

GLAMORGAN HERITAGE COAST ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held on 7th April, 2017.

Present: Councillor Mrs. A.J. Preston (Chairman); Councillor R.P. Thomas (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Mrs. V.M. Hartrey, F.T. Johnson and C.J. Williams (Vale of Glamorgan Council); Mr. N.A. Lewis (Glamorgan Wild Life Trust), Ms. G.M. Barter (Natural Resources Wales), Mr. J. Golunski (Dunraven Estates), Councillor G. Davies (Bridgend County Borough Council), Mr. R. McLaggen (Merthyr Mawr Estates), Mr. B. Acott (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast)) and Councillor R. Gant (One Voice Wales).

Also present: Mrs. H. March (Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast), Mr. B. Guy (Operational Manager), Mr. P. Lock (Glamorgan Heritage Coast Centre), Mr. S. Pickering (Team Leader Countryside Services), Mr. G. Teague (Public Rights of Way Officer) and Mr. I. Sherwood (Communities Directorate Bridgend County Borough Council

(a) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from Councillor L. Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan Council) and Ms. P. George (Vale Tourist Association).

(b) Minutes –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September, 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

(c) Presentation by the Site Ranger – Mr. P. Lock – Achievements and Issues Since the Last Meeting –

Mr. Lock advised that positive feedback had been received from the public in relation to all the events that had been held during the year and in particular referred to the new stone gateway features that had been placed around the coast as part of the Creative Rural Communities' project to strengthen the awareness of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, which had become a talking point for visitors. New events had also been undertaken during the year with a number of organisations e.g. lugworm species event which was an ongoing activity and the organisation involved had also hired the centre and provided events on the beach.

With regard to maintaining the coast, regular inspections were undertaken to closely monitor any erosion. The winter months were also the time when habitat

management was undertaken and during the year a significant amount of work had been undertaken to maintain the butterfly habitat, including the High Brown Fritillary.

The team also undertook rights of way maintenance which was not always confined to the Heritage Coast as it was being undertaken further and further inland. From September 2016 the team had been one member of staff down, but a new recruit had been appointed in January 2017. The Group was advised that habitat work and maintenance was essential on the coast and all the team were pleased to see the rewards of their work in the increasing number of people enjoying the countryside and coast leading up to the forthcoming summer months.

The works to Public Rights of Way took the form of maintaining gates, filling in steps and maintaining styles. Mr. Lock took the opportunity to thank all groups, including the Rotary Club of Cowbridge, who had undertaken a litter pick and Lloyds Bank who had sent teams of staff throughout the year to undertake maintenance work, in particular work in the gardens, with further dates being scheduled. Following a query as to how far work on footpaths was being undertaken by the Heritage Coast Team involved, the Operational Manager confirmed that the Countryside Service is now an integrated team, whilst the Heritage Coast based staff work on footpaths beyond the coast. Teams from Cosmeston and Porthkerry were working on specific tasks within the Heritage Coast area, and this approach was working well.

The Chairman took the opportunity to congratulate the team on how well the gardens were looking as she was aware of the hard work that had been required.

(d) Coastal Access Improvement – Verbal Update –

Mr. Gwyn Teague, Public Rights of Way Officer, provided the Group with an update on a number of matters relating to the Heritage Coast and the major projects that had been undertaken to date together with details of those planned for the year ahead.

The Coastal Access Improvement Programme was funded by Welsh Government which had commenced in April 2015 with £900,000 uplift to the Natural Resources Wales Grant in Aid budget.

For the Vale of Glamorgan for maintenance the grant offered for 2017/18 was £19,550 and for development £49,125 being a total of £68,675.

At the Regional Management Group for the south region discussions on the following were being held :-

- terms of reference
- arrangements for NRW with local authority agreements
- determination of quality standards
- and a summary of spend and grant allocation.

A South Wales and Severn Estuary guide book had also recently been released.

In referring to improvement projects undertaken for 2016/17 Mr. Teague made reference to Dimhole where the surface had been improved using Ultitrec (planings) and the path had been rolled back away from the cliffs. At Cwm Colhuw surface improvement had been undertaken and for Sully Playing Fields, surface improvement again with Ultitrec (planings) had been undertaken.

Legal projects undertaken during 2016/17 were for Ogmore Down, where the Order had been confirmed, for Monk Nash where an agreement had been concluded and for Gileston where an agreement had been concluded in part with an outstanding landowner issue at East End.

For 2017/18 the projects listed were as follows:

	Total Cost	Grant Rate %	Grant Applied For
Maintenance	26,066	75	19,550
Traeth Mawr - Monknash	2,000	100	2,000
East of Nash Point	4,500	100	4,500
West of Tresilian	4,500	100	4,500
Summerhouse	5,000	100	5,000
Gileston	20,000	100	20,000
Monknash	17,500	75	13,125
TOTAL	79,566	--	68,675

Mrs. Heather Marsh referred to the excellent improvement at Dimhole and requested that consideration be given for the establishment of a handrail, possibly under the following year's maintenance programme.

(e) Rights of Way Improvement Plan Review – Verbal Update –

In November 2007, the Vale of Glamorgan published its 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' (ROWIP). Now, almost ten years on from the initial production of the Vale's 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), local authorities are required under section 60 (3) and (4) of the CROW Act to make a new assessment, review their ROWIP and decide whether or not to amend it not more than ten years after publishing their previous plan.

The Welsh government had acknowledged that the first round of ROWIP's were a success and produced positive results but that more needs to be done given legislative changes since the first round of ROWIP's were produced and the changing economic climate. The New ROWIPs would take into account:

1. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2013
2. Active Travel (Wales Act) 2013
3. Equality Act 2010

As well as the new legislation that had come on board in recent years that would need to be considered the 2016 guidance stated that the new ROWIP would be different in the following ways:

1. Additional 'Delivery Plans' – would need to be produced annexed to the main plan and linked to the statement of actions contained within the main ROWIP. The idea being that there were flexible focused plans that could be reviewed and changed when necessary due to any changes in circumstances. The original ROWIP had Statement of Actions that were static whereas with the delivery plans it was hoped that the plan could be kept more up to date and relevant.
2. Assessment of the previous ROWIP – this would need to assess to what extent actions in the last ROWIP had been addressed and any outstanding actions highlighted to be taken forward.
3. Review of limitations & authorised structures – there would be a need to review and provide a summary of limitations & authorised structures of public rights of way to inform public
4. Link to new plans /strategies – there would be a need to link to other targets of relevance in other plans/strategies that had come on board since the first ROWIP and to use the ROWIP as a means to assist delivery. In the Vale of Glamorgan reference to outdoor access and health & well-being /transport links was referred to in the Corporate Plan 2016-202, Destination Management Plan 2014, Transport Plan 2015-2030, Local Development Plan 2013 and Active Travel Maps.
5. Focus on non-participants – a need to try and take into account needs of the wider public including those who currently do not participate in outdoor recreation regularly. Therefore as wide as possible consultation would be needed to be carried out.
6. Focus on blind /partially sighted/mobility users – emphasis on taking into account the needs of the blind/partially sighted and those with mobility issues. Need to consult such users.
7. Focus on working cross boundary & in partnership where needed – given the economic challenges and changing priorities need to think more creatively of how and who can deliver targets..

Pursuing the above would require consultation on the current state of public paths i.e. surface, waymarks, signage, gates/stiles, promoted routes etc; how, where and what people used the network for i.e. dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking etc; and peoples priorities so that the Council can sustain and where possible improve those aspects. It would also need to consider what barriers existed that prevented people from using the network i.e. lack of awareness of opportunities, personal mobility problems etc.

A draft timetable of consultation and analysis was also presented to the Group.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked Mr Teague for the informative and comprehensive presentations.

(f) Matters Raised by Bridgend County Borough Council –

Councillor G. Davies, representing Bridgend County Borough Council, took the opportunity to advise that he would be retiring at the next Local Government election and he wished to advise the Group that he had been very pleased to attend the meetings and be the link between his Local Authority and the Group.

Councillor Davies introduced Mr. I. Sherwood, who would be the Officer representative in attendance at future meetings from Bridgend County Borough Council.

Mr. Sherwood advised that his role in Bridgend County Borough Council was to manage a number of different service areas including rural development, tourism, the beaches and the marina. He referred to recent key areas of work in Bridgend outlined below :

- The Porthcawl cycle path had recently been launched and had received funds from the Coastal Communities Fund
- There had been an installation of a crane in the Porthcawl Marina to help assist boat users in and out of the Marina
- The Jennings redevelopment in Porthcawl was due to be completed in June 2017 which would include a number of restaurants with upstairs access to 13 live / work units.
- Coastal defence works were due to commence at the Tan beach site in late September 2017 and the funding for the Water sport Centre at Rest Bay was due to be completed shortly
- At Kenfig Nature Reserve a five year management plan had been put in place and over the last two years, the targets had been achieved earlier than anticipated.

Mr. Sherwood also took the opportunity to thank all the volunteers who had assisted with the project and continued to assist with all projects. He stated that Bridgend County Borough Council also had a similar establishment to the Creative Rural Communities team in the Vale, namely REACH, which was in the process of establishing sustainable management schemes. The quality mark attributed to golf clubs was also hoped to be achieved in Bridgend this year and in July 2017 the Seniors Open was to be held. The RNLI were to operate from Porthcawl beaches from the Easter weekend, with members of the group congratulating Bridgend on achieving this service, which the Vale had also been successful in having for a number of years.

Following a query from a Member as to the opportunity for the public to hire premises i.e. to site motor homes etc. at the Nature Reserve, the Officer advised that under the agreement with the landowner, the terms and conditions did not allow such activities to take place and the Council had to adhere to the confines of the lease.

(g) Matters Raised by Natural Resources Wales –

Ms. Barter took the opportunity to thank the team at Southerndown for their habitat management advising that Cwm Mawr was an example of the excellent maintenance that had been undertaken, noting that the variety of species would not be available if such work had not been done.

(h) Matters Raised by Friends of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast –

Mr. Acott advised that the Friends had still not been successful in moving the Seawatch Centre on any further although the improvement work that had been undertaken at the Gileston footpath would assist, it was hoped in future endeavours. The responses that had been received referred to the lack of access which was one of the significant reasons people were reluctant to take on the Seawatch Centre.

A newsletter for the Friends was to be published early in the summer and Mr. Acott made a request to all present for information in relation to future events and dates that could be added to the newsletter.

In conclusion the Operational Manger advised all present of the TV series that was to start broadcast that evening on BBC Wales on 'Glamorgan Coastal Lives', with which, the Council's Tourism and Countryside Service staff had assisted.

(i) Announcement –

At the end of the meeting the Chairman took the opportunity to thank all those present for their support, as she was retiring as a Vale Council at the May election, stating that she had enjoyed her time as Chairman and wished everyone best wishes for the future.