mr. David Hýtch clarified that the route he had referred to was from Dock Road to Coleg Cambria through the National Grid site.

**Matters Arising**

**Minute Number 4 - Raising the Profile of the Forum**

The Chair advised that he had written a summary of the main topics discussed at the meeting for inclusion on the website, and that he would do the same following this meeting.

**That, subject to the two amendments, the minutes be agreed.**

## 2. UPDATE ON RELEVANT BUDGETS

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair circulated a letter which he had sent to ten Assembly Members in support of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). He welcomed the news that the provisional settlement was a slightly improved position than had been predicted, particularly as there was some uncertainty around future funding to support Rights of Way. He referred to the outstanding record of the Council's Rights of Way service in comparison to that of other Authorities and said that the Forum would do what it could to support the continued high performance of this service.

Mr. Farrow reported that a series of public consultation sessions had been held to engage with the public on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. In view of the significant financial challenges, the Council had also adopted a lobbying strategy to set out the implications of further cuts to its partners. Whilst the provisional settlement was marginally better than expected, there remained significant challenges in balancing the budget. In addition, a 6.4% cut to the Single Environment Grant (a new grant combining a number of areas) would require decisions on which services could be delivered, as the grant primarily dealt with waste recycling and collection services. Although representations had been made to Assembly Members on the impact of this reduction, the Rights of Way team had been set three objectives: to consider their priorities, standards of maintenance and strategy for income/fees. Mr. Farrow expressed his gratitude for the support of the Chair and Forum, along with other bodies, in putting pressure on Assembly Members and said that proposals would be shared with relevant groups including the Forum.

In response to comments from Mr. Hÿtch on the effects of reduced gritting services as part of the budget cuts, Mr. Farrow provided explanation on the approach taken by the Council.

Mr. Scragg asked that it be noted that the content of the Chair's letter to Assembly Members was endorsed by the Committee. The Chair replied that not all AMs had responded; he suggested that the letter and recipients be attached to the minutes.

**That the update be noted and the Chair's letter (with recipients) be appended to the minutes of this meeting.**

## 3. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PLAN

The Chair invited views from the Forum on items to include on the work plan. The following suggestions were made:

(i) Publicity and developing public awareness of the value of open spaces and availability of the Rights of Way network

Mr. Tom Woodall suggested that the promotion of routes could be raised at the Destination Flintshire partnership meetings which were due to restart later in

the week, and that Mr. Richard Jones was now the Council's lead officer on Tourism. In the absence of Mr. Howell (the Forum representative on this group), Mr. Bryan Harrison was willing to attend the next meeting. The Chair asked that he remind the group of the interest by the Forum and invite a representative to the next meeting of the Forum. Mr. Hýtch gave a reminder that, as agreed previously, an officer from the Tourism section was to be invited to a future meeting.

(ii) Involving communities by promoting local ownership of local routes and generating interest from volunteer groups on maintenance

The Chair referred to the joint initiative with town and community councils which was the subject of ongoing discussion at the Forum. In relation to community asset transfers, a suggestion had previously been made to invite Mr. Neal Cockerton or Mr. Ian Bancroft to attend a future meeting to discuss public access implications. Mr. Farrow suggested that an invitation could also be extended to the 'Silver Slashers' path maintenance volunteer group in Anglesey to hear about their experiences. This could be considered for the April meeting to link with the objectives of the Rights of Way team.

(iii) Promoting the health (including mental health) benefits in using the countryside

The Chair suggested that the Council could help the Forum to develop links with the local Health Board and local GP practices as well as other groups to recognise the health benefits of the countryside and that this could help generate interest from groups in maintaining the countryside and improving the Rights of Way network. Mr. Farrow offered to provide a contact name for the GP representative on the LDP stakeholder group. Mr. Woodall suggested that liaising with a GP representative was a good starting point and that he would liaise with Leisure Services to provide a relevant contact in relation to links between health and sport/recreation whose input could also be useful.

Mr. Scragg was aware of the existence of some groups who promoted walking for health. Mrs. Chamberlain referred to an equine initiative on encouraging adults to participate in horse riding to improve health and wellbeing.

Following comments on bridleways, Mr. Armstrong-Braun reported on a new bridleway between Watery Lane and Stringers Lane in Higher Kinnerton.

- (i) That Mr. Woodall liaise with Mr. Bryan Harrison on attending the forthcoming Destination Flintshire meeting. Mr. Harrison to invite a representative of Destination Flintshire to attend the next meeting of the Forum and liaise with the Secretary on the outcome.**
- (ii) The Secretary to invite a representative of the 'Silver Slashers' volunteer group to the April meeting of the Forum.**
- (iii) Mr. Farrow to provide contact details for the GP representative on the LDP stakeholder group. Mr. Woodall to provide details for a**

relevant contact regarding links between health and sport/recreation.

4. **UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON THE PROVISION OF A FOOTPATH ADJACENT TO THE A494 MOLD BYPASS**

The Secretary reported that an expression of interest for the footpath would be submitted before the end of month deadline. Mr. Stuart Jones had already undertaken a significant amount of work on this matter and the support of the Forum was appreciated. The Secretary advised that Mrs. Sue Price was leading on the project and that progress would be reported to the next meeting.

**That the Secretary report progress on the footpath to the next meeting.**

5. **APPROVAL OF THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FORUM**

A draft version of the thirteenth Annual Report 2014/15 of the Forum had been circulated with the agenda for consideration. This was approved with the following amendments:

- Section 7 - to include the table from Natural Resources Wales
- Appendix 3 - to remove the word 'previously' from the membership details for Councillor David Evans.

As discussed at previous meetings, the Chair proposed that the content of future reports be expanded to include a section written by members of the Forum, including observations on progress made and highlighting positive and negative issues. He suggested that a small group of members from the Forum could meet in October to draft a section for next year's report, noting that the Secretary would still be required to produce the statutory content of the report.

**Subject to the two amendments, the thirteenth Annual Report 2014/15 of the Forum be endorsed.**

**To arrange for a sub-group of the Forum to meet in October to draft a section for the 2015/16 Annual Report.**

6. **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Mr. Paul Mitchell of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) advised that following the publication of NRW/Welsh Government advice to local authorities, discussions were taking place with Welsh Government on a joint project.

**That the position be noted and future progress be reported back to the Forum.**

7. **POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- (a) Development of a work plan

To incorporate the three items suggested under item 3, with associated actions.

(b) Local Access Forum Annual Report 2015/16

To seek nominations for a sub-group of the Forum to meet in October 2016 to prepare a section for the next Annual Report.

(c) Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) Demonstration

To arrange for a demonstration of the system at the next meeting in April, following resolution of the reporting problem.

(d) Update on Countryside Services developments (when available)

Mr. Woodall agreed to share an overview of next year's priorities for the service at the next meeting in April.

(e) Development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans

Progress to be reported back to the Forum.

(f) Public access implications arising from Community Asset Transfers

To invite Neal Cockerton/Ian Bancroft to attend.

(g) Progress on the provision of a footpath adjacent to the A494 Mold bypass

An update to be provided at the next LAF meeting in April.

(h) Tourism / Destination Flintshire

To invite relevant representatives and encourage engagement with the Forum on priorities for tourism strategies.

(i) Any Other Business (standard item)

**The Forum agreed to note the outstanding items and actions from this meeting for consideration at future meetings.**

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Gay said that she had found the website of the Forum difficult to locate and asked if details of these meetings could be included on the Council's calendar of meetings. The Chair pointed out that the Forum was an independent body and was therefore not included with the Council's official meetings.

**9. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

The forthcoming meetings of the Forum were noted:

Monday 18 April 2016  
Monday 18 July 2016  
(both to start at 2pm)

Mr. Hýtch referred to previous agreement that meetings of the Forum be held outside school holidays. The Secretary agreed to check whether the meeting scheduled for 18 July could be moved back a week.

**That the Secretary arrange for the meeting on 18 July to be moved back if possible.**

**10. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 2pm and finished at 3.05pm.

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**Chair**