

VALE OF GLAMORGAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of a meeting held on 3rd December, 2019.

Present: Councillor E. Williams (Chairman), Mrs. S. Davies, Mrs. R. Exley, Mr. I. Fraser, Mr. J. Herbert, Mrs. K. Lucas, Mr. H.S. McMillan and Mr. G. Thomas.

Also present: Mr. G.J. Davies, Mr. S. Pickering, Mr. G. Teague, Mr. J. Walker and Mrs. S. Thomas (Vale of Glamorgan Council), and Mrs. M. Miyata-Lee (Natural Resources Wales)

(a) Apologies for Absence –

Apologies were received from Mr. R. Pittard (Deputy Chairman), Mr. F. Coleman and Mr. S. Gaffney.

(b) Minutes –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meetings held on 13th February, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

(c) Coastal Access Improvement Programme: Update –

Mr. Teague provided an update on Coastal Access projects undertaken during 2019/20.

Mr. Teague began by advising the Forum that funding was allocated via a formula for which 100% was provided for realignment and 75% provided for improvement works. In addition, £643 was allocated per kilometre for Public Rights of Way maintenance and £20 per kilometre for non-maintained paths.

Mr. Teague advised that the current Programme would run until the end of March 2021 which meant that projects needed to be completed in time for the March reclaim. He also advised that a new Regional Management Officer had been appointed.

Mr. Teague then provided an update on work undertaken on the following:

- Maintenance including Annual cuts, Llantwit Steps and Kissing Gates:
- Aberthaw – drainage;
- Nash Point to St. Donats – roll back of path;
- Monknash – design work for repair of path;
- Porthkerry – realignment of path.

AGREED – T H A T the report be noted.

(d) Maintenance Reports –

The Forum was provided with an update in relation to maintenance work that had been carried out. This included over 400 maintenance issues, 119 clearances and 314 signage issues.

With regard to maintenance, Mr. Teague advised that these were logged following a survey of paths undertaken during 2011. The Forum was also presented with a map to illustrate where the issues were.

A Member of Forum noted that there was a downward trend in the number of maintenance issues resolved. In reply, Mr. Teague advised that this was expected as issues were first logged back in 2011, and these were being ticked off once completed. There was a spike in 2015, when a large number of issues were resolved. This was expected as there were either straight forward fixes or big issues that need to be dealt with as a priority. Some issues were more difficult to resolve, such as where it was difficult to access land. Further to this query, Mr. Pickering stated that Rangers were very active, and where they could, they would go out and resolve issues. This was better than waiting for contractors to complete the work.

General discussion then ensued around the use of volunteers and Mr. Teague stated that Valeways was not currently fully staffed and there was an issue with capacity in terms of running volunteer programmes directly, so extra resources would be needed to run any volunteer scheme. Mr. Teague advised that a bid for funding had been submitted through the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Wales Project and discussions were ongoing with the Ramblers to see what assistance they could provide.

AGREED – T H A T the maintenance reports be noted.

(e) Legal Orders and Evidential Modification Orders Update –

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

Mrs. S. Thomas referred to Legal Orders identification numbers 76 (Llanblethian) and 83 (St. Andrews Major) for which objections had been received.

Since February 2020, a number of new Legal Orders had been received:

- 93 – Pendoylan
- 94 – St. Athan
- 94 – Barry
- 95 – Llantwit Major
- 96 – Llanblethian
- 97 - Penmark

These were noted by the Forum.

AGREED – T H A T the report be noted.

(f) Rights of Way Improvement Plan –

The Forum was asked to consider a revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda papers.

Mr. Teague advised that the aims of the Improvement Plan had been updated following a workshop held with members of the Forum. As a result, actions were redrafted following the review and the revised Improvement Plan would be presented to Cabinet for adoption in the New Year.

The Forum noted that the key themes of the Improvement Plan remained, which were as follows:

- Management – actions 1 to 25;
- Stakeholders – actions 26 to 36; and
- Information – actions 37 to 41.

A Forum Member referred to Action 31 which related to working with motorised vehicle interest groups to look at appropriate opportunities for safe driving routes within the Vale. The Member stated that the biggest issue for this related to scrambler bikes and he queried whether this should be worded differently. In reply, Mr. Teague stated that inclusion of the word “appropriate” could be included and so this action would be looked at again.

AGREED – T H A T the revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan be agreed subject to Action 31 being revised.

(g) Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing in Wales (ENRaW) – Bridle and Bike –

Mr. Walker provided an update on a bid submitted to the Welsh Government Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing in Wales project. The Vale’s bid include a bridle and mountain bike scheme which included the following:

- A review of existing bridle and bike provision and targeted opportunities for route creation;
- Proposal and costing of a programme of work;
- Collaboration with the user, local and nature conservation groups to implement, sustain and promote the network.

The aim of the scheme was to produce a plan for the delivery of a long distance horse and mountain bike trail that linked hubs of bridleway access across the programmed area. This would be established in collaboration with local, user and nature conservation groups which would look towards delivery and subsequent sustainability of the trail with the hope to capitalise the opportunities to develop trails as wildlife corridors. The programme area would align with the south and

central Natural Resources Wales area statement which covered Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr.

The proposed project activities were:

- Delivery of a long-distance horse and mountain bike trail linking hubs of bridleway access across the South Central region, as developed in the Green Trails Network Plan (includes route, works and costs).
- Feasibility, business planning and piloting of a profit-making gateway facility (bike-park) that will contribute to financially sustaining the regional trail in the long term. The pilot site was proposed to be Leckwith Woods (Cardiff/Vale border) with opportunities to replicate the model on other sites around the trail to be explored.
- Animating and supporting local, user and nature conservation groups towards delivering and sustaining the trail and capitalising on opportunities for nature conservation.
- Develop branding and marketing strategies

The Forum noted that gateway facilities would be profit making and provide focal points for activities around and within which user communities could organise. Piloting and developing the correct business model would be key to sustaining the resource overall. It was planned that the project would contribute to tourism, physical activity, wellbeing and green infrastructure objectives.

Mr. Walker advised that he had been post since June and so he was currently half way through the project, and the next 6 months would involve putting everything together and developing a delivery plan. Mr. Teague added that delivery of the new trail would involve creation of legal rights and ground works. It would be focussed on maintain momentum amongst community groups and working on a collaborative basis in order to deliver and maintain the trail.

AGREED – T H A T the report be noted.