

**Minutes of the Northern Snowdonia Local Access Forum Meeting
held on Monday 2nd November 2020 at 5.00p.m
Online Zoom Meeting**

Present - Members:	Mr Edwin Noble	
	Mr Richard Williams	Mr Arthur Davies
	Mr John Gladston	Cllr Jason Parry
	Mr Dafydd Gwyndaf	Mr Mark Jones
	Mrs Hilary Davies	Mr Callum Muskett
Officers / Speakers:	Peter Rutherford (SNPA)	Catrin Glyn (SNPA)
	Rhian P Williams (SNPA)	Molly Lovatt (NRW)
	Angela Jones (SNPA)	

- 1. Apologies:** Received from David Firth, Tom Hutton, and Kate Worthington
- 2. Introduction and welcome to new members**

PR welcomed all new and current members to the meeting and explained the normal way of conducting LAF business and he would try to apply some degree of normalcy under these difficult times, but it was disappointing that we couldn't meet face to face to enable people to get to know one another.

He asked that any apologies for future meetings should be sent in in advance via the Secretary.

He further explained that under the regulations he would Chair this first meeting until a Chair and Vice Chair had been elected hopefully by the next meeting.

In order to do this nomination would have to be received from within the membership so he asked that members who wished to put themselves forward let him know so as to enable him to circulate their CV's to other members to enable them to decide on their candidate.

Membership lasted for a period of 3 years – although under the Access Reform Groups (ARAG) the Welsh Gov. is considering extending LAF membership tenure periods by one or two years.

For clarity, the LAF membership was evenly split with half representing landowners and half from the user/recreational groups and with one additional member specifically from the disabilities sector.

Generally, an officer attended as an observer from the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and if any member wished to pose a question to the NRW then that will be through and at the discretion of the Chair. Meetings can also be attended by the public. And previous (approved) minutes are available on the NP website. *Older sets of minutes not available on the website can be obtained on request.*

In general terms all LAF business is related to access – either CRoW access land issues or Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – footpaths, bridleways, access to water and any consultations related to access. Any other topics such as planning, biodiversity or agriculture for example are not within the remit of the LAF.

3. Previous Minutes

Approved

4. Matters Arising

i) E Bikes

PR explained that previously a member had queried the status of E bikes and asked if there were any special criteria for their lawful use.

Following that request these details, which explained their legal and technical limitations, had now been added to the cycling advice on the NP website to encompass this relatively new development.

EN asked if their motors drives had to be under a certain power which was pre-set.

PR confirmed the following:

- The minimum age for the rider is 14.
- They were allowed on any bridleway in the same manner as a normal cycle¹
- They are not allowed to be power assisted for more than a maximum speed 15.5mph
- Their motors must be less than 250W capacity.

EN asked how this could be `policed` in any way.

PR stated that this would be addressed in the same way as any inappropriate cycling and their use will be monitored in the same way by the Wardens. This additional information for their lawful use will be useful.

He showed some pictures of the new types of electric cycle and added although they were increasing in numbers, they were still prohibitively expensive with average prices anything between £3k - £8k but they would continue to monitor their use.

ii) Bwlch y Moch

PR explained that following concerns raised by the Llanberis MRT that this area was becoming a hot spot for accidents. It was thought that people were still accessing Crib Coch by accident rather than design i.e., thinking they were heading directly for Snowdon. This was an issue has been identified by the Warden Service and Access personnel as a perennial problem.

Following previous discussions, the LAF had decided to form a small specialist group to look at this issue on site. Unfortunately, this was severely delayed due to the C19 pandemic. However, a site visit was organised on the 15th Oct. with KW, DF, PR, Hywel Jones (NP Project Officer) and two NP Wardens to discuss this.

¹ Cycles are allowed on bridleways following the Countryside Act 1968 (Sect 30) which gave those rights. *This also states specifically that cyclists must always give way to pedestrians and equine users.*

He showed pictures of the area. The NP's proposal was to extend and overlap the current (and incomplete) wall towards the double stile with the entrant at the overlap. This would enable walkers to make a more conscious decision in accessing Crib Coch rather than assuming this was a direct route to Snowdon and to stop the less experienced 'follow on' walkers making the wrong decision.

He asked for members comments on this issue.

EN commented that this was a known area of difficulty and completing the wall would be a sensible solution.

PR added that the present wall had been partially successful in arresting erosion and was a limiting factor but it plainly wasn't a complete answer.

DG added that the existing wall blended in well and he saw no issues with extending this to help alleviate or reduce this problem of inadvertent access to Crib Coch.

JP (Cllr) commented that he would support what is a sensible solution to a difficult problem if it blended in with the existing structure.

PR commented that there was a recommendation that the existing stone pillar should also be moved back a few meters from its current location as this may be compounding the issue.

MJ suggested that another pillar be placed slightly higher up on the Crib Coch route indicating which route this was.

PR explained that there was already a smaller dedicated 'Crib Coch' pillar slightly higher up which was out of immediate sight.

MJ asked if we had any figures for those people who had unintentionally gone that way.

PR commented that evidence was anecdotal from the field staff and we had all (including himself) seen this first hand on a regular basis but no statistics had been accumulated. The MRT figures were only based on actual incidents and did not make this distinction. Annually this route monitoring records regularly 25,000 with most walkers accessing east to west².

CM commented that whilst the wall proposal was reasonable, he asked if we had considered a more cost-effective method such as improving the site signage as there used to be signs on the upper stile.

PR gave some background to this aspect. In previous years, the NP had erected many signs and posts on this route especially on or near the upper stile. Unfortunately, almost all had been removed or damaged in a very short space of time by those who object to signage of any sort on the mountain - hence the difficulty. The existing wall he thought had done some good, but it was not complete, and this needed rectifying.

² Link to the NP Visitor monitoring statistics.

https://www.snowdonia.gov.wales/__data/assets/pdf_file/0034/259837/Visitor-Monitoring-Report-2018.pdf

CM added that he thought this a reasonable solution and appreciated the signage issue.

ML (though the Chair) asked if it was worth getting a better understanding of how many people were making a conscious decision to go up Crib Coch as opposed to those who have done so by default.

PR replied that many people getting stuck on Crib Coch had not made that conscious decision or done their homework on this route and this was a problem. Our own field staff reported this on a daily basis.

ML asked if we still used the walker degree of difficulty symbols to denote a routes grade/severity/ease.

PR stated that these were widely used on our route descriptions for Snowdon as all routes to the summit are classed as hard mountain walks. Crib Coch is purposely not advertised as a walking route and does not appear in any NP information or website especially as the route is classed as a Grade 1 scramble and cannot be described as a mountain `walk`.

MJ asked if we had additional one for climbing that could be used.

CM stated that he thought this another option given a suitable trial time. It would also be useful to gain some stats from the MRT to determine how many people intentionally accessed Crib Coch or not.

PR stated that possibly a higher-grade symbol may be useful. He would look at this as an additional `tool`. He was not sure if any stats from the MRT would show any distinction between those walkers who were in difficulty. But he would ask them about their comments on the wall proposal.

iii) Drone Flying

PR mentioned that that a LAF member had raised the issue of drone flying in Cwm Idwal.

He explained that this area was in the ownership of the National Trust and therefore permission was required for any drone flying over NT land. When requests are received for Ogwen via the NP (which is a frequent occurrence) then he passes this on to their appropriate filming officer and area Warden.

Anything within the Natural Nature Reserve (NNR) would also require additional consent from the NRW.

MJ asked if they also required permission from any official body such as the Rescue Helicopter given how much low flying there is.

PR explained that all drone operators regardless of size were required to register with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and apply for an operator's licence and undergo formal training and certification. Users would also need consent from landowners if not in a public place.

Most commercial operators such as filming companies were very careful to get their consents and arrangements in place. The more problematic issue is private individuals with smaller drones who may become a nuisance in places such as the Snowdon summit or coastal areas. The NP has a dedicated drone advice page on our website with relevant links³ which are constantly updated.

The website also mentions that there are other low flying aircraft in the area (MoD, Rescue Helicopters and private aircraft) and that they should be very mindful of this at all times.

CM added that he had worked with drone operators himself and commercial operators are usually well organised. He recommended that we may want to consider putting up notices in Cwm Idwal targeted at private individuals to this end.

PR thought this a good idea and would discuss this with the NT.

5. Correspondence

i) Natural Resources Wales (NRW) – Countryside Codes update

PR mentioned that the NRW had now put their collection of activity/codes in one place on their website⁴. The list contains:

The Countryside Code, the Dog Walking Code, the Trail users Code, the Waterside Code, the Canoeing Code, Angling Code, and the Wild swimming Code.

He would arrange to change the existing NP website links for this as this was a very useful collection of the codes all in one place.

ii) NRW Notification of the Area Statement Workshops

PR informed the members that there was another round of workshops and some LAF members had attended these in other capacities.

This was the list of the forthcoming ones which was also available on the NRW website. Attendees should register their attendance via the NRW website *but not as LAF attendees*.

Although the workshops covered a great deal of topics there was none to cover specifically Health & Wellbeing which was a disappointment.

ML (through the Chair) commented that there was quite a lot of information on their website with reference to Health and Well Being.

³ https://www.eryri.llyw.cymru/search/search-results?queries_term_query=drones
<https://www.snowdonia.gov.wales/authority/news-and-media/using-drones>

⁴ <https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/the-countryside-codes/?lang=cy>
<https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/the-countryside-codes/?lang=en>

JG asked ML how these area Statements fitted in with the Public Service Boards Health and Well-Being objectives and how will the C19 pandemic effect this process.

ML replied that Area Statements had been developed by the stakeholders and that `feed in` will dictate how the emerging themes will take shape. She added that in terms of C19 there was a green recovery strategy that will influence this process. She encouraged JG to attend to give his views.

6. Eryri Management Plan 2020 – Update

PR introduced Angela Jones our Partnerships Manager who would now present the new National Park Management Plan.

AJ thanked the LAF for the opportunity to present this document.

She explained that the final version of Cynllun Eryri had been formally adopted by the Authority at their meeting in September last as the NP's formal and statutory Management Plan.

This has been the result of a great deal of work and wide range of stakeholder engagement in recent years to get to the final point. She had been involved over the last year to bring this all together. This process and document are a significant change for the NP and how the NP works in partnership with others and was based on Snowdon Partnership process and the Eryri Forum. *She noted that some LAF members were a part of that group.* Fortunately, the final public consultation period for the draft MP was completed before the March lockdown and resulted in many positives and that the NP had considered stakeholders perspectives and ideas.

*The Plan has been proofed on the basis of subsequent events and was considered fit for purpose, most likely due to the robust and sustainable mode of its co-production.

She explained that for the first time the document outlined in detail the 9 Special Qualities of the NP which are:

- Diverse Landscapes
- Community Cohesion
- Vibrancy of the Welsh Language
- Inspiration of the Arts
- Tranquillity and Solitude
- Extensive Recreational Opportunities
- Historic landscapes
- Renowned Geology
- Internationally important species and habitats

She added that there was also a new initiative called the new Ambassador Programme whose goal was to convey and to enhance the learning experience of Eryri' s Special Qualities. If anyone would like further information, then she will be happy supply this.

Cynllun Eryri has, and ambitious action plan linked to the statutory duties and purpose of the NP i.e. Section A - Eryri's Environment, B - its Health & Well-Being and C - its Communities and Local Economy. Section B has many aspects which relate to the interests of the LAF's and access.

Over the next 5 years and working with partners the outcomes and actions will be delivered with the NP's core purposes and Special Qualities at its centre. Annual reports on the MP's progress will also be presented to the Authority. She was happy to report back to the LAF at any time to update them on the progress.

She thanked the members who had contributed to this process in other capacities.

On behalf of the LAF members PR thanked AJ for her time.

7. Yr Wyddfa and Ogwen Transport and Parking Review and Options Appraisal

CG explained that she was the NP's Snowdon Partnership Officer and thanked the LAF members for the opportunity to update them of this important and exiting project.

This presentation would be an overview of the work and progress of this project thus far and that the full report would not be shared but stated that that a report summary (Pdf) was available on the Partnership's website⁵ or she could supply a copy if necessary, on request.

She commented that whilst we are used to significant but growing levels of visitors and associated traffic and parking problems in the area - recently exacerbated by the lifting of Covid restrictions, this project had been on the Partnership agenda since its launch in 2018 and by today had gained even greater significance.

Following the stakeholder engagement for the Snowdon Plan this was one of the priorities issues flagged up during that process. This engagement was wide ranging (and widely supported) and included other organisations such as the NRW, the farming unions, local Community Councils, the National Trust and the representatives from the tourism sector.

Following this process, the Partnership (including input from both Conwy & Gwynedd Councils) wrote a commissioning brief with monies from both a WG grant, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board fund and some additional funding from the NP Authority with a view to appointing consultants to produce this all-encompassing Transport and Parking Review.

The brief focuses on Yr Wyddfa and Ogwen, but will inevitably have a wider impact and is was important to consider how these issues can be addressed across the whole of the NP in the years to come.

This had been put out to tender and the contract was awarded to Martin Higgitt Associates who have now written this report which has been accepted by the NP Authority and the Partnership.

⁵<https://www.snowdonpartnership.co.uk/projects>

She emphasised that a considerable amount of background and research work had been undertaken to enable completion of this report in terms of stakeholder and sector group engagement including workshops involving a wide range of interests including tourism and business, local authorities and local communities, the recreation sector and also one to one interviews.

This report was both ambitious and timely and is of significant importance as it conveniently falls at a time when national policies in terms of sustainable transport and tourism are now being given more attention by WG. So there is an opportunity to make major changes in the way that transport is managed. *The post Covid lockdown `effect` and the high numbers of visitors we experienced over that period has given added impetus to the need for us to make those changes for the future.*

Some of the issues raised within the report are very apparent such the demand for car based access to the core areas during peak times. These in turn all lead to negative experiences for visitors and local communities alike and has led to significant amounts of ad hoc roadside parking giving rise to other inappropriate activities such as fly camping and littering. This is exacerbated by a disjointed public transport system with limited options.

The report will also focus on how we may change visitor mindsets particularly their expectations for parking and transport and how, between the stakeholders, we can influence and encourage more sustainable transport models within the NP.

AJ added this report`s principle focus was to highlight those widely recognised transport and parking issues which the NP had endured over many years and to make recommendations on how these could be addressed based on a sustainable tourism model in the longer term. This was the beginning on this projects journey.

It was expected that the number of parking places available in the immediate area would fall and visitors would be expected to use improved public transport based in various strategic hubs where those parking areas where located. Pre-booking was another option under consideration.

Some of these ideas are based on an original scheme in Austria who faced similar problems and where a sustainable transport model was agreed and introduced which was advantageous to both visitors and local communities alike.

This will require a new financing system where parking revenues could be used to enhance those services.

The summary document will be available on the NP website.

Some of the environmental advantages of the proposals are:

- Reduction of inappropriate parking on the landscape
- Develop new norms of accessing this protected landscape
- Villages can rationalise and better manage parking facilities and reclaim public space
- Zero emission shuttle bus fleet
- Cycle and walking networks improved
- Links to wider Demand Responsive Transport and closely align itself with local and national policies for a sustainable economy

- It is an opportunity re brand the area and how we are perceived by others and to secure the special qualities of the NP for the future.
- This scheme would be pioneering with a full commitment by all stakeholders to ensure its success. *The C19 pandemic has shown how joint working can be very advantageous.*

Other benefits are:

- It is essential that local communities shape the future function of their areas
- A highly improved transport network for residents
- Opportunity for greater highway and traffic management
- Specialist audiences can be catered for
- Pre-booking creates a better visitor experience

CG explained the next steps. They would be:

Present review to Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa

Present review to the Executive Officers Group (Business) - North Wales Economic Ambition Board and others

Secure support from Welsh Government & Transport Wales

Engage with partners and stakeholders

Secure investment e.g. joint bid with M-Sparc

Community master planning

She emphasised that this was a bottom up approach and support from the local communities was crucial to this projects success but that it would also require significant investment.

She thanked the members for taking an interest in this exiting project and if they required any further information then she would supply this. She would regularly update the LAF on developments and invited comments or questions from the members.

PR asked about any legal changes that may be required for parking areas or lay-by management.

AJ stated that potentially some legal changes may be required in the long term to enable some actions and they would need to work with local authorities planning and highways departments. It was hoped that the project was far reaching in terms of sustainability.

PR asked if the boundaries shown within the report summary are fixed or would they be flexible to encompass a wider area of involvement.

CG stated that the report had defined the core the areas as - Bethesda, Betws Y Coed, Llanberis and Beddgelert. However, it was hoped that providing other options to people in terms of transportation across the area would be more sustainable and become the preferable option in meeting the future needs of the

local communities. However, those communities would be consulted on how they wished to see this develop in the future.

AJ added what would be learned from this project could be rolled out across other areas of the NP in the future.

DG asked how much this particular report had cost.

CG stated that this had cost £60k in total

GJ stated that this was a good document and asked if this was also based on the Euro Parcs Federation definition for sustainable tourism destinations.

AJ commented that they generally used the UN World Tourism Organisation Destination definition for tourism. However, this report was not based on any specific definition but was presented to stakeholders with three different options at the time. They had overwhelmingly chosen the sustainable tourism option – which was also the most radical.

She stressed that there is a realisation that significant changes are needed to the way that tourism is managed particularly the parking and transport networks. Whilst they need to be ambitious they also need to be realistic and of benefit to local communities in the longer term.

GJ added that potentially there are other outlying communities – beyond that boundary who may wished to be involved in this project.

AJ stated that the thrust (and brief) of the report addressed how visitors accessed this core area of the NP and was not intended to simply benefit tourism per se and this was very much a model which also benefits local communities. There was considerable scope to push out these ideas and encourage people to bus into the more popular areas at peak times and also to encourage people to explore other less frequented areas in the NP.

RW asked if this project would help reduce the numbers of people accessing Snowdon generally.

CG commented that the scheme was about managing tourism in a more sustainable way and currently our infrastructure, whilst adequate even 10 years ago, is by today not fit for purpose given those increases in numbers. It was a question on how it could be managed in a more sustainable way.

AD asked if they had really thought about exactly where these parking areas could be placed in those communities. Especially as those existing parking provisions such as Betws y Coed were already at maximum capacity during peak times.

CG mentioned that not recognising this factor was clearly a major failing of past schemes and projects and it was hoped that this time that these issues would be addressed. So new solutions will be sought.

AD added that there was a risk of displacing parking problems from one place to another and he asked how this could be provided if some communities chose not to partake.

CG stated that they were aware of the dangers of displacement and there was a recognition that additional provision would be necessary. The potential for additional recommended sites would be part of those discussions with communities.

AD noted that the bus service was still running mostly empty whilst in the summer they were frequently oversubscribed.

CM queried how much out of season access could be provided for local people within the scope of this scheme. I.e. would they need a pass to use NP car parks or otherwise particularly if bus services are much reduced during those times. He stressed local peoples participation in the outdoors was equally important at those times.

CG stated that this was a typical issue that would form part of their master planning discussions and based on whatever data or information they can collect to enable them to develop this strategy for the long term including provisions for local communities.

PR thanked both CG & AJ for this important update on what will be an exiting project

8. SNPA Access Timeline

PR explained to members that this body of work was not pre-planned but was the result of a casual conversation with his opposite number in the Peak District. One member of staff had assembled their `access history` which was simply a list of historical events and facts that occurred well before (going back as far as the 1600`s) and after the inception of the NP to the present day. He thought this an interesting exercise that may be beneficial to the public and staff alike as generally most of this information was not readily available in one place.

This turned out to be rather a greater body of research and work than at first anticipated and following this they had added various photographs and other interesting information and facts pertinent to Snowdonia National Park.

This was now available to the public via their website which was proving popular.

He encouraged members to review this and if they had any comments or thought there was anything missing then he would gladly receive them.

EN mentioned that the timeline mentioned that the Snowdon Sherpa bus service began to ferry visitors around Snowdon in 1976 and since that time not a great deal had changed.

Group laugh!

PR added that hopefully the new initiative would now move things along for the future in a more sustainable way.

9. Welsh Government Access Reform Programme

PR explained for the benefit of the new members the process whereby the Welsh Government has asked the Access Reform Advisory Group (ARAG) to develop advice for legislative options to provide for wider recreational access to the countryside.

The WG has commissioned Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to co-ordinate these Access Reform Groups of which there were three expert groups.

The National Parks (Wales) had representation on all groups. He himself was a member of Group 1 & 3. This had not been an easy process for any of the contributors including professional officers such as himself and they had been a challenging series of discussions and debates.

Group 1A (with split workstreams) to consider in detail possible approaches: *“to increase the range of activities permitted on CRoW access land (including water bodies mapped under CRoW) and create new access land in coastal areas. Such as cycling, horse riding, hang-gliding and paragliding, non-mechanically propelled vessels on, or in, inland bodies of water (excluding reservoirs) currently mapped as open access land, bathing / swimming on, or in, inland bodies of water (excluding reservoirs) currently mapped as open access land.*

For the benefit of new members he reminded them that in terms of access to water the LAF had supported access to water generally (as a result of the question specifically asked in the original Green Paper in 2017) but that this would require formal management and that unfettered access to water bodies was not an option and that known points of access and egress could be formalised combined with reduced liability for landowners – including for man made features. Those previous LAF responses are available if members wished to see them.

Group 1B - Coastal Access

To extend CRoW access land to the coast, coastal cliffs and foreshore. Consideration is to be given to the merits of including the Wales Coast Path as part of the definition of new CRoW coastal access land. This was still under discussion and some did not favour this approach. The other alternative was a Marine and Coastal Access Land (MACA) model approach - like the one underway in England.

Group 2 is a technical expert group largely taken from within the Rights of Way Officers Group (Wales) and other stakeholders concerned with access.

The remit of Expert Group 2 is to consider in detail possible approaches to: “Increase the range of activities that the public can undertake by right on public footpaths; and to improve processes and reduce procedural burdens in managing temporary diversions, temporary closures and stock control related to public rights of way”.

The Rights Of Way Officers Group had submitted a substantial list of recommendations during this process.

Group 3

The remit of Expert Group 3 is to consider in detail possible approaches to: *“improve the process of creating, storing and communication of statutory access maps and develop a more integrated approach to planning improvements to access provision”*.

Crosscutting Themes

The Expert Groups are also considering the possible implications for other key matters including; equality of public access, ensuring responsible recreation, the status of commercial recreational activities and the role of Local Access Forums within the context of these reforms. Also, to consider the links with the other reforms being considered within the wider Access Reform Programme and other Welsh Government work streams such as Land Management Reform.

The goal of the Access Reform Advisory Group, based on these discussions and workshops, is to deliver a draft Access Reform Report to the Welsh Government by April 2021 for their consideration.

He would report further when more information was at hand and reports were available.

CM asked PR what Group 1’ thoughts were in terms of opening up all CRoW land to multi users. Did they see major changes to land use or is simply a matter of legalising activities that are already take place.

PR replied that this was an interesting question but the thoughts of the group were that if higher rights were applied across the board then firstly and understandably there would be reservations from landowners in terms of liability and for land management (stock etc)

Secondly, from the NP’s (and local authorities) perspective user expectations would be far greater and the demands made of the existing network and infrastructure could be a severe burden and come at great cost in terms of the resources required to meet this.

CM asked I any lessons had been learnt from the Scottish model of access.

PR added that he understood why some people had cited the Scottish access code model. However, Scotland has large expanses of land and water and had mostly not experienced conflicting these issues – with the exception of Loch Lomond where fly camping has been a significant issue. But clearly Wales did not have that luxury to enable this in terms land mass and differing farming practices.

He posed an example: that if wild camping was an allowable activity within CRoW access land then Snowdon and other areas of high use would be included. So you may picture the scenario with 550,000 + people walking up Snowdon every year and if only 1% decided to camp then that would raise some serious management issues such as their health & safety, toileting, litter and the potential for other anti social behaviour. We would have to seek additional by laws in such areas to exclude these activities and policing this would be difficult as we would find ourselves constantly at odds with people trying to exercise those rights. So this particular issue not as simplistic as it first appears.

He added that NP's did not discount the notion of higher rights in some places – and they had proposed the creation of CRoW linear corridors with higher rights where those routes could form new linkages particularly in areas where links between routes were not recorded or omitted. A common issue after the recording of those routes in the 1950`s

CM queried whether it should be wholly in the domain of landowners to control those participating in activities within CRoW access land. He understood these potential issues but with sufficient funding then surely some additional rights for activities were achievable.

PR commented that the debate and stakeholder involvement at these workshops was wide ranging but they there may be other ways to do this by zoning or corridors but it would take a great deal of work and understanding to achieve this.

MJ mentioned that in a previous position he had managed to obtain SPLASH⁶ grant monies access to improve the access to water on the Dwyrdd near Plas Tan Y Bwlch for an access/egress point. The landowner did at that time discuss liability and making that small land area CRoW access land was considered but not acted upon.

PR commented that generally access to water was currently on an *ad hoc* basis within the NP and canoeist (and swimmers) access and egress rivers at known points. But if formalised, as recommended to WG, then landowners would need to have some protection and reduced liability similar to those under the CRoW provisions for land – i.e. they have reduced liability for natural features.

There are about 10 such popular points in the NP and if formalised based on the reduced liability them it would be relatively easy to help with infrastructure such as signage, fencing/gating and steps.

He recommended that in the spring (subject to the C19 regulations at the time) they could plan a site visit to view the `arrangements` on the upper Conwy.

EN asked if the WG election may hold up recommendations made by the ARAG groups process.

PR stated that hopefully the results of this exercise would not be held up as before but it will have to be bolted onto some piece of environmental legislation. It would be a shame to once again come to stop after so much input from the LAF and stakeholders since 2017.

JG asked if there was a national standard in terms of access to water or access generally. Or did this vary between authorities.

ML responded that this was dependent on the status of any given Public Right of Way such as for example bridleway where cycles and horses have to share routes. Those general standards are well known and applied wherever possible but given there are so many and in so many different locations and terrain applying the same standards across the network would be difficult and unrealistic.

⁶ In 2008 The Environment Agency for Wales, a Quango sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, launched Splash, a scheme to provide large and small grants to support projects throughout Wales that improve or promote public access to waterways, lakes, reservoirs and coastal areas.

She added that there were set standards for the All Wales Coastal Path which included furniture and signage where this was more easily managed.

She mentioned a pilot scheme with Gwynedd Council where they were initiating a pilot to allow disabled users to determine for themselves whether a route was suitable for them or not. This was based on a video type approach to route descriptions by a disabled person.

PR added that in terms of access to water there were no fixed standards and they had invented their own set their own for infrastructure and signage on the upper Conwy pilot which had proved successful. Hopefully, these could be applied to any new works we consider but JG had made an interesting point.

In terms of general accessibility any routes under consideration for improvements or upgrading are always assessed to enable as many users to access the countryside as possible and this includes disabled access if resources (and terrain) allow. Typically examples are currently under way on the Maescwm and Snowdon Ranger bridleways which will enable `Tramper` type vehicles onto the bridleway – linking Llanberis to Rhyd Ddu.

MJ added that there was also Disabilities Sport Wales initiative In sport Club which is all about inclusivity and which aims to support the physical activity, sport and leisure sectors delivering inclusively of disabled people. So there is considerably more assistance and promotion than there has been in the past.

10. Bwlch y Moch

As previously discussed under item 4.2

11. Dates recommended for next year's meetings

Approved as 1st March, 7th June, 6th September & 6th December.

12. Recommended Agenda items for next meeting

- i) Election of Chair and Vice Chair – CVs to be circulated beforehand**
- ii) Carneddau HLF Landscape Partnership update**
- iii) SNPA Recreation strategy outline draft**

He asked if members could let us know their preferences in terms of receiving minutes either by post or by e mail.

Agreed that the meeting to times are slightly later from 6-8pm

PR thanked the members for their forbearance this evening and if they had any questions between now and the next meeting he would be happy to answer them.

13. Any Other business *at the discretion of the Chair*

None

14. Date of next meeting – 1st March 2021