

**Minutes of the South Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting held on
Tuesday 15th March 2022 at 6.30 pm
Online Zoom Meeting**

Present – Members:	Mr Hedd Pugh	Cllr Eryl Jones-Williams
	Mr Alun Edwards	Mr Geraint Rowlands
	Mr Alun Evans	Mr Delwyn Evans
	Mr Ashley Charlwood	Mrs Leslie Amison
	Mrs Janette Holmes	Mr David Coleman
	Mr Aled Thomas	Mr Alun Williams
	Mr Huw Roberts	Mrs Gaynor Davies
	Cllr John Pughe Roberts	Cllr Dewi Owen

Officers / Observers:	Peter Rutherford (SNPA)	Gwynn Lloyd Evans (GC)
	Adam Daniel (SNPA)	Rhys G Roberts (GC)
	Dion Roberts (SNPA)	David P Jones (SNP)

HP welcomed everyone to this evening's meeting. He mentioned our previous member Gareth Roberts and that on behalf of the membership he wished him and the family well on their return from Ukraine and asked PR to pass on those messages.

1. Apologies Andy Hall Molly Lovatt

PR announced that Andy Hall (and current Vice Chair) was moving to Scotland and wished me to convey his best wishes to the LAF members and he wished them well for the future.

HP added that this was disappointing as AH had been a very knowledgeable and valued member of the LAF since its early days representing the user groups particularly the canoeing and kayaking sector and had also been Vice Chair. He asked if PR could draft a letter of thanks to AH which he could sign on behalf of the members.

He added that AH was a member representing the outdoor sector and as the LAF required a balance in membership between landowners and those from the recreational sector. AH had recommended a replacement as Dafydd Davis – a well-known person from the mountain biking community and was previously responsible for the design and building of many mountain tracks and courses including those in Coed Y Brenin.

PR explained that if the LAF members agreed there was a prescribed process for this within the LAF Regulations. His details and subsequent membership application would need to be put to the National Park Authority and subsequently be approved then as a co-opted member of the LAF.

Agreed

2. Declaration of Interest

HP stated that possibly had to declare an interest under item 9

3. Previous Minutes (Medi 14 Sept)

i) JPR noted that his surname was spelt differently.

EJW also mentioned something similar.

PR apologised for that oversight and would amend it accordingly.

- ii) HP mentioned that the minutes stated that PRow furniture was the responsibility of the landowner.

PR confirmed that this was the case.

GLE confirmed this but that any work that had been carried out should be approved by them and be to the landowner's satisfaction and also to the correct standard¹.

HP asked if this was the same for gates on Unclassified roads. And what was the situation with higher rights such as cycles or horse riders on bridleways in terms of gates and fittings.

GLE stated that in terms of Unclassified Roads (UCR) this was the responsibility of the relevant Highways department within the Council. In terms of bridleways - gate widths and fittings that was a Rights of Way issue and any furniture should be compliant with British Standards (BS) and preferably be two way opening gates wherever possible.

PR added that in some instances this could be problematic especially on boundaries where stock was grazed on each side. Each site had its own set of circumstances which needed to be overcome and sometimes a one size fits all approach is not possible.

HP mentioned that although some excellent work had been carried as part of the Dinas Mawddwy path scheme possibly some of the new field gates installed may not have bridle handles to enable easier opening by cycles and horse riders and asked if they could be looked at.

JPR mentioned that many in that area were not bridleways but footpaths. It does depend on their status on what some describe as `green lanes`.

PR added that the frequently used term `green lane` was misleading and not a legal definition. What was important for any user groups was their actual legal status as recorded on the definitive map. There are many `tracks` that only have lower rights such as public footpaths. So, upgrading furniture is not as straight forward.

DE added that it was important to walk these routes given all the variables that we have to consider including the provisions of the Equality Act.

EJW mentioned that there were problems with large potholes on the bridleway in Dyffryn which have been created by the water company. He had subsequently complained, and Gwynedd Rights of Way had tried to remedy this, and he was grateful, but the water company continues to wreck it.

Furniture on Public Rights of Way is required to comply with British Standard (BS) 5709 Gaps, Gates, and Stiles.

GLE stated that he was aware of this site and had been in discussion with the company and they had contributed to the repairs but agreed with EJW that it needed a longer-term solution to address the standing water issues.

Item 12 PR mentioned that the disabled toilets in Morfa Mawddach had been closed along with the other toilets and DE had made the point that the disabled facilities should remain open. He was discussing his issue with the NP Properties department currently to see what could be done and possibly return these to radar type locks to make them accessible to disabled users.

EJW commented that he thought these were closed over the winter due to the disability toilets being left open after people accessing using RADAR² Keys and leaving a mess.

Approved

4. Matters Arising

i) Update on Barmouth Viaduct Network Rail work and update for 2022

PR mentioned that the original date for the reopening of the viaduct by Network Rail (NR) had been the 24th of December. However, this had been put back several times last December and had been problematic for the Warden Service in having to change their signs on several occasions.

It was expected that similar works will begin from next September to December to complete the second round of viaduct refurbishment works. He would appraise members when they knew more later on in the year. The bus service would resume to enable people to transit round as it was before.

EJW added that the closure dates for Part II so far were the 11th September to the 11th December. There would also be a short closure in April for one weekend. When he has more information he would pass this on. Welshpool section will also be reopened following the flooding damage over the winter.

HO thanked EJW for that update.

5. Correspondence

i) NRW Countryside Code – Advice for land managers

PR explained that this was the updated advice for landowners – contained in paper 5i. Post CRoW 2002 in Wales the old Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) had produced a useful document as a guide for landowners, but it was felt that this required updating and after wide consultation in Wales and England this was the result.

The NRW had explained it thus.

² RADAR locks and keys - key system specifically designed for disabled toilet users.

“It is felt that the guidance needs the right balance between encouraging access and making sure land managers understand their rights and responsibilities when working in and managing the countryside. The advice has also been supported by the Health and Safety Executive”.

This document would fall into the family of codes that the NRW have produced and hoped that landowners would find this useful. The National Park was the `authority` for matters pertaining to open access land and if any landowner or tenant wished to seek advice then the NP would try to assist them. He had done this on many occasions in the past.

HP mentioned that the old document was useful and revising this was important to landowners.

ED commented that one farmer was recently killed by one of his cattle and this resulted in a prosecution by the Health & Safety Executive – to ensure that the public are safe. But given that we are encouraged to do by agri-environmental schemes such as Glastir – that is to graze open land with cattle then this raises some serious concerns for those landowners and their stock management within access land.

This made for an uneasy situation when the H&S Executive recommended the growing on crops on that particular land and not stock grazing on land which was publicly accessible. This situation made the industry uneasy given that many landowners have no choice but to graze stock on this type of land and where other agricultural production such as the growing of crops was not possible.

HP wasn't sure if the H&S Exec did say this as that would cause considerable consternation within the industry if true. As AE had said cattle grazing regimes were a crucial part of their operations and it was no feasible or possible to change this.

Cllr DWO mentioned that a similar H&S issue had occurred to a member of the public 18 months ago in Tywyn. That person was severely injured. There are many such paths which pass through cattle stocking areas and were accessible by the public including those with dogs which can compound the situation. Erecting signage was problematic these days.

PR (through the Chair) mentioned that this issue was becoming more common hence the need for a great deal more public information especially about cattle with calves. It was interesting to note that the NRW in their latest Dogs Code and guidance may follow the National Park`s website phrase “dogs to be on shorts leads in the vicinity of livestock” which we had used for several years with some success. Staff were able to cite this whilst out and about and people generally understood the principle.

Sign could help rather than hinder and possibly the farming unions and others could look at this particular aspect.

HP added that it was cows with calves rather than bulls that was the main problem – particularly when walkers have a dog. Cows may react to this and in his view releasing the dog completely was the best option rather than trying to hold on to it and may put them in danger. As DWO had mentioned signage was difficult.

EJW added that any signs that indicated any form of danger must not be used as that can mean certain liability issues.

HP agreed with this but whilst most cows are fine some may not be.

JH commented that if you are on a bridleway it is not possible to get off and release your horse. It is common sense not to access an area like this if you can get around. The coastal path may be problematic as they are linear in nature.

HP said that working together on this may be a useful exercise.

PR added that sadly not everyone exercises common sense whilst in the countryside and some post Covid visitors plainly have no relationship with the outdoors so there is a great deal of public information work to undertake to get people to engage or re-engage with the Countryside Code/s. He himself had been threatened by dog owners on Snowdon.

AC asked if there was any form of quantifiable baseline evidence of the scale of the issue rather than being based on these specific issues that had occurred in recent times. Reactions and looking for practical solutions should be based on the likelihood of these things happening.

PR stated that there are statistics that the H&S Executive do have data on such incidents. Certainly, there are more incidents occurring by today than there was 20 years ago when he first started in his role as Access officer.

EJW asked who was the authority in such matters.

GJE stated that the H&S Executive were the prosecuting authority in such cases.

- ii) Letter to Minister – Provision for off road motorcycles in the countryside.**
- iii) Welsh Government's response letter to the above.**

PR stated that he had received a reply – he apologised that it was not available in the minutes. *Sharing the screen*, the LAF letter (endorsed by both Snowdonia LAF's) had asked the Minister if some alternative sites could be provided for off road motorcyclists within NRW state forests particularly given the increasing number of problems occurring in the countryside including National Parks. The response had not been favourable, but it had noted the points the LAF's had raised. The Minister mentioned that next winter as part of their review of the future and direction of national forest they would be consulting widely and there may be an opportunity for the LAF's to put our views at that time.

PR added that this was a little disappointing but not unexpected. If there is a consultation he would ensure that the LAF members are afforded the opportunity to make their views known.

HP mentioned that this had come from the Minister Lee Walters AM.

DWO commented that this response was disappointing as this activity is increasing and it's difficult to see where it will end – especially when there is damage to people's land and where they could be penalised if it was not in good condition.

GR mentioned that the Llanelltyd Community Council had received complaints about off roaders on the Bont Ddu – Pont Scethin route which was suffering severe and continual damage. Additionally, some off roaders were then moving away from the UCR and going upwards to Diffwys. This was difficult to stop but results in a great deal of damage to land and stock disturbance.

HP added that we had been disusing this area for several years and he had mentioned in the past including a potential seasonal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). However, he was unsure what appetite Gwynedd Highways had for this. But a season TRO would help to reduce the degree of damage over the winter months but policing this would be difficult.

EJW commented that the Police had been proactive in some instances, but it was not a priority. He had seen motorcycles in that area many times but was a problem across the NP and was also a Wales wide issue.

JPR added that some bikers had recently been displaced in the Dovey due to them being caught by the Police - possibly this is why there were now more activity in the Tywyn area but appreciated that it was a continuous problem.

6. Update on the All-Wales Coastal Path in Gwynedd – Rhys G Roberts

RR was interested to hear the discussion about dogs in the countryside. This was one of the most common complaints that they receive on the coastal path and many sections of the AWCP run through fields that contain either sheep or cattle. It was also frustrating that it was so difficult to get any form of definitive answer from the H&S Executive on this issue.

When they received complaints, as per their protocol. they did discuss these with the landowners but surprisingly many users do not realise that most of the coastal path land – even as a Public Right of Way, in many places, is largely agricultural land. He concurred with the view that the law in relation to dogs in the countryside was weak and offered little protection for landowners or walkers. There was some research conducted in Pen Llyn on National Trust land where different signage was trialled, and some stock was moved when necessary. But this was not possible in many places.

In relation to the Barmouth Viaduct the difficulty was that the bridge was the property of Network Rail (NR). Although it was part of the coastal path route it was not a Public Right of Way and access is by agreement between Gwynedd Council and NR and they had to work with them during these repair phases.

He explained that it had been a challenging year for them generally but there was various works that were underway across the Gwynedd section of path but that he would update them on the more important points.

There had been some movement in their deliberations with the Penrhyn Estate near Bangor which was encouraging.

He had also been in preliminary discussions with Network Rail to establish a link between Tonfannau, Rhoslefain and the Llwyngwrl area.

AE had asked at the last meeting about the condition of the bridge in Tonfannau (and many have asked the same question). The parapets will be removed to a workshop then sand blasted and be repainted early this year.

As part of their work some landowners had asked if it was possible to carry out other conservation works within the AWCP such as tree planting, water ponds and planting of hedgerows. Given these requests they had asked WG via the NRW if there was funding available for such work and the response from them was very positive. They had since received grant monies to run a pilot project on a farm in the Abersoch area. This work included 400m of new hedgerow banks, scrub clearance, new grazing regimes on the coastal slopes to suit the Chough (Bran Coes Coch) and other planting. This scheme is now ending, and this pilot will be evaluated. He was confident that WG, based on this Gwynedd Pilot, may be keen to role this out across the AWCP. He emphasised that this was very much a farmer led scheme instead of the other way round.

This year the AWCP will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary on the 5th of May. He announced that the guidebook will be translated into Welsh for the first time - Bangor to Porthmadog and will be launched in Nant Gwtheryrn during May and Forum members will be invited.

It was important to remember that a major part of the success of the AWCP was very much due to co-operation of landowners to ensure its future.

The WG had commissioned a review of the AWCP recently and the Minister concerned had asked for feedback from various quarters including the LAF's albeit this was over a short timeframe and included discussions with coastal staff across Wales. Snowdonia National Park had also responded with their views. Future funding was one of the main concerns.

If any LAF members wished to ask any further questions he would be happy to discuss them or alternatively they could ask online via the Gwynedd website at any time.

RR added that they had not had much of an opportunity to make their views known as this review was conducted over a very short period. He agreed that PRoW creations were slow to achieve under current legislation and simplifying and speeding up the process would be beneficial.

He was aware that there were new faces here this evening and he was always available to answer any questions either by phone or via their online system.

AE thanked RR for this valuable update. He asked if the Tonfannau bridge would have to be closed for the re painting.

RR stated that it would not be closed as this would mean an 8-mile diversion for users.

HP asked if the bridge had been in place for 10 years and was a significant development in the area at the time.

RR confirmed this.

GD asked what their intention was between Tonfannau and Llwyngwriol.

RR replied that discussions were at an early phase, and they were looking to develop potentially something new.

GD asked if this was going to run near the railway and as landowners in that area, and as far as she was aware, there had been no discussions with anyone as yet.

RR reiterated that this was very `early days` in their discussions with NR, although they had been in discussion with some landowners going back to 2016. But they would eventually be discussing this with all the relevant landowners when things were clearer.

GD added that there had been a considerable amount of coastal erosion in some sections and putting in a path would be extremely difficult.

HP mentioned that the LAFs had received - today in fact, a request for their opinion on the AWCP and contribute to this review process.

PR commented that this had been a matter for discussion by the National Access Forum (NAF) today.

He confirmed that WG had sent this request recently relating to the coastal path review to our Chief Executive to which they had since responded. The main points SNP had made in the review were:

- To look at use of the coastal path for higher rights where possible – cycles and/or equine/ disabled users.
- To consider more coastal community links – inland to enable more to benefit.
- To ensure that future funding was adequate and guaranteed
- To decide on its formal and national status – such as a National Trail, CRoW access corridor or simply as Public Rights of Way.
- To ensure that coastal rollback due to erosion was a far easier process than it was currently under the current highway's legislation.

LA mentioned that someone had been in contact regarding the 10th Anniversary of the AWCP and to celebrate this they had included 3 additional coastal walks in their Barmouth Walking Festival. Tywyn - Llwyngwriol, Porthmadog to Harlech and a circular around Talsarnau. This was also coincidentally the 20th anniversary of the walking festival.

DWO asked if the coastal path monitoring figures were available, and it would be interesting to the Community Councils.

RR stated that they had 15 counters situated along the coastal path with another 5 new ones allocated to other sections. He could make this information available if required. Certainly, following the lifting of Covid restrictions, they had seen an increase in use of the path by locals and visitors alike.

DWO asked if the monitoring information could be provided in time for the next LAF meeting in June.

RR stated that he would try to make this available.

AE asked what the costs were for the Tonfannau bridge.

RR thought this in the region of £30k with some of the costs met by the company with a smaller contribution coming from Highways.

HP thanked RR for his contribution this evening which was interesting and hoped that the figures would be available in time for the next meeting.

7. Welsh Government Access Reform Programme Update – Peter Rutherford

PR announced that this process had now come to an end and that the NRW had submitted their report to WG based on the various groups' deliberations (which had been onerous)³

The more recent deliberations included dogs on leads – *previously discussed*.

Another was that LAFs and their management and role. Although part of the CRoW Act consultees for applications for restrictions over 6 months LAF`s were not statutory consultees for other aspects of access work such as Public Rights of Way modification orders (DMMO`s). They had recommended that they be included on this statutory list. Most orders are not contentious but in some instances the input of the LAF would be worthwhile.

Another aspect was the membership tenure for LAFs. Currently the LAF Regulations required that this was every 3 years. This was widely acknowledged to be difficult for Secretaries to organise and for members to gain knowledge on what is a steep learning curve. They had recommended that this be extended to 4 or preferably 5 years.

Hopefully the WG will move on some of the recommendations made following the conclusion of the ARAG process.

PR also mentioned that a CRoW mapping review was required every 10 years with the last being done in 2013. Given that this was extremely costly and time consuming for the NRW and other stakeholders and that the access map was already established then surely a complete review was not necessary. They had recommended that additions and/or deletions should be brought forward on a continuous review basis. The next review was due in Wales in 2023 and the Minister and the NRW have recently announced that this would now be put back until 2029 – it was expected that the legislation would be amended at some stage in the interim.

In terms of any changes then it would make complete sense to ask the LAF`s for their opinion on potential applications for any changes to access land guided by their respective Officers.

HP asked PR when he thought they might expect the WG`s response to these recommendations.

PR replied that it was difficult to see how this would now play out and given that the discussions had been ongoing since 2015 including the Green Paper – which included changes to Rights of Way procedures, access to water and dogs this was now all deeply frustrating. However, he was hopeful that after the ARAG process things would have to move forward soon. The NAF subgroup report on access to water was also rebuffed by the Minister.

8. Update on the Warden Section`s work in the South area of the Park – David P Jones

AD on behalf of DPJ

AD mentioned that DPJ has not been able to join the meeting due to technical difficulties. He would try his best from his own notes.

He advised the members that they had faced significant challenges post Covid and last year additional monies had been received from WG to finance additional season staff and he had just received confirmation that additional monies would be available for this year so they could now recruit as soon as possible.

In the south of the NP substantial funding and works were going towards substantial repairs on the Mynydd Moel section of Cadair Idris. This was in the region of £300k with contributions from the NP (via WG monies), a crowd funded contribution from the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) `Mend Our Mountains` fund and some from the NRW. They will shortly be discussed this in detail internally with only contractual limited works let so far.

He added that in terms of pitching skills there is a shortage of contractors who could undertake this type of work across the NP and is even more difficult to find skilled contractors in the south area. With this in mind they were going to develop some form of stone pitching training particularly for wallers so as to create some form of skills pool in the south.

He further explained that other monies had been applied for under the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) scheme monies. This was allocated to two feasibility studies i) Glan LLyn missing link and ii) Dol Ebrill link and they were currently discussing the objectives with the contractor.

He reported that they were hoping to emulate the successful Voluntary Wardening scheme on Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) in the south of the NP. Invitations for these roles will be out within the next few weeks and if anyone, or if members knew of anyone who may be interested, then he would encourage them to get in touch with the NP. Most would be based in the Cader Idris area.

The Warden Service had also been undertaking education work with schools and working with the NRW on the trout fishery.

He hopes that DPJ could further update the members of their work at the next meeting in June.

JPR asked if there were any monies that would fund a Warden for the Aran area.

AD mentioned that last year they did have monies for seasonal Wardens and again for this coming year. They would be based in the Warden depots in the south of the NP - in Bala and Dolgellau but would be working across the south.

HP thanked AD for that update

9. Update on Amaethwyr Mawddwy Sustainable Management Scheme – Dion Roberts

DR thanked the members for the opportunity to update them on their activities in the area.

This would focus on the access project work.

He explained that the SMS scheme was concentrated in the southeast of the NP in the Mawddwy valley - with a total grant value of £500k and was part funded by WG and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. They were now heading into their second year.

The scheme encompassed 5 farming enterprises with 11 holdings.

The scheme objective was to work together with the NP and landowners to deliver environmental improvements for conservation in the landscape including improvements for biodiversity including habitat connectivity and peat restoration for carbon capture and storage and also for access improvements.

The biodiversity and habitat work including the planting of over 2.5km of coppicing and laying of hedges and renovating others to improve them as linear habitats. They has also been working with volunteers from Cymdeithas Eryri - Snowdonia Society to plant trees. They would also be working to protect an additional 7Ha of existing woodland.

The peatland restoration is an important factor in carbon capture and storage given the global situation. Working together with landowners we are looking at 408Ha of peat restoration work.

The project is also undertaking some access improvement works to improve existing paths which have deteriorated badly. These include Waun Camddwr (boardwalk) – Aran Fawddwy. They are trialling 100m using a woollen membrane as a permeable layer under path surfaces instead of a plastic-based membrane. This will then be topped with stone to rebuild this section. This will begin this coming year.

To enable this process, he had sought advice from other Officers for pre planning and advice on the proposed access provisions. They will then carry out some stakeholder engagement with the Community Councils and today the SLAF.

They are also working together with Cwmni Nod Glas – who have previous experience of footpath improvement work in the Dinas Mawddwy area who had also worked closely with the NP. They would also be working with them to upgrade their local bilingual website which would carry all the route information available in the area. They were also working with Coleg Merion Dwyfor in Dolgellau to develop QR codes for specific features of interest.

DR asked what the SLAF members for their opinion in relation to the use of QR codes on the Aran Fawddwy route and if they had any reservations on where these could be placed.

HP invited comments from members on the QS code issue.

AE stated that he was in favour of QR codes as these would be inconspicuous in remoter areas and useful especially as many people accessed information using their phones and meant that larger signage in the countryside was unnecessary.

JPR added that he was a part of this scheme, and he was glad that the various parties were working together. He agreed that QR codes were a useful device to enable people to access local information, including language and culture, on their phones rather than cluttering sites with interpretation boards.

HP added that he was also a part of the scheme (declared previously) and he agree that the QR code approach was a welcome one.

He thanked DR for his interesting presentation.

10 Recommended Agenda items for next meeting

- i)** Cambrian Way update by Ramblers Cymru
- ii)** Access Strategy Review.
- iii)** Coastal monitoring figures

DC asked what the latest situation in relation to the ROWIP review was.

PR would note this and ascertain from GC what the situation was.

GLE commented that this document would be out for consultation soon and he would report on this at the next meeting.

11. Any other business

i) AE mentioned that last year an ultra-marathon mountain race had been through his property and the first they knew of this was that signs had been placed across the route. These were small tags of plastic with wires and could be dangerous to stock if ingested. He had challenged the organisers, but it was difficult to track them down. Taking to neighbouring landowners they had seen similar things. He asked if the NP had any communication with the organisers.

PR commented that he had been in communication with this group recently – this was an elite race of 50 competitors held over several days. Generally, the NP includes signage

as part of any discussions - along with safety, sustainable transport, and litter/waste control. Our protocols are well understood by organisers in that signage should be removed by sweepers immediately after any event that have taken place. It appears also here that the signage may not be suitable and be dangerous to stock. This issue has not occurred in the NP before, and he will note this and arrange to discuss this at the first opportunity.

As part of the NP advice to organisers they are also supposed to contact all landowners along the route well in advance of any event with information such as times and dates and as a matter of courtesy and in case there may be unforeseen issues. He would also mention AE's concerns to the organisers and ask them to communicate with AE to rectify this.

ii) LA reported that last year they did manage to have a reduced Walking Festival with a limited of number walks with appropriate Covid measures applied – this included 9 days of walks with 3 different walks daily. They had attracted over 85 people with over 250 walks over the 9 days. They were intending to carry on in a similar fashion this year. The closure of the viaduct did cause some disruption, but they managed to work around the replacement bus service provided. This year they will be celebrating their 20th anniversary.

HP thanked LA for her report and update.

iii) AE asked if there had been any progress on the Pant yr Onnen – Cwrt UCR. This was now in a dreadful state and was unsure what was happening and who was responsible for it.

GLE understood that this had been discussed but that there may be local difficulties But was under the auspices of Highways as a UCR.

PR mentioned he had ben working with the off roading group (GLAS) who had crowd funded substantial monies to pay for a helicopter and materials to carry out substantial repairs at their own cost. PR had organised the heli lifts for the materials to assist but due to lack of agreement from the landowner this activity had not taken place which was a wasted opportunity. He had tried on several occasions to try to recover this, but this was not successful and was a frustrating situation.

AE offered to discuss this with the landowner as this was now in a bad way.

PR would welcome this. For information they had in conjunction with the formal off roading groups adopted a one-way system for this route running west to east. This information was carried by their respective social media and websites. It was unfortunate that some users did not adhere to this principle and continued to travel in the opposite direction making matters worse but otherwise it worked well.

JH asked what was being done to improve paths for women. She thought that there should be greater capacity for women as recreational users. Typically, she thought that most mountain activities were undertake by men. Most lady users were confined to the equine sector. This was problematic in itself when parking provisions were limited, and bridleways frequently not connected together.

PR stated that this was an interesting perspective but based on his own observations there were many women participating in the outdoor sector including women's walking groups, mountain biking, climbing, fell running and orienteering. Her comments about the bridle network and the lack of associated parking provisions is a valid one. This was a common problem in many places and unfortunately they were being penalised for misuse of parking areas by others. In terms of the network they were working continuously on improvements when the opportunity arose.

They were still at an impasse in terms of the Mawddach Trail and all the safety barrier work was finished (as recommended previously by the consultant's report). They had also recently completed a new link in the north of the NP from the Beddgelert Forest (Gorse section) to the Rhyd Ddu path which was proving to be very popular as a circular for Lon Gwyrfa. The Maescwm bridleway, which links Snowdon Ranger to Llanberis, has also been recently upgraded to allow access for a Trumper vehicle from Llanberis to Cwellyn.

Seeking consent for new or upgrading routes as bridleways was always difficult but usually issues are not insurmountable given the resources and time.

JH thanked PR for that information. She still thought that the majority of users in the countryside were still men.

PR added that possibly in terms of take up the lead bodies or respective associations have a role to play here in their promotion of their respective sports to all genders.

GLE added that, using access improvement grants, they have been improving access provision for horse riders recently in Llanfachreth and Tonfannau quarry. He added that their resources were speared thinly but they would always look to improving the network whenever they could.

PR commented that it was unfortunate that they were backtracking almost 70 years where frequently the wrong furniture had been installed on bridleways in particular. And other places where linkages were poor. So even today they were unpicking this problem. This had even been the case on Snowdon not so many years ago

LA added that most assistants on her walks programme are women volunteers. She mentioned that there are many fallen trees on the Ivy bridge route.

PR stated that if she had any details then he would look into it.

12. Date of Next Meeting – 14th June 2022

PR mentioned that they were planning to have a face-to-face meeting for June.

HP thanked all members and Officers for their attendance and contributions this evening.

