Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum

Annual Report 2014/15

Foreword

As the Chairman (for 2014/15) and the Secretary, we are pleased to present the 20114/15 Annual Report of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum.

The report is a very brief summary of the Forum's work. Further details, including agendas, reports and minutes, are available on the Council's website.

It remains a challenging time for those involved in the public sector, Budget pressures continue to impact on services. It is satisfying, therefore, that the Forum continues to enjoy a constructive relationship with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The meeting in February 2015 represented the final meeting of the Forum's three year appointment period. A recruitment exercise subsequently took place and the reappointed Forum will begin a new three year term.

In addition to thanking Forum members for their efforts during the year, we again wish to place on record our appreciation of the support provided by the various officers involved, particularly the Public Rights of Way (PROW) team.

Frank Coleman (Chairman)
Jeff Wyatt (Secretary)

What is the Local Access Forum (LAF)?

The function of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum is to provide advice to the Council, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government and others as appropriate. Its remit covers 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.

Meetings

Three meetings of the Forum took place during the year - in July and October 2014 and February 2015.

Prior to the July meeting, Members viewed improvements to the footpath network near Cwm George, Dinas Powys.

(Porthkerry Lodge)

The October 2014 meeting was held at the Porthkerry Lodge at Porthkerry Park. Members took the opportunity to view the works that had been undertaken along the coast path leading up to the

Porthkerry Bulwarks and the new cycle way which links Porthkerry Country Park to the Rhoose cycleways.

A Summary of the Year

Maintenance Priorities

At each meeting, the Forum received reports covering the Council's Public Rights of Way (PROWs), comprising some 554kms. Maintenance issues are divided into six categories to provide a statistical breakdown.

Officers also submit to each meeting an update on Modification and Legal Orders.

Rights of Way Improvement Programme (ROWIP) and Coastal Access Improvement Programme (CAIP)

The Forum monitors progress on these programmes through regular reports from officers.

ROWIP funding has underwritten six projects in 2014-2015. The funding has assisted in matching £11,696.37 of Rural Development Plan money for dedication of a new community link between Twyn-Yr-Odyn and Wenvoe, dedication of a new bridleway link through Cross Common and for practical works involved in opening up approximately 11km. of new bridleway at Penllyn Estate in Cowbridge. The additional bridleways represent a significant addition to horse riding provision

throughout the County and increase the length of the overall bridleway network in the Vale by 38%

Review and delivery of a clearance programme of 30 km. of priority paths was supported by ROWIP, including mapping routes and appointing contractors to undertake the work.

Following completion of quality assurance of the Definitive Map, work commenced on making all outstanding Legal Event Modification Orders to enable republication.

CAIP projects included provision of a new section of coast path at Ogmore, enabling users to avoid walking alongside a busy road with no footway; progress on various Legal Orders and rollbacks due to erosion; and improvements to a link from Rhoose Station to the Coast Path where the existing path was being undercut by erosion from a drainage channel.

(Coast Path at Ogmore)

At the October 2014 meeting, it was agreed that Chairman, on behalf of the Forum, would write to Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to express concern with regard to the short-term nature of the funding for the

Wales Coast Path Development Programme.

Consultation Responses

The Forum continued its role of responding to various Consultation Documents, including

- Cross Compliance

Following discussion, the Forum's response addressed the issues of the maintenance of public rights of way, enforcement arrangements and the digitisation of the Definitive Map.

LAF Members' Surveys of Public Rights of Way

Members of the Forum once again undertook a 5% sample survey of Public Rights of Way during the Spring and Autumn. The results showed that, although the return for the "Paths That Are Easy to Use" was down on the previous year, this year's 63% pass rate was higher than the average for the previous ten years (59%) and the return for "Paths Signposted From the Road" equalled the previous year's return, with a pass rate of 80%.

These surveys provide a valuable source of information for the Council's Public Rights of Way team, with the survey detail feeding directly into the team's maintenance database.

Involvement with Others

The Chairman continued to represent the Forum at meetings of the Welsh LAF Chairs and on the Rural Development Plan Footpath Grant scheme. The Vice-Chairman was actively involved with the Steering Group which promotes Walking in the Rural Vale.

Presentations

In July 2014, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Principal Transport Safety Officer, Claire Cameron gave a presentation on the Active Travel Programme.

Members continue to be are grateful to all those who give their time to assist the Forum in its work.

Membership 2014-15

Frank Coleman	**(Chairman)**
Mike Dunn	**(Vice-Chairman)**
Val Hartrey	**Geraint Thomas**
Jerry Herbert	**Rhodri Traherne**
Simon Lait	**Cllr. Eddie Williams**
Kay Lucas	**Stuart McMillan**
Elizabeth Nash	**Mike Parry**
Rowland Pittard	**Robin Simpson**
Jeff Wyatt	**(Secretary)**

Further information in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan Local Access Forum can be found at

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/environment/countryside/public_rights_of_way/local_access_forum.aspx