

MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th April 2016 at 1:00pm
Innovation House Wales 1 Business Park, Magor**

PRESENT:

Members:

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| Mr Richard Davies | Chair | RD |
| Mrs Jenny Barrell | | JB |
| Mrs Irene Brooke | | IB |
| Mr Allan Thomas | | AT |
| Mrs Anne Underwood | | AU |

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| MCC | Mr Matthew Lewis | ML |
| MCC | Mrs Ruth Rourke | RR |
| MCC Highways Network | Mr Paul Keeble | PK |
| Minute Secretary: | Alan Clarke | AC |

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Askew, Pat Belsten, Joanne Bolwell, Stella Collard, Christian Schmidt, Cllr Ann Webb, Cllr Phil Hobson and Gill Bilsborough (NRW)

2. Introductions

RD welcomed members to the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2016 were agreed by those present and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

Mons Lane Care Scheme. **PK** said further advance training had been given to volunteers who were now working with John Askew and the Highways Operations Unit. Some early clearing had been done on the route chosen in Tintern.

IB said she had recently walked the part of the route which had been cleared and had found that many of the cut branches had been washed down from the banks during recent heavy rain making the path difficult to walk. Members agreed that it would be useful to hold a site visit and proposed this be done in June.

Welsh Government Green Paper. **ML** said progress continued to be on hold until after the Welsh Government elections in May 2016.

LAF Chairmans' Meeting. **AU** said she had attended the recent LAF Chairmans' meeting where it had been announced that the Welsh Government had received 6000 responses to the Green Paper, 4000 of which had come from the cycling group CTC. A significant number of respondents were in favour of the Scottish system of open access. A summary of responses is expected to be issued shortly.

AU said efforts were being made to reach greater standardisation of LAFs in Wales. However several were experiencing difficulties due to shortage of members and some were currently in abeyance.

Active Travel. **ML** said that Christian Schmidt had been successful in obtaining a quick wins bid which had enabled a number of access improvements to be made, some of which will improve connectivity.

AU suggested opportunities for mixed use, e.g. horseriders, needed to be built into the schemes. Members agreed this would be useful and suitable locations should be mapped out. **RR** said this was already a stated aim in the ROWIP and it would therefore be valuable to progress suitable routes. It was agreed to put this on the agenda of a future meeting.

Brecon Beacons. **ML** said a letter had been received from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority formally giving notice to end the agreement with Monmouthshire on provision of statutory rights of way services with effect from 1st April 2017. He said detailed discussions will now be held with the National Park on handover arrangements. Over time a ROWIP will be produced for the whole county but it will take some time to fully assimilate. **RR** said Morag Stinton was already liaising with Brecon pathcare volunteers.

Re-Appointment of LAF. **ML** said he had drafted an advert for recruitment of members to the next LAF. The document now needed to be translated into Welsh before being issued next week. The deadline for replies would be 26th May and applications would be put to the Council in June.

6. Proposed new M4 Scheme

Members noted the report produced by **ML** and documents associated with the proposed new M4 scheme. **ML** said the proposals now reflected many of the comments made earlier by the LAF. He invited Members to make any further comments which would need to be submitted by 4th May 2016.

PK left the meeting at 2.30pm.

ML pointed out that the right of way which passes through the Mill Reen tunnel would need to be closed for a period of time during the M4 construction period. After discussion Members agreed steps should be taken to maintain access for as long as possible during construction as the route provided an important link to the footpath network to the north of the motorway.

Members discussed the potential for improvements to link footpaths at the motorway service station roundabout.

ML said he would collate the LAF’s comments and ensure they were submitted by the deadline of 4th May.

7. Performance Measures

Members noted the performance measures information produced by **ML**. He said the main conclusion which could be drawn from the figures was that the backlog of outstanding issues was not reducing. What was not clear was whether or not the Authority was effectively dealing with all issues with higher priority such as bridge repairs and replacements. He said reports would be revised in future to show the proportion of higher priorities dealt with. LAF members discussed and agreed this suggestion.

ML said the location of people counters on tourism trails was producing useful data. The location of current counters would continue to be reviewed in order to produce the most effective picture. With advancing technologies, other innovative methods of measuring footfall were also being considered.

8. Future Work Programme

Members noted the future LAF work programme. Given the limited time available before the formation of the new LAF, it was agreed to prioritise the following items for the September meeting:

- Performance Measures
- Funding
- Highway Records and Claims

ML also briefly outlined the potential for working in partnership with a Living Levels Landscape Scheme based on the Gwent Levels and with a fund of £2.5M from the National Lottery. This was still at an early stage and was due to commence in 2017/18.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed that next meeting will be a site visit to see work being carried out to clear the Mons Lane site at Tintern. It was also proposed to hold a pre-meeting at Tintern Old Station. **ML** to advise.

After discussion, it was agreed to put back the meeting scheduled for 6th September to 27th September in order to avoid a clash of dates.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Signed as a true record of the proceedings:.....

(Chairman)

Date:.....