

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held
at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6NX on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025
at 2.00 pm**

MEMBERS: Irene Brooke
Ian Mawdsley,
Phil Mundell, Chair,
Anne Underwood,
Kelvin Varney
Huw Watkins

INVITED: County Councillor Tony Easson,

**ADVISERS/
OBSERVERS**

Richard Garner	Public Right of Way Officer Natural Resources Wales Natural Resources Wales
----------------	---

APOLOGIES:

Councillors A.Fairey, P. Allsopp, J. Askew, Sara Burch, B. Heys, S. Roderick, J. Thurston and R. Wynne-Jones

1. Apologies for Absence / Introductions

LAF meeting opened with RG going through general housekeeping.

Apologies were received from members Philip Allsop, John Askew, Sara Burch, Anthea Fairey, Barbara Heys, Rhys Wynne-Jones, Sallie Roderick, Jack Thurston and from Ruth Rourke, Monmouthshire County Council.

Tony Easson introduced as soon to be county council member appointed to the LAF -invited to take part by the Chair

2. Declarations of Interest

None received

3. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum meeting of 19th February 2025 (Attached).

The minutes of the meeting 19th February 2025 were accepted,
Proposer: KV, Seconded: AU

4. Actions arising from the previous meeting not on the agenda:

Additional LAF member recruitment

RG updated the LAF regarding contacting Tillhil as a forestry landowner in the area, still no reply being received from potential contact related to the Farmers Union of Wales(FUW), and no response received from the National Farmers Union(NFU) or Country Land and Business

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6NX on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025 at 2.00 pm

Association (CLA). Recommendations for LAF members to pass on to any landowners they were aware of.

ACTION: contact or pass on contact details of potential landowners/horse riders – LAF members

Website for registers on cams web:

Still with Welsh language officer to test new Welsh side of site

ACTION: Update LAF when available for initial viewing -RG

5. Tracks and Trails project update

No meeting since last LAF, next scheduled is for the 19th May, waiting for consultant's report.

A site visit took place - horse way significant damage from water.

Climate issues prevalent with excessive water, affecting numerous routes, pressure from usage, faster than can be maintained.

ST- Pembrokeshire coast as an example of rollback/moving trails etc.

Concern from LAF that project is not moving forward quickly enough

ACTION: Circulate minutes and website to the LAF when available – RG

ACTION: Circulate consultant's report when available – RG

ACTION: Update to next LAF meeting- BH/Subgroup

6. Natural Resources Wales update (Sarah Tindal, Senior Officer People and Places, South East Wales/ Bob Campbell Senior Officer Land Management, South East Wales)

Operational update from BC/ST.

Notes appended to meeting agenda

query regarding tree responsibility on NRW land - surface is usually with MCC, trees/side growth is usually with NRW.

Reporting via MCC interactive map or direct email for NRW

- LAF expressed an interest in how to report as a future session

Cattle tracking on Beacon Hill, Trellech, you can track via QR code link to website, this has enabled removal of gates, fences etc improving accessibility as a result

National landscape photo trails for improved accessibility and route planning ahead, possible for Chepstow park woods.

MCC volunteers now able to work on NRW estate

New process for events without charge, simplifies process -shortly to go live, for now email Bob about events.

Clarification sought about what events need notification - commercial or large size groups need notification.

When released feedback welcomed from LAF.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6NX on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025 at 2.00 pm

Please report any incidents issues, antisocial or illegal behaviour via these contacts:

For any queries please use the Land Management Team contact e mail:

forestsandnaturesoutheast@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

NOTE: For urgent or out of hrs incidents / reports use the Incident Control Centre (ICC) : 0300 065 3000 (24/7) [Natural Resources Wales / Report an incident](#)

Reporting off-road vehicles: contact@gwent.pnn.police.uk Call 101 @gwentpolice

ST- updated on NRW focus on statutory functions,

Access and rec policy team/officers have had a large reduction and now have reduced support for LAF's and generally. Chairs LAF meetings National Access Forum are now unknowns as to how they are managed.

Doing things differently hopefully better or more effective over the next 6-9 month changes will be outlined to the LAF.

Current support is due to value the LAF provides to NRW.

Response from LAF regarding how important NRW involvement is as a two way communication means, is accessible to groups/organisations and events volunteers are far more effective due to this involvement.

Many other LAFs still not yet running noting the loss of experience, and support this entails and to feed this back to the LAF chairs group/

ACTION: Feedback to the chairs group – PM

7. LAF Future Work Programme for review and updating

The previous years' work programme was reviewed, changes for the coming years programme (2025/26) have been included below:

Item	Background	Reporting Arrangements	Progress Plans /
Standard Items:			
Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP)	Progress in implementing the approved CAIP	Regular report	Future Meetings via regular MCC operational update
Performance Measures	MonLife Delivery Plan performance measures of CAMS issues	Regular report	Future Meetings via regular MCC operational update
Funding	Progress on and opportunities for external funded & MCC capital funded countryside access projects programmes	Regular report	Future Meetings via regular MCC operational update
Consultations	Consultations to the LAF on relevant matters as required	Report to LAF	As required

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6NX on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025 at 2.00 pm

Natural Resource Wales (NRW) updates	Update on forestry operations and access related issues	Regular report	Future Meetings via regular NRW operational update
Working Groups:			
Improvement subgroup (Proposed)	To be established to support working with local communities to identify future improvements, initially focussed on Chepstow Park Wood and then Wentwood Forest, subject to re-establishment of liaison arrangements with land managers and Newport City Council.	Regular report	Model TOR and agreement to establish LAF 11 June 2024; Reconfirmed May 2025. Update future meetings
Lower Wye Valley Tracks and Trails subgroup	Sub group established to act as part of the Tracks and Trails project steering group	Regular report	Update future meetings
Gwent Access Group	To participate in the regional access group as required (currently dormant)	Report as required	As required
Work Programme Items			
Review of the existing prioritisation system for legal orders (including DMMO claims)	To review the operation of the prioritisation system	Report to future meeting	Future Meeting within 25/26
Bridges	To consider the asset management plan & capital programme	Regular report	Appended list to MCC operational update.
Community Engagement and Volunteering	To consider the volunteering and community engagement programme	Report to future meeting	Future Meeting
Welsh Government Access Reform	To receive any updates on progress on the access reforms	Report as required	Updates as received
Communication to wider audience	Communicating LAF achievements/work to wider audiences	Reports by members for the LAF	As needed
Active travel	Update by Active travel on the work programme, including consultations	Report as required	As required
Large development access	To update on large developments, such as those in the Local development Plan (LDP)	Report as required	As required

8. Dates for future meetings and venue

The following dates were put forward for future meetings:
September 9th 2025

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held
at The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6NX on Tuesday, 13th May, 2025
at 2.00 pm**

November 26th 2025

ACTION LAF members to provide feedback if they can't attend - LAF members

ACTION: get agenda out 2 weeks before -RG

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm