Minutes of the Northern Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting held on Monday 8th June 2026 at 5.45p.m at Canolfan Prenteg, Porthmadog LL49 9SP

Present - Members:	Mr Edwin Noble	Mr Dafydd Gwyndaf
	Mr John Gladston	Cllr Beca Roberts
	Mrs Fiona Davies	Mrs Maggi Barry
	Cllr Goronwy Edwards	Mr Patrick Griffith
	Mr Richard Williams	Mr Robin Parry
	Mr Dafydd P Jones	Mr Gethin Davies
	Mr Ken Latham	Mr Arwel Elias
	Mr Tom Carrick	

Officers / Speakers:	Peter Rutherford (ENPA)	Naomi Jones (ENPA)
	Rhian P Williams (ENPA)	Angela Jones (ENPA)
	Simon Roberts (ENPA)	Andrew Watson (Dartmoor N.P)

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

1	**Apologies**	Mr Mark Jones	Mr Guto Davies
		Mr Richard Till	Miss Ailish Roberts
		Mr Tim Jones	

PR opened the proceedings as acting Chair as this was a new LAF term of office. Some members had returned and there were also new faces. It would be necessary later on to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair.

Agreed.

He further explained that the LAF's were statutory committees whose prime remit was to advise the Authority on access related issues. This included matters concerning access land (over 60% of the NP is denoted as access land under the CRoW Act). They had also responded to various WG consultations on access related issues and on many other issues concerning access generally including Rights of Way and access projects throughout the NP. This was an important role.

It was also important that the LAF members were aware of any subjects that may arise e.g. access to inland water, the wild camping debate, proposed changes to legislation. And also, local issues typically those such as Crib Goch/Crib Y Ddysgl.

He fully appreciated that there sometimes was a great deal of information which meant a steep learning curve, however if any member was unsure of any subject or proceedings, then they only have to ask for information and PR would gladly supply it.

It was also important to consider that although some LAF members were members of official organisations relating to the outdoor sector they were there as individuals and for their expertise and not to represent any specific bodies or their policies.

2. Previous Minutes

Approved

3. Matters arising

i) Update on safety works at Bwlch Crib Goch – Crib y Ddysgl

PR advised members that this work had now been completed and showed various slides and videos of the work and the placing of the stones by helicopter at the far end (west) of Bwlch Crib Goch at the entrant and foot of the first Crib Y Ddysgl rise. They had been dug in and placed against one another so they could not be rolled away.

Hopefully this will stop walkers attempting to use this false path which has led people into difficulties in the past. He would liaise with the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team (LLMRT) at the end of the main season, if they could measure its effectuality i.e. reduced number of callouts in that area.

This work had been agreed following some discussions with the MRT last year. It was also planned to put some information of the website concerning Crib Goch which they had not carried in the past – alluding to the fact that this was Grade 1[1] scramble and also, that Crib Y Ddysgl was also a Grade 1 route – a fact that many walkers overlooked.

One of the major issues in the Bwlch Y Moch area was `following on` – that is by walkers following others and not realising that the Crib Goch route was not an ascent to Yr Wyddfa but a difficult ridge not for the inexperienced and then finding themselves in difficulty.

The wall at Bwlch Y Moch was also completed but with a view to rebuild and extend to the east a lower one. The new (current) configuration encourages walkers to make a conscious decision to turn and use the Crib Goch route.

There has been a site visit with some LAF members to view the site for the lower wall and there was a consensus that this should be done but at limited height. The existing pillar would also have to be moved east a few meters.

He also mentioned that a new pillar has been discussed with the MRT for the top of the Llanberis rise above Allt Coch to more clearly indicate the descent route of the Llanberis path in particular as some were veering off towards Crib Y Ddysgl. He showed mock ups of the pillar. This was now in Pwllheli for engraving and would be erected as soon as it was returned. It would have to be transported to site by train.

ii) Lon Gwyrfai – update. PR showed slides of the area. The section that was blocked due to felling of all the trees including the ones brought down by storm Dara. The felling operations have cause considerable damage to this section behind the Forest Campsite. The route is still, after a year and a half, unusable and still not cleared. He had met with their local NRW area officer, and he had

1 Grade 1 scramble. A set of grades indicating a routes difficulty. Grade 1 being “an adventurous mountain route that sits between hard walking and easy rock climbing”.

indicated that would be cleared and the surface and drains rebuild and would occur in July/August and was out to tender. PR would report back on this issue as soon as he knew more. The NRW timeframe for all of this was very disappointing and had caused un considerable angst for all concerned.

SR added that the Wardens had installed temporary signage which indicated that walkers should use the alternative track.

KL asked if the Slate Trail volunteers could erect their signage on that section.

PR stated that there would be no objection however he advised that they leave this until the site was safe to use after the NRW had completed the works.

RW asked if it was worth pursuing this with the NRW. They seem to be well behind what is required.

Cllr BR asked if it was worth asking for an Officer from the NRW to attend the meetings.

PG mentioned that GC, CCBC and the ENP were struggling to keep up with the upkeep of their respective networks and the NRW should be doing more to maintain their network – especially within their own property.

Agreed that PR write to the NRW expressing the need for some attendance from the NRW.

PR advised that we would move directly to item 6 as Mr Andrew Watson was joining us online.

6. Wild Camping – Presentation on Dartmoor National Park's experience on wild camping and high court ruling.

PR commented that it was important to remember that the situation on Dartmoor was entirely different to that of the rest of the UK National Parks – with the exception of Scotland where the Scottish Outdoor Code[2] prevails. *He may add an item for the next October meeting agenda to explain this document.*

PR welcomed AW and thanked him for joining the meeting.

AW stated that he was the Head of Access, Recreation and Properties at Dartmoor National Park (DNP) and had been on post since 2008 and was pleased to be able to present this issue to the LAF members.

He shared a screen and explained that the DNP managed their Public Rights of Way network within the park on behalf of Devon County Council (DCC) and they were the authority for the access land under the CRoW Act.

In addition to this they also had the Dartmoor Commons Act (DC Act 1985) for which they also have responsibility.

2 Scottish Outdoor Code - NatureScot The Code explains how people can responsibly exercise the access rights granted under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. These rights apply to most land and inland water, including hills, woods, parks, coasts, rivers and lochs, at any time of day.

In recent times they had received a legal challenge to the allowable activities under this Act.

The DC Act bestowed rights on foot and horseback for the purposes of open-air recreation and was seen as pre-cursor to the CRoW Act and the creation of `access land`.

In 1999 the Dartmoor National Park sitting within, at the time, Devon County Council brough in various bylaws to provide a framework for activities that were taking place on the commons. Those bylaws encompassed controlling dogs, open fires, damaging vegetation, interfering with water courses or ecological damage. Camping was an allowable activity with some caveats – this has to be at least 100m from a road and out of sight of buildings. Their definition is 'backpacking' and not termed 'wild camping', but where the usual rules apply, they recommend one or two nights, leave no trace, camp later and leave early.

They have also developed a code of conduct as they have also had as have many designated areas in the UK, many people roadside camping or in camper vans citing, they are wild campers when in fact this is not the same activity.

The legal case itself hinged on the definition of what constituted 'open air recreation'. The Authority's view was that wild backpack camping was an allowable activity included in the bylaws – they were produced in 1989 and have remained unaltered in that time.

In 2021 they decided to review the bylaws and bring them up to date to include newer activities such as the use of drones.

Slightly earlier than this review process a new landowner had purchased a large estate in the southwest of the DNP which included Stormoor common. Apart from being landowners they also have the grazing rights.

They challenged the authority's right to allow access on foot under Section 10 of the DC Act. It does not go as far as including wild camping.

They asked the NP to issue a declaration that it did not allow this activity. The Authority refused and then Authority was taken to the High Court where the single judge presiding agreed with the landowner. The DNP appealed at the Court of Appeal where the previous judgement was overturned, and the Authority's position was upheld.

The landowners then appealed against this decision at the Supreme Court where the case was heard in Oct 2024 and with a final outcome in July 2025. The final outcome was that DNP's position, and the previous High Court Appeal was upheld.

This meant that the previous organised activities such as the 10 Tors Challenge[3] could continue as before. This event also includes Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) expedition groups.

Ten Tors Challenge is an annual two-day endurance hike on Dartmoor where teams of six teenagers navigate rugged terrain to visit ten designated checkpoints

Some landowners also asked the question as to why the land within the National Park's ownership, which is not a great deal, did not also have allowable camping. Since the review and taking on board those comments they have now designated some sites for this activity.

The NP received considerable support from user group organisations such as the Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA) who began fundraising to help fund the NP's legal costs. Following the favourable result in court they asked for costs which were granted. The monies raised by the DPA are now being used to help fund some of the NP's outreach work. Typically, "nights under the stars" programme which gives young people in particular the opportunity to experience wild camping in Dartmoor. Another scheme is about getting groups of women and younger women out to also experience camping in Dartmoor.

He showed maps of the areas. And that all information regarding the allowable camping areas are available on the DNP website.

Post Covid they secured some funding to employ Marshals (trained by the Ranger team) to deal with any issues that arise from wild camping.

Following the positive result in the case and good weather last year this had prompted a greater number of people wishing to experience wild camping in the area. They had also seen an increase in roadside camping which they had not experienced in the past

AW invited questions.

EN asked that i) given the increase in capital monies for the Marshalls did they have any powers to remove or to stop people camping wherever they wished. And ii) technically did sites that had become very popular then fall foul of any planning legislation?

AW replied that they did see an increase last year but people exercising true wild camping *per se* are not often seen and are not the issue. The issues are more related to honey pot sites where there are problems such as anti-social behaviour. lighting open fires, litter and waste and roadside camping out of a boot of a car. This is where the Marshals and Rangers are most proactive, but they also try to engage and educate people.

They were advised that the bylaws review should be put on hold during the case. They will now revisit this; however, this is very complex. On the ground dealing with non-compliant and repeat offenders is problematic – thankfully they are a minority, but some are more challenging to authority than what they have experienced in the past. Unfortunately, other NP's have reported similar trends.

In terms of planning this is not an issue – such a large spread-out area with intermittent low-level and non-permanent use did not qualify under any planning constraints.

They had recently piloted limited parking for motorhomes, but they had been advised that if this was more permanent then this would require `change of use` even if based on self-containment without facilities. This would be based on a similar scheme run by Forestry Scotland. Time constraints could be imposed for example 8pm to 9am.

KL asked if they had seen large increases in litter since the Supreme Court case had reinstated wild camping – particularly given the popularity of the pop-up tents.

AW replied that they had not seen major increases only the usual amount of litter and the use of festival type tents.

SR added that they had seen many more people attempting to camp on Yr Wyddfa _ Snowdon and its periphery. And after every weekend they remove many abandoned tents.

PR asked if they were policing these issues through their staff how did they manage costs and how sustainable was that in the long term.

AW stated that the Dartmoor Marshals scheme had secured funding through the Crime Commissioners Office following the post Covid period. They made the case based on the numbers of visitors following the ease of lockdown (but with people still restricted from overseas travel). However, this was not all detrimental as many new visitors had come to visit Dartmoor for the first time and intended to return. In terms of visitor management this presented new opportunities to convey our messaging and promote understanding of our NP's and protected landscapes. He added that the Authority had put monies into this and also that some landowners and larger organisations had also contributed to this funding.

PR referring to the map and asked if there was zoning criteria for the allocation of the wild camping areas.

AW stated that those areas reflected the areas of common land where camping is allowed and not allowed. This was an advisory map that people can look up.

GD asked if there had been any changes in the perspectives of the local communities or residents regarding this camping issue.

AW stated that they had gone through the legal process and that they were back to their original position and the communities understood this. Local communities and the farming community were well used to this activity. Unfortunately, there are always going to be a small minority that caused a disproportionate number of difficulties.

PR commented that it was unfortunate that the roadside fly campers and the difficulties caused (litter, fires, waste and anti-social behaviour) had reflected badly on the true wild camping practitioners

JG asked if private landowners charged for camping on their land and did this fall into the 28day rule?

AW commented that there a few sites where this occurred apart from Dartmoor commons. These are more basic campsites with little or no facilities. These do serve a useful purpose if they require other basics rather than purely wild camping.

PR thanked AW for his presentation and time to bring this to the LAF members.

EN asked if they had seen an increase in roadside camping.

AJ replied that this was increasing and that they were amassing empirical data over this summer on this issue as most previous evidence was anecdotal. They may wish to change certain rules in the Local Development Plan (LDP).

DJ asked if the NP still advisory signage had that they could supply. The previous signs had been very effective at dispersing those camper vans from car parks. Any that could be sup[lied by the NP would be useful.

AJ mentioned that they were proactive and our Sustainable Tourism Officer had been liaising with App providers to reduce the amount of incorrect information that was being circulated.

DJ mentioned that there was a French site that had been advertising sites that were not `legal`.

AJ mentioned that they were aware of this App and it was misleading and they (the ENP) had been in communication with them and had requested that some of the sites they mentioned were removed which they did. Unfortunately, once on the internet information tended to resurface.

She mentioned that Gwynedd Council have trailed 5 sites outside of the NP boundary specifically for camper vans at various locations across the county. They were currently reviewing their effectiveness.

JG asked if there was public health concerns related to fly/roadside camping.

PR stated that this was a major issue – he had photos going back to the 1960's showing the same issues. The difficulty was that by today numbers had increased considerably and many failed to recognise their responsibilities whilst in the countryside. He thought that there was a significant amount of work to do on a national scale to address this behaviour. Personally, he thought that not enough is being done to address this at a national level in terms of public information surround the Countryside Code in particular.

JG asked how this applied to events.

PR stated that he was not so worried about events *per se* as they always asked them to have litter and waste under control of a specific person and not to leave stuff locally as a cost of the local ratepayers. This also included organic waste – orange peel, banana skins, apple cores, waste food. All must be removed.

AJ mentioned that they were taking a collaborative approach to this via our Comms team which gives us a wider reach to the public rather than just via the Eryri social media platforms. But it is a constant battle to keep up with disinformation.

TC mentioned that there was a new Mountain Rescue media Co-ordinator and possibly they may be potential for some joint messaging.

RP commented that it was not uncommon to find bags of rubbish in the river in Nant Llanberis.

KL added that during his time at Parc Padarn this was a constant irritation and a burden on resources. Some information is within QR codes and that could be a useful vector for messaging.

RW mentioned that the BMC used QR codes for their Tremadog routes.

AJ mentioned that they had installed some trial donation boxes in Betws Y Coed.

Cllr BR asked that with a new government I post was there an opportunity for the ENP to create some educational materials which could be used for schools in their National Curriculum in relation to the Countryside Code. It was important to get to the next generation.

AE commented that it was obvious that the Countryside Code had fallen out of the public mindset, and this required a new approach and a refresh in terms of resources for schools and colleges. This would make an ideal project for local schools promoted by the ENP messaging.

GR added that WG should consider this within any amendments to school curriculums in Wales. If it wasn't part of it then it would become more difficult to get those messages across the educational system.

AE commented that from his observations local children understood these factors, but it was unfortunate that others did not and that was a challenge.

4. Correspondence
None

5 Local Access Forum – Welcome new members for 2026-2029 and elect chairman and vice chair.

PR explained as earlier there was a need to elect a Chari & Vice Chair from within the membership. He understood that some people may not know one another and he was willing to have an interim period (before the next meeting) before members could make up their minds. He asked if members wished to make their choice this evening if there were any nominations from the floor or wait until the next meeting. The choice was theirs. By show of hands members opted to conduct this this evening.

Agreed that this should be this evening:

*Following the majority of meeting agenda items:
Members elected Edwin Noble as Chair by show of hands and Dafydd Gwyndaf as Vice Chair.

Agreed

7. Director of Land Management Eryri National Park – A presentation on the role of the director Naomi Jones

NJ explained that she had asked to attend this evening's meeting to inform the LAF

Members as to her role as Director for Land Management. She had been in role now since last August.

She stressed that her door was always open and would welcome any queries from the LAF members.

Her role encompassed the Warden Service, Conservation, Cultural Heritage, Biodiveristy and Agricultural and Forestry department.

She had worked fore the NP since 2007 and had been in various roles in the NP prior to her current role.

The work is mixed with numerous projects ongoing and new ones on the horizon. She stressed that many projects where not in silos and often crossed departments and required joint working. She would ensure that anything related to access and well being would be brought to the Forum.

She stated that AJ was currently working on the National Park Plan which would set their priorities and objectives for the next 5 years.

There were challenges to face such as nature and conservation, climate change, carbon, health and wellbeing and our local communities and visitor experience.

She introduced some of the principal projects. Recently the Tirwedd Partneriaeth Carneddau – Carneddau Landscape Partnership, Dolgellau Town Buildings project and connecting people with nature. The NP's biggest project ever undertaken Project Life is coming to an end next year which encompassed the Celtic Rain Forest scheme. This was European funded scheme. And the Welsh place names project specifically aimed at geographical areas - with Ogwen as the first area. There will be some complex work required. They would also be working with other partners and stakeholders such as the Mountain Rescue Teams, Cymdeithas Eryri and the BMC

The Ffermio Bro scheme was up and running with over 50 schemes funded with 13 farming groups.

This year there would also be a new Footpaths Strategy, and the LAF will be consulted over this.

There was no doubt that the role embraced a wide range of the NP's work which presented challenges.

Another scheme was the redevelopment of Plas Tan Y Bwlch with a view to move the headquarters from Penrhyndeudraeth to Plas. The preliminary work was underway with a view to put in a HLF bid for the works approximate spend of £15m. We would know if this is successful by Christmas this year. If successful, this would take approximately 2 years to complete.

There was also a bid to HLF for Coed Cadw – Woodland Trust for temperate forest projects and management.

8. Rights of Way Coed Victoria, Llanberis – update on the latest position on the proposed changes.

PR explained that they has made some progress recently in their discussions with landowners – of which there are 4. And they had developed a route map showing the changes required. This meant a realignment, a diversion and partial extinguishment of the lower section and also a realignment of the upper section. He showed the map.

Hopefully this would make this route more user friendly and particularly be more attractive to small groups and those at nighttime and cause less disturbance to Victoria Terrace.

Estimates of the work are ongoing but would need substantial resources to reconstruct the upper section and realign it. Possibly in the region of £80 - £90k. Some monies have been kept to one side but they would have to top this up.

He would be communicating this final route information to the landowners and to give them the opportunity to respond, if necessary, before moving forward.

The official and legal work required to alter the Rights of Way formally would be undertaken by Gwynedd Council who were very keen to assist us in this matter.

He would update the LAF members at a later date.

PG asked where that monies would come from.

PR stated that they had some project underspend and they would have to look at any other pots within our budget to complete the rest.

9. Pen y Pass – Speed limit in the area

PR explained that the LAF had written to Gwynedd Highways several times in the past concerning the current speed limit – which was 60mhp. Given the constant footfall to and from Mallory's YHA, the number of buses, minibuses, cars, and taxis this was an accident waiting to happen and that from the Nant Peris end this was a blind hill. Gwynedd had indicated that they would review this.

AJ commented that there was now an advisory limit had now been changed to 20mph whilst they were reviewing the whole situation.

PR commented that at least they has listened to the NP and LAF members. But hoped that this may change from an advisory to a statutory limit once they had completed their review.

10. Recommended Agenda items of next meeting

i) Update of the Warden Service North
ii) Update by the ENPA Volunteer Officer (to be confirmed)
iii) Explanation of the Scottish Outdoor Code. *PR would seek out someone from one of the Scottish National Parks to present this.*
iv) New Eryri NP Management Plan update

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

PR announced that following the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SLF) and the Welsh Government (WG) consultation regarding the access element the Forum had recommended that steel furniture was more sustainable in the longer term than wooden gates and stiles which would have to be replaced within a 10-year period at great costs to all concerned. He was pleased to advise the members that the WG had taken this advice on board and now advocated metal where possible. This was a success and would apply to all grant schemes including Ffermio Bro. He thanked the Chairs for their input into this.

12. Date of next meeting – 5th October 2026.

Addenda – revised meeting date would now be the 12th of October. Venue to be confirmed.