



FLINTSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
ANNUAL REVIEW 2023 -2024





Overview from the Chair

I have the pleasure in presenting this first annual report for the new Flintshire Local Access forum 2023/24. The report is a brief summary of the Forum's work. It is great to reflect on the work of the forum and see that members have had the opportunity to discuss, comment on and challenge such important topics of access in Flintshire. I know members have found the presentations and information interesting and useful and have valued being able to input and shape the work to provide quality access provision for the communities of Flintshire. I would like to thank members for their continued support to ensure we reach consensus and compromise during discussions. I am grateful to Flintshire County Council for providing meeting venues.

I would also like to thank all the Access and Natural Environment Officers for their commitment to improving access and maintaining high standards, against a background of significant growth and national infrastructure pressures.

What is the Local Access Forum (LAF)?

The function of the Flintshire 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.

Forum Membership

The Forum membership is for a three-year period and the Council (as the appointing authority) must appoint members to sit on the Forum. The Forum should comprise between 10 and 22 members, including the Chair and Vice Chair (who are selected from LAF members by the forum itself). In appointing Forum members, the authority must ensure that there is a reasonable balance between the interest of users of rights of way and access land, and the owners and occupiers of access land or land over which public rights of way subsist.

In addition, the authority should seek to ensure that fair balance between persons of different genders, races, ages, disabilities, and other characteristics.

The Regulations also provide for observers from the Welsh Assembly Government and Natural Resources Wales to attend Forum meetings. In addition, the Chair can invite other observers to Forum meetings to advise on specialist topics or to represent interests.



Introduction to members of the LAF and their interests.

Julian Pellatt – Chair. Julian worked in the local authority sector at director level, with responsibility for Rights of Way. He has a great interest in walking.

Huw Morgan – Vice chair. Is a local landowner and Chair of Nannerch Community Council, and work for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape.

Jeff Shone. Enjoys walking for leisure and is interested in promoting more access routes for work. He has an interest in historical routes / maintaining existing or reopening former rights of way.

Shirley Fermor. Is a Clwydian Rambler.

Councillor Dave Evans. Is FCC nominated member and is the Chair of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Sarah Hampson. Interests are equestrian access.

Marjorie Thomson. Is a Rainbow Rambler. She is also a Community Councillor for Gwernymynydd.

John Holiday. Represents cycling interests which stretch from roughly Abergele to the Chester border & inland and is interested in any developments that are cycling related in a wider context.

Alan Neale. Is interested in the Holywell area. He plans and leads walking groups.

Ian Gibbons. Former Walkabout Flintshire.

Nia Thomas. Works with Public Health NHS Wales.

Neville Howell. Rambler. (Resigned for the forum during the year)

Johnny Hulson. Wildlife interest. Works across North Wales for the North Wildlife Trust.



The Year Reviewed

Meeting Diary

1st LAF Meeting – Wepre Park.

19 people in attendance and 2 apologies.

This meeting was an introduction to the LAF and provided training to members into the work of the forum and rights of way. Discussions of appointment of Chair and Vice Chair. Members discussed future agenda items for the LAF to consider. Members took a walk around Wepre park.

2nd LAF Meeting – Greenfield Valley.

15 people in attendance, 3 apologies and 3 observers.

Decided on the election the of chair and vice chair for the Local Access Forum. Members received and watched presentation of Active travel and cycling and discussed the Access Barrier Review. The meeting finished with a walk around Greenfield Valley.

3rd LAF Meeting – Talacre Community Centre.

13 people in attendance, 4 apologies and 1 observer.

An Introduction to Flintshire Coastal Park was presented. Footpath diversions through Farmyards and Bridleways were discussed and the meeting finished with a walk around Talacre.

4th LAF Meeting – Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve

18 people in attendance, 2 apologies and 1 observer.

Members watched a presentation on the work to establish a New National Park and Access in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5th LAF Meeting – Wepre Park Garden Room.

13 People in attendance and 7 apologies.

Members reviewed the first year of the LAF. They carried out a discussion on future agenda items such as interaction with the planning department. Received a presentation on the use of the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS). Improving behaviours in the countryside to hear member views on incidences of poor behaviours and to discuss options to address them.

The Vice Chair and Secretary attended the National LAF Chairs meeting in Bulth Wells on 4th October 2024.



Guest Speakers and Advice.

Richard Flood – Flintshire Transport Manager, Rob Nursaw – Active Travel and Cycling

Isobel Smith – Connecting Coast and Countryside Development Officer – An introduction to the Flintshire Coastal Park.

Richard Sumner – National Resources Wales – Establishing a New National Park.

Dave Shiel – Area Manager, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB - Access in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Improvements to the network.

Members received updates on the status of the network at each forum meeting.

Responses to consultations.

The LAF responded to NRW on work to establish a new national park and Welsh Government's consultation on the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Access Improvement Grant 2023/24

Members received an update on works to deliver the 2023/24 funding which was provided to local authorities from the Welsh Government through an Access Improvement Grant. The purpose of the grant was to support improvement of access to our Public Rights of Way network, open access land and green space. For Flintshire County Council the total grant amount for 2023/24 was £74 k which funded several projects including:



As part of our continuous program of improving access to the countryside 32 stiles in the past year were replaced with self-closing gates or kissing gates.





PFP 9 Penyffordd Surfacing work with stone to improve access.



Footpath 21 Holywell
Pilgrim's Way repair to eroded surface using tarmac.





The Welsh Government Brilliant Basics Fund 2023-2024

The purpose of this Brilliant Basics Fund is to deliver small scale tourism infrastructure improvements across all of Wales.

This has enabled six stiles on footpath 410/45 which forms part of Wat's Dyke Way around Argoed Farm, New Brighton to be replaced with kissing gates.

Further work is planned in the 2024/25 financial year to install kissing gates in the Whitford area.

Ramblers Cymru – Paths to Wellbeing project

Completion of the Ramblers scheme that covered Llanfynydd in Flintshire. A worthwhile project that helped to upgrade the network around the community along 8 various walks.

A project officer was able to connect volunteers to aid improvement works across the community. One local volunteer even won the Young Volunteer award for the project, which was across 22 local authorities.

The Legal Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way

A Definitive Map consolidation exercise is currently being undertaken by the Access Team. This will enable the Definitive Map to be kept up to date, deal with applications from residents, businesses, and landowners to add new routes or change their alignment and resolve any errors.



Hynet CO2 Capture Pipeline

The 60km pipeline will collect CO2 produced at industrial plants at Ince and Stanlow in Cheshire and transport it to the Point of Ayr terminal at Talacre where it will be stored offshore in depleted gas reservoirs owned by Eni.

The Access Team have been working closely with colleagues in the Minerals & Waste Planning Services to identify all the PRow affected by the proposal and make provisions for temporary diversions during construction.

Cadwyn Clwyd Green Communities Fund

Nannerch Community Council through funding via the Green Communities Scheme has now benefitted from further updates to park infrastructure, including enhanced public paths, seating, and wildlife areas. As part of the project, the council received funding to make improvements to footpaths surrounding the village, so they are easily accessible for older, or less mobile residents.

These improvements include. Replacing 27 stiles with kissing gates, making them passable for all walking abilities. They were installed with the help of Flintshire County Council. Updating drainage on a byway to prevent flooding, and to ensure the paths are in action all year. A Community Miles leaflet, which details walking routes in the area has also been produced as part of the project to promote two of the updated footpaths, and to showcase local businesses in the villages.

Social Media

Flintshire Countryside & Coast

The Access Team has continued to use web-based social media including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to effectively promote events, guided walks and projects.

Social Media Followers:



3,200



1,529



1,109



Rights of Way Surveyed 170 km

Regular inspections of the PRow network aid the Access Team in taking a proactive approach to rights of way management.

Number of fault reports resolved in the last twelve months 297

Faults include problems with overgrown vegetation, broken stiles, and damaged signposts through to temporary or permanent obstructions.

Storm Damage

During the winter there were several extreme weather events that had an impact on the PRow network. This resulted in several reported problems such as fallen trees, blocked gullies, culverts, ditches, landslides & erosion of the surface.



Match Funding

Two new kissing gates in Northop village have been funded by Northop Community Council & Flintshire County Council's Access Team arranged the installation. The community council was keen to highlight the partnership working and the improvements made.



For more information about the Local Access Forum and how you can get involved please contact the Flintshire Local Access Forum:

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