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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Local Access Forum held
at Sports Hall, Gilwern Outdoor Centre, Ty Mawr, Gilwern NP7 0EB on Thursday, 2nd
May, 2024 at 3.00 pm

PRESENT: Anthea Fairey,
Phillip Allsopp
John Askew
Irene Brooke
Bethany Handley
Barbara Heys
Shan Lewis
Terence Mead
Phil Mundell
Sallie Roderick
Anne Underwood
Kelvin Varney
Huw Watkins
Rhys Wynne-Jones
County Councillor Sara Burch,

ADVISERS/OBSERVERS

Richard Garner	Rights of Way Officer (MCC)
Matthew Lewis (Countryside)	Interim Performance, Evaluation and Programme Development Lead for MonLife
Richard Ray	Paralegal
Ruth Rourke	Countryside Access Manager
Sarah. Tindal,	Natural Resources Wales
Robert Campbell	Natural Resources Wales
One Member of the Public	

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from members Ian Mawdsley and Jack Thurston and from Paul Keeble, Lead Engineer, Highways and Flooding.

2. Introductions by Members

ML welcomed members to the first meeting of the new local access forum and accordingly set by the appropriate regulations and guidance and chaired by ML as the current Local Access Forum Secretary. Introductions were made around the table with members outlining their areas of interest and observers their role in assisting the forum. ML outlined the interests of those members not able to attend. In response to a question ML indicated that members would have an opportunity to review the composition and balance of the forum's membership at the next meeting.

3. Initial Briefing by Appointing Authority

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ML introduced the initial briefing by way of a presentation. The presentation covered the role of the forum and its context.

ML outlined the scope of the wider countryside access network including the rights of way network, countryside access sites, promoted routes, open access land and other publicly accessible land. ML outlined MonLife's countryside access team, including their responsibilities and structure and the wider actions by other teams, including the Outdoor Adventure, Active Travel and Green Infrastructure teams, to promote wider access to the countryside.

ML outlined budgets and current grants and RR summarised countryside access policy, including the countryside access improvement plan, and its delivery including funding, partnerships, volunteering, and projects. ML outlined some of the challenges including balancing demand, asset condition, budgetary pressures, and partnership complexity.

ML introduced the future work programme including the Wye Valley Tracks and Trails project and a proposed review of the operation of the prioritisation scheme. The work programme will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting and ML asked members to consider their priorities and any training needs. The agreed work programme would then be added to the latest annual report and published.

4. The appointment procedure for Chair and Deputy Chair

ML explained that in accordance with the regulations the next meeting included the election of a Chair and Deputy Chair. ML indicated that he would circulate a request for nominations to the roles by email; self-nomination being acceptable.

5. Dates and times of future meetings

The next meeting's agenda includes the election of a Chair and Deputy Chair, agreement of the terms of reference, a discussion regarding whether additional members and observers are required to cover the full range of interests, the future work programme, and a programme of meeting dates for the next year. It was agreed a date would be set early in June for the next meeting following a poll of members preferences.

The meeting ended at 4.30 pm