



CEREDIGION LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Ceredigion County Council
Penmorfa, Aberaeron
Ceredigion, SA46 0PA

CEREDIGION LOCAL ACCESS FORUM - ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The annual report of the Ceredigion Local Access Forum has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

The report looks at the operation of the Local Access Forum during 2022-2023 and identifies proposed work programme for the term.

FORUM OFFICIALS

Chairman: Peter White
Vice Chairman: Dic Evans
Secretary: Eifion Jones (Ceredigion County Council)

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1. THE CEREDIGION LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Ceredigion Local Access Forum (LAF), hereafter known as the 'Forum', was established in April 2002 under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Forum performs the function of advising the local authority, Natural Resources Wales and others as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area¹ (Appendix B).

In carrying out this function, the Forum should have regard to²:

- The needs of land management;
- The desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area, including its wildlife, geology and landform; and
- Guidance given by Welsh Government.

The previous Forum's three-year term expired in March 2021 and a new Forum was appointed for the period 2022-25 in accordance with the Regulations³.

The Forum met four times in 2022 - 2023:

30th June 2022
29th September 2022
19th January 2023
20th April 2023

The meeting of the 30th June was held remotely due to the continuation of COVID protocols. The meeting of the 29th September was a hybrid meeting with the first face to face meeting post COVID; held at the village hall in Llanddewi Brefi. The meeting of the 19th January was held remotely due to inclement weather. The April 20th meeting was hybrid with the face to face element being held at Penmorfa Aberaeron. Notice of the Forum's meetings was given, including agendas and other information, on the Forum's web page contained on the County Council's web site⁴.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) sub-committee met to consider the ROWIP progress and reviewing the 'Primary Paths Network' (PPN) on a 6 monthly basis. Meetings were convened remotely on the:

23rd August 2022
2nd December 2022

¹ Section 94(4), Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

² Section 94(6), Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

³ The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2001

⁴ www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11843

Richard Price was elected Chair of the sub committee in the meeting of the 23rd August with Felicity Wills elected as Vice Chair in the same meeting.

2. LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The County Council (as ‘appointing authority’) is responsible for selecting Local Access Forum members. The Forum comprises a chair and deputy chair and between 10 and 20 other members. The authority is required to appoint members who are representative of users of public rights of way or access land; owners/occupiers of access land or land over which public rights of way subsist and others with interests relevant to the County. The authority has sought to ensure a balance between users of access land and rights of way and landowners/occupiers in the appointment of Forum members.

Forum members sit for a term of three years from the date of appointment (unless otherwise terminated). In 2022 the County Council appointed members to sit for the period 2022-2025. The Forum’s membership is shown in Appendix C.

A statutory observer may attend Forum meetings from each of the Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government (NRW). Representatives from the National Trust have also invited to meetings during the period 2022-2025 as observers and advisers; additional organisations may be invited periodically throughout the term if the members think it will add value and interest to the work of the forum.

3. LOCAL ACCESS FORUM ACTIVITIES 2022-2023

This section highlights the main areas of the Forum’s work in 2022-2023. The minutes of Forum meetings provide a more detailed account of the work undertaken during the year.

i) Local Access Forum Processes:

Appointment of Local Access Forum Chair and Vice Chair

Mr Peter White was appointed as Chair of the Forum on 30th June 2022. Mr Dic Evans was appointed Vice Chair on 29th September 2022.

Functions of the Local Access Forum

A document detailing the functions of the Forum having regard to the CROW Act, Welsh Government regulations and NRW guidance, along with the Forum’s standing orders and the Memorandum of Understanding with the County Council is available to view on the Council website

ii) Rights of Way and Access:

Ceredigion Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

The ROWIP provides a framework for the management of Rights of Way and access in Ceredigion for a 10 year period. It is a key document for the Forum because it sets a context for the Forum's work programme and a means of assessing progress in improving rights of way and access.

A standing sub-committee (ROWIP) oversees the plan's progress and reviewing the 'Primary Paths Network' (PPN) on a 6 monthly basis.

Feedback from LAF Chairpersons meeting Newtown Oct 26th 2022

The Chair reported on the matters discussed in the meeting with a great deal of discussion about some of the practical issues surrounding sustainable farming, woodland creation, climate change, issue of dogs in the countryside and work undertaken as part of the access reform program.

Rights of Way and Access Programmes/Activities

The Secretary provided regular updates on rights of way and access matters including works completed under the Welsh Governments Access Improvement Grant and Wales Coast Path maintenance/development grants.

The Secretary informed the Forum of various initiatives currently underway within the County, including Cambrian Mountains initiative, Walking Festivals by Growing Mid Wales, Access Reform Advisory Group, Ramblers Paths to Wellbeing, Visit Wales and the Teifi Trail.

The Secretary informed the LAF that 2023 marks 15 years of the Ceredigion Coast Path. There will be a guided walks programme and production of coast path circular walks material as part of the celebration.

ii) Briefings/Presentations and Other Matters:

Strata Florida Project

Professor David Austin from University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) gave an overview of the Strata Florida archaeological Project

Active Travel

Gari Jones, Engineer for Ceredigion County Council with responsibility for Active Travel gave an overview of the Councils responsibilities (under the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013) and identified works completed/planned with regards to active travel improvements.

Cambrian Mountains Society Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Lorna Brazell explained how the Cambrian Mountains Society are seeking to promote and conserve the Cambrian Mountains and their campaign to designate the area as an AONB.

Ceredigion Rural Crime Team

Police Community Support Officer Billy Dunne attended the Forum to provide an overview of their work in particular relating to dogs worrying livestock and off-road vehicles.

Teifi Trail

James Williams (also LAF member) gave an overview of the work being done by local volunteers to develop the Teifi Trail long distance walking route.

4. WORK PROGRAMME, 2022 – 2025

The Local Access Forum's proposed work programme for 2022-25 is set out below (agreed at the Forum meeting held on 19th January 2023).

The work programme was originally developed at the beginning of the new term of the Forum in 2022 and includes items that will be considered over a longer period. They do not include the short-term issues which usually arise for inclusion in agendas. Forum members are welcome to suggest agenda items for any meeting.

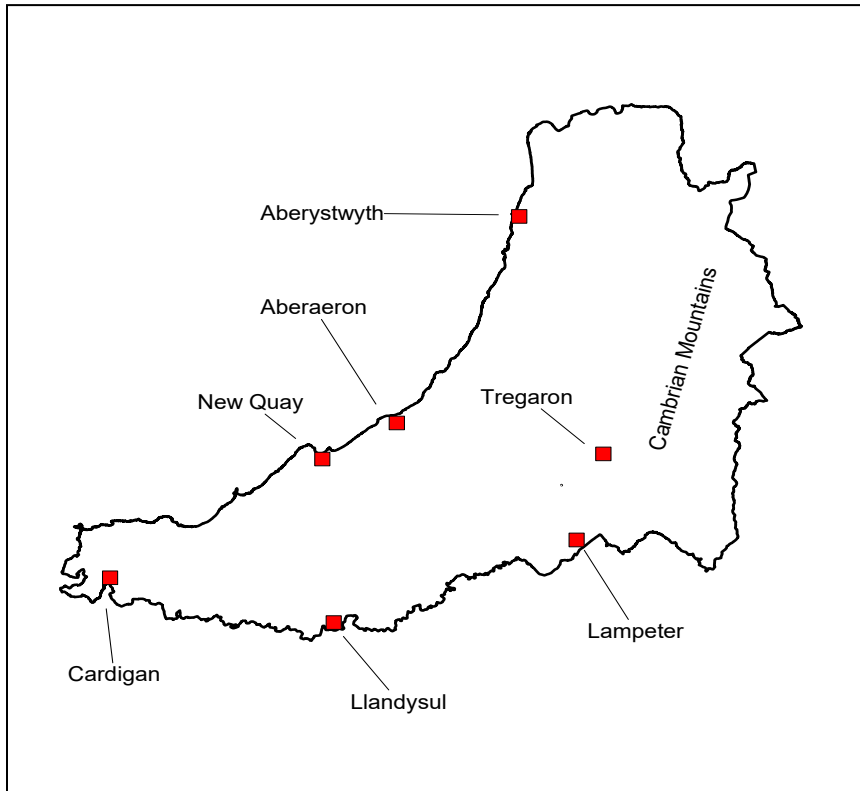
Item
Teifi Trail
Pendinas project
Report from local NRW Manager on the actions and plans in Ceredigion on access and recreational facilities.
Access Reforms update. NRW/WG representative
Cambrian Mountains Initiative – AONB status
Cambrian Mountains Initiative (access/recreation report)
Paths to wellbeing project – update from Ramblers Association
Portalis project
Ceredigion Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy –
Coed y Bont – Ponthrydyfendigaid
Longwood community woodland

Education around safe use of multi-user paths
Funding for access projects
Training for LAF members –
National Trust – Hafod Estate

APPENDICES

Appendix A

CEREDIGION: LOCAL ACCESS FORUM AREA



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prosecution or civil proceedings. Cyngor Sir Ceredigion Lce No 100024419, 2012*

Appendix B

ACCESS FORUM FUNCTIONS: COUNTRYSIDE & RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

- 94(4) It is the function of a local access forum, as respects the area for which it is established to advise –
- (a) the appointing authority
 - (b) any body exercising functions under Part I in relation to land in that area,
 - (c) if the appointing authority is a National Park authority, the local highway authority for any part of that land, and
 - (d) such other bodies as may be prescribed.

as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.

- 94(5) The bodies mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d) of subsection (4) shall have regard, in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them by a local access forum under this subsection or any other provision of this Act.

- 94(6) In carrying out its functions, a local access forum shall have regard to –
- (a) the needs of land management,
 - (b) the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area, and
 - (c) guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State (as respects England) or the National Assembly for Wales (as respects Wales).

Appendix C

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CEREDIGION LOCAL ACCESS FORUM (2022- 2025)

Name	Previous member of the LAF
Aeron Jenkins	Yes
Chris Thomas (Mrs)	No
David Beale	No
Dic Evans (Vice Chair)	Yes
Emma Davies	No
Felicity Wills	Yes
Glyn Davies	Yes
James Williams	No
Mari Davies	No
Maurice Kyle	No
Peter White (Chair)	No
Raymond Ricketts	No
Richard Price	No
Robert Griffiths	Yes
Robin Young	No
William Bobbett	No

Helen Donnan	No
Cllr Clive Davies (Ceredigion County Council)	No
David Hart National Trust (Observer/Advisor)	No
Michael Smith Natural Resources Wales (Observer/Advisor)	Yes