

**Minutes of the Northern Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting
held on Monday 2nd June 2025 at 5.45p.m
at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Blaenau Ffestiniog**

Present - Members:

Mr Edwin Noble	Mr Dafydd Gwyndaf
Mr David Firth	Mr John Gladston
Mr Robin Parry	Mr Callum Muskett
Mrs Fiona Davies	Mr Paul Williams
Mr Richard Williams	Mr Tim Jones
Mr Arthur Davies	Mr Dafydd P Jones
Mrs Maggi Barry	

Officers / Speakers:

Peter Rutherford (ENPA)	Simon LI Roberts(ENPA)
Rhian P Williams(ENPA)	Naomi Jones (ENPA)

EN welcomed all members and Officers/speakers to the meeting this evening.

1 Apologies Mr Mark Jones.

EN asked if we were still 2 short within the membership from the outdoor sector and asked if it was worth just continuing as given that this membership tenure will finish in February. He appreciated that it was the balance that was important.

PR stated that they would look at the membership as it stood in terms of the balance and address any shortages they have if necessary.

2. Previous Minutes

p5 DF mentioned that the minutes should read Ffestiniog Railway and not Welsh Highland Railway.

PR apologised for this oversight and would record this in the minutes.

Approved

3. Matters arising

i) p8 ED mentioned that the NP were encouraging larger events to go `plastic free` and asked how that initiative was going.

PR stated that this was a `slow burn` and he had presented this to many events organisers as a challenge working with their Plastics Free Officer. They were asked to consider reductions or eliminate its use i.e. food wrappers, small plastic bottles. Hopefully, this will become part of their *modus operandi* for all events in the coming years. People were keen to work with us but he appreciated this was a challenge.

ii) PR stated that there has been some movement on Coed Victoria and was looking slightly more positive in terms of the landowners. It was complex situation and will have to be done in conjunction with Gwynedd Rights of Way team. He would report back to the members when the position became clearer. Resolving this would help significantly in terms of events, especially those that occur at night

to avoid Victoria Terrace. He stressed that that this was a working progress. However, this would be an expensive exercise and initial estimates are in the region of £80 – £100k if we used our own teams.

iii) TJ asked if it was possible that some arrangement could be reached with the Victoria Hotel for overnight parking or as drop off points.

PR mentioned that it may not be possible as the Victoria Hotel was a commercial enterprise and was always full and it would be likely that they would not welcome people disturbing their clients and taking up parking spaces with minibuses especially at nighttime. This was also becoming a favourite as a Three Peaks drop off point/finish point which further complicated the issue. The NP had also updated the advice for Three Peaks Challenges and the Llanberis path information which included asking organisers not to park or drop off/pick up in the residential areas of Llanberis.

CM mentioned that it would be possible to add a drop off point at a lay-by in that area.

PR stated that the verge was wide enough but that would be a matter for Gwynedd Highways to consider if and when we got to that stage it would have to be assessed. He stressed that all of this was ongoing and may take some time. They had digitally recorded the slightly new route which would require consent from the 4 different landowners.

TJ added that if the monies were to be spent then that route would have to be the best one achievable.

PW asked who would foot that bill – the NP or Gwynedd.

PR stated that the route works would be undertaken by the NP and the road issues and any Rights of Way legal orders would be undertaken by GC as the Highways Authorities. The two bodies are working together on this. The costs mentioned earlier are for the route build works only. We may get some monies from the WG or other sources but we would have to put a good case together.

JG mentioned that he had heard several complaints about the opening hours of the toilets in Llanberis and anything out of hours meant that there were no public toilets available.

PR fully understood this problem and it had been mentioned several times in discussions with GC. And as JG had said I was exacerbated by out of hours walkers requiring facilities. The `consequences` are then apparent on the mountain.

He added that - **and was his personal opinion** that what was really required for the future in Llanberis was a 24/7 facility similar to the `Sill`¹ on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland National Park. This was a modern eco 21st century building with all the resources. Llanberis would significantly benefit from such a development. This could be run jointly by GC and the NP but there appears to be no appetite for this

¹ [The Sill • The UK's National Landscape Discovery Centre](#)

4. Correspondence

- i) Letter to Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) expressing LAF's concern regarding closure of Ysbyty Ifan toilets.
- ii) Conwy Council's response to the above letter.

PR mentioned that they had received a negative and disappointing response from CCBC about the Ysbyty toilets which are under threat of closure. He felt that CCBC had not really considered the different dynamics as this toilet block was used not only by members if the public but its location is alongside the main canoe access point for the upper Conwy down to Rhydlanfair.

DJ thanked the LAF for bringing this to the attention of CCBC and mentioned that the costs could not be absorbed by the Community Council but is currently being looked after by volunteers could prove problematic in the long term. He asked what the thoughts of paddlers would be on this and could they help.

PR though the Chair stated that their funds would be limited and it was unlikely that they could contribute but he would ask and also ask them to put that information on their website. It was important to remember that only 16% of paddlers were members of the Association – the majority were not members which was disappointing but he would ask them what their views were.

- iii) PR added that after a discussion at both LAF/s it was agreed that he write to the Minister to ask what the latest position was following all the work and consultations undertaken by the Access Reform Groups in 2019 and also the deliberations on access to inland water. No response was received but he had resent the letter together with an email which sufficiently prompted an apology for the delay from the Minister and he had now written to then back to LAF Chairs. The response had not said a great deal and disappointingly it is unlikely that anything will emerge until after the next election.

5 Plas Tan y Bwlch – access update

PR circulated a paper map and explained the current situation. The NP had reversed its original proposal and Plas would now be retained for the time being subject to the Authority's decisions. Thankfully, it was his understanding that the NP will retain the woodland and lake regardless of any future sale of Plas itself.

TJ commented that the new Chief Executive had discussed this with the Authority and asked if there were there were other ways to look at this. It could be repurposed and then move the current HQ to that site and/or decide to apply for a grant to refurbish it through a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. Without substantial reinvestment it will not be cost effective. However, those costs may be in the region of £10m.

The Building is not sustainable as it is (i.e. financially or the fabric) and substantial costs are involved. It was worth noting that other National Parks had already divested themselves of such buildings. Hence the sale of the property.

NJ mentioned that the feasibility application to the HLF would be made within the next few months followed by a full application if successful.

TJ mentioned that they had also had two public drop in sessions following so much concern expressed by the local users and communities about the potential loss of amenity. The Authority had then decided to retain the woodland and lake.

EN asked how confident they were in obtaining the grant monies.

TJ stated that after initial discussions they had received a favourable response from HLF.

EN asked what the timeframe was for all of this.

NJ stated that the application should be within the year.

CM asked how this had been received by the local communities.

NJ believed that this had gone down well and had been met with a favourable response.

PW asked how long a process this would all be.

NJ answered that an outline bid would be made within a year and then if successful they would complete a full bid application. They (the Authority) would be required to match any grant by 10%. Potentially this could come from other funding sources.

PW mentioned that then this will all take about 3 years meaning the NP will be absorbing those running costs during that period thus leaving the Authority financially liable.

TJ added that there were some funds to cover this but ideally Plas should be self-sufficient.

PW asked if there were any people or organisations who were interested in purchasing Plas.

TJ mentioned that there were one or two but whoever was the ultimate purchaser they would need to understand the degree of upkeep required.

PR mentioned that all complaints and inquiries that had emanated from the news about the sale of Plas was that it included the lake and woodlands. The fact that these areas were now not to be sold came as great relief to all.

He further explained that there was also the potential for creating some Public Rights of Way within the woodlands. Access is required to the Ffestiniog Railway halt which is situated within the woodland and also that the access from the Plas drive down to the Oakley was not a Public Right of Way. There were also important links to the footpath in the northeast across the road to Tanygrisiau. Once the situation becomes clearer then they would consider additional options if necessary.

EN thanked everyone for their updates and was pleased that this was looking more favourable.

6. Bwlch y Moch – Update on the latest works

PR informed the members that the upper wall overlap was now complete but that the final wall proposals were held up due to requiring consent from the landowner which was proving to be protracted. The reason for the wall was to make people think about their route decisions – as many thought that the Crib Coch entrant was the route to Yr Wyddfa when in fact it leads to a Grade 1 Scramble and also onwards to Crib y Ddysgl also a Grade 1 scramble. There was also a great deal of ‘follow on’ issues – meaning that walkers who were unfamiliar with the site tended to follow others. Initial evidence indicated that the new upper overlap wall was having an effect but it would be difficult to quantify this given that Bwlch Y Moch is such a busy location.

TJ asked if there was any sort of signage.

PR stated that they had erected a sign but that had been torn off – *he would show members the sign at the next meeting.* It was deeply disturbing that certain people chose to vandalise something that was erected with the purpose of saving lives and in view of the number of call outs received for Crib Coch by the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team(LIMRT).

Ideally it would be preferable to install another low wall to create a corridor of sort to guide people through this site and move the existing pillar. A site visit had been convened and attended by, TJ, Hywel Jones (Project Officer), PR, the tenant Mr Bedwyr Jones, Alun G Jones (Warden) and Simon Roberts (Head Warden north). This was now subject to discussion with the landowner.

SR added that they were also looking at Horns access/exit path at that point which was incorrectly being used by walkers to descend from Bwlch Y Moch to Pen y Pass when in fact they should preferably stay on the Pyg Track. This may need to be re-aligned on the as it was not a safe route as it appeared on the map. People are also frequently turning back adding to the confusion.

CM asked if the National Park had considering other more robust signage.

PR commented that this area had become such a pinch point and early indications were that the new walls section was working but additional work may be required to complete the area and where they could create a sort of funnel towards the stiles to enable more clarity. The NP did want to do anything to erect signage generally as they detract from the wilderness of the area but in this instance it was necessary.

TJ commented that even though generally additional infrastructure on the mountain was not usually welcomed this was an unusual site given the high number of walkers in that area. A lengthy discussion was had on site and it was agreed that another low wall was appropriate together with moving the pillar. Signage would undoubtedly be torn down yet again so more physical management was the best solution.

JG added that there was no doubt that social media had exacerbated this problem and had by default encouraged some walkers to climb Crib Coch without prerequisite skills or maps none of which was helpful.

EN asked what would happen to the existing pillar.

PR stated that it would be moved slightly east and in alignment with the new wall once erected. It was important to remember that the location of all the pillars on the summit and Bwlch Y Moch were agreed with the LIMTR at the time following several site visits. Creating those pillars had taken a great deal of effort and subsequent cost but they had worked very well including those erected around the periphery of every track.

PW added that the location of the pillars gave more clarity and had saved a great deal of erosion as people stuck to the line of the paths.

DF commented that in his view, given the number of people passing and repassing Bwlch Y Moch, there was no alternative especially when people do not have those scrambling skills required and do not carry maps, this indicated that they have not preplanned and are without adequate information to make informed choices. The additional wall would help in his view.

SR reported that they had asked for a legal view on making infrastructural improvements in that area and what potential liabilities there may be as it is CRoW access land. They are awaiting that report.

EN asked when this work would be undertaken.

SR hopefully they could begin some this year but may take two seasons to complete.

PR added that the NP had been asked by the LIMTR to assist in dealing with another issue further on from Crib Coch There had been a number of callouts on a 'path' that had developed in recent years leading to difficult terrain from Bwlch Crib Coch at the beginning of the route onwards to Crib Y Ddysgl. He showed members slides of that particular point.

Having studied the site the NP had recommend that we blocked off the path with large bounders rather than erect pillars – it would be inappropriate at that point. However this would require consent from the landowner and they wished to wait until the commissioned legal report came back. This would also require a helicopter lift to place the bounders. The logistics are ongoing but a heli lift was only a couple of hours and stone has been selected. Heavy enough and oblong so they could not be moved once placed.

DF appreciated that people were going 'off piste' and asked if they would be landscaped with turf or by some other means.

PR said that there was little or no turf in that location to enable this but they would be dug in slightly but eventually they would weather and accumulate and trap soils and would look more natural in a matter of months.

EN thanked all for their contributions to this issue and asked if the members can be updated on the Crib Coch and Corb Y Ddysgl issues.

7. Eryri Landscape names project – Update on the latest work programme in the area.

NJ thanked the members for the opportunity to come and brief them on the project.

She explained that there were two separate projects i) in conjunction with Cardiff University and ii) to collect data and information about original Welsh place names.

It is recognised that the use of land frequently defines place names such as local fields, villages and hamlets, rivers, streams, hills, archaeological and industrial features, local mountains and Ffriddoedd², and the use of properties – religious buildings, mills & ponds, granaries, store houses, leats & weirs, lanes and country and tithe buildings and houses so it was important to record and preserve their Welsh place names. She gave various examples.

They had also been working with Ordnance Survey to ensure that mapped names were correct in their location and that the spelling of the Welsh place names were retained and predominant wherever possible. This was a part of our National Park Welsh language policy and also that we should encourage other organisations to consider working with us in relation to this project.

When the Authority changed its name formally to Eryri and also to adopt the name Yr Wyddfa for Snowdon the Welsh Language Commission had asked if we would be interested in a wider place names project. It was unfortunate that there is no legal duty in Wales to protect or record Welsh place names and the project is conducted on that basis and means that the work is even more important.

Within the NP they had started with accumulating names for lakes with over 200 recorded thus far. Based on the NP's recommendations the OS have agreed to use those names. However, there was a great deal of verification work involved in researching names *per se*. and sometimes had many variants. As an example Llyn Du as opposed to Llyndu and which was one was correct and there are many similar examples.

Another interesting example is Nameless Cwm (Ogwen) which is in fact Cwm Cneifion and we would encourage people and organisations to use the Welsh version.

They were still amassing a great deal of information and various volunteers and groups were involved in this process to which they were very grateful. If people felt that they had valid original names to contribute then they were welcome to bring them forward for consideration.

CM mentioned that there were some very interesting names usually associated with features of any given crag or location. Although OS were engaged with the project he asked if this applied to other map providers such as Harvey maps.

² Ffridd. - The upland fringe (or Ffridd/Coed cae as it is known in Wales) is the area between the enclosed more intensively managed lower fields and the unenclosed hill and moorland.

PR stated that last year they (access and field staff) had recently reviewed the new Harvey draft maps and had found some mistakes including spelling issues and had suggested various changes all of which were taken on board.

NJ dated that they were engaging with as many organisations/publications as possible i.e. those who provided any material that was to become public information in terms of Welsh place names. This included the Crown Estates.

She added that they have been running several workshops across the NP to gather information and this exercise is ongoing and was proving to be very useful with a substantial amount of names and details noted.

NJ also mentioned that the original Climbers Journal had made reference to the Welsh place names for various climbs and crags which was interesting. Quote (1965) below:

“ Welsh names for crags exist which are not recorded on Ordnance Survey maps. These crags hence may have names (often in Welsh) in use among climbers which were invented by the latter. Minor topographical features may have names which occur in mediaeval charters and other documents relating to land tenure, which are not found on present-day maps. Many such names, and numerous others, are still in use today to define the limits of the cynefinoedd (sheep-walks: singular cynefin), or fields, or property, or for convenience: it is almost inconceivable that a crag which is large enough to afford rock-climbing should not have such a name. (For an illustration of the existence of such names, see the section on the Carneddau, below). A place-name in use among the local farming community, often of long standing or with an historical, literary or legendary background, or with an intrinsic beauty or aptness, is surely preferable to pigeon-Welsh or banal urban English names invented by climbers. Furthermore, when certain features appear to have no names, earlier names drawn from documentary sources should be introduced. An old and authentic place-name is often of first importance to historical studies in human settlement and land use, natural history and philology. These names therefore should not be cast aside in response to current whims of either the climbing or the farming community.

The project had also attracted a wider audience such as mentioned in the national press and media.

PR mentioned that it would take some time to change place names but hopefully a transfusion could occur. If any map changes are made by OS they can make changes their digital maps overnight, however paper maps were printed every four years.

He also knew of another similar project where field names were being recorded as many were not and only used locally or by the landowner or tenants. Local graziers associations were also a font of information for Ffridd names and pastures.

NJ added that they had included the local graziers and invited them to contribute.

EN thanked NJ for her interesting presentation and hoped the project would prove to be well worthwhile for the preservation of our local Welsh names.

8. Warden Section update on the latest work programme. – Simon LI Roberts

SR thanked the members for the opportunity to update them.

He stated that the Alan Prichard the Warden for the north coast, Ogwen and the Carneddau had now left the NP after 33 years in post and he wished him all the luck for the future. SR had made the case for retaining the post to the Management Team and they awaited the outcome.

The bridge repairs on Lon Gwyrfaï were now finished with a complete replacement of the decking bearers in plastic and composite plastic treads so this should give it considerable longevity and reduce its maintenance issues.

As mentioned previously the Bwlch Y Moch issues continues and we await the landowners opinion on the additional wall proposal and legal advice.

Feasibility works are still ongoing for a proposed bridge in the Coety area Carneddau – Pont Hafod Y Porth Llwyd. This was a request from a local community group to install a bridge but there are various issues which they are looking at including the fact that it would have to be erected over a weir and over a line which is not a Public Right of Way. It is proving to be complex and they were in discussion with various stakeholders including Conwy Council (CCBC). There is no previous or existing structure.

One of the footpath teams are undertaking works on the old A5 in the Capel Curig area. This was mostly drainage works.

There have been complaints about motorcycles attempting to use the Capel Curig – Crafnant path. This was complex as it was partially a dual status path and an Unclassified Road with a vehicular restrictions by way of a Traffic Regulation Order. So it will require some additional signage which will be installed by CCBC as the highways authority to inform riders that they are not allowed on it.

The season had started again and the seasonal Wardens were now in place. It has been agreed with the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team (LIMRT) that it would be useful if they can position themselves at strategic locations later on in the day at peak times, after 4 pm, to assist people in their route choices at those points where they may not be sure of their ascent route i.e. Bwlch Y Moch, Bwlch Glas, Pyg Miners intersection or to the east of the summit for Rhyd Ddu and Watkin. With a view to reduce the number of call outs.

Last year 45 Voluntary Wardens worked a total of 3500 hours and helped collect, together with other volunteers a total of 1500kg of litter (600 bags). And they spent 36 days manning the interpretation van and providing information. The litter issue was very disappointing but they continue as a NP to give out consistent messaging in relation to litter and waste. They have also helped in Ogwen – especially Cwm Idwal.

Other access works undertaken by the two teams of two continue in Cwm Marchnad – Rhyd Ddu, Abergwyngregyn path works And also some works on a community circuit in the Cwm Cynfal area.

Wardens are also engaged in mink trapping.

Work continues under the Conwy Service Level³ agreement (SLA).

PR added that the SLA was a maintenance regime only and did not include legal issues. Any such issues are deferred to CCBC. But the scheme had proved very successful over the years. This only included contractor and material costs and did not include any time or resources of the NP. It also did not include any works within NRW or National Trust properties.

Some repair works following a landslide have now been completed on the Miners track by a contractor where an excellent job as done.

This year they planned to replace a board walk in Coed Yr Eryr in Nant Gwynant.

PR added that this was installed by the NP some 15 years ago and needed replacement.

SR continued – many gates required replacement on Lon Gwyrfai and that work was ongoing.

More works are also planned this year on the Llanberis track.

In the Conwy valley area works by the local Area Warden Ioan Davies are ongoing with gate replacements in various communities and work under the SLA. He had also been providing support to the community group's Trefriw trails initiative.

DF asked what the latest position was in the Beddgelert woodland behind the campsite following storm Dara. Lon Gwyrfai was still blocked and a diversion was still in place. There was also a sign down in the station area.

PR stated that it was very disappointing that this was not resolved. NRW are not planning to clear fell this large tree fall following storm Dara until this coming October.

This had caused a great deal of inconvenience to the public. He would update the members and would investigate the collapsed sign.

EN thanked SR for his update and asked the members if we should send a letter to Alan Prichard thanking him for his service.

Agreed

PR would arrange this.

This is an agreement between CCBC and the NP for basic maintenance works to be undertaken on Public Rights of Way within the NP (around 540km).

9. Recommended Agenda items of next meeting

i) Organised Events Guidelines. This document was currently under internal review and some changes are required. He stressed that this was not 'Wyddfa centric' it was meant to cover the whole of the NP.

However, it was not going out for any public consultation. However, it was correct for the LAF members to see the latest version before posting on the website. This is a document that was currently available to all events organisers and is on the NP website. There are also links to this when organisers register their events on the data base which is shared between Gwynedd Council and the NP. They have also drawn up an additional advice pdf for groups specifically using the Llanberis track.

ii) *CM asked if the wild camping issue could be put onto the agenda. Given the situation in Dartmoor (who have existing bylaws) had promoted representations nationally from other groups such as the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) to allow wild camping within UK NP's.*

EN stated that we could put this onto the agenda.

PR stated that he would but would require to know who was going to present this and by what organisation before the agenda was concluded. He asked CM to advise him in good time.

11. Any Other business – This to be kept as short as possible and was at the discretion of the Chair.

i) *DF mentioned that he had noted that some well-known community routes were not noted anywhere online and asked if it may be advantageous for the NP to consider including them. The NT had presented this to the National Access Forum and announced that they had digitised some of their courtesy paths. He appreciated that they were within their own property but asked if the NP may consider adding other where they existed.*

ii) *He had also noticed on several occasions Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) groups walking along the road on Capel Curig on the A4086 when there was a Public Right of Way close.*

PR replied (through the Chair) stated that he appreciated that it was only promoted routes that currently appeared on the website. They could review what their community links information if they were sufficiently popular. However, this would be dependent on resources.

In terms of DoE walking on the road. DF was correct. He had also noticed this developing in recent years and had stopped to talk with several groups (adjacent to Llynnau Mymbyr heading west heading towards the campsite) to ask the DoE groups why they were walking along the main road. When showed their route maps this was marked in a thick highlighter line by supervisors which distorted the route to make it seem that it was the road that should be walked when in fact it was the adjacent PRoW which is on the other side of the wall. He would raise this with the DoE.

iii) JG asked what the position was regarding the Trampers⁴ and booking system and were there plans to add to the `fleet`.

PR stated that there was a 4 week booking system for any use of the NP 2 Trumper all ability vehicles. This was essential to enable the Wardens to plan their activities and organise for them to be delivered to site and also to be picked up following use. It is not possible to arrange a short term booking as it places staff and work plans under undue pressure.

Currently one is based in the Forest Campsite in Beddgelert which is out almost on a daily basis. This is an arrangement between the NP and Forest Holidays. The other is based in the Warden centre in Dolgellau and is used primarily on the Mawddach Trail and sometimes on Foel Ispri. The NP also own a Da Vinci 4 wheeler but is currently under repair. The NP is currently looking for grant monies to replace our first machine which is showing signs of age. There are no plans to expand the number as our resources to get this to and from sites is limited.

They had also reviewed the risk assessment for their use especially in poor weather and snow and icy ground conditions.

Many people have derived a great deal of satisfaction using the NP's Trampers as it allowed those with some form of disability access into the countryside. The reverse throttle controls are particularly useful for people who may be paralysed on one side (stroke victims) or have lost an upper limb. Swopping from one side to another was by flicking a switch.

EN thanked all for their contributions this evening and closed the meeting.

- 12. Date of next meeting - 6th October, venue to be confirmed – dates for 2026 to be confirmed in October.**

⁴ Trumper is a trade name for all terrain mobility scooter type vehicle. The NP has two.