

**Minutes of the South Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting held on
Tuesday 14th June 2022 at 5.45 p.m.
At The Red Lion, Dinas Mawddwy**

Present – Members:

Mr Hedd Pugh (Chair)	Cllr John Pughe Roberts
Mrs Gaynor Davies	Mr Huw Roberts
Mr Geraint Rowlands	Mrs Lesley Amison
Mrs Janette Holmes	Mr David Coleman

Officers / Observers:

Peter Rutherford (SNPA)	David P Jones (SNPA)
Rhian P Williams (SNPA)	Dana Williams (SNPA)
Arfon Hughes (Cwmni Nod Glas)	

1. Apologies

Mr Eryl Jones Willaims	Mr Alun Edwards
Mr Aled Thomas	Mr Ashley Charwood

HP welcomed everyone to the first SLAF `live` meeting in over two years and that it was good to see everyone in attendance especially new the members who had never met in person before other than by Zoom - although there were some apologies.

He invited round the table introductions.

HP landowner and current LAF Chair and member of the SLAF since 2002. The NP Forums were some of the first in Wales to be established.

Peter Rutheford – Access and Health & Well Being Manager SNP and Secretary to both the National Parks Local Access Forums.

Dana Williams – Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Monitoring Officer SNP

Leslie Amison – resident of Dyffryn Ardudwy, organiser of the Barmouth Walking festival and Barmouth Publicity Association.

David Prysor Jones – Head Warden South for SNP

Huw Roberts – landowner

Geraint Rowlands – landowner and caravan site owner

Jeanette Holmes – member of the British Horse Society and the Barmouth Bridleway group

Arfon Hughes – representing Cwmni Nod Glas a local community led development group.

Cllr John Pughe Roberts – member of the SNP Authority and local landowner.

Gaynor Davies – new member and the first time for her to meet other members in person with farming interest and campsite owners in the Rhoslefain area.

Rhian Williams – Admin support for the Wardening Section of the SNPA and LAF admin support

HP thanked all for this information.

PR through the Chair asked JPR if he was still the nominated member to the LAF from the Authority.

JPR replied that he was.

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Previous Minutes

HP noted that GLE was mentioned as being in attendance twice.

PR would note that for the record.

Approved

HP mentioned that unfortunately Andy Hall our Vice Chair had moved to Scotland (to enjoy his retirement) and therefore there was a need to co-opt a Vice Chair.

It was normal for the Chair and Vice Chairs to be from both groups which made up the usual membership of the Forum – i.e. one from the user groups and one from the landowner group. In this case there was a requirement to have the Vice Chair from the user group.

He would ask PR to send out invitations for this role from within the membership.

PR would circulate this to them. He also informed members that co-option of the perspective new member Mr Dafydd Davis would shortly be under consideration by the Authority.

4. Matters Arising

i) Coastal Path monitoring figures from Gwynedd Council

PR mentioned that unfortunately Gwynedd Council's Coastal Officer Rhys Roberts was not able to attend this evening.

He explained that the NRW funded the All-Wales Coastal Path (AWCP) and its Officers across Wales. The delivery of the path continues with Gwynedd having one of the biggest sections of the route in Wales – running from Llanfairfechan (the boundary with Conwy) all the way down to Machynlleth – (the boundary with Powys/Ceredigion) with approximately 100 miles of the AWCP within the NP. Responsibility for this lies with Gwynedd and the NRW as funders. Although RR keep us up to date on progress and liaises with field staff and PR when required.

In terms of the visitor monitoring figures Gwynedd had found a similar pattern to the National Park – that there were behavioural changes which occurred within local communities and visitors during and after Covid lockdowns following the lifting of travel restrictions. Some patterns indicated that local communities had rediscovered their immediate networks and links to other communities. It was apparent that visitors been using the network and the NP had received many inquiries about areas where activities were lower in the past.

The figures recently passed to him from RR indicated that the Barmouth viaduct total (part of the coast path) was in the region of 113,000. The total between 2019 – and 2021 was in the region of 339,000 which is substantial. This translates into 100,000 per annum. The embankment footpath figures between Morfa Mawddach and Fairbourne (2021 – 2022) were in the region of 48,000 which was also significant. Using the NP figures for the Mawddach this meant that 50,000 were heading for Dolgellau.

GD advised that this was also included the cycle count.

Others were: Talsarnau (2020-2021) – 37,000. Harlech 34,000 (2019 – 2020) and 2020 - 2021 – 24,000.

PR reported that in recent months it was interesting that Hugh Iranca Davies AM had initiated a coastal path review and the NP had been asked to respond.

In brief the points raised (by the NP) were:

- i) Its future funding mechanism and guarantee in the long term.
- ii) The potential for developing of additional links to other coastal and adjacent inland communities.
- iii) Explore its potential for higher rights wherever practicable.
- iv) To confirm its long-term status - i.e.as a National Trail, a CRoW corridor, or some other form of designation.
- v) The potential to make coastal erosion fall back positions easier to accomplish rather going through the current procedural requirements under the Highways Act for Rights of Way.

PR would ask RR if he could update the members at the next meeting if he was free.

ii) SNPA Draft Recreation Strategy – Update

PR reported that the revised version was now updated with new photos and graphics. He had taken this paper to the Management Team, and they had advised him that this paper should go to the Authority Pwyllgor/Committee for their observations before the Forum. *The Forums had a text version previously.*

This places PR in a difficult position as the LAF were the statutory advisors to the Authority on access and the LAFs contained a great deal of expertise. He asked for views on this.

JPR stated that he would raise this at the next Authority meeting.

PR added that these new documents bore no similarity to the old one but must follow the objectives laid down in the Management Plan. If changes are made to this which are related to access or there is new legislation then the Recreational Strategy will be revised accordingly – so it was important that the document was flexible.

HP mentioned that he had made some of his initial observations known to PR. He thought that the document recommendations should come from the Forum in the first instance as the statutory advisors to the Authority on access and the membership was well represented in terms of knowledge and experience. He asked PR to mention this to the Management Team.

iii) p4 - PR mentioned that Barmouth Viaduct works were concluded for this period, but members should be aware that NR were intending to carry out similar works beginning next September and with some closure periods leading up to Christmas. He would attempt to keep them informed. This can be severely disruptive and had proved difficult for field staff to keep the public and signage information on the Mawddach up to date.

5. Correspondence

i) Natural Resources Wales (NRW) – Update on the Llyn Tegid Reservoir safety works.

PR mentioned that this was the latest newsletter from the NRW on the flood embankment works in Llyn Tegid.

In their initial discussions with the NRW they had negotiated the installation of new disabled access ramp (to replace the old one) near the Warden Centre which was now included in the scheme.

Some of the PRow which had been closed were being managed by the NRW to help with the access however, the NRW were attempting to make this as least disruptive as possible for the public – this was not always possible given the scale of the works.

The only problem that they foresaw in terms of joint development of the flood embankment work at the same time of the development of the Bala Railway extension was how one footpath (Bala No 4) could be used to the east of the embankment. He was sure this would not cause any inconvenience.

DPJ commented that things had gone well thus far, and improvements had been made that were overall more beneficial to the Public in terms of access.

HR mentioned that some landowners had feared that the new flood defences could raise water levels particularly at the south end of the lake. They had been assured by the NRW that this was not the case.

DPJ added that the NRW had concerns about trees growing into the flood defences and this was one of the principal reasons to clear and to rebuild them to a proper standard.

PR added that it was unfortunate that this meant that the new all ability track the NP had installed on top of the east embankment between the road and the north gate weir was now being dug up – but part of the arrangement with the NRW was that this would be replaced when works are completed. Albeit it was a loss of amenity in the interim.

ii) NRW briefing note – Countryside and Rights of Way Act Access mapping – extension to the mapping review deadline.

Phone call for JPR!

PR explained that under the CRow Act 2000 the open access map was to be reviewed every ten years. The first one was 2013 and at that time some landowners had still attempted to question CRow access land on their property, and some had applied to remove it. Many were spurious and were very time consuming for the NRW and the NP. The next map review was supposed to take place in 2023 but the Minister, via the NRW, has now decided to postpone this until 2029. This seemed an inordinate amount of time for an extension but was welcomed by many. The Access Reform Groups (ARAG) had recommended that this very onerous mapping process be replaced by a rolling process where applications could be considered on an individual basis by the LAF's following Officer reports – this had been recommended by the LAF's themselves in the past.

There were some candidate sites that were removed from the previous map in 2013 – Pandora Mine spoil heap, which was mapped incorrectly, was one area which clearly did not meet the CRow access land criteria and should have been removed earlier but the mapping review system did not allow for this. Having this on a rolling basis would be easier and cheaper for such cases.

This may also be a method of delaying the map review until such time as it can be built into new legislation before that time (to remove the need for a 10-year review) as well as changing provision for access to water, PRow, rules on dogs and other access reforms – many as outlined by the ARAG groups.

In the past the NP had only recommended some sites to the NRW if they had not met the original access land criteria.

There was an issue when one or two sites which may pose a continuing danger to the public – such as the Traws ranges area, where an exclusion had to resubmitted to the Forum every five years for approval as required by the legislation. The access land designation under the CRow Act was irreversible but plainly did not allow for these types of problems where there may be a consistent `danger to the public`. He thought that this needed to have some form of mechanism within the Act to remove them in such cases – and this should be the only reason. They had made their views known to the NRW in the past.

If anything further transpired he would report back to the members.

6. Gwynedd Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

PR reported that GLE is unable to attend as he has Covid.

The document will be received soon and required a response from the LAF's. Although any members may respond as individuals.

It had been agreed in the past that a subgroup of the joint LAF`s (Arfon Dwyfor, attend a joint meeting between the three LAF`s which PR would host. Two members plus the Chair. He asked if the members would agree to continue with this method of having a joint response.

Agreed.

Members are HP, AC & JH

PR would inform this group when this meeting will occur. The venue will be Plas Tan Y Bwlch.

No doubt the issue of categorisation was something that should be under consideration given all the behavioural changes experienced post lockdowns and where local community links had become more important.

GD asked if this was reflected in the increasing number of people using their respective networks during and after lockdowns.

PR stated that this was reflection of what happened in local communities and by visitor during and following lockdowns. Communities had rediscovered their local networks and had recognised the benefits for exercise, health, and well-being. Reviewing the ROWIP`s would enable the Community Councils to re-examine their original local Rights of Way categorisation.

7. Update on the work of the Warden Section in the south area of the Park – David P Jones

DJP introduced himself as the Head Warden for the south area of the NP. In terms of staffing – Rhys Gwynn covered the Dolgellau area and down to Dinas Mawddwy, Gethin Corps also has an area in Dolgellau but was also partly on the Mawddach and also west and south of the NP. Arwel Morris, assisted by a seasonal Warden Robot Davies, covered the Bala and Llyn Tegid areas. With one estate worked Meirion Edwards working out of Marian workshop in Dolgellau.

In terms of the Wardens work programme this had all been severely affected by the Covid pandemic. Visitor numbers had gone up significantly following the lifting of lockdown and travel restrictions and this resulted in a number of issues such as excessive numbers of cars at all our car parks and in turn the lack of additional capacity causing overflow issues. There had also been a great deal of poor behaviour such as littering and `waste`, fly camping and other antisocial issues. Llyn Tegid itself has seen unprecedented numbers of visitors with record amounts of litter.

Whilst we should broadly welcome visitors clearly there were some who had not visited the Park before and had little understanding in terms of their collective responsibility to our environment and countryside.

PR commented that this pattern had been reflected across the NP. and also other organisations had seen similar things including the NRW, Woodland Trust – Coed Cymru, the National Trust and this had proven to be significant challenge for all staff.

JPR asked if the Park had seen a new type of visitor that we had not seen before.

DPJ commented that they had seen higher numbers of people in areas of the NP that were traditionally quieter, and this was a new phenomenon. 2022 was indicative of previous visitor `types` and hopefully this would continue.

He stressed that they were still working with landowners and were focused on improving access for local communities and visitors alike to enable them to enjoy the benefits of the outdoors.

Although PRow furniture was the responsibility of the landowner (gates, and stiles) the NP was willing to work with landowners to assist them to improve access particularly if this meant developing new least restrictive options such as gates.

HP asked who was responsible for furniture on tenanted land.

DC commented that it was the landlord generally.

DPJ added to it was likely that this was dependant of what was in their tenancy agreement

HP commented that it was difficult especially when dealing with boundaries.

PR added that they had come across some difficulties in NRW boundaries where furniture was not in good condition and the NP frequently had to pursue this.

DPJ added that in recent years the NP had been replacing stiles with self-closing gates wherever possible if the terrain was suitable. This was advantageous for a number of reasons. It became easier for people to walk and to enable people to be more confident using routes. Gates also allowed less abled people access to the countryside and led to less damage to fences by people walking their dogs - sometimes cutting holes through. in some places where access was remote it meant that staff had to carry furniture sometimes a considerable distance to install it.

He showed more slides showing Llwybr Cynwch - Precipice Walk which was one of the more popular routes in the area – DW confirmed that this was in the region of 32,000

GD added that the Foel Offrwm route was also becoming popular as it started opposite the same car park.

DPJ confirmed that the parking area was very busy throughout the year with a considerable amount of local use including throughout the lockdown period.

PR added that Llwybr Cynwch – Precipice Walk was a permissive route granted by the Nannau estate – and that Foel Offrwm was CRow access land – with the exception of a short section of the path at the beginning.

DPJ informed the members that the new Pont Dol Y Bont gates were now ready to go in.

The next phase of works on Mynydd Moel – funded in conjunction with the BMC donation fund `Mend our Mountains` and the NRW, was almost ready to begin and 100 tones of stone had already been flown in and a contractor appointed. Another 100 tons will be required.

This route is part of the Cader – Mynydd Moel circular (beginning in Minffordd/Dol Idris, which is a popular route, however, the Mynydd Moel section is in poor condition in places and those sections are quite high up so everything must be flown in.

GD asked why we did not use the stone that is sitting on the hill.

PR stated that although they had done so for a limited amount in the past, but the surface stone is part of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI noted for its geomorphology – glacial remnants) and they cannot be used. It was also very difficult to bag up safely by hand and move around the mountain.

DPJ also mentioned the new coastal boardwalk in Dyffryn which replaced the old one. This is now complete.

He mentioned that by today the NP had less staff available on the ground, but we did receive additional funding for a season member of staff both in Dolgellau and Bala which proved to very useful especially over busy weekends. Hopefully, they can recruit another two for this season. It was very useful experience for locally based young person's wanting to gain experience within the outdoor sector.

This year they are also trialling a new Volunteer Warden Scheme in the Cader Idris area – although this there always traditionally been a lot of activity of this nature in the north of the NP very little had been done in the south of the NP before. Hopefully, they will run some training with the recruits that came forward.

HR asked what the ages range was for this so far.

DPJ replied that they ranged from late teens up to their 70`s. It was disappointing that there were few locally based people that had come forward to volunteer, but it was surprising how far people were willing to travel travelled to do this – with one coming from Hay On Wye.

HP asked if they received their travel expenses.

DPJ replied that they did receive their travel costs. It was also an opportunity to people to learn to speak some Welsh and they were usually paired up with a Welsh speaker.

Covid also prevented their work with local schools and other community work. However, this was now ongoing. One which was notable was the fish breeding scheme (under the Life Project Grant in conjunction with the NRW) which enable schoolchildren to monitor the growth and development of fish before release. Their activities with schools also included talks on wildlife biodiversity.

HR asked if the Wardens could assist in the Community Councils brief for improving biodiversity.

DPJ replied that they could assist as each had a biodiversity brief within their particular Warden area plan to enable this. Other biodiversity work included erecting bird and bat boxes, planting trees, and eradicating invasive species such as Rhododendron Ponticum, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese knotweed and they worked closely with the NP Conservation Officers on these projects.

PR asked if the Wardens were still involved in the Mink control project.

DPJ replied that it was ongoing.

HP asked if it was true that Otters tended to displace Mink.

PR stated that some conservation research claimed this fact – he would inquire further.

JPR asked what the situation was this year with regard to the wild camping in Llyn Cae (under Cader Idris).

DPJ replied that this year it was less than last year, and many had come from afar.

GD added that certain visitors assumed that they could camp anywhere they liked which was a problem.

PR confirmed that there were no rights to wild camp in Wales or England without landowner's consent. Scotland did allow this under the Scottish Outdoor Code, but it was still regulated around Loch Lomond (NP) due to the similar issues they experience each year.

DPJ stated that this was not wild camping in its truest sense as they did leave a trace. Fly camping was another issue.

GD mentioned that there were also camper vans using lay-bys.

DPJ commented that Gwynedd Council were working on some form of `Aires` system for some lay byes` where camper vans and motorhomes would be allowed to stay overnight legally. Similar to the French system.

GR asked where the Health & Safety element was here as the requirements for a formal site (such as their own) were strict indeed and parking in lay-bys was not subject to the same rules which is unfair.

JPR mentioned that there was no certainty over what happened to their waste when parked up in lay-bys.

HP commented that some people used common land thinking that it was not owned by anyone which is entirely incorrect - all commons are owned by someone.

JH commented that she had noticed more people in cars and small vans parking in lay-bys and then leaving all their rubbish in black bags.

PR confirmed that it was people in cars and ordinary vans (some hired) that were the problem. They were using lay-by's or hopping over walls and `fly camping` and causing problems with litter, `other waste`, parking off road, lighting fires and barbeques and leaving everything behind them and since the lifting of restrictions this was happening across the NP.

Camper vans and motorhomes followed their industry Code of Conduct.

DPJ commented that staff always tried to encourage people to use local formal sites whenever possible and the NP Tourist Information Service (TIC`s) are preparing a definitive list of all the sites registered within the NP which will be available to the public soon. However, he appreciated that some motorhome and camper van owners did not wish to use formal sites.

LA mentioned that this was far removed from the notion of true wild camping.

PR mentioned that some years ago the wild camping advice was put up on the website together with the code of conduct. *The Forums had considered this in their deliberations at the time.* However given all the issues that `fly camping` has brought post lockdowns it was considered prudent to remove it for now. It was unfortunate that this had adversely affected people who understood how to wild camp in its traditional sense. He confirmed that he received weekly requests for camping, and they are all encouraged to use local campsites.

GR asked if the parking issue was a problem in places such as Llanfachreth or other paces. It was clear that there was a capacity issue in many places.

DPJ confirmed that it was a capacity issue across the whole of the NP and the additional influx showed that we had no spare capacity anywhere. Llyn Tegid has a large capacity but still could not accommodate the numbers seen post Covid.

JPR questioned the NP parking policy and asked if this required a review.

HP added that when we expect so many people to visit the NP then there must be parking capacity to cope with this.

JPR asked if it was possible that the LAF express their views to the Authority management.

Agreed that PR write to the Head of Planning to ask what can be done to improve this situation.

JH added that there are issues with parking for horse boxes and not just tourists.

She also asked DPJ about the steps he had shown on his slides on Mynydd Moel and that she would have trouble walking down these.

DPJ replied that this was a very section high of the route on the Mynydd Moel – Cader circular and was only accessible to the most intrepid walkers.

HR mentioned that there was a need to open a gap into the wall near the Pont Lliw bridge on the outskirts of Llanywchlyn linking the two paths.

DC commented that they had tried before but that this was not straightforward as Trunk Road were involved even though the speed limit was 40mph, but the link would be useful.

PR would inquire about this, but he thought that the bridge was listed.

DPJ commented that this may be a line-of-sight issue given the nature of the road.

HP thanked DPJ for his presentation and for the work of the Wardens in their area.

8. SNPA Visitor Monitoring figures 2021

DW explained that she was responsible for the monitoring figures and was going to present the 2021 figures and that the LAF were the first to see this data.

They were still missing some data due to technical issues – with some hardware issues, mostly battery problems not resolved during Covid.

She explained that the first three months of the year were clearly adversely affected by the Covid restriction with few figures generated. However, the figures for July, August and September were above normal mean values.

Ogwen figures showed a more spread out across the year, but this area tended to attract a different clientele to Snowdon and parking was finite.

Cader Idris had shown little in activity in the first four months due to Covid, but the summer months again were very high especially in August and where the parking issue was at its worst. And was busier than any previous August.

It was interesting to note that the overall figure for the 2019 – 2021 comparisons showed that the figures were still higher for 2021 even though we had lost the first few months of the year due to the pandemic. The whole season was jammed into July, August and September and this pattern was similar across the NP.

Precipice walk also showed an increase with an additional 7000 using the route compared with previous years which was significant. It was assumed that this was attributable to a considerable number of local users using the site due to the travel restrictions.

She apologised that there was no figures for 2021 for the Mawddach trail as we had several technical difficulties which had not been easy to resolve.

GD asked which was the most popular route up Cader as she had seen an increase in the number of cars parked in the Cwm Rhwyddfor car park.

DW replied that it was Minffordd (Dol Idris) that was the most popular.

DPJ commented that many people thought this route easy when in fact it was more strenuous than the Pony Path, but many people only went as far as Cwm Cae and not onwards to the summit. People parking in Cwm Rhwyddfôr may be accessing Cader Iris via a northern approach to Mynydd Moel. Many are aircraft enthusiasts visiting the Mach Loop¹

PR added that the number of cars parking in that car park were supplemented by the aircraft enthusiasts who were numerous throughout the year.

In terms of the parking issue he explained that given that the slightly higher than normal visitor numbers had been squeezed into July, August, and September it was found that we have little in terms of spare carrying capacity to accommodate this excess and this was a challenge.

HP commented the cost-of-living raises may well affect the coming season figures.

HR asked if there was any form of Park and Ride service.

PR stated that in the north there was a very good Sherpas Bus Service which operated around Yr Wyddfa - Snowdon as a circular and also a service linking into this from Betws Y Coed and Capel Curig. People could catch the bus from Llanberis, Nant Peris, Cromlech, Pen Y Pass, Pen y Gwryd, Nant Gwynant, Beddgelert, Rhyd Ddu, Betws Garmon and Waunfawr. There was also this year a new service from Bangor to Corwen which stopped in Ogwen which was the first bus service to that point in many years. The local community hub in Bethesda was also initiating an electric bus service from Bethesda to Ogwen. Pen Pass is only available by pre-booking online.

GD asked if the NP advertised the south of the NP instead of the honey pots in the north of the NP.

PR explained that the NP did give more attention than it did previously but typically Yr Wyddfa – Snowdon is a magnet for walkers and sucks in a great deal more people and subsequently our resources.

DPJ commented that potentially if more attention and advertising were given to the south then this could result in excessive numbers leading to similar issues experienced in the north and this was not any easy equation to balance.

9. Cwmni Nôd Glas (CNG) Project Dinas Mawddwy – Update by Arfon Hughes

AH thanked the members for the opportunity to explain the scheme.

He explained that CNG was a community regeneration scheme which has been running in recent years in the area. They had acquired a shop (now a café) and flat premises, and they had received various grants to improve the properties and to make the whole scheme sustainable in the long term.

¹ Mach loop is popular with aircraft enthusiasts and photographers from across the UK and Europe throughout the year.

In 2017/2-18 they put together a grant bid to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) for a scheme to improve series of local footpaths which would appeal to local residents and visitors alike. All of which are centred around the Dinas Mawddwy area, and they had used local landowners and local contractors to carry out this work.

They had received £200k for capital works for this which they matched funded with £20k from their own funds and monies from various other grants.

Another was submitted a project to the Community Renewal Fund for £45k which was successful. This grant would fund a project manager who would co-ordinate the contractual works and liaise with landowners for the footpath works.

They had also been recently working closely with National Park officers and landowners on a local SMS² scheme which had been beneficial. This included works on other popular routes in the area such as Llwybr yr Aran and Bwlch y Groes and this partnership had worked well.

In addition it was hoped to create a series of maps for the locally based walks and there would be an opportunity for people to view the draft maps and give their views on this next week in Dinas Mawddwy (Llew Coch). Mid Wales Tourism will also be in attendance to assist in the promotion along with Cwmni Celyn who will be appraising how this process had gone and what can be learned from it.

Alongside the mapping they were also planning to develop a website, some information panels and install QR code information in the more interesting sections of promoted footpath network.

There were 8 promoted footpaths in total which enabled a walk daily throughout the week with – one was wheelchair accessible, and others varied in difficulty. Some were located in the local valleys such as Llanymawddwy, Aberhangell, Cwm Digoed and Cwm Cerist - giving a wide variation of a lowland experience of the area.

JPR commented that providing this network and route maps around Dinas Mawddwy was important especially when one of the first questions that people asked when visiting was `where they could go walking`. Providing a variety of daily walks would prove to be popular and the information contained within information boards and the QR code signs would enable people to learn more about the history and culture of the area.

HR mentioned that Covid had revived people's interest in their local Rights of Way network and how useful they were for their physical and mental health.

AH informed the members that they had planned to print 1000 map copies and asked if they thought this to many or not enough.

LA mentioned that for some short walks from the town centre in the Barmouth area they had printed 10,000 each. This included Panorama walk and which contained several others.

² The SMS is a competitive £23.3m grant funding scheme available to individuals and organisations who collaborate as groups to improve Welsh natural resources. The SMS is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities: Rural Development Programme (WG RC-RDP) 2014 to 2020.

DPJ commented that this was dependant on the area catchment.

AH stated that ideally they should be available locally in cafes and with accommodation providers.

PR added that people still liked to have a map in hand and that would be useful to have available locally but by today people also liked to download Apps onto their phones and carry that information – certainly, the NP did not produce as many paper maps as it once did.

He thought this project very important to the area but that the information such as maps should be easily available through accommodation providers and local businesses.

HP asked AH when this public event to view the maps was planned as he was sure some landowners concerned would like to see them.

AH stated that they had only received conformation today about this and he hoped that the officer (Rhodri Wigley) would now inform all the stakeholders to invite them along and enable them to have some input.

HR stated that this project was important to the area but that the information such as maps should be easily available through accommodation providers and local businesses. Having promoted routes that were in good repair and with good furniture was an advantage to landowners.

HP commented that he had seen some of the CNG`s roundels but they were still in fact Public Rights of Way and those statutory roundels were not to be found in some places which may lead to confusion.

AH added that they were aware of this issue and stressed that the way marking was also an important element on these routes.

HP thanked AH for his presentation and time this evening to update the members.

10. Recommended Agenda Items for next meeting

- 1 Cambrian way update from Ramblers Cymru following the official launch
- 2 Parking issues on common land

11. Any other business

- i) PR showed the members a copy of the OS map relating to the Cwm and LLyn Cae area under the east slope of Cader Idris. It was noteworthy that there was a Public Rights Way which ran along its northern lake shore (this was Llanfihangel Y Pennant No 28).

The OS map showed its termination at the west end the lake when in fact the route according to the definitive map lead upwards to the summit.

The NP some years ago had asked OS to remove that particular section from the map given that it was dangerous due to its steepness and a number of incidents had occurred. It was concerning that the remained of the route was still on the definitive map (although not on the OS map) and he thought it should be removed. This was exacerbated by the pitching of the lake access and now people – via their mobile phones were attempting once again to use that steep section which was not a safe option. He would need to discuss this with all parties concerned once again but he was hopeful that this could be achieved.

DC commented that Gwyned at the time had tried to remove this section from the definitive map but faced various opposition from the Ramblers and the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) and no agreement could be made so this was left as it is.

He asked members for their view on this.

GD commented that that section was steep and potentially dangerous especial to those who attempted it and were not mountaineers.

DPJ added that the stone chute did appeal to some mountaineers.

PR appreciated this perspective, and it was already open access map.

DC mentioned that this was difficult terrain especially when unprepared walkers were attempting to navigate this in poor conditions and found themselves in severe difficulties halfway up to the summit.

PR added that it was preferable to remove it and get people to stop at the bottom.

HP added that it was also CRoW `access land` so people could access it they wanted.

Agreed that PR could explore this with stakeholders.

- ii) PR informed the members that DE and EJW in a precious meeting had raised the point about the closing of the disabled toilet facility in Mora Mawddach car park over the winter months.

He had received a response NP Properties Manager and he was advised that the toilet blocks were currently being upgraded - following this they would review this facility.

The disabled facility no longer had radar key locks so hopefully they could come to some sensible solution. It was a sad fact that that toilet block was frequently vandalised. He would report back when he knew more.

- iii) *LA mentioned that she was aware that there were trees which had been felled in the Maentwrog woodland area which had affected some PRoW. She asked if there was a responsibility to clear them after felling.*

PR stated that routes within felling areas are subject to temporary footpath closures but there was a requirement to clear them and any brash following these activities. He asked LA if she could supply him with location details.

Once he knew exactly where this was he would mention this to the Woodland Officers to see what the situation was.

iv) *HR mentioned that the Bala Triathlon appeared better organised this year with limited road closure and he hoped that would be a better arrangement than before.*

PR stated that the Bala Warden would monitor any activities which affected the lake. Road closures were a matter for Gwynedd Highways and were out of their hands. But it did appear that things were better organised this year.

v) *LA announced that the Barmouth Walking festival was going ahead this year and that most routes were fully booked. The closure of the Barmouth viaduct had affected them but they had used an alternative bus system.*

AH mentioned that they were thinking of having something similar in the Dinas Mawddwy area and he may be looking for some advice on this.

12. Date of Next Meeting - 13th September 2022

HP thanked al for their attendance and contributions this evening

