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| **Title of Meeting:** | **National Access Forum (NAFW 52)** | | | | |
| **Date of Meeting:** | 7 July 2015  10:30 – 13:00  13:40-15:15 LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales: Workshop |  |  | **Venue:** | Powys Hospitality Centre, Welshpool Livestock Sales, SY21 8SR |
| **Present:**  **Observers:** | Ruth Hall (NRW, Chair), Carys Drew (NRW, Secretariat), Mark Weston (BHS), Elfyn Jones (BMC), Andrew Stumpf (Glandwr Cymru), Charles de Winton (CLBA), Claire Goodman(IPROW/WROWMWG), Gwenda Owen (CTC),Tom Packham (Dwr Cymru), David Evans (Elan Valley Trust), Bernard Griffiths (FUW), Jean Rosenfeld (LAFs in Wales/CPRW), Rebecca Brough(Ramblers Cymru), Gwyn Smith (Sustrans), Chris Wright (WATO), Richard Ball (Welsh National Parks), Richard Neale (NT), Beverley Penney (OSS), Rowland Pittard (YHA), Catrin Dellar (WG),  John Watkins (WG), Jont Bulbeck (NRW).Barbara Anglezarke (NRW), Mat Stephens (NRW), Sue Hearn (NRW), Kath Hewitt (NRW) IanHughes (NRW) , Joe Roberts (NRW), Rich Dearing (NRW)  Andy Mackintosh (Natural England), Vicky Morgan (Powys LAF), Chris Tomley (Powys LAF & LARA), | | | | |
| **Apologies:** | Janet Williams (BDS), Stuart France (CCC), Rachel Lewis-Griffiths (NFU Cymru), Tim Evans/Rebecca Mattingley (Sport Wales), Ian Dutch (WLGA), Ian Spence (WOS) Stephanie Price (Mountain Training Cymru) Kerry Thatcher (Visit Wales) | | | | |

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| **Item No:** | **Item** | **Action** |
|  | Welcome and Apologies. Ruth Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the two Forum members who were taking the opportunity to present items. Other members were encouraged to put items forward for future meetings and to contact Carys should they wish to do so.  The apologies were stated including from Ian Dutch who would be standing down as the WLGA representative as he was taking early retirement. Ruth asked that a note of thanks be recorded to Ian Dutch, which the Forum endorsed, for all his work and contributions to the Forum and subgroups over the years. Ian was in touch with WLGA with regard to finding a new representative. |  |
|  | British Mountaineering Council as a landowner and an overview of access managementElfyn Jones introduced the BMC - the organisation’s role as a representative body of climbers and hill walkers and it’s National Council, area structure and staffing and volunteers, with Elfyn being the only member of staff in Wales and part of the Access and Conservation team. Elfyn outlined the areas of work which the BMC were involved with including work in managing owned land and the challenges of managing natural cliff faces as recreational sites. He then provided a demonstration of the Regional Access Database, a live on-line resource that lists all known climbing sites that have access or conservation issues. See: <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/RAD/>  BMC current campaigns and aims for 2015/16 were focussed on Access Green Paper, disused quarries as potential climbing sites and aspirations around hill-walking.  **Discussion points included:**   * That the Regional Access Database is available to the public online and linked to google maps, it is also available as an App for iPhone and android * The information was ‘ground-truthed’ and kept up to date through reporting from volunteers and staff * Discussion about managing visitor numbers on sites - where it was understood that the sites that could get busy tended to be easy grade or low technical difficulty sites where outdoor providers were taking groups and they would develop consensus between themselves to avoid sites becoming too busy   **Action: 52.1** Carys to circulate the link to the App  <https://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmc-rad-android-app> | Carys Drew |
|  | Sustrans and delivering the Active Travel Act 2013 Gwyn Smith outlined the wide range of projects that Sustrans is involved with to encourage and support people to walk and cycle more, and developing the built environment to provide more suitable facilities Projects included:   * Smarter Choices, * Bike IT – with officers going into schools and learning resources for schools, * Health Hospitals and Universities, * Projects funded by NRW’s Nature Fund to support pollinators, * Greener Greenways – increasing biodiversity on their own land * specific infrastructure developments (Heads of the Valleys Route 46 and getting benefits for walkers and cyclists from the A465 Dualling)   Sustrans had been instrumental in the work that had culminated in the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and were working with local authorities through the first stages of the Act. Working with Exegesis they had won the Welsh Government contract to identify and map the base data for the ‘Prescribed Built up areas’. Local authorities had been given an extension until January 2016 to produce the public facing maps of existing Active Travel routes and were required to produce Integrated Network Maps by September 2017.  **Discussion points included:**   * The benefits of different types of surfacing – some were preferable for shared use and horse-riding. It was noted that dust surface had been required to be used rather than tarmac for conservation reasons, and that tarmac faded with time. |  |
|  | Good for People GIS toolkitBarbara Anglezarke introduced the ‘Good for People GIS Toolkit’ commissioned by NRW to provide evidence to target delivery of NRW’s Good for People Enabling Plans (Outdoor Recreation and Access, Education and Skills, Communities and Regeneration) – supporting strategic and operational decision making. The AECOM consultancy company worked with NRW staff over the last year on Toolkit development, bringing together GIS datasets which provide high level information to answer a range of questions.  Barbara demonstrated how the tool can be used to understand the characteristics of communities and show how it can be used in planning specific project interventions. It would help area teams focus on the areas where interventions were most in need, this may mean withdrawing from other areas. NRW had used the toolkit in the Natural Resource Management trial areas of Rhondda, Tawe and Dyfi.  The toolkit had been developed from the start with a view that the information would be available for anyone to use, not just NRW, to help inform decision making using objective data.  **Action 52.2:** Carys to circulate the Toolkit User Guide and Barbara’s contact details who could be contacted for further information.  **Discussion points included:**   * That the Toolkit was not yet available, it was hoped that it would be available for use in NRW within 6 months when it was expected that it would be used to inform NRW’s Recreation and Access Plans on NRW managed land and available for use more widely within a year. | Carys Drew |
|  | Contributions from all & any other business See: Paper NAFW 52 Contributions  Ruth thanked everyone for their contributions.  Catrin Dellar, Welsh Government provided verbal update on two items:   * **Green Paper Consultation: Improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation**   The Welsh Government listened to what stakeholders were saying during the review of access and outdoor recreation and have developed the green paper in light of the issues raised.  Catrin said that the Green Paper does not propose specific changes but rather it enables a discussion over how Welsh Government might improve the opportunities available for responsible outdoor recreation whilst taking account of land management needs and the natural and cultural environments. The paper sets out potential options for change on a sliding scale from procedural changes to the way public rights of way are managed and recorded to more significant changes to the legislative framework on access.  The intention was to promote constructive discussion on all the areas featured in the consultation in order to help to inform decisions by the next Welsh Government.  The Green Paper consultation will open on the 10thJuly 2015 and close on the 2nd October 2015. The consultation, including a young person’s consultation document, can be found at:  <http://gov.wales/consultations/environmentandcountryside/improving-opportunities-to-access-the-outdoors/?status=closed&lang=en>  ***Action 47.5:*** *Members to put their names forward if interested in being part of the NAFW sub-group to consider the Green Paper to Carys Drew who would organise a meeting in response to consultation being issued*   * **Request for input to develop updated Guidance for Local authorities on Rights of Way.**   Welsh Government had appointed consultants (BRO partnership) to update Rights of Way Circular 5/93 and said that they would welcome input from the Forum to this work. There was scoping paper which would be circulated and Forum members were invited provide initial feedback to this. A consultation with stakeholders (including the Forum) on the revised guidance would take place during August and September 2015.  **Action 52.3** Carys Drew to circulate and all to respond to Scoping Paper from BRO Partnership  NRW provided a number of updates:  **Wales Coast Path:**  Jont responded to the concern raised in WLGA’s update about the delay in issuing funding offer letters for the WCP to local authorities.  He apologised for the delays which were due to significant changes to WCP programme arrangements, including the allocated budget, having to be considered and decided by NRW’s Executive Team.  Following NRW’s Executive Team decision on 9th June the WCP programme had now been taken within NRW as a permanent responsibility for the organisation. NRW will receive an uplift of £900k per year from Welsh Government, ring fenced as £4.5million over the next 5 years i.e. to March 2020. NRW will determine the amount of the annual budget for the WCP from April 2020 onwards. NRW would now be leading the project although Welsh Government would retain an interest.  The programme changes also required inclusion within the existing NRW grants process for the first time. The WCP grants for 2015/16 had now all been processed and offer letters sent out.  **ROWIP Guidance update**  Carys Drew provided an overview of the work which she and Mat Stephens were working on following the request from Welsh Government for NRW to provide advice on statutory Guidance for local highway authorities on their Review of ROWIPs.  An email had been circulated asking for expressions of interest to take part in a subgroup to look at Guidance in detail, to which a number of Forum members had responded. A subgroup of NAFW would be organised in due course.  **Action 52.4** Carys Drew to organise ROWIP Guidance Subgroup  **Dog Walking guidance**  Joe Roberts thanked Forum members for their contribution to the consultation on guidance for dog walkers, the working group developing the guidance (of which NRW was a member) had considered feedback and in response had developed a short leaflet. The leaflet would have a press launch during the Royal Welsh Show.  NRW was also working with Bangor Centre for Behaviour Change in projects seeking to tackle the issue of dog fouling.  **Action 52.5:** Carys Drew to circulate dog walking guidance leaflet when available  **Welsh Government seeking new NRW Board members**  Ruth Hall drew Forum member’s attention to the fact that Welsh Government were recruiting for NRW Board membership, this may be something of interest to Forum members and their contacts and networks. Further details regarding these appointments are available on:  <https://cymru-wales.tal.net/vx/lang-en-GB/mobile-0/appcentre-3/brand-2/xf-0808dd031340/candidate/so/pm/1/pl/8/opp/1107-Members-Natural-Resources-Wales/en-GB>  **WATO**  Chris Wright noted that Visit Wales had named 2015 as the ‘Year of Adventure’ and there was an opportunity to get involved and suggest events to be included and demonstrate the importance of outdoor recreation.  **YHA**  Rowland Pittard highlighted that Youth hostels are available to all not just YHA members.  The MOSAIC project had been completed in Wales  <http://us4.campaign-archive2.com/?u=c36639d69b0071f7dceef08be&id=8c2296794c&e=165f77b360>  **LAFs**  Jean Rosenfeld in his role as National LAF representative was involved in the Partnership Group for Promoted Routes project.  Jean noted that the project was being delayed due to NRW’s policy to include NRW corporate branding and logos on projects that were carried out in partnership, and he felt that this was not appropriate for a project where the work is delivered jointly.  Jont responded that the work with the partnership group had been very positive with the group setting out clear way recommendations for taking forward the promotion. He acknowledged there were internal NRW issues yet to be resolved for this work and these had significantly delayed progress. The main issue had been NRW’s approach to use of NRW’s corporate branding in such joint projects, where NRW doesn’t ‘own’ the products to be promoted. We hoped to resolve how we might develop a brand identity and/or logo for the promoted routes promotion work or otherwise took forward the promotional aspects. | All / Carys Drew  Carys Drew / All  Carys Drew  Carys Drew |
|  | Date of next meetings The next two meeting dates and venues were confirmed as:   * 10th November 2015 (YHA Cardiff Central, East Tyndall Street, Cardiff CF10 4BB) * 8th March 2016 (NRW office, Maes y Ffynnon, Bangor)   All to note that meeting dates and papers will now be available on the NRW website:  <http://naturalresources.wales/out-and-about/recreation-and-access-policy-advice-and-guidance/networks-and-partnerships/national-access-forum-for-wales/?lang=en> |  |
|  | LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales – presentation Sue Hearn, NRW, provided an introduction to the LIFE Natura 2000 project to bring protected sites into favourable condition.  The LIFE N2K project is aiming to develop a strategic programme for the management and restoration of all SACs and SPAs in Wales, and their habitats and species for the period 2014-20. It is managed by NRW & co-funded by EU LIFE+ Nature.  The main phase of project work has been to produce Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs) for all SACs and SPAs in Wales, via a series of interviews with everyone involved with each site. The PIPs identify priority Pressures and Threats facing the sites and review actions required to bring the sites into favourable condition.  Alongside the production of PIPs, the project is producing Thematic Plans for main issues affecting N2K features across the Welsh network. These plans will identify key actions at Welsh level, e.g. changes of policy or legislation, improvements to existing tools and new mechanisms and methods. The plans are developed through stakeholder consultation and NRW have been running workshops with key stakeholders for each issue.  One of these Thematic Plan issues is Access and Recreation the afternoon workshop would be looking at this and associated issues and risks and current and potential future mechanisms for their management.  **Discussion:**   * In considering how recreation and access were perceived, it was important to get an accurate rounded picture of the impact both positive and negative of recreation and access and to reflect that not all activities were damaging, there was a need for detailed information to fully understand the situation. There was a concern that non-damaging activities could be limited unnecessarily if the situation was not fully understood. |  |
|  | LUNCH |  |
|  | **Natura 2000 – workshop**  Forum members were joined by some NRW staff who also contributed their views as part of the workshop to focus on Access and Recreation Thematic Plan.  See separate write up of issues raised in the workshop |  |