



VALE OF GLAMORGAN
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

J. Wyatt
Secretary, Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum

June 2007



VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
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A map of the Vale of Glamorgan is enclosed at the end of the document.

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Introduction

Regulation 16 of the Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001, requires "Appointing Authorities" (in this case the Vale of Glamorgan Council) to prepare an Annual Report for each Local Access Forum for which it is responsible.

The Annual Report must include:

- (a) information relating to the performance of the Forum's functions during the period up to 31st March of the year in question.
- (b) a programme of works which has been agreed which the Forum plans to undertake during the 12 months commencing immediately after that date.

A copy of the Annual Report must, when it has been approved, be made available for inspection by members of the public during normal office hours free of charge and available for purchase if required.

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Foreword

We are both very pleased to have continued in our capacities of Secretary and Chairman of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum.

Since its first meeting on 29th October, 2002, the Forum has continued to evolve, considering a wide range of issues with enthusiasm and commitment. In addition to various reports and issues brought to meetings by officers or Forum members themselves, the Forum also received a presentation from consultants engaged on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Forum continues to play an important role in advising the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Countryside Council for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government and others as to the improvement of public access to land in the area. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all members of the Forum for their continued contributions.

Particular appreciation is also extended to the following officers of the Vale of Glamorgan Council for their invaluable support to the Forum :

Frank Coleman, Operational Manager - Countryside and Environmental Projects
Chris Jones-Jenkins, Public Rights of Way Officer
Steve Latham, Country Parks and Commons Manager
Sandra Thomas, Public Rights of Way Assistant
Lorraine Pugh, Democratic Services Officer.

We feel a special mention should be made of Frank Coleman who, in May 2007, retires after almost forty years service to local government and, since its inception, the Forum.

Jeff Wyatt - Secretary

Mike Harvey - Chairman

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Review of the Year

An illustration of the way in which members of the Forum themselves can raise matters occurred at the meeting on 7th June, 2006, held at the Cosmeston Lakes Visitor Centre when the Deputy Chairman submitted a paper on Good Practice for Local Access Forums suggested by the Countryside Agency following a series of workshops and surveys of practice. Generally speaking, it was considered that the Forum was currently operating on the lines of the Good Practice suggestions.

Again, at the June 2006 meeting, the Forum was advised by the Deputy Chairman that, in conjunction with the Cardiff Institute of the Blind, a walk had been undertaken to the Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, with a view to ascertaining how people with poor sight could cope with country walks. As a result, it was agreed that information for the visually impaired on walks would be addressed within the preparation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).



(Photograph – LAF Members and officers prior to the June 2006 meeting at Cosmeston Lakes Country Park.)

In March 2006, the Deputy Chairman had attended the third National Local Access Forum Conference on 30th March, 2006. The Conference had addressed a number of areas, each of which was summarised in a paper to the Forum.

A significant issue discussed in June revolved around draft ROWIP principles. The principles submitted to the Forum had been derived from the issues and priorities in the ROWIP Assessment Consultation document and discussion between officers and members of the Forum. The principles were to provide guidance to the ROWIP as an extension to the “vision” set down at the start of the ROWIP process. Having made some specific suggestions regarding the wording, the Forum endorsed the philosophy and comprehensiveness of the suggested principles as a basis for aiding the development of the draft ROWIP.

In conjunction with the above, the Forum noted the process for consultation and approval of the ROWIP from Spring 2006 through to the Summer of 2007.

Other issues considered in June 2006 included:

- update on annual routine maintenance
- costing for public rights of way maintenance
- indicative work programme received from the Countryside Council for Wales / Welsh Assembly Government for 2006/07.

Finally, at the June meeting, a date was confirmed when volunteers from the Forum would undertake surveys on the condition of footpaths.

The Forum next met on 6th September, 2006 at the Heritage Coast Visitors Centre, Southerndown. Prior to the meeting, members undertook a walk to the castle site to view access to the path / garden and Tir Gofal.

Since the previous meeting of the Forum one of the former members, Mrs. J. Spence, had submitted her resignation.

At the September meeting, the Forum received an update report on the Countryside Council for Wales Coastal Access Programme.

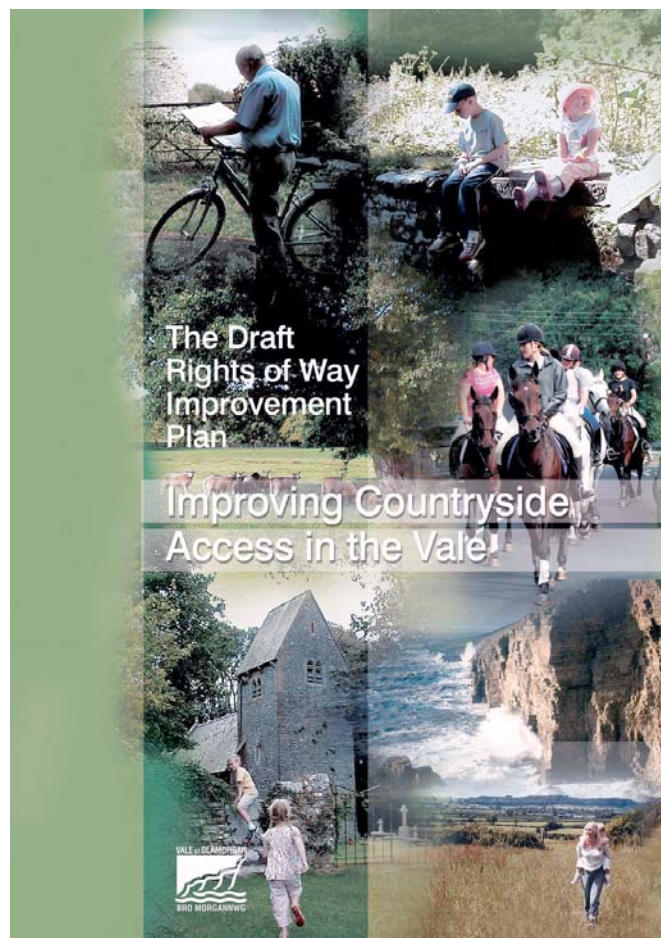
Mr. F. Coleman had attended a stakeholder meeting in July 2006, being one of only four representatives from Welsh local authorities at the event. At the meeting of the Forum, he drew attention to specific issues raised at that meeting, including the necessity of specific definitions being drawn up relating to “access to coastal land” and “secure access”. The importance of such terms being clearly defined and tied in with the Coastal Tourism Strategy was fully recognised. It was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government would be attempting to put together a Strategic Project Plan for the whole of Wales which would contain, inter alia, guidelines for attracting funding.

The Forum would play an important role in assisting the Vale of Glamorgan Council in delivering the overall programme, although it was accepted that the availability of sufficient funding would be vital if the ambitious outputs for the programme were to be delivered.

It was agreed that further information would be submitted to the following meeting of the Forum.

Further consideration was given at the meeting to the ROWIP timetable which, at the time, it was anticipated would be ready by the end of September 2006, following which a brief internal consultation exercise would commence. In order to progress the timetable, it was agreed that a further meeting of the Forum would take place on 19th October, 2006, following which comments would be submitted to the Council's Scrutiny Committee (Economy and Environment) and Cabinet.

The intended programme was then for the draft ROWIP to be translated and printed in November/December 2006 and published for widespread consultation in January 2007. An updated version would be submitted to the above bodies later in 2007, with final modifications being made and the ROWIP itself due for publication in September 2007.



(Photograph – front cover of draft ROWIP for the Vale of Glamorgan.)

Members gave detailed consideration to the criteria to be arrived at in order to assess the value of actions to look after, or to improve, routes under the ROWIP. Discussion included consideration of various aspects separated under the headings of:

- health and safety
- access for all
- community value
- features of interest
- contribution to the wider network
- economic value.

It was also noted at the September meeting that the Environment Agency Wales would be leading a Steering Group to develop a strategic plan for water-related sports and recreation in Wales. Members were invited to submit responses to the Environment Agency Wales as part of the consultation process.

As alluded to above, an additional meeting of the Forum took place on 19th October, 2006 to consider further the draft ROWIP.

Irene Evison of the consultancy “Resources for Change” was in attendance to present “Improving Countryside Access in the Vale” - the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Ms. Evison outlined how the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan had evolved and took the Forum through the various elements of the draft Plan. In essence, the draft Plan outlined the strategies that would form the basis for the management of the Vale of Glamorgan’s rights of way network over the next 10 years. The document was the result of a significant amount of work, including consultation with a wide range of individuals and organisations regarding the issues they believed were facing the network and the steps that could be taken to facilitate improvement.

The Council’s Rights of Way Team had worked to prepare the ROWIP since 2003 and the document provided the basis for annual work programmes. In addressing members, Ms. Evison alluded to the main components of the draft ROWIP viz:

- a brief Executive Summary
- abbreviations and glossary
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Introduction to Rights of Way in the Vale
- Strategic Context
- ROWIP Process
- Management
- Stakeholders
- Information, Communication and Promotion
- Statement of Action.

Ms. Evison acknowledged that a significant amount of material had already been in existence when work on the draft ROWIP commenced. She also alluded to the Assessment Report which had been considered previously by the Forum as part of the ROWIP process. The Assessment Report itself had been subject to a consultation exercise which, in turn, had informed the draft ROWIP. Whilst Countryside Council for Wales guidance existed regarding the content of ROWIPs, the document would need to reflect the actual situation existing within the Vale of Glamorgan. She proceeded to outline the methodology used in the consultation process, summarised the main themes and aims of the draft ROWIP and stressed to the Forum the importance of the Statement of Actions contained at the end of the ROWIP.

Notwithstanding resourcing difficulties, the Plan would be used to produce an annual work programme based on the Statement of Actions and reflecting changing priorities as the Plan evolved through its various timescales.

The Forum acknowledged the contribution of the Council's Rights of Way Team to the creation of a comprehensive, yet suitably succinct, document. Reference was also made to strengthening the wording contained in the document regarding the seeking of funding sources and, again, it was agreed that this particular section would be re-examined. Agreement was also reached on the need to consider, where appropriate, further cross referencing of actions and to the need to acknowledge the relationship between the updating of the Definitive Map and Ordinance Survey maps.

Members also referred to the need to insert the rationale behind the increase from 5% to 10% in the random sampling methodology to be used. Certain members were also of the view that, perhaps, a different methodology of random sampling could be used which would be more effective but would not conflict with the desired outcome requested by the Welsh Assembly Government in its Performance Indicators. Notwithstanding the logic of the suggestion, the methodology for the comparative sample was clearly set down by the Welsh Assembly Government.

It was agreed that the possibility of grouping various actions would be considered in order to create "discreet projects" for which bids for financial resources could be made and possibly have a greater chance of successfully obtaining resources.

One further issue alluded to concerned Action Point 18 which referred to the implementation of least restrictive access for all future maintenance or improvement works by looking at a process of "gap-gate-style" (in that order), in consultation with landowners and occupiers. Various members of the Forum considered that it would be completely impractical to consider the provision of gaps where any livestock was involved. Furthermore, gates were unlikely to be a realistic option unless they constituted kissing gates, given the growing issue of litigation against landowners / farmers.

Consideration was given as to where the draft ROWIP would fit in with the Council's overall strategy framework. It was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government's rationalisation of plans would mean there would only be four high level strategies required from local authorities by WAG. Reference was made to the introduction of a Regional Transport Plan, which, with the new Local Development Plan and Community Strategy, would act as the "umbrella" for plans such as a ROWIP.

The draft ROWIP was commended and all those involved in its production thanked.

The final meeting of 2006/07 was held on 21st February, 2007.

Whilst a limited number of responses had been received at that time to the draft ROWIP consultation exercise, it was noted that the consultation period had some time to run and it was agreed that the results of the consultation would be submitted to the Forum at the May 2007 meeting, at which time the comments of the Countryside Council for Wales and then the other contributors would also be summarised for consideration by members.

The Forum was also informed of the following three successful bids for grants from the Welsh Assembly Government's Active Lifestyles Grant, administered by the Sports Council for Wales, which aimed to encourage healthy activity, embrace local opportunities for daily physical activity and make better use of indoor or outdoor facilities;

- to provide footpath access along a missing section of Heritage Coast path near Wick, by fencing off adjacent fields to enable access and to prevent trespass (grant awarded - £10k.)
- to provide an all-weather activity trail at Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, to include re-grading, drainage and resurfacing of the path around the north east perimeter of the park, linking into the recently completed housing estate, giving access to c. 1,000 homes (grant awarded £25k.)
- to improve the Castlefields Public Right of Way between Llanblethian and Cowbridge to enable access by all including wheelchair users and to open up opportunities for circular walks (grant awarded - £35k.).

Members were also informed of the other seven successful schemes submitted for grant which included Community Centre refurbishment and school/youth facilities, and the cycle training scheme to extend to safe accompanied riders by members of the Exercise Referral Scheme based at Leisure Centres.

An update was also submitted on the work undertaken in a volunteer capacity by Forum members to survey the footpath network. To date, only 44% of the paths surveyed had been satisfactory. Members of the Forum were thanked for their work to date.

It was noted at the February meeting that the Welsh Assembly Government and the Countryside Council for Wales had confirmed the Coastal Access Improvement Programme, as initially discussed at the last meeting of the Forum in September 2006. The first phase of the programme would run for three years from April 2007 to March 2010, to be extended potentially to six years following a review.

Two guidance notes were submitted. In brief, each coastal local authority had to prepare by the end of April 2007 an Outline Coastal Access Plan (CAP) to accompany a grant bid for 2007/08 which would include intentions for practical work as well as preparatory work for the Full CAP to be produced by October. The first draft of an Outline CAP was considered at the meeting. The draft followed the guidelines in the WAG/CCW note and, inter alia, outlined the areas of work which could form the basis of the first year's bid for grant (a mixture of practical, investigative and management/negotiation work). It was noted that all coastal Community Councils had been consulted together with a number of major landowners in the preparation of the Outline.

Particular attention was drawn to an important element of the emerging Vale CAP, namely the establishment of a local partnership together with consultation with a wide range of interest groups. The guidance suggested that a local partnership could be based on, or a sub-committee of, the LAF. The possible formation of a Vale of Glamorgan Coastal Access Partnership, from a core of LAF members together with a representative from selected organisations to provide the strategic advisory group and sounding board for coastal access issues was considered. The suggested organisations were the Country Landowners and Business Association; the NFU and FUW; the Environment Agency; the Vale Marketing Group; and the Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People. It would also be necessary to establish a wider network of interested organisations to be involved with the evolving Coastal Access Plan, and individual landowners and occupiers, Community Councils and user groups would also need to be consulted on relevant proposals. It was agreed that the issue would be progressed by officers in due course.

The following issues were identified in a Forum workshop session as being of prime importance:

- accessibility – both in terms of access by means of public transport and by car, the latter necessitating car parking facilities
- availability of information and provision of adequate signage
- safety
- footpath status
- improvements for all, ensuring the standards and quality were right.

As regards priorities, it was clear that the top priorities were to obtain better information as to the current levels of access in order to draw up a plan for action, and to identify and harness all potential sources of funding. Clearly, transportation and car parking, the completion of the coastal path, the quality of the path, and the aim of achieving "Access for All" were all issues which also required to be addressed.

Subsequent discussion included the definition of the “coast”, it being considered that coastal access referred to landward access to the cliffs and foreshore but not the cliff face or foreshore itself. As regards the cliff face, whilst the National Access Forum had expressed concerns at a potential conflict between climbers and nesting birds, no such conflict in the Vale was currently apparent. The question was also asked as to how the needs of horse riders and cyclists would be catered for within the Vale, given topographical and landownership issues. It was generally accepted that there was unlikely to be much opportunity in the Vale to assist horse riders for the reasons outlined above, and that a practical and realistic approach should therefore be adopted in that respect, particularly when there were excellent horse-riding facilities with good access close by at Merthyr Mawr and Pyle.

WAG had allocated £1.6m. across Wales to deliver its commitment to increase public access to the coast, and had yet to finalise the guidance to be followed when applying for grant aid. It was accepted, however, that there was a need to identify and prepare potential schemes for submission to the WAG once invitations to apply for grant were issued. In conclusion, members’ attention was drawn to the first draft of the Outline CAP as appended to the report.

Members were invited to submit their comments on the draft Outline CAP.

The meeting on 8th May, 2007, would be held at Dyffryn Gardens, providing an opportunity to view the improved facilities and to receive feedback on the responses to the draft ROWIP.

The final version of the ROWIP and a final draft version of the Coastal Access Improvement Programme would be submitted to the meeting to be arranged in September 2007.

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Programme for 2007/08 onwards

In addition to continuing its normal quarterly scheduled meetings, in 2007/08, it is anticipated that the Forum will undertake further site visits as appropriate. Specific work would include :

8th May, 2007 - Meeting to be held in the new Visitor Centre at Dyffryn Gardens; opportunity to view the facilities at Dyffryn; feedback on the responses to the draft ROWIP.

September, 2007 - Final version of ROWIP; final draft version of Coastal Access Improvement Programme.

In addition, CCW and WAG anticipated that they would refer the matters listed overleaf to LAFs during the year although the list was for guidance only and might change to reflect work priorities.

The following are matters that CCW & WAG anticipate that they will refer to LAFs during the year. This is for guidance only and may change to reflect work priorities. **It should not be taken as definitive.** In addition Local Authorities and National Park authorities will refer matters to LAFs. LAF members themselves should also be encouraged to put forward agenda items.

	<u>Referred by</u>	<u>Approx Timing</u>	<u>Nature of Referral</u>	<u>Which LAFs?</u>
Coastal Access Programme	CCW/WAG	From April 07	Work with coastal local authorities and the two national parks on looking at where improvements can be made at the coast	Those with coastal areas
Access to Inland Water	CCW/WAG	From April 07	Advise on aspects relating to access to water	All
Exclusions & Restrictions on Access Land	CCW	Autumn 2007	Consultation on review of relevant authority guidance.	All
Off-roading	CCW/WAG	Summer/autumn 2007	Advise on aspects of the provision of sites pilots to be undertaken by CCW in partnership with local authorities.	All – though the pilots will not cover all authorities it would be beneficial to have input from each LAF as this is a chance for a nation-wide solution to a growing problem.
Commons Act – Implementation of the town and village greens provisions	WAG	Autumn 2007	Consultation on the implementation of section 15 of the Commons Act relating to town and village greens.	All

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Appointing Authority Details

Appointing Authority - The Vale of Glamorgan Council (address as below)

Secretary to the Forum - Jeff Wyatt, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry,
CF63 4RU.

e-mail: JRWyatt@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Area covered by the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum - see map at
back of document.

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Mmeetings

Meetings were held as follows:

7th June, 2006
6th September, 2006
19TH October, 2006
21st February, 2007.

The opportunity was taken to meet at a variety of venues, with the meeting on 7th June, 2006 held at the Visitor Centre, Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, and the September meeting taking place at the Heritage Coast Visitor Centre, Southerndown.

In 2007/08, meetings of the Forum were intended to take place in May and September 2007 and January and May 2008.

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Recruitment Details

The composition of a Local Access Forum is clearly crucial to its success. With this in mind, a careful recruitment and appointment exercise was undertaken by the “Appointing Authority” during 2002.

The Regulations require that, as far as practicable, the Local Access Forum should have a fair balance between persons of different genders, races, ages, disabilities and other characteristics. With this in mind, the “Appointing Authority’s” Equalities Officer was fully briefed on the appointment exercise undertaken and confirmed that all appropriate procedures were followed.

Applications for membership were sought through an advertisement in the Glamorgan Gem on 16th May 2002, with expressions of interest required by 14th June 2002. In addition, letters were sent to individual interest groups (as listed overleaf).

As a result of the above, 42 requests for information and/or application forms were received, with approximately 30 completed application forms subsequently received.

The appointment process was undertaken by a Selection Panel comprising the Secretary to the Forum, the Operational Manager (Countryside and Environmental Projects) and the Rights of Way Officer. In appointing members to the Forum, careful consideration was given to the following criteria:

- the desirability of appointing persons who reside in, or are otherwise particularly familiar with, or have other interests especially relevant to, the area of the Forum;
- that membership achieve a reasonable balance between the interests of users of local rights of way or the rights of access conferred by Section 21 of the Act and of owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist;
- the need to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, a fair balance between persons of different genders, races, ages, disabilities and other characteristics.

Following the initial three year term of office of the Forum, as required by legislation, a re-appointment exercise took place.

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Recruitment Details (contd/...)

An advertisement was placed in the local press and on the Council's website inviting expressions of interest in becoming a member of the Forum.

29 requests for application forms were received, of which 20 were returned, including nine from existing members of the Forum. As occurred when the Forum was originally established, officers undertook a selection process, endorsed by the Council's Equalities Officer, designed to ensure that members were appointed and/or reappointed representing as wide a range of interests as possible in accordance with the guidance and regulations covering Local Access Forums.

Full details of the current membership is contained in Appendix 4, together with a brief "pen picture" of each member of the Forum.

The following individual interest groups were contacted regarding the initial setting up of the Forum :

Organisation

All Wheel Drive Club
Association of Welsh Anglers
Black Environment Network Ltd.
British Horse Society
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
British Trust for Ornithology
Butterfly Conservation (South Wales)
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People
Cardiff Naturalists Society
Civic Trust for Wales
Coedarhydyglyn Estates
Country Land and Business Association
Coed Cadw Woodland Trust
Crown Estates
Cyclists Touring Club (South Wales)
Disability Wales
Duchy of Lancaster
Dunraven Estates
Earl of Plymouth Estates

Recruitment Details (contd/...)

Environment Agency
Environment Wales
Ewenny Estates
Farmers Union of Wales
Fonmon Castle Estates
Forest Enterprise Wales
Forestry Authority for Wales
Forum for Motorised Sport in Wales
Friends of the Earth Cymru
Glamorgan Anglers
Glamorgan Federation of Women's Institutes
Glamorgan Wildlife Trust
Knight Frank
Land Access and Recreation Association
Llanerch Vineyard
Merthyr Mawr Estates
National Farmers Union of Wales
National Trust
Ogmore Commoners Association
Open Spaces Society
Penllyn Estates
Prince's Trust Bro
Pwll yr Wrach Estates
Ramblers Association
Safety & Facilities for Equestrians
Sports Council for Wales
Sustrans
Trail Riders Fellowship & LARA
United World College of the Atlantic
Valeways
Vale Access Team
Vale Council for Voluntary Services
Wales Association of Town & Community Councils
Wales Council for the Disabled
Wales Tourist Board
Wales Wildlife and Countryside Link
Welsh Development Agency
Welsh Local Government Association
Welsh Orienteering Association
Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru
Woodland Trust
Young Farmer's Clubs of Wales
Youth Hostel Association

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Membership Details

Name	Date Appointed to LAF *	Brief Background Details
Mr. M. R. Harvey (Chairman)	29 th October 2002 *	The former Cabinet member with responsibility for Leisure and Countryside issues and Chairman of the 1 st Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum, encourages countryside walking as a recreation without damage to conservation interests.
Mr. D. J. Field (Deputy-Chairman)	29 th October 2002 *	Local walker with an active interest in maintaining the beauty of the countryside.
Mr. J.V. Custance	29 th October, 2002 *	Resident 26 years in Vale - Walker / rock climber. Member OPG/SCW - BMC Access representative.
Mrs. V.M. Hartrey	12 th February, 2003 *	Elected Member, keen hill walker, appointed by Local Authority.
Mr. J.J. Herbert	9 th November, 2005	Long term interest in ROW issues, recognising the need to balance access "rights" with the concerns of landowners and other Welsh interests also include the Motor Sports Association, the All Wheel Drive Club and the Green Lane Association.
Mr. D.T. Hopkin	29 th October, 2002 *	Lived in the country all my life, therefore I have a great interest in the countryside.
Mrs. H. March	29 th October, 2002 *	Agricultural interests/horse rider/walker.
Mr. H.S. McMillan	9 th November, 2005	Brought up in the countryside. Walker both in groups and independently / camper / conservationist / cyclist / climber.

Membership Details (contd/...)

Mrs. M. Morgan	29 th October, 2002 *	Keen interest in development of countryside:- Farmer's wife - Proprietor of BHS Riding Establishment - Secretary to Ogmore Commoners Association.
Mr. N. Moss	9 th November, 2005	Committed to the provision of improved access to the countryside and ROW. Interests include public health / wildlife / disability / cycling / walking. Previous liaison with the Council on local footpath issues.
Mr. R. Pittard	29 th October, 2002 *	YHA Wales - Vice President and Volunteer Countryside Policy and Activities Co-ordinator.
Mr. R. Simpson	29 th October, 2002 *	Interested in rural economy, countryside land use management and conservation.
Mr. R. Traherne	29 th October, 2002 *	Riding, walking, conservation, forestry and the rural economy.
Mrs. V. Warlow	9 th November, 2005	Keen walker, a former Trustee of Valeways – a charity set up to assist the Council in maintaining its ROW network. Instrumental in the development and introduction of Walking for Health within the Vale.
Mr. D. Williams	9 th November, 2005	Keen walker, knowledge of agriculture and some legislation relating to agriculture. Former Veterinary Advisor to the Welsh Office and manager of the State Veterinary Service in Wales.

* Reappointed on 9th November, 2005

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Terms of Reference

1. The Local Access Forum shall be known as the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum.

Roles and Responsibilities

2. The function of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum is to provide advice to the relevant local authorities, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and others as appropriate as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area in ways which take account of land management, social, economic, environmental and educational interests.
3. The Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum will fulfil this role by advising on issues of particular local relevance, including:
 - (a) supporting the implementation of the new right of access to open countryside;
 - (b) improving the rights of way network; and
 - (c) developing recreation and access strategies that cater for everyone.
4. The Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum will work to:
 - (a) develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside;
 - (b) respect local circumstances and different interests whilst operating within national guidance;
 - (c) provide advice on issues of principle and good practice;
 - (d) engage in constructive debate and seek consensus wherever possible; and
 - (e) where consensus is not possible, make clear the nature of differing views, and suggest how they might be resolved.

Terms of Reference (contd/...)

Membership

5. The membership will include:
 - (a) a Chair and Deputy Chair elected in accordance with the LAF regulations;
 - (b) a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 other members, which must include a balanced representation of (i) recreational access users and (ii) landowners and occupiers – together with representation of other interests especially relevant to the area.

6. The membership will:
 - (a) be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group;
 - (b) represent a cross-section of interests in the area; and
 - (c) live or work within the area or have a sound knowledge of the area.

7. Members will be expected to:
 - (a) adhere to the sections relating to LAFs in the CROW Act and regulations and these Terms of Reference;
 - (b) show commitment to achieving the aims of the Local Access Forum through constructive working with other members;
 - (c) be able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings and to network outside meetings;
 - (d) have sufficient experience of access to the countryside in the local areas to be able to make an informed and constructive contribution to improving access provision; and
 - (e) be capable of working with a wide range of interest groups.

Administration

Secretariat

8. The Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum will have a Secretary appointed by the appointing authority who will be responsible for:
 - (a) providing support to the Chair of the Forum;
 - (b) ensuring that the Forum is set up and run according to the CROW Act, Local Access Forum regulations and these Terms of Reference;
 - (c) managing any resources dedicated to its work;
 - (d) arranging and promoting meetings, including arranging the delivery of papers and information to Forum members and the public;
 - (e) producing minutes of Forum meetings.

Terms of Reference (contd/...)

Meetings

9. Meetings will be held at least two times a year, and more frequently as and when necessary, to be agreed by the LAF and the appointing authority.
10. Meetings agendas will be agreed between the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Secretary – although any member may suggest agenda items for consideration.
11. Meetings will be advertised in advance and the minutes published.
12. The Chair will invite observers/advisors to the meeting when appropriate.
13. Observers/advisors will be able to contribute to the proceedings at the discretion of the Chair.
14. One representative of each of the Countryside Council for Wales and the National Assembly for Wales and any officer of the appointing authority will automatically have observer status.
15. If necessary, Local Access Forum committees will be set up by the Chair after agreement with the members.
16. The chairing, membership and terms of reference of committees will be agreed by the Chair and members.
17. All meetings of the LAF will be held in public. However, the person presiding, following a request from a member or members, may decide that the public should be barred for particular items for reasons of personal privacy or commercial confidentiality.
18. Should a member of the Forum feel he/she might have conflict of interest relating to a specific agenda item, such interest should be declared.

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Officer Support

Secretary

Jeff Wyatt, Operational Manager (Democratic Services), Directorate of Legal, Public Protection and Housing Services, The Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU

Chris Fray, Head of Economic Development and Leisure, The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT

Chris Jones-Jenkins, Public Rights of Way Officer, The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT

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The Vale of Glamorgan

