Minutes of the South Eryri Local Access Forum Meeting held on Tuesday 23rd June 2026, at 5.45 p.m At The Red Lion, Dinas Mawddwy.SY20 9JA

Present – Members:	Mr Hedd Pugh (Cadeirydd)	Mr Huw Roberts
	Mrs Gaynor Davies	Mr Delwyn Evans
	Mr Aled Thomas	Cllr John P Roberts
	Mr David Coleman	Mr Huw T Jones
	Mr Tim Faire	Mrs Kirstie Lumsdon
	Mr Roger Greenhalgh	Ms Denis Meldrum
Officers / Observers:	Peter Rutherford (ENPA)	Naomi Jones (ENPA)
	Rhian P Williams (ENPA)	Andrew Watson (DNP)
	Eben Muse (BMC online)	Tim Jones
1. Apologies	Cllr Dewi Owen	Mr Alun Edwards
	Mr Alun Evans	Mr Geraint Rowlands
	Mrs Janette Holmes	

2. Declaration of Interest

None

PR stated before business that as this was the beginning of a new term of office for members – and there were some new faces around the table. He would Chair this evening until a new Chair and Vice Chair are elected. This was a matter of choice – members could elect a Chair and Vice Chair this evening if there were from the floor either through a show of hands or ballot. If not, they could hold this at the next meeting. *These procedures are laid down by the CRoW Act legislation. To be discussed under item 6.*

3. Previous Minutes

Approved

4. Matters Arising

i) Update on Coed y Brenin

PR informed the members that the situation on site at CYB was the same as before. In that the café was still not let. Albeit all tracks and toilets are available with the pay and a pay and display system in place in the car park. This was disappointing but unsurprising.

HP asked if PR could determine from the NRW as to what the latest position was in CyB.

PR would endeavour to find out.

TJ recommended that if there was no suitable answer then we should write to the new Minister.

Agreed

HTJ added that there was still a substantial amount of people using the site but asked if it was possible to ascertain if the closure of the café has affected the overall numbers.

JPR commented that he had heard anecdotally from the bike hire company that their numbers were lower because the café was unavailable which was disappointing...

ii) People Counters on Trawsfynydd Circular
PR informed the members that they had recently installed a new people/cycle counter on the Traws Circular. Currently they has no data for usage on this popular circuit only guess estimates so this counter information would be useful. It was also more user friendly than they old style counters as this delivered data via telemetry[1] i.e. by phone signal to a desktop that we could use – thus we did not have to go out to download data. These units are expensive (£3k each) and there were annual licence fees. They had been working with the NRW to have some joint counters, and the NP had also bought some units directly. Hopefully by this time next year we would have some useful data.

JPR added that that type of information was important to the Authority in terms of funding routes and for any future potential project grant monies.

iii) Update on Trawsfynydd Lake footbridge
There was no news on the footbridge bridge issue. This was also disappointing as neither the National Park nor Gwynedd Council had been invited to any of the previous meetings to discuss this.

It was important to remember that the bridge section was not a Public Right of Way but was connected to the network at either end. *He had noted the banners erected near the A470 demanding a new bridge.*

DM asked what the problem with the bridge was.

PR understood that this was a structural problem more related to the steel and concrete bases. He had heard that replacement costs could be in the region of £3m. He would continue to monitor this.

iv) p6. PR was pleased to inform the members that Ffermio Bro officers had been consulting with them over Rights of Way issues, and this was especially useful to all parties and a step in the right direction.

[1] . The automated process of collecting measurements and data from remote or inaccessible sources and transmitting it to a receiving system for monitoring and analysis. In this case this was via a phone signal.

5. *Correspondence*

None

6. Local Access Forum – welcome new members

HP welcomed all and asked if all members could have around the table introduction as there were new members attending for the first time this evening.

PR explained that the Local Access Forums were statutory bodies and in place to advise the Authority on access issues and also many other issues pertaining to access including consultations from WG and others.

This evening 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.

Chairs and Vice Chairs are asked to attend the annual National Local Access Forum meeting and take part in various consultations and Chair occasionally some subgroups – often combined with Arfon Dwyfor LAF.

Members decided to have a show of hands.

JPR nominated HP.

There were no other nominations.

By unanimous show of hands HP was elected Chair.

Chair – Hedd Pugh - *HP reminded everyone that if the Chair was from the agricultural sector, then the Vice Chair should be from the user groups.*

Vice Chair elected – Delwyn Evans (also representing the disabilities sector)

HP thanked members for his nomination. It was important to remember that the Eryri LAF's were some of the first to become established in Wales and some of the most successful.

7. Wild Camping – Mr Andrew Watson, Dartmoor N.P

PR explained, prior to AW joining the meeting, that in some quarters of the outdoor sector there are calls for the extension of wild camping rights and he thought it reasonable for the members to hear of the Dartmoor experience. He

further explained that the Dartmoor Commons situation was quite different to that of the rest of the UK designated landscapes with the exception of Scotland. This was managed via the Scottish Outdoor Code[2]. He had discussed this item with a colleague in the Loch Lomond National Park who had agreed to attend online at our next meeting to explain how this works in practice.

AW joined the meeting. He 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.

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`.

The land area of the Dartmoor Commons and CRoW access land amount to some 50% of their DNP area.

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

[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.

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 4000-acre estate in the southwest of the DNP. 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 that there was no right to camp. 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.

The legal challenge was very much conflated by the opposite side about the difference between backpack camping and fly camping which the DNP has never tolerated. The code of conduct and Bylaws regulate how this is done. All maps showing camping areas show clearly that those sites are buffered at least 100m from any road.

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.

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

The NP received considerable support from user group organisations such as the Dartmoor Preservation Association (DPA). The Open Spaces Society, the BMC, and others. The DPA 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 – around £70k and monies raised by other user groups is now being used to help fund some of the NP's outreach work.

[3] 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. This involves some 2500 young people in teams. Saturday morning to Sunday evening.

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.

Those groups with several tents would be encouraged to use formal campsites rather than wild camp together.

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 and are extremely focused on visitor management. Funding post Covid, given the number of visitors, they had secured some funding from the Crime Commissioners Office.

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.

It was interesting that some landowners – including the Duchy of Cornwall had asked that backpacking to be continued on their property regardless of the outcome of the courts. This meant that they were at almost 90% of the original camping areas. Technical that was short lived due to the final judgement.

Due to the weather last year, they had seen an increase in numbers and the formal campsites were also full. Certainly, the legal case raised Dartmoor’s profile as a place to camp but there was misinformation in the media that indicated that people could camp anywhere which is not the case. They has gone to considerable lengths to get those messages over to the public.

AW invited questions.

TJ asked if the Marshal/Rangers who patrol this are general volunteers or are they people have formal training for dealing with (on occasion) difficult people as within Eryri we have a similar situation in terms of fly camping. They (the Authority) though that formally trained staff should be employed for this role rather than volunteers.
AW stated that they were not volunteers but were trained under the security industry qualification. The Ranger service is also given some training and are particularly good at engaging with people.

TJ mentioned that seeing some sort of costings would be useful.

AW stated that he could supply some details to PR.

KL asked that given the increase in numbers had there been any corresponding increases or impact in search and rescue incidents and having to aid people when things go awry due to peoples inexperience in backpacking.

AW stated that he was not aware of any additional call out and anecdotally it was though that most inexperienced people were the ones who were fly camping rather than those wild camping.

PR asked if there had been any spill over issues on the periphery of the DNP due to the high profile of this issue in the area.

AW stated that there were hotspots, but most were within the DNP – some were festival culture type of set ups – large tents, fairy lights, open fire pits etc which had to be dealt with. One in particular site which popular is a river side setting within Forestry Commission land. They had put a temporary restriction of the site to allow it to recover. They do have a good relationship with the Police who usually know of any antisocial activities of that nature.

DE asked if they had many issues with those people demanding to be roadside and not wanting to camp the 100m away from the road.

AW stated that they did, but the Marshals/Rangers will attend to cases such as these or recommend that they move on to a formal campsite. Some will pitch a tent 100m from the car and do multiple trips back and forth with all their paraphernalia which goes against the ethos of the code of conduct and advice i.e. carry all you need in a backpack and leave no trace.

EM (BMC) appreciated the approach taken by DNP. His question was that if things had gone differently and DNP had to fall in line with the rest of the England and Wales would this have made their job in managing camping easier or more difficult.

AW replied that if the legal case were lost then where would they be? The contingency Commissioners scheme they had worked up – where other landowners came together to provide land, would have brought back about 90% of the land previously used for wild camping.

EM added that if they could not have negotiated replacement land then where would they be.

AW stated that ti was fortunate that this scheme would have been extremely useful in maintaining the status quo to a larger extent.

However, if this arrangement, which would have been voluntary, over time began to experience problems, then landowners could withdraw from any scheme leading to a fragmentation of the whole system. It was fortunate that the Duchy of Cornwall – a major landowner was supportive in terms of providing wild camping areas and are also supportive of communities and young people.

HJ commented that there was a distinct lack of information around how land was managed by farmers and those messages were important to get over to the public.

AW appreciated the point HJ had made and how the land is managed is a part of their messaging to the public on how land is managed. But certainly, people were becoming more challenging whilst accessing the countryside. It was the usual issues – open fires, barbeques, and litter/waste.

GD asked that given the increases in the number of people camping was that reflected in the number of cases of dog worrying or have farmers reduced stock numbers.

AW replied that it was at a similar level as it was before. They did support the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society who employed a member of staff to gather data such as livestock incidents and sheep worrying and vehicle contact as there were areas with limited stock fencing on the moors. The rangers do try to convey those messages.

TF asked if the term `National` park which appeared to belong to the nation/s, was misleading when in fact that land is mostly managed by a collection of private individuals or organisations.

AW agreed that this was confusing to the public. Parliament at the time agreed that those areas had special qualities. By today he thought it was the messaging and outreach work that was important particularly to convey the information within the Countryside Code and working with UK National Parks, other agencies such as Natural England (NE), Forestry Commission England (FCE) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to ensure this goes into the public domain including school curriculums. This also included youth organisations such as the Scouts, Brownies, Guides. Everyone should be encouraged to be out in nature whilst respecting the people who live and work within the area.

HP thanked AW and all the Q&A following from members. This has proved most interesting and worthwhile presentation.

PR informed the members that EM from the BMC had rejoined the meeting and there followed some confusion regarding the BMC presentation. He (EM) was under the impression that he was about to give their presentation on the wild camping issue. PR asked the Chair if this was possible.

Via the Chair the members asked if this could be postponed until the next meeting as the pervious item had taken so long - an hour.

HP commented that this would give the members more time to absorb what AW had said on the subject and then listen to the BMC presentation at the next meeting.

PR asked EM if he could give their presentation for the next meeting on the October 20th. He replied that this was `no problem`. PR thanked him for that accommodation.

8. Director of Land Management Eryri National Park – 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. stressed that her door was always open and would welcome any queries from LAF members.

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

She had worked for 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 ending 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.

KL asked if this was specifically targeted at footpaths per se.
NJ commented that the overarching polices were the domain of the Engagement.
Team (AJ and PR) this strategy would revolve around footpath and their promoted routes for which they were responsible.

DM added it would be useful if they could include bridleways especially those with potential forward linkages. The equine sector tended to get left behind in such polices.

HR noted that he was grateful for the work the NP had undertaken on their RoW Network and that his community had contributed to the various projects NJ had referred to earlier. He was also interested in Ffermio Bro and asked who funded this scheme.

NJ replied that this was a WG funded scheme expanded across 8 areas of Wales.
They had 6 officers managing scheme in the NP and peripheral areas.

JPR stated that the Forum has recently had an update from the Ffermio Bro Officers and there had been considerable interest.

HR commented that every farm was run on different models for a variety of reasons but he sometimes felt that schemes were too generic and boxed all in the same category when in actuality there were all different in their way.

HP added that things were changed and could be more tailor made.

HP declared an interest at this point.

JPR added that having good community networks was important and the Dinas Mawddwy, one had proved it worth to the area where 7 single daily walks were available which were popular with the community and visitors and were local information such as history and culture could be given.

TF commented that in the past schemes had tried to deliver nature improvements but at the same time this was agricultural land and that should be clearly understood. Many had invested heavily in schemes for many years and conservation management through the various past scheme still did not deliver a high value in nature conservation.

HP added that at the end of the day we were all collectively responsible for what we have including climate change.

NJ appreciated that position, but the schemes encompassed nature and conservation *per se* to try to address declines wherever possible.

NJ continued. There was no doubt that her 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.

HP thanked NJ for her presentation and for her time this evening.

9 Update on Mynydd Moel – Cader Idris

PR informed the members that another heli lift had taken place and a new section. This work was ongoing. The Cader Idris Mynydd Moel circular had been in a poor state of repair. From counter evidence Dol Idris figures indicate around 70k of walker per annum with a high proportion descending via Mynydd Moel. So, this was important work which is to a high specification in terms of pitching stone albeit this was a difficult location. There may be another two seasons left on this.

HTJ reported that he had recently walked this path and the work was an excellent standard.

GD mentioned that she of some visitors who had missed this link down Mynydd Moel had returned via the road. What was the feeling about signage.

PR mentioned that erecting signs of mountains was always problematic and several had been removed or vandalised on Yr Wyddfa – those specifically put in place to save lives. This was both dangerous and costly.

They would look at that intersection as GD has mentioned.

TJ mentioned that there were some – particularly overseas visitors that there was not enough mountain signage.

KL mentioned that there was an issue for the MRT in one rescue where a tent had gone over and they had to proffer help to the occupants – in that did they bring down their tents and paraphernalia. She thought that the more signs went up then the more they would need.

PR mentioned that the stone pillars erected on Yr Wyddfa had helped considerably. It was worth mentioning that without the support of the LAF for that initiative discussions would have circulated for years potentially. LAF's views gave the Officers (including himself) the confidence to move forward on this.

HR mentioned that the walking Apps were popular.

JPR added that Apps – such as the Dinas Mawddwy one were proving to be useful and a good way to disseminate other information.

KL mentioned that the Mountain Rescue services had seen a large jump in incidents involving 18 – 24yr olds. One of the problems in terms of information

was that they were the groups least likely to interact with any formal sites such as theirs. And that was difficult to get around.

RG added that typically in Switzerland there was signage everywhere and there was no thought process required – this did take the challenge out of trekking.

10 Recommended Items of the next meeting

i) Dinas Mawddwy footpaths update on the community paths project.
ii) Roger Greenhough (member) has kindly offered to explain the history of the mapping process in the UK.
iii) Update by the ENPA Volunteer Officer (to be confirmed)
iv) Explanation of the Scottish Outdoor Code. *PR would seek out someone from one of the Scottish National Parks to present this.*
v) New Eryri NP Management Plan update

11. Any other business

i) PR mentioned that in terms of the LAF membership we were short of one person from within the land management sector and one from the user sector. If anyone had any recommendations, then he would gladly receive them. They would have to be coopted and would need to be ratified by the Authority.

12. Date of next meeting – 20th October 2026 – Venue to be decided.

HP thanked all for their contribution this evening.