

**Minutes of the South Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting held
on Tuesday 17th February 2026, at 5.45 p.m
At Community Hall, Abergynolwyn. LL36 9YE**

Present – Members:

Mr Hedd Pugh (Cadeirydd)	Cyng Dewi Owen
Mrs Gaynor Davies	Mr Alun Edwards
Mr Aled Thomas	Cllr John P Roberts
Mr David Coleman	Mrs Janette Holmes
Mr Geraint Rowlands	Mr Tim Faire

Officers / Observers:

Peter Rutherford (ENPA)	David P Jones (ENPA)
Rhian P Williams (ENPA)	Iwan Ifan (ENPA)

HP welcomed all to the meeting this evening.

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Eryl Jones Williams	Mr Huw Roberts
Mr Emlyn Roberts	

2. **Declaration of Interest**

HP declared his interest in the Ffermio Bro Item

3. **Previous Minutes**

*GR item 7 – noted that there was a mistake in the Plas Y Brenin item.
PR would amend this.*

Approved.

4. **Matters Arising**

i) **Llyn Trawsfynydd footbridge - update**

PR informed the members that he had not heard anything further from Magnox about the bridge.

There had been an article in the Daily Post referring to the intended dismantling of the bridge, but it made no reference to a replacement.

There had been some discussions with the local community but neither the NP nor GC had been invited to these meetings. He was led to believe that the local AM and MP had been attended some meetings. Given that there was so much pressure from the local communities they would have to consider a replacement in the long term.

The current route now forces people to walk along to the A470 onwards and did not encourage people into the village.

The figure for replacement was estimated to be in the region of £3m, *he found this figure extremely high for what it was.*

The bridge itself is not a Public Right of Way (PRoW) but was linked to a PRoW at its the northern end - footpath Trawsfynydd No 77 which is adjacent to Bryn Ysgyboriau.

DF mentioned that the status of the bridge may go as far back as the 1926 and the North Wales Hydro Act

PR reminded members that this was described in a footnote (p2) of the pervious minutes.

DPJ mentioned that this was a boundary between two communities whilst the original construction went ahead and that there was no need for a RoW or was not considered important at the time.

The demolition of the existing structure had not yet received planning consent as far as he knew.

PR stated that he would make further inquiries and report back to the members.

HP & AE asked if CADW may have an interest in this bridge as a `structure` given it that is quite old.

HP added that he thought that there had been a public meeting in Trawsfynydd to discuss the bridge.

PR added that he was not sure if it had any status but this had been mentioned in North Wales Live which only mentioned the demolition and not a rebuild. ¹. The article can be viewed from the link in the footnote. He would continue his inquiries and report back.

ii) Taith Ardudwy Way – Update

PR explained that the original concept for TAW had come from the coastal communities along its length. They were all very keen to work together to create this route. This was a mid-level path – between the peaks of the Rhinogydd and the All-Wales Coastal Path and all of which is on existing Rights of Way. At the time the National Park had volunteered to assist in its delivery but was keen that the community partners remained at the forefront of the development and promotion.

¹ ['Betrayal' of drowned Eryri community as historic bridge to be demolished | North Wales Live](#)

The route was split into three daily walkable sections (in either direction) with several drop off points along its length - Barmouth – Tyl y Bont – Dyffryn Ardudwy – Harlech – Llandecwyn. It was also unique in that it was a sustainable travel route where the use of a car was not required as the regular train service had stops at all points along its way to enable people to return to their point of origin.

The NP assisted by surveying the route, undertook a considerable amount of ground works in sometimes difficult conditions and replacing furniture where needed. They had also assisted in erecting signage and continue to do so today.

The group had always maintained their own website and created the three leaflets - north, mid and south which were innovative at the time at their own expense.

Following a review of the content and subsequent discussions with some members of the original group it was felt that this needed updating. The NP was keen to continue with the promotion of this route and had offered to bring this inhouse whilst maintaining the ethos that the whole project had been community led. This was agreed recently, and it would now be promoted by the NP. The team was working on its format.

The route itself had gained considerable popularity in recent years and as growing with some attempting to walk it in 1 or 2 days. There was no doubt that the views from the path along its entire length were some of the best in the NP.

GD mentioned that the leaflets were of a good standard and well designed and were popular.

JH added that they were leaflets available in Barmouth.

Once this exercise was completed, he would bring this back to the members. They could arrange a site visit.

JPR added that it was important to keep lots of the original information that was written for the leaflets so that walkers could understand the history of farm buildings, the wildlife and the cultural heritage including place names they would find along the route.

DPJ added that the farming history may be additional points of interest that could be developed – there were examples in Cwm Nantcol.

PR added that whilst clearing some top surfacing the team had uncovered part of the old drovers' route – it was thought that before the coastal road was built this original route was significant.

DC confirmed that he had given a presentation some years ago to the LAF on the development of the early roads in Meirionnydd.

iii) DO asked what the latest position was regarding Coed Y Brenin.

PR replied that as far as he knew, and following NS (NRW) update last October to the LAF, the NRW were anxious to offer the running of the café to an external commercial provider. In the meantime, all other facilities were still available. I.e. the cycle tracks, parking, cycle hire, and toilets. The NRW had led us to believe that this process would be concluded by May 26.

He would inquire with NS what the current position was and update the members at the next meeting.

5. Correspondence

i) Request from Welsh Government asking all of Wales LAFs for their opinion about the type of furniture on Public Rights of Way with the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).

The NP had received a request from Welsh Government (WG) asking LAFs for their opinion about the type of material that should be used for furniture on Public Rights of Way within SFS.

PR stated that given the short time frame to obtain opinions from the Rights of Way Officers across Wales and the Local Access Forums. It was decided to call together all three Chairs – Edwin Noble (north), Hedd Pugh (south) and Vincent Mears (Arfon Dwyfor LAF) for their opinion on this matter and get a combined response.

Given the issues that had arisen with wooden furniture in the past provided by various schemes and authorities (Tir Gofal, Glastir etc) the longevity of wooden furniture was questionable. There was a consensus that furniture should be metal wherever possible in that so many issues have arisen from using wooden furniture which have proved to have short life spans and the costly to replace for local authorities, landowners, and NPs in the future. The response was sent.

Gwyn Lloyd Evans had sent the joint response – Rights of Way Team Leader at GC. PR was highly appreciative for his assistance in this matter.

Subsequently they had received a response from WG. They had taken this advice on board and had now decided to advise that metal furniture should be used wherever possible within the optional scheme for access in SFS.

This was a successful response. However, given the looming election it is difficult to see into the near future in terms of SFS.

They had also indicated that the WG were intending to look at and act on the work of the Access Reform groups in 2019. I.e. to look at the recommendations and where improvements could be made to the legislation to make those processes more cost effective, efficient, and less bureaucratic.

They would further consult with the local authorities and others, including the LAF's across Wales if Ministers are so minded.

PR stated that this would be a major step forward and long overdue given all the energy that was given to the Access Reform consultation and was please with this announcement.

In terms of the furniture metal is a suitable alternative given the lack of longevity of wooden furniture and that the local authorities and National Parks would need to change furniture once again 8 – 10 year later at great expense.

HP added that that may also fall to landowners as they are technically responsible for maintaining furniture – albeit he acknowledged that the NP and the Council helped considerably. If furniture was found to be in a poor condition, they may be liable for any injuries sustained by the public.

GD asked that if a wooden stile over a wall had deteriorated what would the replacement be.

PR stated that this down to how it was seen in the landscape. But from now on they would be replaced with metal stile or change them to metal gates, but it was the location and what was practicable that was important. Gates in walls were more problematic in terms of adapting walls The least restrictive option was always a consideration as a matter of policy or all authorities. He acknowledged that that was not always practicable in some locations – especially in isolated parts of the uplands.

DPJ added that replacing stiles with gates would require some understanding between landowners and the authorities in such cases. But it would depend on the location and cost.

DWO – we are fortunate that both the NP and Gwynedd assisted landowners where they could. He was concerned about the detail that may lie within any SFS scheme and how responsibility would be attribute for furniture.

I.I commented that whilst he could not speak for the NP the latest thinking for SFS and Ffermio Bro for the access layer was that this would include new furniture where required.

PR added that just for clarity the NP only assisted in cases where any given route was a NP promoted route. Albeit they did assist in other places where they could and worked closely with both Gwynedd and Conwy Councils. It was the local authorities who were the legal entity and for Public Rights of Way. In terms of making changes to the network the NP was always ready to help where we could, but we were back tracking from 1951 where stiles were the 'norm' and may not be so acceptable today. He appreciated how complex this may seem.

TF commented that in his experience with wooden stiles the only thing that did work was metal kissing gates. They were especially good at stopping the mixing of stock.

JH thought that kissing gates were no longer allowed due to the Disabilities Discrimination Act and Equality Act.

PR commented that this was not the case. The Acts did say that such changes can be made where 'reasonably practicable.' The Government policy recognized that such measures would be impracticable to deliver in many locations. Much of it governed by terrain. But it should always be a consideration.

There were many instances over the years within the NP where stiles had been erected (going back to 1951) for example between two flat fields which would not be acceptable today. All local authorities have similar policies.

AE added that he had seen many self-closing ones which were useful – "rather *than shut the ... gate*"!

HP thanked everyone for their views on this issue.

6. Ffermio Bro – an introduction to the scheme- Iwan Ifan, Advisor

He stated that he was one of the Agricultural and Natural Resources Officers within ENP managing the Ffermio Bro scheme both within the National Park and administering the scheme within National Landscapes (formally Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – AONB's) in Pen Llyn and Ynys Mon.

He outlined the basics of the Ffermio Bro schemes. This was available in eight parts of Wales including the 3 National Parks and five areas of National Landscapes. He was managing the north area of the scheme. They were on a good trajectory in their current spending regime and farm schemes.

A key component was what they deemed to be 'collaborative working.' The scheme was very much a pre cursor for the later implementation of the WG's Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Access was not a prime outcome of the scheme, but it could be included in wider schemes.

The scheme was very much a precursor to the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

The four principal components were:

- Deliver collaborative activities that span multiple farms to achieve a common goal
- Support the recovery of nature and the resilience of ecosystems

- Help farm businesses become more sustainable and resilient
- Create opportunities for people to enjoy the Landscapes and their cultural heritage.

Activities may include:

- Low density targeted tree planting where improving habitat. This could include on steep banks, upland gullies and streams, field corners, and creating wood pasture.
- Woodland restoration
- Natural regeneration.
- Restoring and creating hedgerows.
- Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) removal and eradication.
- Natural flood risk management (NFRM) interventions.
- Enhancing and creating wetland through re-wetting measures and supporting ponds, lakes, reed beds, and fens.
- Enhancing and creating riparian habitat.
- Enhancing upland and unenclosed habitat & peatland.
- Enhancing and creating lowland habitat.
- Restoring traditional hay meadows, and creating wild bird, wildlife and pollinator strips and plots.
- Traditional boundary restoration, stone walls, earth banks, and slate fences.
- Improving access to the countryside through upgrading/enhancing public paths, open access land, and green spaces.
- Targeted measures to support the recovery of the wildlife species and habitats set out in the such as creating and establishing nesting and feeding habitat, including unavoidable predatory controls to support those species as part of the wider landscapes scale actions.
- Targeted measures to improve water quality such as stock control.

These are examples only and not a comprehensive list.

He explained that they could undertake access work, but it would always have to revolve around improving the ecosystem. Typically, where a PRow goes through a hedgerow or alongside it.

They were also keen to get groups of neighbouring landowners in a scheme with joint outcomes for environmental management. *This would also be beneficial for access and Rights of Way management.*

Within Eryri they can only offer schemes within the NP boundary and up to 1km overlap.

FBro schemes have a 3-year life cycle.

26/27 they have some £710k for those years and the same for years 27/28. In total about a million and a half within Eryri. There are separate pots of monies for the other areas outside of the NP such as Pen Llyn.

Although SFS and Ffermio Bro are different schemes all the work on the universal actions within Ffermio Bro will count towards the SFS scheme outcomes. Typically, hedgerow management, soil quality management, tree cover etc.

The joint groups will be working towards the themes, and access could be an example of this. He cited Cwm Prysor as an example where this could be done. Improving habitat such as planting new hedgerows, clearing culverts, wall repairs along alongside a PRoW or creating a permissive path.

They would also like to see increases in grazing by cattle in the uplands and ffridd² land. They are also promoting the use of electronic collars to manage areas for regenerative farming and to monitor stock.

Within SFS there will be a 10% score for habitat regeneration and all the Ffermio Bro activity will help towards these goals. This will also include the selective replanting of more trees in the uplands but will be in places where existing remnant of woodlands remain. However, many of those old copses are single age structure without natural regeneration and they require new planting to develop a mixed age range of tree cover. It is unlikely that such planting will affect any agricultural activities or production. He showed anti stock measures to avoid damage to newly planted trees by stock.

They are mindful about access land and how fences can affect routes and they will always consider those issues within any schemes.

It is considered important that wherever mature woodlands should be grazed.

Water courses such for example a nant (a stream or brook) may be fenced out to protect water quality and banksides and these are important habitats in themselves.

Some additional planting is also important in terms of natural flood management. By retaining water and enabling slower release.

Rainwater harvesting and slurry control are also part of the scheme's themes.

There is an independent panel to assess applications and rates are standardised.

HP and JPR both declared an interest at this point.

² Welsh term for the diverse, mosaic-like transitional habitat found between the enclosed, low-lying agricultural fields and the open, upland moorland. Often rich in biodiversity, it features a mix of bracken, heath, scrub, and woodland, and is crucial for local wildlife moorland. It is characterized by a mix of bracken, heather, acidic grassland, scrub (gorse/hawthorn), and rocky outcrops and serving as a crucial wildlife corridor and traditional grazing land.

Candidate schemes are assessed by using a scoring matrix which are then further assessed and scrutinized by a panel. Anything under £10k can be decided by the Officer concerned. The assessment panel was made up of the CEO of ENP, Officers from the NFU and FUW, the NRW, the Chair of Forwm Eryri.

Il invited questions.

AE mentioned that he found the notion of planting more trees within Ffridd difficult as traditionally this was a habitat. He asked where that specific information could be found.

Il appreciated that trees did form a part of the Ffridd but acknowledged that this may be difficult in some instances and the level of planting should be lower than any whole woodland. They were focused on natural succession and to keep what they had.

AE added that they were sure to return to this issue.

AT asked what differentiation they made between pine plantation and deciduous woodland. Often a mixed woodland was important.

Il replied that a mixed woodland would be looked at in a more favourable light and look at the potential for grazing but there would not be a great deal of interest in purely existing coniferous woodland elements. It may not necessarily be the trees themselves but the understory that was an issue. The way they were originally planted and subsequently management (with no thinning) then this allowed little light and no natural ground cover. They would not have an issue with grazing mixed woodlands.

Riverside corridors were also of interest and could be fenced out with widths to be agreed. Some applicants may also be interested in more nature management such as the creation of scrapes for wildlife and some natural flood management. And rainwater collection systems to prevent run off.

AE asked if the tank storage systems included filtration systems.

Il confirmed that they did not. They were simply rainwater collection storage tanks.

Currently they could fund individual projects up to £15k subject to assessment by the panel. But group applications were welcomed.

PR added that in terms of access it was important that the Ffermio Bro Officers consulted with the relevant Officers within the ENP and local authorities before embarking on any improvements to Rights of Way. This would ensure that correct legal standards are met and their definitive lines³ are not moved.

³ Public Rights of Way Definitive line. The definitive line of a Public Right of Way (PROW) is the exact legal path of a route established by law. The conclusive record of these lines is the

JPR asked if the NP has also another funding pot which was not part of the Ffermio Bro scheme.

Il confirmed that this was a separate grant fund and may be targeted at regenerative farming.

GD mentioned that they had no hedgerows as such they were all stone walls.

Il acknowledged that this did vary from place to place within the NP and that it was not possible to fund them all.

AT asked how the criteria were applied for a successful application – was there a distinction between smaller or larger farm properties.

Il the criteria were that anything under 3ha was not classed as an agricultural holding by WG. But anything over would be considered but some may be more intensely farmed than others. The scoring matrix makes does not make the distinction between their size it simply analyses their potential for environmental improvement.

JPR asked if the previous areas under the old payments system such as Sect 15 payments (SSSI) were allowed to enrol under the Ffermio Bro scheme.

Il stated that they were allowed to do so.

PR asked if those areas would lose their Sect 15 payments and be subsumed under SFS.

Il stated that those wheels were turning slowly and it was difficult to see what would eventually happen to those payment systems, but it was envisioned that they would eventually fall under the SFS system but more for capital works and not for razing regimes.

DPJ asked what would happen to those older grazing schemes that fell under the Glastir Commons grazing. Surely that would need to adapt or be changed. They had not heard anything.

Il was not sure how that would be changed in the long term.

HP thanked Il for his time and interesting presentation.

7. Wild Camping – BMC Cymru perspective

PR announced that there may have been some confusion here and he would arrange a presentation for the next meeting if anyone were available, from the BMC, to give their views.

Definitive Map and Statement, which is maintained by the local highway authority.
Source quote from Staffordshire County Council.

PR added that for the next meeting he would arrange for Mr Andrew Watson from Dartmoor National Park, who dealt with the court case following a landowner applying a restricting on camping on his land within the Dartmoor Common. He thought that an online presentation to the members at next the meetings. This would help members to understand what had transpired and inform the members about the wild camping topic.

This issue had now subject to various lobbying by interest groups such as the BMC including WG.

It was cited in some circles that wild camping was not an issue. He agreed that the notion of wild camping in its strictest sense was not an issue. However, post Covid across the UK and Eryri a great deal of fly camping and antisocial behaviour has occurred which unfortunately has reflected badly on those true wild camping enthusiasts.

Some had cited the Scottish Outdoor Code as an example how this could be done in Wales. However, the expanse of landscapes, farming practices, size or holdings and management in Wales were dissimilar to the Scottish model. But it was important for members to hear both sides of the equation in case of any consultation that may emerge on the subject from WG.

JH asked why this was a problem. As they take everything with them.

PR explained that currently there was no legislation that allowed wild camping to occur without landowner consent. Proper wild camping enthusiasts were adept and skilful and adhered to the wild camping code and there were few issues. However, there are many others who 'fly camp' i.e. on the sides of roads, lay-bys, nearby fields, streams, and rivers, causing damage to fences, open fires, litter and 'waste' who have no idea how to behave in this type of environment. And this was the problem which continues.

Legal access for this activity has the potential to cause significant problems for the NP and the need for resources to deal with it.

DPJ added that fly camping is now appearing in more remote locations where everything is simply left behind and this is increasing. It was then the Warden Service to clean it up.

AE commented that it was rare to see proper wild campers as they were inconspicuous and frequently leave early and no trace is left. They were very responsible people.

DO mentioned that some parts in his area were commons which already attracted camper vans to add to the problem. This has resulted in additional litter and waste.

PR commented that camper vans and mobile homes tended to keep their sites clean it was again unfortunately that the behaviour of those fly campers

sleeping in vans – off road tents near their cars. Those activities were not the same.

It was interesting that he has photos from the 1960's showing the same behaviour.

AT mentioned that in Scotland the legislation was different and wild camping was legal asked what the difference was between Wales and Scotland.

PR commented that Scotland has vast expanses of isolated open country and many larger rivers (for access to water) and it was entirely different.

GD asked how wild campers obtained landowners details to ask consent if wild campers required it.

PR stated that he was frequently asked for landowner details but due to Gdpr⁴ regulations could not pass on any details. He usually referred them to the farming unions.

HP suggested that they may need to consider a mechanism whereby landowners could allow the NP to pass on their details to wild campers or others when necessary.

PR stated that they were in the process of having a letter sent out to all landowners around the periphery of Yr Wyddfa to that end. He was not sure where this was in terms of timeline but would inquire. He would also discuss this with their GDPR Officer to see what was possible.

JPR mentioned that the 28-day rules for pop up campsites had been under consideration by WG. He understood that this was still 28 days within the NP.

PR would inquire.

8. Update on the internal review of the ENP Events Guidance

PR informed the members that the review of this document was now completed and was up and available via the ENP website⁵. They had also decided to split this up into component parts on the website to make it easier for organisers to find what they required.

⁴ The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a comprehensive European law governing data privacy and security. It mandates strict guidelines for how businesses and organizations collect, store, and process personal information, granting individuals greater control over dissemination of their details.

⁵ Eryri National Park website link to the Organised Events Guidelines below:
<https://authority.eryri.gov.wales/information/organised-events/yr-wyddfa-specific-information-and-advice/>

PR added the NP had few powers but-most event providers came to them for information and what could be described as ethical endorsement which was useful in bringing all the relevant factors together.

Larger events were also encouraged to come to us and Gwynedd Council if it was felt that other departments or organisations required input – such as the North Wales Police, the Ambulance Service, Environmental Health, Highways and Trunk Roads, NRW or the National Trust. The NP outlines what was important in terms of sustainable event management including sustainable transport (including parking arrangements), mountain safety, early communication and landowner dialogue, points of contact, litter and waste control, supporters plan, emergency plan, signage management, environmental plans where relevant and post event management.

The NP was asking for best practice, and most large events did their homework and most pass off without incident. By today all major charities employ professional organisers to run their fund raisers e.g. Red Cros, Alzheimer's, Marie Currie and many others which is the ideal.

It is the smaller groups (20-50) who are sometimes problematic – i.e. no preplanning, little knowledge of the area or Yr Wyddfa, little in terms of risk assessment, little awareness of mountain safety and no realistic idea of what staging any size or event entails. Hence the information we provide is essential.

We do invite people to register on our joint Gwynedd/National Park data base so there is some form of contact/group information. This includes who they are, their dates, routes, contacts, and numbers. There is a meeting planned soon with Gwynedd Council to decide if we can share this information with the North Wales Police and the Llanberis Mountain rescue and occasionally our Wardens in Pen Y Pass. There may be some Gdpr⁶ issues but if this is limited then that could be overcome.

If anyone required a hard copy, then he could arrange this.

JPR added that the British Fell Running Championship had gone ahead in Dinas Mawddwy last year and had been highly successful. It showed that with good planning then events were a positive thing.

9. Membership of the Access Forum

PR mentioned that this was now the last meeting of this LAF membership as their 3-year tenure was now at its end. As required by the statutory regulations pertaining to the LAF's under the CRoW Act they would now have to advertise and recruit new membership. Advertisements would be placed in local papers and on social media.

⁶ Gdpr – General Date Protection Regulations – where certain information cannot be shared without consent. That means that any private data held for individuals means strict handling of that data by organizations.

He stressed that continuity was an important element for the LAF membership and appreciated that members had been on a steep learning curve throughout with many topics relating to access discussed and some being sometimes complex.

He hoped that many existing members would reapply and he thanked all members for their invaluable contribution to the LAF business over the last three years. All existing members would receive an application form sent by RW.

PR mentioned that the LAF had been instrumental, post Covid, in creating and holding the wild camping information on the NP website. This sort of advice was invaluable to the Authority. The access to water issue (Penmachno/Rhydlanfair in particular) was another where the LAF opinion had influenced what the NP had undertaken on site to help matters. And all the formal consultations that had arisen from time to time for which he was grateful.

10 Recommended Items of the next meeting

- i) Wild Camping presentation
- ii) Updates on Traws footbridge bridge
- iii) Update on the dogs in the countryside issue update
- iv) GDPR information

11. Any other business

i)TF mentioned the changes in the legislation and dogs.

There are now unlimited fines for dog worrying following changes in the legislation.

PR stated that he would try to get some additional information about this.

12. Date of next meeting – 23rd June 2026 – Venue to be decided.

HP thanked all for their contribution this evening and hoped all would reapply for their membership.