

VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd May, 2018.

Present: Mr. R. Traherne (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair) ; Mr. F. Coleman, Mr. J.J. Herbert, Ms. C. Lucas, Mr. H.S. McMillan, Ms. E. Nash, Mr. R. Pittard and Mr. G. Thomas.

Mr. J. Wyatt, Mr. S. Pickering, Mr. G. Teague (Vale of Glamorgan Council).
Ms. M. Miyata-Lee (Natural Resources Wales).

(a) Minutes -

AGREED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 1st November, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

The Vice-Chairman asked the Secretary whether he was able to update Members regarding their recommendations of the last meeting regarding potential shortfalls in ROWIP funding which might occur as a result of discontinuation of existing funding provided by Welsh Government. The Secretary indicated he would endeavour to clarify the position during the remainder of the meeting and / or update Members subsequently.

(b) Presentation -

The Forum had been due to receive a presentation by Matt Childs, Royal National Lifeboat Institute Coastal Safety Officer. However, Mr. Childs had been unable to attend. In his absence, it was agreed that Mr. McMillan (who arrived during the meeting) would address the Forum (details are included later in the minutes).

Given the presentation subject was Reducing the Risks to Coastal Walkers and Dog Walkers on Cliffs and Beaches, Mr. Pittard mentioned he was aware of a "booklet relating to Dog Walking which had been facilitated by Cornwall Council. Mr. Pickering confirmed that the Vale of Glamorgan Council was supporting a similar initiative via Creative Rural Communities funding.

(c) Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWP) -

The ROWIP Funding Programme for 2017-18 comprised a number of actions aiming to assist in the delivery of ROWIP Objectives.

| Ref | Location | Brief Details of Programme Action | Update |
|-----|-----------|------------------------------------|---|
| VG1 | Cowbridge | Drainage scheme alongside Waitrose | Enforcement action from NRW has been required before the scheme has |

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| | | | been able to proceed. |
| VG2 | Promoted Routes | Adopt a path coordination of works | Completed |
| VG3 | Countywide | Definitive Map anomalies – resolve long standing issues by order | Reallocated |
| VG4 | 30km of priority routes | Vegetation clearance | Completed |
| VG5 | Barry | Improvement of surface following confirmation of DMMO | Ultitrec footpath provided and segregated from garden with fencing. |
| VG6 | Countywide | Roadside Posts | 90 roadside posts purchased. |

VG1 provided for the design and implementation of a drainage scheme to relieve flooding of Footpath 6, Cowbridge, which led from Waitrose to the park and childrens play area. The scheme included plans to connect to the existing drainage network and discharge to the nearby stream. It had not been possible to progress the scheme due to contamination of the existing drain by local properties. Enforcement action to resolve this was being undertaken by NRW. Responding to a query from the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Teague indicated that the council had periodically sought progress reports from the Council's Highway Engineers and from Natural Resources Wales. He also confirmed that it would be necessary to again bid for funding and/or fund from the Maintenance Grant.

VG2 supported the coordination and resolution of maintenance issues on promoted routes that are part of the Adopt a Path scheme.

VG3 was intended to address paths recorded as anomalous following quality assurance of the previous definitive map however funding was reallocated due to staffing constraints.

VG4 support the annual clearance of vegetation on inland routes.

VG5 provided for the improvement of a path surface and accompanying works following conclusion of a Definitive Map Modification Order.

VG6 allowed the purchase of roadside posts for the demarcation of public rights of way where they leave metalled roads.

In terms of ROWIP generally, Mr. Teague confirmed that in the event of ROWIP funding not continuing in 2018/19, it would be necessary to progress ROWIP actions through other sources of funding. Mr. Coleman questioned whether a discontinuation of ROWIP funding sat comfortably with the statutory requirement on Local Authorities to review / re-publish their ROWIP. In response, Mr. Teague stated the new ROWIP would contain Objectives, but with reference to the prevailing

financial position.

Mr. Pittard asked whether there was a particular synergy between Active Travel and ROWIP and whether it was considered that the Forum should be consulted on Active Travel work. In response, Mr. Teague advised that any synergy in reality was less than perhaps might appear on the surface. He also mentioned, for the information of the Forum, the fact that the Active Travel team was part of an area of the Council currently undergoing a restructure.

Linking the discussion under this item to the reference in approving the minutes to the Secretary updating the Forum, the Vice-Chairman reiterated the importance of the Cabinet / Council being aware of any shortfall of funding and considering means of addressing such.

At this point, the Secretary confirmed that the Forum's recommendations from the last meeting had been submitted to the Council's Cabinet on 20th November, 2017. The Cabinet had resolved:

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(2) T H A T the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport write to the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs seeking assurances of the future of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Funding.

(3) T H A T following a response from Welsh Government concerning the letter sent in resolution 2, above, Cabinet receive a report on general Rights of Way Improvement Plan achievements in order to inform consideration of the issue around the on-going funding provision.”

AGREED - T H A T the Secretary clarify the position regarding the recommendations from the Forum at its November meeting relating to ROWIP funding and update the Forum Members accordingly.

(d) Coastal Access Improvement Programme: Background and Update -

The Coastal Access Improvement Programme (CAIP) was a scheme funded by the Welsh Government via Natural Resources Wales and delivered through Local Authorities.

Since the Wales Coast Path officially opened on May 5th 2012 the scheme, which initially ran from 2007-2013 had continued to fund the development and improvement of the route. Following completion of the initial project further funding was made available, this ran from 2013-2015.

The current programme was initiated by a ministerial announcement that committed £900,000 worth of funding per annum for the next 5 years to the path. The current scheme differed from previous in so much as funding was divided between improvements and maintenance, to reflect the maturing nature of the Coast Path.

CAIP Funding 2017-18

The CAIP programme for 2017-18 was complete, though Legal Order projects and works near Monkash would continue into 2018-19.

| Code | Location | Details | Update |
|--------|-----------------------|---|--|
| VG1502 | Traeth Mawr | Missing link currently available on permissive basis only. Previously submitted as creation order, landowner has indicated willingness to revert to agreement | Complete |
| VG1503 | East of Nash Point | Rollback of path to mitigate cliff undercutting | Referred to consultant – site visits and landowner contact undertaken |
| VG1504 | West of Tresilian Bay | Formalisation of rollback following coastal erosion | Referred to consultant – site visits and landowner contact undertaken. |
| VG1506 | Summerhouse | legal orders to formalise cliff top rollback | Referred to consultant – site visits and landowner contact undertaken |
| VG1507 | Gileston | Creation of missing link. Agreement complete and works agreed. Creation order underway in respect of final part of land. | Dedication agreement concluded & outstanding order progressed. Works associated with agreement complete |
| VG1701 | Monkash | Improvement of drainage, surface and crossing | Topo survey complete, heritage survey complete, design work seeking approval from structures and drainage teams. |

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The Vice-Chairman asked for clarification regarding the funding position for 2018/19. Mr. Teague informed the Forum that applications for funding of £2,000 for each of the Legal Order Projects had been made and £2,500 in respect of design work regarding the tender stage for the Monknash Scheme. He clarified that match-funding where required (i.e. in respect of Maintenance Funding) could be by means of allocation of staff time. In terms of Monknash, should the scheme be deemed to be attributable to “storm damage”, no match-funding would be required.

In addition an allocation for coast path maintenance via grant and at 75% grant rate had been advised. In the Vale for 2017-18 this amounted to £19,230 of grant to be matched by £6,410. It was anticipated that this would be issued each year over the life of the programme:

| Code | Description | Details | Update |
|-------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Maint | Maintenance Projects on VoG WCP | Vegetation cut back, maintenance of furniture and surfaces | Seasonal cuts complete. Report into cliff erosion near Rhoose received. Contract for ancillary works at Sully invited. Regrading path at Lavernock complete, handrail at Rhoose and reconstruction of head wall complete. |

AGREED - T H A T the report be noted.

(e) Maintenance Reports -

The Forum was provided with an update in relation to maintenance work carried out up to 18th April 2018.

Mr. Pickering referred to the process whereby particular areas would be prioritised for a period of work. An example was the clearing of some 40/50 issues which had taken place in Llancarfan. During October/November of the current year, the team would work in the Ystradowen area for a month. Responding to a query regarding whether Town and Community Councils within the Vale of Glamorgan were aware of the position within their respective areas, Mr. Teague confirmed that awareness levels varied, but also that engagement with Town and Community Councils had increased. Examples of such included ROWIP workshops and individual Councils starting to consider working together on a regional basis.

A general discussion ensued in terms of the way the information was currently presented for the Forum, with members suggesting that it possibly suggested a picture worse than existed in reality. It was suggested that the information perhaps could be presented differently, e.g. in order to reflect and clarify the difference

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between Priority Routes and the many lesser routes which existed and which were often very underused and, possibly, even closed in reality.

Mr. Teague reminded Members of the requirement to take account of all paths within the overall network. However, he undertook to take into account the comments of the Forum and review the way information was presented paragraph for example taking into account basing it on priorities and numbers of issues resolved within a period.

AGREED - T H AT Maintenance Reports as presented to the Forum be reviewed in terms of their format as alluded to above.

(f) Legal Orders and Evidential Modification Orders Updates -

The Forum was presented with an update on the Legal Orders and Evidential Modification Orders across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Referring to a general query from Ms. Nash, Mr. Teague clarified the position regarding applying for Orders and he undertook to provide an application pack to her.

Mr. Teague also clarified specific queries from Members of the Forum regarding:

- Legal Order No. 74, Llantwit Major
- Evidential Modification Order No. 12, Colwinston
- A path in the Colwinston area (as alluded to above by Ms. Nash).
- Legal Order No. 91, Wenvoe.

(g) Performance Information Survey Returns 2017/18: Public Rights of Way -

The 2017/18 survey year differed from previous years; the initial aim was to increase the annual 10% survey to 20%, The LAF members maintaining a 5% spring and 5% autumn survey and the PROW team picking up the remaining 10%.

Continuing the principle of complete random selection, the selection was undertaken for the full 5 years ensuring no path would be surveyed twice. Unfortunately, due to staff shortage, the later surveys were not undertaken and the early surveys came in short.

In 2017/18 - 8.7% (51.2 kms) of the PROW network was surveyed, comprising the spring LAF survey 4.7% and the spring/summer survey by the PROW team 4 %.

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| The pass rate for | 2017/18 | 67 % |
| Compared to previous years | 2012/13 | 62% |
| | 2013/14 | 69% |
| | 2014/15 | 63% |
| | 2015/16 | 71% |
| | 2016/17 | 59% |

The average pass rate for the previous 5 years was 65%.

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In line with the return this year to an average pass rate, the individual detail for bridges, stiles and gates, obstructions and surface conditions remained stable and close to the average of the previous 5 years.

Signposting from the road showed a steady decline from a high of 80% in 2014/15 to a pass rate of 70% in 2017/18; however, way-marking along the paths showed a slight improvement this year – the average over the previous 5 years was 77% this year 81%. Ploughing and cropping had returned to a stable rate in line with previous years; the particularly poor rate for 2016/17 would appear to have been a blip.

The aim for 2018/19 was to undertake a 20% survey, incorporating the 10% LAF survey split between Spring and Autumn and 10% PROW team survey; if possible, also the completion of the 10% missed from 2017/18, this would be back to a position to complete the 100% survey over 5 years.

AGREED - T H A T the report be noted.

(h) Assessment Phase Report for Rights of Way Improvement Plan -

This evaluation had been divided into three subject areas, each in turn subject to further sub-division. The three subject areas were:

- Assessment of the physical condition of the network;
- Assessment of the accuracy and currency of the legal records of PROW; and
- Assessing the provision of information about PROW and their management.

The evidence used for the evaluation had been gathered from a number of sources and activities. These were:

- Interrogation of the Council's Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)
- records;
- Review of data assembled to inform the first ROWIP;
- Review of Annual 'Ease of Use' Survey data;
- Internet searches;
- Telephone interviews with selected stakeholders; and
- Workshops.

There had been no new on-the-ground survey work carried out and the evaluation had been reliant upon the availability of information and the input of stakeholders.

As part of this item, the Forum also received details of progress made in respect of previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan Actions.

(i) Member Briefing: Changing the Network -

It was agreed that this item would be held over until the next meeting.

(j) Presentation –

As indicated earlier in the minutes, the Forum had been due to receive a presentation by Matt Childs, Royal National Lifeboat Institute Coastal Safety Officer, regarding Reducing the Risks to Coastal Walkers and Dog Walkers on Cliffs and Beaches.

Mr. McMillan apologised for the fact that Mr. Childs had been unable to be present. It was agreed that Mr. McMillan would give a brief summary of the points Mr. Childs would have included in his presentation. In summary, these included:

- A very brief summary of the history and evolution of the RNLI
- How the RNLI integrated with other agencies
- A recognition around 15 years ago by the RNLI that it needed to initiate more preventative programmes
- Statistical information, e.g. the fact that approximately 190 persons a year drowned around the United Kingdom and Irish beaches
- The introduction by the RNLI of a second preventative programme in 2016 designed to reduce drownings by 50% by 2024 (which would be 200 years since the RNLI was formed)
- Work which was underway in terms of studying statistics and targeting specific activities undertaken by the general public in terms of raising awareness of safety issues.

Mr. McMillan informed the Forum that Mr. Childs was very keen to contact various groups, e.g. ramblers and other independent walking groups, dog walking groups, running groups, angling groups in order to engage with such groups and raise awareness of the relevant issues.

In conclusion, Mr. McMillan referred to a water safety message programme involving attendance at every primary and secondary school in Barry or an invitation for them to attend the RNLI Visitors Centre at Barry Island. He also alluded to a “traffic lights system” for Sully Island, which would entail volunteers periodically standing guard on the causeway at critical times.

AGREED – T H A T Mr. McMillan be thanked for his interesting and informative presentation.