



Report No. **1/2012**  
Scrutiny Panel  
Report Date: 20 February 2011

## REPORT OF Scrutiny Panel - Annexes

Lead Member: Margaret Underwood BBNPA

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**SUBJECT: The ROW network – July 2011 – February 2012**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

### ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

<b>Access Land</b>	<i>Registered common land and land mapped by CCW as mountain, moor, heath or down (open country) to which the public have a right of access on foot under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</i>
<b>BBNP</b>	Brecon Beacons National Park
<b>BBNPA</b>	The area covered by the Brecon Beacons National Park Brecon Beacons National Park Authority <i>A special purpose local authority responsible for the management of the Brecon Beacons National Park.</i>
<b>BOAT</b>	Byway Open to All Traffic <i>Public right of way with rights for pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists, carriages and mechanically propelled vehicles.</i>
<b>Bridleway</b>	<i>Public right of way with the right to walk, ride or lead a horse or to cycle (cyclists must give way to other users).</i>
<b>CBC</b>	County Borough Council
<b>CC</b>	County Council
<b>CCW</b>	Countryside Council for Wales
<b>CRoW Act</b>	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
<b>Definitive Map</b>	<i>The Definitive Map and Statement identifies all registered public rights of way.</i>
<b>Footpath</b>	<i>Public right of way with rights for walkers and users of class 2 and 3 disabled vehicles.</i>
<b>Ha</b>	Hectares
<b>Km</b>	Kilometres
<b>LAF</b>	Local Access Forum <i>Statutory body of local volunteers with experience of a wide variety of access issues. LAFs were established under the CRoW Act to advise local authorities, national park authorities, CCW, WAG and others on improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open air recreation and enjoyment. The National Park Authority currently has three LAFs covering the western, central and eastern areas of the National Park and their meetings are open to members of the public for observation.</i>
<b>Least Restrictive Option</b>	<i>There is no standard definition of the term but it encompasses the principle of making access as easy as possible for the greatest diversity of people and is generally applied to field furniture. The order of priority when installing furniture will be gap, gate and stile according to the expected level of use likely to be made of the route and the management of the land.</i>
<b>Lost Ways</b>	<i>Lost ways are public rights of way which may have existed before 1949 but were not legally registered. They may also be public rights of way with incorrectly recorded status. Sections 53 to 56 of the CRoW Act state that unrecorded rights of way which must be proved by historical evidence will be extinguished in 2026 when any unrecorded higher rights will also be lost.</i>
<b>Local Transport Plans</b>	<i>The Welsh Assembly Government directed that all local authorities should produce a Local Transport Plan by 2000; these are now being reviewed. The WAG Guidance stresses the</i>

	<i>importance of the ROWIP policies being integrated into those of the Local Transport Plans.</i>
<b>Public Right of Way</b>	<i>A way over which members of the public have a right to pass and repass. There are four types - see footpath, bridleway, RB and BOAT.</i>
<b>ROWIP</b>	<i>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</i>
<b>RB</b>	<i>Restricted Byway An RB is a former Road Used as a Public Path (RUPP) and came into being on enactment of sections 47 and 48 of the CRoW Act giving rights to walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers. Due to legal reclassification RUPPs no longer exist.</i>
<b>Scoping Study</b>	<i>exeGesIS, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, <b>Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Scoping Study</b> (September 2003).The Scoping Study was commissioned by the BBNPA and part funded by the Countryside Council for Wales.</i>

## Annex 2 – Relevant and related actions from the BBNP Management Plan

Grey shading indicates a related action

### Theme 1: Managing Park landscapes to maximise conservation and public benefits

Actions for Priority	Specific Actions
Raise awareness and understanding of the Park's historic environment.	Develop education, interpretation and information strategies to raise awareness, enjoyment and understanding of the Park's historic environment.
Develop a research and management agenda for the natural environment of the National Park.	Implement a living landscapes approach to landscape, habitat and wildlife management.
Maximise the benefits of Glastir entry level and higher level schemes within the National Park.	Work closely with Farming Connect and Glastir Project Officers to improve the chances for the Park's farmers to provide public benefits in the countryside, particularly the delivery of environmental goods and services.

### Theme 2: Conserving and enhancing biodiversity

Actions for Priority	Specific Actions
Protect and manage the Park's biodiversity.	Provide management advice and training to landowners.

### Theme 3: Provide opportunities for outdoor access and recreation

Actions for Priority	Specific Actions
Manage the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network by implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).	Raise the % of the PROW network which is easy to use to 65% by 2013.
Manage the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network by implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).	Identify and implement circular and connecting routes with the network.
Manage the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network by implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).	Make progress towards bringing the Definitive Map and Statement up to date.
Improve the provision of and information on countryside access.	Provide targeted countryside access information in a wider variety of accessible formats.
Improve the provision of and information on countryside access.	Improve access on to inland water.
Improve the provision of and information on countryside access.	Increase awareness of and provision for people with disabilities and easier access requirements in the countryside.
Improve the provision of and information on countryside access.	Link public transport to BBNPA promoted routes.

<b>Use funding and resource opportunities to improve countryside access</b>	Explore provision for legal off roading in the National Park.
<b>Use funding and resource opportunities to improve countryside access</b>	Increase the use of the NP by excluded groups.
<b>Use funding and resource opportunities to improve countryside access</b>	Develop and maintain access on Wildlife Trust-owned reserves.

#### **Theme 4: Raising awareness and understanding of the Park**

<b>Actions for Priority</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>
<b>Use funding and resource opportunities to raise awareness and understanding.</b>	Continue to develop and deliver the Social Inclusion Action Plan and related programmes.
<b>Use funding and resource opportunities to raise awareness and understanding.</b>	Work with minority group representatives to raise awareness of and contributions to NP decision making and delivery of actions.
<b>Deliver a visitor experience which exceeds expectations.</b>	Provide training and development for businesses and information providers to ensure delivery of a first class welcome, high quality information, interpretation and interaction.
<b>Deliver a visitor experience which exceeds expectations.</b>	Develop web based services which provide clear, coordinated and important pre-visit information and promotion of opportunities.
<b>Promote and develop a sense of shared responsibility for both the National Park and Geopark</b>	Work with those not yet fully engaged - identifying and breaking down barriers and nurturing advocates.
<b>Develop a prioritised plan for information provision.</b>	Audit and evaluate existing information, interpretation and education.
<b>Develop a prioritised plan for information provision.</b>	Provide information, orientation and interpretation at identified gateways and honeypot sites.
<b>Develop a prioritised plan for information provision.</b>	Increase the bilingual delivery of interpretation, information and education.
<b>Develop a prioritised plan for information provision.</b>	Provide local people with access to information, interpretation and education on their environment and promote the benefits on offer.

#### **Theme 5: Building and maintaining sustainable communities, towns and villages**

<b>Actions for Priority</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>
<b>Encourage and support community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions.</b>	Provide outreach programmes to local groups to increase awareness and use of local opportunities for recreation, reducing travel and associated carbon emissions.
<b>Encourage and support community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions.</b>	Identify suitable areas for establishment of more dedicated car parking spaces for disabled people and implement.

<b>Encourage and support community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions.</b>	Provide an affordable, accessible and effective sustainable transport network that meets the needs of residents and visitors.
<b>Encourage and support community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions.</b>	Promote cycling as a means of everyday travel and develop safe cycle routes.
<b>Deliver a Sustainable Development Fund which meets the strategic priorities of the National Park Management Plan.</b>	Develop and support by way of the Sustainable Development Fund community based sustainable transport initiatives designed to reduce the carbon footprint.
<b>Deliver a Sustainable Development Fund which meets the strategic priorities of the National Park Management Plan.</b>	Develop and support by way of the Sustainable Development Fund community based visitor transport initiatives including access to visitor "hot spots."
<b>Deliver a Sustainable Development Fund which meets the strategic priorities of the National Park Management Plan.</b>	Develop and support by way of the Sustainable Development Fund projects designed to provide environmentally benign access to water.
<b>Support initiatives which enhance community pride in and benefit from the National Park designation.</b>	Deliver community based outreach programmes such as Crossing Park Boundaries that increase the value of and benefit from the NP designation.

## Theme 7: Sustainable economic development

<b>Actions for Priority</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>
<b>Enable an improved visitor experience.</b>	Implement activity tourism strategies within environmental sensitivity.
<b>Enable an improved visitor experience.</b>	Realise fully the tourism potential of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal whilst its attractive setting is conserved and enhanced.
<b>Improve sustainable economic impact of tourism.</b>	Encourage day visitors to stay longer and spend more.
<b>Encourage enhanced use of sustainable transport by visitors.</b>	Maintain commitment to Beacons Bus.
<b>Encourage enhanced use of sustainable transport by visitors.</b>	Encourage visitor use of weekday public transport.

Annex 2

*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  
Authority*

*Corporate Strategy 2011-14*



*Prepared April 2011*

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# PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CORPORATE STRATEGY 2011 - 2014

## An introduction from our Chairman and Chief Executive

Our Authority is in the process of major change. We have a new Chief Executive and there have been a number of changes amongst the staff. The current economic climate means we will face financial restrictions over the next three years with reductions in funding from Welsh Assembly Government and other grant income. That has not reduced the need to deliver the demands made on National Parks, including conservation, public access, local employment and affordable housing. This corporate strategy is the first part of a three year programme to ensure we meet the demands placed on us by our customers – both the residents of the National Park and the visitors.

## Why do we have a Corporate Strategy?

The Corporate Strategy sets out our vision, our role, and in eight statements (strategic outcomes) what the National Park Authority (NPA) wishes to achieve through its activities over the next three years. All work or activity by our staff should contribute to achieving one or more of the strategic outcomes.

Under Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) legislation the Authority is required to publish an Improvement Plan which sets out what improvements to its services, in terms of quality, access and cost, it proposes to make. The Authority is fully committed to continuously improving its services and this strategy document is intended to be its Improvement Plan.

## Our Priorities

The eight outcomes detailed in this strategy cover the wide spectrum of work of the Authority and involve many individual services and work teams.

Within this, we have identified four service areas which we consider to be prioritised improvement objectives –

1. Our planning service has improved significantly over the past two years and we must build on this improvement so that our planning service is consistently amongst the top six in Wales.
2. The standard of footpath maintenance will be maintained although the budget is reduced by 3%.
3. More people encounter the key messages of the National Park through visiting our centres.
4. We will increase the number of 'hard to reach' participants taking part in our events and activities from 1,800 to 2,000.

## How did we develop this strategy?

Although the NPA is a relatively small organisation there are many factors influencing its work. These include

- The statutory purposes as defined in the Environment Act 1995
- The statutory role as the planning authority for the national park area and the policies set out in the Local Development Plan
- The National Park Management Plan which sets out the long term vision for the National Park
- WAG's sustainable development scheme One Wales: One Planet
- The Strategic Grant Letter issued by WAG to the NPA each year
- The Community Strategy for Pembrokeshire

- Other WAG policies and strategies such as Natural Environment Framework
- The resources available to fund activities
- Past performance
- Reports by Wales Audit Office on the NPA
- Responses to surveys from residents and visitors

A number of workshops were held, involving staff and Members of the Authority, to identify the priority outcomes and how these could be measured. With sustainable development as our central organising principle a draft corporate strategy was produced and presented to the Authority in December 2010.

#### Who did we consult?

The draft strategy was circulated to all staff, to all the community councils in the National Park and to key stakeholders including WAG, CCW and PCC. All the community councils were invited to a seminar which

featured a discussion on the corporate strategy. At a work shop all staff were invited to comment on it. Comments on this or for future versions of the Corporate Strategy may be emailed to [info@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:info@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) with a subject of 'Corporate Strategy' or in writing to PCNPA, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock, SA72 6DY  
How do we intend to use the Corporate Strategy

A more detailed plan will be prepared for each of the eight outcomes, setting firm milestone targets for 2011/12 and proposing targets for the following two years, and these in turn will generate specific work programmes for the various teams and individuals within the NPA. A number of performance indicators and measures are being developed to show how well we are delivering the outcomes and these will be reported to the Authority every quarter. Based on this performance, and on consultation with customers and stakeholders, and any changes in WAG policies, the strategy will be reviewed and revised annually.

## **Our Vision**

Enthuse for today, enlighten for tomorrow, cherish forever

## **Our Role**

To conserve the landscape, environment and culture, support community well-being and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the National Park.

## **The Outcomes we would like to deliver**

The successful delivery of this strategy will lead to the delivery of the following outcomes:

- 1 - The National Park is conserved for current and future generations**
- 2 - Residents and visitors enjoy and appreciate the National Park**
- 3 - Residents and visitors use opportunities provided to adopt more sustainable lifestyles**
- 4 - Opportunities are provided for local people to live within the National Park**
- 5 - A thriving local economy exists based on the sustainable use of the National Park.**
- 6 - Residents and Visitors from a wide range of backgrounds access opportunities for improved understanding about the National Park.**

**7 - Residents and visitors recognise the distinct Pembrokeshire cultures within the National Park**

**8 - The Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners**



**Richard Howells - Chairman**

**Outcome 1 - The National Park is conserved for current and future generations**

To achieve this outcome

We will use our planning powers to ensure that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park retains its special features. We recognise that those responsible for land and buildings need to make a living and we will seek to support them to balance this need with the need to protect the natural and historic landscape and promote biodiversity for its environmental and economic benefits.

We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Trends in 'key species' populations are increasing over time;
- b. The area of land managed for conservation in partnership with NPA increases by 5% by March 2013 (currently 2,000 hectares on 170 sites);
- c. At least 33% of housing development and 45% of employment allocation permitted is on previously developed land;
- d. Only greenfield and open space which is allocated for development in the LDP is lost to development each year;



**Tegryn Jones - Chief Executive**

- e. The percentage of listed buildings at risk remains below 7% (currently 6.9) and less than 33% of Scheduled Ancient Monuments are in a worsening condition (36% currently).

Where are we now

The new Local Development Plan was adopted in September 2010 and sets out the policies for all future developments. The authority supports land management for conservation working to form bio-diversity corridors although this is a slow process and often relies on opportunity rather than planned improvements. This work has contributed to positive trends for the populations of three key species – chough, skylarks and shelduck. Grants totalling £100,000 are awarded for the improvement of historic buildings each year. We encourage landowners to conserve scheduled ancient monument sites although coastal erosion is probably the most significant cause of damage

We will take the following actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Manage our own sites and encourage others to manage for conservation benefit;
- b. Assist landowners and farmers to engage in agri-environment schemes, both national and local;
- c. Develop biodiversity corridors;
- d. Implement LDP policies;
- e. Prioritise planning enforcement actions;

## **Outcome 2 - Residents and visitors enjoy and appreciate the National Park**

### To achieve this outcome

We will promote access and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy recreation and the natural, cultural and historic environment of the Park.

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There is an increasing trend in the number of people using the rights of way and other paths;
- b. The length of public rights of way in use exceeds 85% (Welsh average about 60%)
- c. The current lengths of Coast Path suitable for a variety of less able access is maintained at 130 km
- d. The performance of walking opportunities as perceived by visitors is maintained – (survey in 2008 scored 4.75 out of 5)
- e. Number of downloads of promoted walks on website increases

(With the reduction in funding available the Authority has prioritised the need to maintain the present high standard of paths rather than trying to extend the network).

### Where are we now

The Authority maintains over 1102km of footpaths and bridleways, including the popular Coast Path. Many paths have been adapted to be more suitable for the less able, with improved surfaces and removal of stiles. Details of walks are available in publications, leaflets with over 200 downloadable maps on the website. The Authority also maintains many

sites and car parks giving access to the most popular walks and beaches. Surveys indicate that over 85% of the users are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the paths and that the majority of local residents use the paths occasionally and up to 40% use them at least once a month.

### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Maintain Coast Path, inland rights of way, other paths and sites;
- b. Develop website and other media
- c. Seek funding for second Preseli woodland multi-user network by 2013
- d. Negotiate a revised PROW delegation agreement with PCC;
- e. Develop good practice agreements with divers, coastering groups and cliff anglers using the approach developed through the outdoor charter and marine code;
- f. Submit a Big Lottery bid to extend the approach taken in the GO4IT experiment park wide
- g. Republish easy access guide and put Coast Path easy access guide onto website
- h. Support Bluestone Walking Festival
- i. Provide and promote well managed circular walking opportunities within 500m of 45 of the biggest 50 settlements in the park.
- j. Adopt and commence implementation of Recreation Strategy

### **Outcome 3 - Residents and visitors use opportunities provided to adopt more sustainable lifestyles**

#### To achieve this outcome

We will encourage the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles by providing easy access to recreation, promoting sustainable transport, renewable energy sources and the well-being of communities.

#### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Planning approvals include sustainable design proposals (from 2012)
- b. There is an increasing trend in the number of people walking and cycling regularly (CCW Recreation survey)
- c. The number of people using coastal buses, park and ride and similar schemes increases each year (37,600 in 2010);
- d. The amount of power generated by renewable energy schemes in the Park increases each year.
- e. Our energy consumption is reduced by at least 3% per annum
- f. The Sustainable Grant Fund supports at least one renewable energy project each year project

#### Where are we now

The Authority has published policies on provision of renewable energy and sustainable design within the National Park and has supported several renewable energy projects with Sustainable Development Fund grants.

In partnership with PCC, the Authority helps fund Greenways bus services. Fixed counters on the inland paths showed a 9% increase in the number of people using the paths during 2009/10.

#### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Promotion of walking & cycling and public transport;
- b. Maintain our investment in Greenways & Coastal Buses schemes
- c. Use all available Sustainable Development Fund;
- d. Carry out feasibility study into renewable energy generation business models for Cilrhedyn and other NPA owned sites
- e. Demonstrate & share good practice in travel, energy reduction and building management to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- f. Publish planning guidance for renewable energy proposals and sustainable design
- g. Prepare Sustainability Action Plan
- h. Explore the feasibility of developing renewable energy projects in NPA land

#### **Outcome 4 - Opportunities are provided for local people to live within the National Park**

##### To achieve this outcome

We will use our planning responsibilities to assist in the provision of affordable homes.

##### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Planning permission is granted for at least 50 affordable homes each year
- b. The percentage of affordable housing approved is delivered in line with the Local Development Plan target.

##### Where are we now

Although not a housing authority, the NPA recognises the need to provide affordable homes and has introduced policies to ensure a proportion of new houses are affordable. During 2010,

planning permission was approved for only 12 affordable homes.

##### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Approve supplementary planning guidance to promote affordable housing
- b. Use Section 106 agreements and planning conditions to ensure delivery;
- c. Contact owners of land allocated in the Local Development Plan to monitor progress
- d. Review outstanding permissions with housing associations and consider how to activate
- e. Investigate selling surplus NPA land that is suitable for affordable housing development.

## **Outcome 5 - A thriving local economy exists based on the sustainable use of the National Park.**

### To achieve this outcome

We will encourage local businesses, in particular in tourism and agriculture, to ensure a sustainable use of the resources of the Park in the development of their businesses. We will support the development of the tourism industry by promoting the sustainable use of the National Park resource as a tourism attraction

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. There are more examples of businesses using the Park sustainably;
- b. Surveys of tourism providers show increasing sustainable use of the Park;
- c. The Sustainable Development Fund supports at least one commercial enterprise each year
- d. 85% planning applications for commercial activities are approved;

### Where are we now

The Authority works closely with Pembrokeshire Tourism and through various charter groups to encourage sustainable tourism and good practice.

Charters setting good practice are in place with boat operators, climbers and other groups. We have planning policies to help protect against excessive use of the natural resources but which do not prevent appropriate commercial activities.

The SDF fund has supported a number of private sector projects, particularly in renewable energy feasibility projects. Our historic building grants have supported the local building trade, especially in Tenby and St. Davids.

### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Greater promotion of the contribution of the Park to the economy;
- b. Develop tourism partnership working with Pembrokeshire Tourism and PCC;
- c. Encourage good practice & develop skills;
- d. Closer working and partnerships such as Pembrokeshire Business Club and support for Outdoor Charter and Marine Code;

## **Outcome 6 - Residents and Visitors from a wide range of backgrounds access opportunities for improved understanding about the National Park.**

### To achieve this outcome

We will use the special qualities of the National Park as the basis for lifelong learning for all.

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. 75% of people surveyed display an improved understanding of the National Park following an organised event;
- b. Increasing trend in the number of hits on the National Park Authority web site;
- c. Over 260,000 people make use of our centres each year
- d. At least 75% of school groups feedback an inspiration score of 10 or higher
- e. We have maintained the numbers of agreements we have with business (eg Outdoor Charter, Bourne Leisure ranger etc) that help provide training for businesses to help pass on understanding to their clients
- f. We increase the number of 'hard to reach' participants taking part in our events and activities from 1,800 a year to 2,000.

### Where are we now

Over 250,000 people annually make use of the Authority's visitor centres and the website attracts more than 150,000 individual visits. 225,000 copies of Coast to Coast newspaper are distributed every year and over 300 activities and events are organised to raise awareness and understanding. Feedback from school activities shows inspiration levels averaging over 10 on a scale of 1 – 11.

### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Increase support for secondary schools to engage with NP
- b. Develop links with Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire schools
- c. Participate in MOSAIC project
- d. Develop in service training for teachers
- e. Increase publicity for NPA activities and events
- f. Standardise collection, evaluation and recording of information across the National Park

## **Outcome 7 - Residents and visitors recognise the distinct Pembrokeshire cultures within the National Park**

### To achieve this outcome

We will promote the wide variety of local, linguistic, artistic and social cultures found within the National Park.

### We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:

- a. Surveys of visitors and residents show at least 50% recognise the cultural aspects of Pembrokeshire
- b. 30% of visitors to Oriol y Parc visitor centre also go into the gallery (currently 20%)
- c. The number of people visiting our historic culture sites and attending historic related remains at or above current levels of approximately 67,000 a year.
- d. The number of historic related activities and events increases each year.

### Where are we now

The facilities at Oriol y Parc, Carew Castle and Castell Henllys offer opportunities to recognise for the artistic, historic, and social cultures.

Bi-lingual services are provided under an approved Welsh Language Scheme.

### We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:

- a. Develop a Culture Action Plan to outline activities aimed at delivering this outcome (this will be developed during 2011-2012 and will focus on the delivery of this Outcome from 2012 onwards)
- b. Investigate new technology opportunities
- c. Encourage use of the Welsh language and local dialects
- d. Promote traditional land management and building techniques
- e. Use our centres and activities to promote and demonstrate cultural heritage
- f. Continue to exhibit some of the collection of the National Museum of Wales
- g. Showcase the work of local artists

**Outcome 8 - The Authority is recognised as meeting good practice standards in terms of governance, providing value for money and listening to the views of residents, visitors and partners**

*To achieve this outcome*

We will work to meet standards of good practice in terms of governance, fairness and efficiency, and we will work with residents, visitors and partners.

*We will be succeeding in delivering this outcome when:*

- a. We receive a favourable Corporate Review by Wales Audit Office;
- b. We meet the targets in Strategic Grant letter;
- c. Customer satisfaction levels are improving;
- d. We maintain our position as a good employer, with engagement levels remaining high
- e. We retain Investors in People in 2012
- f. Improvement in the number of valid complaints and compliments
- g. The trend in the number of health & safety incidents is reducing
- h. The majority of our media coverage is positive or neutral

*Where are we now*

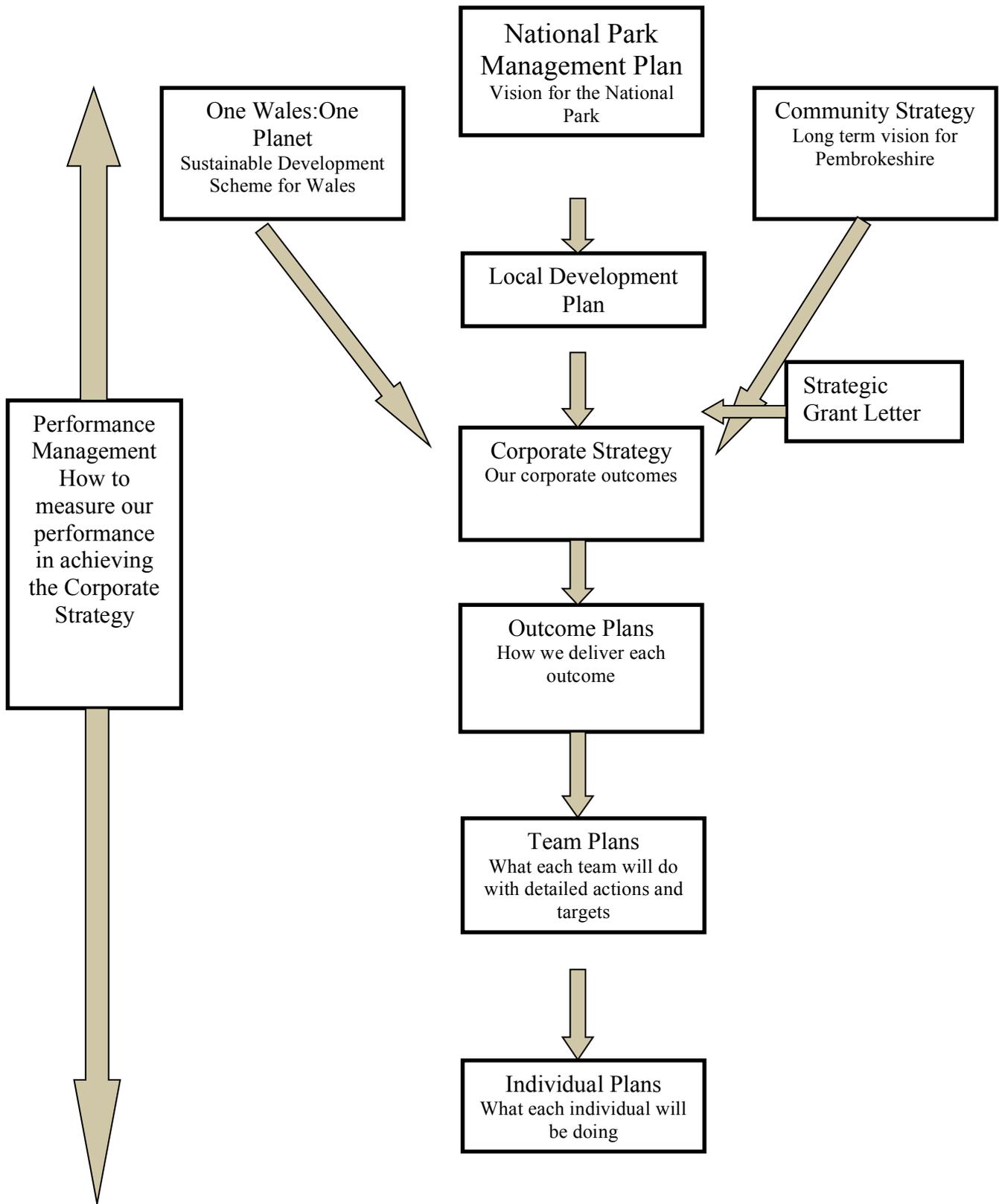
The Annual Improvement Report from Wales Audit Office for 2010 refers to several instances of good practices and identifies areas where some improvements might be considered. A recent audit of community engagement identified good practice and a community council seminar is a regular

event. The authority retained its Investors in People Award in 2009. The performance of our planning service has improved significantly since 2007, but changes in staffing, introduction of a new computer system and the increase in WAG requirements for planning have led to a slight drop in speed of determining applications (from 72% in 2009/10 to 67% in 2010/11).

*We will take the following Actions to deliver these Outcomes:*

- a. Improve the response times for pre-application enquiries
- b. Develop methodology to measure the quality and added value of the planning service
- c. Develop State of the Park monitoring methodology
- d. Continue to implement efficiency savings, joint working, benchmarking and sharing experiences
- e. Improve performance management
- f. Develop the scrutiny role of Members
- g. Work towards advance charter for Members
- h. Interim review of National Park Plan and develop a methodology for state of the park reporting by 2012/13

# Golden Thread – Performance Framework



### Performance Indicators & Measures

Many of the measures and targets listed below are still being developed in line with the new outcomes and may be amended and additional measures introduced.

(Note Actual figures for 2010/11 are best available at time of publication – Feb 2011)

Out-come	Measure	Freq	Target 2011/12	Actual 2010/11	Comments
1	No of skylark territories on St Davids Airfield	Annual	60	60	
1	No of chough territories occupied	Annual	48	48	
1	Annual survey of shelduck on estuary	Annual	12	12	
1	Area of land managed with NPA support	quarterly	2100	2000ha	Target by 2013
1	No of sites managed with NPA support	quarterly	175	170	
1	# of new housing units approved on previously developed land	Monthly			New indicator, data to be collected
1	Total # of new housing units approved	Monthly	50	12	
1	Area of greenfield or openspace developed not in LDP	Monthly			New indicator, data to be collected
1	% SAMS in worsening condition	Annual	33%	36%	
2	% of RoW open & accessible	Annual	85%	87%	Target is minimum to be achieved
2	Number of people using RoW	Annual			
2	% of coast path suitable for less able	Annual	40%	43%	Target is minimum to be achieved
2	% of users satisfied		60%		New indicator, data to be collected
3	% increase in people walking & cycling	Annual			New indicator, data to be collected
3	# of people using coastal buses etc	Annual	38,000	37,600	
3	Amount of renewable energy approved by planning	quarterly			New indicator, data to be collected
4	# of affordable housing units awarded planning permission	quarterly			New indicator, data to be collected
4	# of people on housing register	Annual			New indicator, data to be collected
4	The percentage of affordable housing agreed and actually	Annual			New indicator, data to be collected

<b>Out-come</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>Target 2011/12</b>	<b>Actual 2010/11</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	delivered compared to Local Development Plan target.				
5	% of planning applications for commercial activities approved	quarterly	85%		New indicator, data to be collected
5	Surveys of tourism providers show increasing sustainable use of the Park;	Annual			New indicator, data to be collected
6	% of people surveyed display an improved understanding of the National Park following an organised event;	quarterly	75%		New indicator, data to be collected
6	Increasing trend in the number of hits on the National Park Authority web site;	quarterly	200,000	150,000	
6	# of people make use of our centres each year	quarterly	260,000	254,000	
6	% of school groups feedback an inspiration score of 10 or higher	quarterly	75%	80%	
7	% of visitors and residents show who recognise the cultural aspects of Pembrokeshire	Annual	50%		New indicator, data to be collected
7	% of visitors to Oriell Parc visitor centre also going into the gallery	quarterly	30%	20%	
7	The number of people visiting our historic culture sites and attending historic related activities and events remains at or above current levels	quarterly	67,000 pa		
	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days	Annual	98%	97%	
	i) The percentage of employees who leave the	Annual			

Out-come	Measure	Freq	Target 2011/12	Actual 2010/11	Comments
	employment of the local authority, whether on a voluntary or involuntary basis.				
	ii) The number of working days/ shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence.	Annual	7		
	iii) The percentage of authority employees declaring that they are disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act.	Annual	6%	6%	
	iv) The percentage of planning applications determined during the year that were approved.	Annual	85%	82%	
	b) The number of appeals that were determined during the year, in relation to: i) Planning application decisions ii) Enforcement		65%		Targets to be confirmed

Out-come	Measure	Freq	Target 2011/12	Actual 2010/11	Comments
	<p style="text-align: center;">t notices and</p> <p>c) The percentage of these determined appeals that upheld the authority's decision, in relation to:</p> <p>i) Planning application decisions</p> <p>ii) Enforcement notices</p>		75%		
	<p>d) The percentage of major planning applications determined during the year within 13 weeks,</p> <p>e) The percentage of minor planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks,</p> <p>f) The percentage of householder planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks,</p> <p>g) The percentage of all other planning applications determined during the year within 8 weeks.</p>		<p>50%</p> <p>65%</p> <p>80%</p> <p>70%</p>		Targets to be confirmed
	The percentage of enforcement complaints resolved during the year within 12 weeks of receipt		80%		Target to be confirmed

# Annex 3 Scrutiny Study –Questionnaire

## Public questionnaire



### Joint Rights of Way Scrutiny Review 2011



The Brecon Beacons National Park and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park are currently reviewing their role in the management of public rights of way. This work forms part of a number of joint scrutiny reviews into different aspects of our work in order to assess their value and effectiveness. The ROW network has the potential to impact on people's enjoyment of the special landscapes, local business opportunities, and tourism. The ROW Scrutiny Committee is now in the process of gathering evidence as widely as possible and by the end of its enquiries will expect to be able to answer fully or in part the following questions:

- Is the management of the Public Rights of Way Network (PROW) helping to meet National Park purposes?
- Are we delivering our ROW duty effectively and providing value for money?
- Can we establish criteria for ROW data to enable comparisons between our two authorities to help us assess our performance?
- Is it a realistic ambition and an effective use of resources to seek to open 100% of the ROW network in each National Park? If not how should we prioritise our work?

Each National Park Authority manages a large network of public rights of way, mainly classified as public footpaths and bridleways, which provide access to the countryside. Public rights of way were registered to reflect historic means of communications in rural areas before the mass ownership of motor vehicles. It was not therefore designed with the needs of recreation in mind but is now managed by us as it presents the best way to provide access across our National Parks.

Please circle which National Park you are primarily commenting upon.

Brecon Beacons                      Pembrokeshire Coast                      Both

**1. Does the network of public rights of way provide sufficient access opportunities in the National Park for the following user groups? Please circle.**

- |                                    |     |                                   |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| - Walkers                          | Y/N | - People with restricted mobility | Y/N |
| - Families with prams & pushchairs | Y/N | - Cyclists                        | Y/N |
| - Wheelchair users                 | Y/N | - Horse riders                    | Y/N |

**2. How would you rate the condition of the country paths you have used in the National Park for each of the following? Mark ONE box only in each row**

	Excellent	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Control of vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Gates	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Stiles	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Clean & pleasant – not much litter, rubbish, dog mess	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Path surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Signposts and route way marking	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Information about routes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

**3. Using the network: Do you currently use the public footpaths and bridleways in the National Park? Please circle.**

Yes                      No                      Occasionally

**What might prevent you from using public footpaths and bridleways in the National Parks?**

*Mark as many boxes as apply*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can't get to the walks        | <input type="checkbox"/> Paths too difficult to use i.e. stiles make walks more difficult, poor surfaces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't go walking              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't have the time           | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport problems (parking, no public transport to get to the network etc.)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know where to go        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I walk outside National Park  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information available |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)        |  |

I am unable to make use of the footpath network because.....

**What can the National Park Authorities do to encourage you to use the country paths more?**

*Mark as many boxes as apply*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the signage on the paths                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide more walking opportunities close to where you live |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase the number of leaflets about walking/other activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide sample/taster guided walks for local people        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the content of leaflets about walking/other activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide more publicity of walking opportunities            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide guided walks   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)   |   |

**Both National Park Authorities promote over a wide range of walks on their website with maps and information that can be downloaded and printed to guide the walker.**

- Have you ever looked for walking information on the website? Y/N  
If so did you find the information useful? Y/N
  
- Have you ever used the maps from the website to plan a walk? Y/N  
If so was it useful? Y/N

4. Prioritisation of resources: Given that we have limited resources, please prioritise the areas of work that you consider the National Park Authority should focus on in future (at present 87% of the network is available for use.) (Number 1= most important 3= least important)

- Continue to reinstate all public rights of way with the objective of achieving 100% availability of the public rights of way network
- Concentrate on the selective improvement and promotion of public rights of way to provide access opportunities to communities and popular, scenic destinations and provide more easily accessible paths.
- Maintain current network of public rights of way and promote it better to users

5. Your opportunity to comment on related issues.

Please tell us of any other comments or issues you would like to raise concerning the function and management of the ROW network.

If you are willing to attend a Hearing to discuss your experiences or represent the views of an organisation please indicate below.

I am willing to attend a Hearing on Rights of Way in the

Brecon Beacons National Park

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Name

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Telephone:

Email:

**PLEASE RETURN ALL RESPONSES BY 15 OCTOBER 2011**

When completed, hand this form to staff, email it to [Lora.Davies@breconbeacons.org](mailto:Lora.Davies@breconbeacons.org), submit it on-line or post to Lora Davies, BBNP, Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon, LD3 7HP

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

## Questionnaire for organisations



### Scrutiny Review on Rights Of Way (ROW) in BBNP and PCNP EVIDENCE from organisations



As part of our striving for continuous improvement, BBNP and PCNP are undertaking a number of joint scrutiny reviews into different aspects of our services. This Scrutiny Review is to examine the ROW network as one of the main interfaces between the National Parks and the public. The ROW network has the potential to impact on people's enjoyment of the special landscapes, local business opportunities, and tourism. Both National Parks have prepared statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans in the last four years. These entailed significant research and consultation and they identify priorities for the development of the network to 2017. Building on this work, this Scrutiny Review provides an opportunity to examine in more depth some aspects of our ROW work. The ROW Scrutiny Committee is now in the process of gathering evidence as widely as possible and by the end of its enquiries will expect to be able to answer fully or in part the following questions:

- Is the management of the PROW Network helping to meet NPA purposes?
- Are we delivering our ROW duty effectively and providing value for money?
- Can we establish criteria for ROW data to enable comparisons between our two authorities to help us assess our performance?
- Is it a realistic ambition and an effective use of resources to seek to open 100% of the ROW network in each National Park?

Each National Park Authority manages a large network of public rights of way, mainly classified as public footpaths and bridleways, which provide access to the countryside. Public rights of way were registered to reflect historic means of communications in rural areas before the mass ownership of motor vehicles. It was not therefore designed with the needs of recreation in mind but is now managed by us as it presents the best way to provide access across our National Parks.

In order to help the Committee to gather the information we need, we are offering an opportunity for a range of organisations within our communities to be able to contribute by submitting written evidence in answer to the questions set out *below*. If your organisation is willing to provide further evidence in person to the committee please indicate this clearly in your response:

The closing date for the submission of evidence is 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011. It is expected that witnesses will be called to give evidence during November and December 2011.

When completed, please email it to [Lora.Davies@breconbeacons.org](mailto:Lora.Davies@breconbeacons.org), submit it on-line or post to Lora Davies, BBNP, Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way, Brecon, LD3 7HP

There is no word limit however submissions should be of a realistic length. Please provide evidence on the following:

1. Meeting access expectations  
Given that a public right of way is defined as a *way over which members of the public have a right to pass and re-pass* - What are the functions that you would expect a rights of way network to perform for all its various users?
  
2. Using the network:  
What different factors might prevent or encourage use of the ROW network by different user groups?
  
3. Information:  
What information including signage would you expect to be available to enable use of the ROW network nationally and / or locally by defined sections of the community?
  
4. Other factors governing the management of the ROW network:  
What do you consider to be any other competing factors that might impact on how we manage of the ROW network?
  
5. Please tell us of any other comments or issues you would like to raise concerning the function and management of the ROW network.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Questions for the agricultural stakeholder group - BBNP



Joint Scrutiny Review on Rights of Way in Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities



Questions for the agricultural stakeholders group (please start with your group's questions using space provided and continue overleaf if necessary)

Group 1: What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network and its management that are currently not being met?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Group 2: Given our limited resources, what could we do that would make the biggest impact?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Group 3: In your opinion – which areas of the Rights of Way network and its management should we be giving priority to?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Additional Questions:

1. What other, if any, key issues do you wish to bring to our attention?

.....
.....

- 2. Would you like a summary of findings related to:
- Possible scrutiny processes Yes / No
- Issues affecting Rights of Way Yes / No

3. How do you think farmers and landowners should be involved in the management of the Rights of Way network?

.....
.....

## **BBNPA Hearing Questions**

### **PCNPA/BBNPA Joint Scrutiny Project in Public Rights of Way Brecon Beacons NP Hearing 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011, Plas y Ffynnon, Brecon**

**Panel:** Mrs M Underwood (Chair) and Councillor K Silk (BBNPA)  
Councillor M James (PCNPA)

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#### **Session 1 – BBNP Wardens**

Judith Harvey – *Area Manager, Western Area*  
Helen Pye – *Assistant Area Manager, Western Area*

##### **Questions**

1. How does the fact that there are anomalies between what is on the ground and what is on the maps impact on the work you do?
  2. What are the main obstacles to maintaining the footpath network?
  3. How does the promotion of various routes impact on your work?
  4. What, if any, other issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?
- 

#### **Session 2 – Impact on Countryside and Policies**

Bradley Welch – *BBNP Management Plan Officer*

##### **Questions**

1. What do you see as the main impacts, if any, of route promotion on biodiversity and the countryside?
  2. What effects do you think that the remote area work together with the landscape character assessment will have on how we manage the ROW network?
  3. Will developing technologies such as remote monitoring and GIS have an impact on how we manage the ROW?
  4. What, if any, other policies or issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?
- 

#### **Session 3 - Geopark**

Alan Bowring – *BBNP Geopark Development Officer*  
Arwel Michael – *Former BBNP Member*

##### **Questions**

1. Given that the Geopark designation is a tool to help area regeneration, how do you balance the promotion of the area against the carrying capacity of the ROW network?
  2. Some of the focus of the Geopark is about economic well-being, does this have any impact on the usage of the ROW network?
  3. How people use the ROW network has changed over time, do you think that this has had any impacts on the landscape of the National Park?
  4. What, if any, other issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?
- 

#### **Session 4 – Tourism**

Punch Maughan – *Director of Brecon Beacons Tourism*

### **Questions**

1. What do you consider to be the main economic importance of the ROW network?
  2. What benefits for their clients do local tourism operators gain from the ROW network which is effectively provided free of charge to them?
  3. In terms of visitor expectations, what would you expect visitors to be able to find in the network?
  4. In your opinion, what other elements might improve the value of the ROW network for tourism?
  5. Do you have any views on a visitor payback scheme which would help with the ROW maintenance?
- 

### **Session 5 – Equalities and Access**

*Jackie Charlton – Former BBNP Member and equalities member champion*

### **Questions**

1. What do you think are currently some of the main barriers to use of the ROW network?
  2. The Health and Well Being Agenda is becoming increasingly important. How do you think the ROW network can help to deliver on this important topic for its users?
  3. Do you think that there are any unseen barriers to use of the ROW network and how might we address them?
  4. Given our limited resources, what improvements could we undertake that might have maximum impact for users?
- 

### **Session 6 – Forum, ROW Network Users and Tourism Operators**

*Karen Burch - Chairman of Carmarthenshire Riders Group  
BHS Access & ROW Officer, VC Carmarthenshire LAF*

*Robin Mainstone – Walking/Rambling Group Member  
Brecon Beacons Park Society Member*

*Roger Austin – Brecon Beacons Park Society Member  
Pontypool Ramblers, Crickhowell Walking Festival, CRIC*

*Peter Blackburn – Manager of Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre  
Anna Heywood – Drovers Holidays, Hay*

### **Questions**

1. What key aspirations do you have for the ROW network that are currently not being met?
  2. Given our limited resources, what could we do that would make the biggest impact?
  3. In your opinion, which areas of the ROW network should we be giving priority to?
  4. Any other issues not already covered?
-

## PCNP Hearing questions

### PCNPA/BBNPA Joint Scrutiny Project in Public Rights of Way Pembrokeshire Hearing 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock

**Panel:** Councillor M James (Chair) and Mrs G Hayward (PCNPA)  
Mrs M Underwood and Councillor K Silk (BBNPA)

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#### Session 1 – Staff (Group 1)

Libby Taylor – *Ranger Service Manager*  
Theresa Nolan – *Public Rights of Way Assistant Officer*  
David MacLachlan – *National Trail Officer*

#### Questions

5. Is the Management of the Public Rights of Way network helping to meet National Park Purposes?
  6. How does the promotion of various routes impact on your work?
  7. How does the fact that there are anomalies between what is on the ground and what is on maps impact on the work you do?
  8. What are the main obstacles to maintaining the whole footpath network?
- 

#### Session 2 – Staff (Group 2)

Geraint Jones - *Farm Conservation Officer*  
Michel Regelous - *Conservation Policy*  
Charles Mathieson - *Team Leader*

#### Questions

- 5 What do you see as the main impacts, if any, of route promotion on biodiversity and the countryside?
  - 6 What impact would you expect the Natural Environmental Framework to have on managing Rights Of Way in the Park?
  - 7 Are we delivering our public Rights of Way duty effectively and providing value for money?
  - 8 Is the management of the public Rights Of Way Network helping to meet National Park Purposes?
- 

#### Session 3 – Users Group

Mike Phippard - *Pembrokeshire Ramblers Association*  
Peter Harwood - *Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum*  
Tony Rooney - *Trail Riders Federation Wales*

#### Questions

- 5 How would you like to see us promote the Rights of Way (RoW) network?
  - 6 Is it a realistic ambition and an effective use of resources to seek to open and maintain 100% of the Public Rights of Way network in each National Park? If not, how should we prioritise our work?
  - 7 Why do you/your members use the Rights of Way Network?
  - 8 How can we improve the Rights of Way network?
-

## Session 4 – Tourism/Landowners Group

Chris Hogarth - *Chief Executive Pembrokeshire Tourism*  
Stephen Watkins – *CLA*  
Rebecca Voyle - *Farmers Union of Wales*

### Questions

1. How does having the Rights of Way network open and promoted affect your business?
  2. How could we improve the way in which we promote the Rights of Way network?
  3. What do you do to promote the Rights of Way network through your own business management?
- 

## Session 5 - Forum

Derek Rowland - *Voluntary Warden and leader of annual coast path walk*  
Henry Langen – *LAF, Pembrokeshire access group*  
Mike Phippard - *Footpath Ramblers*  
Jill Eaton-Evans - *Friends of PCNPA*  
Anton Wislocka – *St Dogmaels Footpath Group*  
Jill Wislocka – *St Dogmaels Footpath Group*

### Questions

5. If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?
6. What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?
7. What, if any, other key issues for the future of the rights of way network do you wish to bring to our attention?
8. Is the management of the Public Rights of Way network helping to meet National Park purposes? **(N.B. The attendees will not have received this question beforehand)**

## **Annex 4 – Press Releases**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

*For release 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011*

### **Your chance to have a say on the footpaths and bridleways in the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks.**

The Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities are inviting people to take part in their Public Rights of Way network questionnaire so that they can review and assess the network's value and effectiveness. This joint review will enhance the current work that is being undertaken by both National Parks on their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

In particular, the questionnaire seeks to review the current network of footpaths and bridleways which walkers, wheelchair users, horse riders and cyclists use to access and enjoy the countryside. This joint review will provide the National Park Authorities with valuable information on the current management, resources and delivery of the Public Rights of Way network, if these meet the needs of the people using them and what priorities need to be addressed in the future.

The National Parks of Wales are committed to promoting access for all and they play a major role in managing a large network of Public Rights of Way, mainly classified as public footpaths and bridleways, which provide access to and enjoyment of these unique landscapes.

Mrs Julie James, Chairman of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority said: "We are committed to strengthening the links of access to the countryside landscapes and fostering diversity in the network so whether you storm up Pen y Fan, walk the Pembrokeshire Coast Path or just take your dog for a walk on one of our footpaths or canal paths we want you to put forward your views on the current network. The Public Rights of Way network has the potential to impact on people's enjoyment of the special landscapes, local business opportunities, and tourism so it's not just about individual users either. We are also asking organisations like the Brecon Beacons Park Society, the Ramblers Association and Grazing Associations to give us feedback on the network. Once all the information has been gathered, we plan to scrutinise it and use it as a framework to set our priorities."

The questionnaire can be downloaded from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) or the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority website. For more information on the Public Rights of Way network questionnaire please contact Lora Davies at [lora.davies@breconbeacons.org](mailto:lora.davies@breconbeacons.org) or telephone 01874 624437

**-ENDS-**

# PRESS RELEASE

*For release 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011*

**Final chance to have your say on the footpaths and bridleways in the Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks.**

**The consultation period for the Public Rights of Way network questionnaires has been extended until the 18<sup>th</sup> November giving more people the opportunity to have their say on what they think of the current network.**

In view of the level of interest shown by the public, Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authorities have decided to extend the consultation period which invites people to take part in their Public Rights of Way network questionnaire so that they can review and assess the network's value and effectiveness. This joint review will enhance the current work that is being undertaken by both National Parks on their Rights of Way Improvement Plans.

In particular, the questionnaire will be an opportunity to express views on the current network of footpaths and bridleways which walkers, wheelchair users, horse riders and cyclists use to access and enjoy the countryside. This joint review will provide the National Park Authorities with valuable information on the current management, resources and delivery of the Public Rights of Way network, if these meet the needs of the people using them and what priorities need to be addressed in the future.

The National Parks of Wales are committed to promoting access for all and they play a major role in managing a large network of Public Rights of Way, mainly classified as public footpaths and bridleways, which provide access to and enjoyment of these unique landscapes.

Mrs Margaret Underwood, Lead Member for the Project and Member Champion for Biodiversity of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority said: "We have had a terrific response so far – with almost 50 responses that will provide us with a very good picture of the current network. We hope that by extending the consultation period more people will offer their views so that we can use this information as a sound framework to set our priorities for the Rights of Way network. The final report is expected to be delivered by mid February 2012 and if people want to give further evidence to the committee there will be two hearing dates in November and December – let us know if you are interested."

The questionnaire can be downloaded from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) or the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority website . For more information on the Public Rights of Way network questionnaire please contact Lora Davies at [lora.davies@breconbeacons.org](mailto:lora.davies@breconbeacons.org) or telephone 01874 624437

**-ENDS-**

## **Annex 5 – Organisational questionnaire distribution list and list of organisational responses**

Questionnaires were sent to the following organisations within BBNP and PCNP.

### **Scrutiny ROW Evidence Gathering - Questionnaires – Contacts**

#### **Brecon Contacts**

##### **Health and Mobility Impaired Groups**

- Brecknock Access Group
- Monmouthshire Disablement Association
- Brecon District Contact Association
- Ystradgynlais MIND
- Volunteering on Prescription
- Radnorshire Healthy Friendships
- Powys Mental Health Alliance & Powys Stronger in Partnership (same contact for both)
- Institute of Rural Health

##### **JAAF held on the 14<sup>th</sup> October – Members consulted Users, Farming Groups and Landowners via email sent 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2011 with JAAF Agenda**

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Friends of the Earth             | • Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust    |
| • Welsh Trail Riders               | • FUW                                     |
| • Handgliding and paragliding club | • Cambrian Caving Council/Ystradfellte CC |
| • FUW Brecon & Radnor              | • Brecknock Wildlife Trust                |
| • LARA                             | • Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme          |
| • Ramblers                         | • Brecon Beacon Commoners                 |
| • FUW Gwent                        | • Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust        |
| • CCW                              | • National Trust Property Manager         |
| • BBPS                             | • CLA/Defence Estates                     |
| • NFU Cymru                        | • Dyfed Archaeological Trust              |
| • AHOEC                            | • Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust    |
| • Forestry Commission Wales        |   |

##### **Town & Community Councils – as Members of JAAF**

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Talgarth Town               | • Ystradgynlais Town       |
| • Goetre Fawr Community       | • Carmarthenshire County   |
| • Blaenavon Town              | • Dyffryn Cennen Community |
| • Lanelly Town                | • Llandovery Town          |
| • Abergavenny Town            | • Cwmaman Town             |
| • Llanover Community          | • Quarter Bach Community   |
| • Crucorney CC/Llanthony Show | • Tawe Uchaf Community     |
| • Brecon Town                 | • Llandovery Town          |
| • Talybont Community          |                            |
| •                             |                            |

*In addition:*

- Brecon Local Access Forum Members were contacted on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept via email and consulted on the ROW review at their meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011.
- The Agricultural Stakeholders Meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2011 consulted members (NFU, CLA & UAC) on ROW issues.
- The questionnaires were also sent (22 Sept 2011) to approximately 600 contacts of a tourism database which includes businesses and tourism operators throughout the Brecon Beacons National Park area.
- On 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2011, the questionnaires for organisations were sent to the BBNPA's database of town and community councils.
- Copies of the questionnaire were made available at the Mountain Centre, Libanus.

### **Pembrokeshire Contacts**

- Outdoor Charter Group c/o Milford Haven Port Authority
- Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park
- YHA Wales
- Pembrokeshire Tourism
- Carningli Graziers Association
- Preseli Graziers Association
- PLANED
- Newport Paths Group
- NFU
- Country Land & Business Association
- FUW
- National Trust
- Ramblers Association
- British Horse Society & Pembrokeshire Bridleways Association
- Trail Riders Federation Wales
- Pembs Local Access Forum
- Pembrokeshire Access Group

In addition to this list – the questionnaire was sent to:

- 51 Town and community councils
- They were distributed to 3 x Visitor Centres
- Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum
- South Pembrokeshire Access Group
- Individual Pembrokeshire Tourism members via email
- 30 copies were placed in Poppit Sands cafe – as this is the starting point of the Coastal Path

### **Responding organisations**

#### **Organisational Responses**

##### **BBNPA**

Local Access Forum LAF Member  
British Horseriding Society BHS Carmarthenshire  
LAF/Carmarthenshire Riders  
CPRW Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales  
GLASS (Green Lane Association)  
Brecon Beacons Park Society  
Hay Town Council  
Brecon Town Council  
Yscir Community Council  
Blaenavon – Forgotten Landscapes  
Llanelly Community Council

**PCNPA**

Friends of Pembrokeshire National Park

**Both**

Ramblers Cymru responded for both Pembrokeshire and Brecon

**Pembrokeshire Organisations who responded via the Individuals' questionnaire:**

Nolton & Roch Community  
Council  
Dinas Cross Community Council  
Marloes & St Brides Community  
Council  
Tenby Town Council  
Hook Community Council  
Martletwy Community Council  
Coshaston Community Council  
Llangwm Community Council  
Freystrop Community Council  
Dale Community Council

Penally Community Council  
St Dogmaels Community  
Council & Llwybrau Llandudoch  
St Dogmaels Footpath  
Association  
  
National Trust  
Newgale YMCA  
PCF  
Celtic Quest Coasteering  
Pembs FUW

## **Annex 6 – Detailed expenditure breakdown**

### **Expenditure on Rights of Way Management in the Brecon Beacons National Park**

The public rights of way network in the Brecon Beacons National Park is managed through a combination of three Teams that fall within the Countryside and Land Management Directorate. The three Teams are the Access Team, the Rights of Way Team and the Warden Team (divided into the Western Area and Eastern Area Teams).

A varying amount of the Teams' work is dedicated to rights of way management and the information below attempts to demonstrate two things:

The staffing cost of maintaining the rights of way network;

The financial and legal cost of maintaining the rights of way network.

Firstly, an attempt has been made to quantify the staffing cost of maintaining the network. This has been broken down into individual Teams as follows:

#### **Access Team**

Salary budget £58386 (including National Insurance and Superannuation)

15% of total time involved in rights of way management

Total = £8757.90

#### **Rights of Way Team**

Salary budget £64250 (including National Insurance and Superannuation)

95% of total time involved in rights of way management (including Definitive Map work)

Total = £61037.50

#### **Western Area Team**

Salary budget £230820 (including National Insurance and Superannuation)

20% of total time involved in rights of way management

Total = £46164

**Eastern Area Team** Salary budget £166755 (including National Insurance and Superannuation)

36% of total time involved in rights of way management

Total = £60031.80

**Legal Team** An estimated £1000 of Solicitor time is involved in rights of way management annually

The total staffing cost of maintaining the rights of way network in 2011/12 amounts to £176991.20. However, this is an estimate figure as there is difficulty (particularly with the Warden Teams) in the disaggregation of various costs.

We know that in 2010/11 the Western Area Team spent a minimum of 10% of its time maintaining the rights of way network and that the Eastern Area Team spent a minimum of 18% of its time maintaining the rights of way network.

These figures are calculated as part of the recharge for the contributions made by the Unitary Authorities. However, there are a variety of associated costs that are not calculated as part of this exercise such as travel to site, vehicle costs, finding and negotiating with landowners, sourcing and collecting materials, purchase and upkeep of tools and equipment, preparing contracts, inspections and surveys, administration etc. To compensate for this the reported figures have been increased to 20% and 36% respectively as they give a more realistic representation of the time given to rights of way management.

Secondly, an attempt has been made to quantify the financial (through grants and other contributions) and legal cost of maintaining the network. This has been broken down into individual sources of income as follows:

Rights of Way Improvement Plan Value of WG/CCW grant £55513  
Offa's Dyke National Trail Value of CCW grant £15262 (75% grant - match funded by 25% (£5209) in kind)

### **Delegation Agreements**

Contributions from the Unitary Authorities amounting to:

Powys County Council £10000

Monmouthshire County Council £8000

Carmarthenshire County Council £4000

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council £1000

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council £600

Total = £23600

### **Legal costs**

A budget of £7000 currently exists for work associated with the Definitive Map

The total financial cost of maintaining the rights of way network in 2011/12 amounts to £101375.

### **Conclusion**

The total spend on public rights of way in the Brecon Beacons National Park in 2011/12 is therefore as follows:

Given that the Brecon Beacons National Park has a network of 2003.29 km of

public rights of way that amounts to a spend of £138.95 per kilometre.

If the same amount is applied to the 'open' part of the network (i.e. 76%) the spend becomes £182.83 per kilometre.

## **Expenditure on Rights of Way Management in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park**

The public rights of way network in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is managed by the Recreation Management Team. This team is in the Recreation and Marketing Directorate. There is an Access Team that deals with the legal and oversight work and three Area Teams who provide the practical delivery through Wardens (Specialist practical rights of way staff) and Rangers (Who have a wider role and whose % contribution is estimated). The area teams work on both the inland network and the Coast Path. In the breakdown below we have distinguished between the management of the Inland Paths and the management of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail.

The information below attempts to demonstrate three things:

1. The legal costs of the rights of way function
2. The cost of practical maintenance and improvement of the inland rights of way
3. The costs of managing the Coast Path

### **1. Access Team – dealing with the legal aspects of access and rights of way**

This includes the Access Manager (Part of his role) and one Assistant Access Officer post who coordinate all aspects of access including Rights of way legal, prioritising work on the network, management of the LAF and ROWIP and management of CROW land.

Salary budget £39,172 (including National Insurance and Superannuation)  
Legal and advertising budgets £8,351

**Total = £47523**

### **2. Practical maintenance and improvement of the inland rights of way**

- Remainder of Access Team budget; materials, contractors and equipment budgets - £75,100
- Plus proportion of 3 Senior Rangers' (Supervisors) salaries and oncosts £16535
- Proportion of 4 Rangers' salaries and oncosts - £12019
- 50% of 4 warden teams and 100% of another team plus oncosts - £131,562

The total staffing, materials, equipment and contractor cost of maintaining the inland rights of way network in 2011/12 amounts to **£235,216**

There are two Warden teams in the west, one in the south and two in the north. The three teams in the south and west and one of the north teams

divide their time equally between the inland paths and the Coast Path, the fourth team (In the north), works exclusively on inland paths. These costs include associated costs such as travel to site, vehicle costs, finding and negotiating with landowners, sourcing and collecting materials, purchase and upkeep of tools and equipment, preparing contracts, inspections and surveys, administration etc.

### **Income for the Inland Paths' Network**

The income that the authority receives for the management of the inland rights of way comes from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan funding from CCW/WG (ROWIP) plus one-off grants from CCW, Coastal Access, RDP and partner organisations such as PLANED, plus income from a section 106 agreement shared with PCC. Between 2008/9 and 2010/11 this amounted to an average of £77,000 pa.

The delegation agreement of the legal and maintenance function from the Pembrokeshire County Council comes with no funding contribution.

### **Legal costs**

The authority does not have responsibility for the Definitive Map but did contribute considerable staff time (From the Access Team) to a PCC led review of the Definitive Map in 2010-11.

### **Conclusion – Inland Path Network**

The total financial cost of maintaining the inland rights of way network in 2011/12 amounts to **£282739** the income received over the last 4 years from grants and joint projects has been **£77,000** per year leaving a net cost to the authority of **£205739**.

<b>Total expenditure on practical maintenance</b>	<b>Grant income (Inc in the total)</b>	<b>Delegation contributions</b>	<b>Legal costs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>£235,216</b>	<b>(£77000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£47523</b>	<b>£282739</b>

Given that the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has a network of 800km of public rights of way that amounts to a spend of £353 per kilometre but more realistically **if we exclude the closed part of the network and use 680Km as the divisor then the cost per open Km is £415 per Km.**

## Annex 7 - Evidence

### Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks Joint Scrutiny Review Individual Questionnaire – collated responses

#### 1. Using the network

Do you currently use the public footpaths and bridleways in the National Park?

	%
Yes	91
No	0
Occasionally	6

#### 2. Does the network of public rights of way provide sufficient access opportunities in the National Park for the following user groups?

	Yes %	No %
Walkers	74	11
Families with prams & pushchairs	32	33
Wheelchair users	26	37
People with restricted mobility	30	36
Cyclists	39	26
Horse riders	41	22

#### 3. How would you rate the condition of the country paths you have used in the National Park for each of the following?

	Excellent %	Good %	Poor %	Very poor %
Control of vegetation	17	64	11	3
Gates	24	59	12	1
Stiles	22	57	13	1
Clean & pleasant – not much litter, rubbish, dog mess	24	58	11	1
Path surfaces	17	58	17	1
Signposts & route waymarking	12	54	22	8
Information about routes	17	43	30	4

#### 4. What might prevent you from using public footpaths and bridleways in the National Parks?

	%
Can't get transport to the walks	10
Don't go walking	2
Don't have the time	10
Don't know where to go	8
I walk outside the National Park	10
Lack of information available	16
Paths too difficult to use	19
Transport problems	24

**5. What can the National Park Authorities do to encourage you to use their public rights of way more?**

	%
Improve the signage on the paths	59
Increase the number of leaflets	27
Improve the content of leaflets	21
Provide guided walks	23
Provide more walking opportunities close to where you live	11
Provide sample/taster guided walks for local people	22
Provide more publicity on walking opportunities	23

**6. National Park Authorities promote a wide range of walks on their websites with maps and information that can be downloaded and printed to guide those who want to enjoy the countryside. If you do use the website we want to know if it is helpful to you.**

	Yes %	No %
Have you ever looked for walking information on the website?	52	41
If so, did you find the information useful?	45	9
Have you ever used the maps from the website to plan a walk?	27	58
If so, was it useful?	23	6
Have you used the Brecon Beacons Park Explorer App to plan a walk?	5	46
If so, was it useful?	3	5

**7. Prioritisation of Resources. At present, 87% of the network is available for use, given that we have limited resources, please prioritise the areas of work that you consider the National Park Authority should focus on in future.**

***It should be noted here that there was some confusion in answers received so to extrapolate any meaningful information here would be difficult.***

	1 <sup>st</sup> %	2 <sup>nd</sup> %	3 <sup>rd</sup> %
Continue to reinstate all public rights of way with the objective of achieving 100% availability of the public rights of way network.	52	28	38
Concentrate on the selective improvement and promotion of public rights of way to provide access opportunities to communities and popular,	16	30	29

scenic destinations and provide more easily accessible paths.			
Maintain current network of public rights of way and promote it better to users.	26	34	27

## Joint National Park Scrutiny – Rights of Way Brecon Beacons National Park Site Visit – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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### Those present:

Helen Pye	<i>Assistant Area Warden (Western Area)</i>
Judith Harvey	<i>Area Manager (Western Area)</i>
Eifion Jones	<i>Rights of Way Officer</i>
Margaret Underwood	<i>BBNP Member</i>
Cllr Kathryn Silk	<i>BBNP Member</i>
Cllr Helen Wyn	<i>BBNP Member</i>
Cllr Gwyneth Hayward	<i>PCNP Member</i>
Cllr Mike James	<i>PCNP Member</i>
Lora Davies	<i>Scrutiny Administration Officer</i>

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From Gwaun Hepste car park the party drove down to the viewpoint for Sgwd Clun Gwyn waterfall.

### **Background Information**

The area is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is visited by a wide variety of user groups. It receives approximately 154k visitors pa.

### **Working with Key Partners**

For the last two years the Brecon Beacons National Park has been working closely with the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Council for Wales to improve the site. Due to its popularity with various user groups including gorge-walkers, cavers, walkers etc the site has suffered large amounts of erosion and the National Park and its key partners have devised the Waterfall Management Plan to rectify this damage.

Although the site falls within the Powys boundary it is promoted by Neath Port Talbot Council for tourism. This has necessitated partnership working between BBNPA and NPT Council which has essentially been very successful and good partnership working can lead to more funding input.

PCNP have similar experiences with partnership working as there are 186 miles of coastal path traversing a large amount of privately owned land, a good relationship with the landowners is essential.

### **Working with User Groups**

BBNP also work closely with the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG) who represent approximately 130 of the 160 outdoor provider groups operating in South Wales area. The partnership has been formed in order to manage the hugely popular activity of gorge walking in the Waterfall Country, in order to maintain activity without a huge impact on the site. BBNP have liaised with FCW, CCW, SWOAPG and others to produce an agreed code which sets out agreed access points, waymarking, code of conduct on site and is an all encompassing approach not simply path maintenance.

Within Pembrokeshire Coast the increasingly popular sport of coasteering causes problems of erosion with large groups of people visiting small coastal bays such as Ceibwr. The introduction of a Pembrokeshire Code has improved this situation whereby organisations which frequently use the National Park for activities with large groups are required to follow a code of conduct, a system which is also adopted by BBNP.

The area, as with much of the National Park, has caught the attention of film production companies but care must be taken when granting permission to film as the access for heavy film equipment and vehicles can lead to overload on the paths that are not necessarily up to it. Care must also be taken in sensitive areas like this one not to attract a large number of additional visitors through films promoting the area. However, a section of the path here has been greatly improved and funded by a film company as permission to film at the waterfall site was granted on the proviso that the pathway accessing the site was made good (to the value of approx £8k).

### **Planning and Implementing ROW work in the Area**

In the last 2-3 years signage has been improved upon at the site. Each signpost is numbered and the number corresponds with activity maps sold to the public and also to the maps held by the emergency/rescue services. In 2007, 20% of visitors to the site were getting lost, this number dropped in 2009 to 5% largely as a result of the new waymarking and numbers.

It is planned to improve information at the Gwaun Hepste car park where there is currently just a map dispenser. Ideally, visitors will be better informed on the distance and the nature of the walk to the waterfall viewpoint (approx a 30 min walk that requires appropriate footwear). The possibility of even moving the car park to an area further along the track and nearer to the waterfalls is being explored.

### **Appropriate Use of Materials and Infrastructure**

Helen highlighted the many obstacles to overcome in carrying out improvement work to the site, for example, a major issue is accessing site with the materials. The Members were shown photographs of a bridge where Mini-mesh has been used to cover a timber framed walkway. Mini mesh is a durable plastic covering which is also extremely lightweight, therefore, easier to transport to site than timber and the walkway would be expected to last approximately 25 years. MU enquired as to whether recycled mesh could be used – HP to explore.

It is planned to limit the amount of signage at the site, there are currently various signs warning of the danger of the steep drop and of the erosion control work underway. The balance between keeping visitors informed whilst preserving the natural appearance of the site must be maintained.

### **Use of Volunteers**

BBNP endeavour to use available resources wherever possible e.g. army volunteers have been used previously and this proved very successful. However, generally the use of large groups of volunteers tends to be restricted to their assistance with the carrying of materials to site. Technical skills amongst volunteers are rare (although the park do have a pool of skilled volunteers who volunteer regularly with us) and as National Park quality and liability must remain a priority with regard to path maintenance, such work should be carried out to the highest spec by those with the appropriate technical ability.

The practice of employing students/trainees on placement opportunities has proved very successful and as both National Parks enjoy a high profile/status, high calibre students can be attracted.

### **Extinguishing and Diverting Routes**

Another issue faced at this site is the existence of historic rights of way that are disjointed or perhaps inaccessible. For example, a section of the path follows a course with a very steep drop to one side, rendering it unsuitable. The Team are looking into how the path can best be diverted. Diverting a route can prove to be problematic and requires negotiation with landowners and user groups.

### **Monitoring Performance and Results**

In order to monitor performance and the visitor experience, approximately every two years the wardens carry out a survey of visitors who use the area. This involves a one to one questionnaire at six sites across the area. Surveys were carried out in 2007, 2009 and 2011 (with work in progress to analyse the results of the 2011 questionnaires).

The Authority has also spent £6,000 on installing counters in the area to monitor path usage. The counters are unobtrusive and send an infra red beam across the path which registers when the beam is broken. There are 2 installed at car parks and 6 on selected visitor paths. The quantitative data provided by the counters is invaluable and can be used as evidence to secure funding where needed.

## Notes from the PCNPA hearing

### Pembrokeshire Hearing 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock Session 1 - Staff

**Present:** Councillor M James (Chair) and Mrs G Hayward (PCNPA)  
Mrs M Underwood and Councillor K Silk (BBNPA)

**Invited Participants:** Libby Taylor (LT)  
Theresa Nola (TN)  
David MacLachlan (DM)

#### Question 1 - Is the Management of the Public Rights of Way network helping to meet National Park Purposes?

LT – Yes, particularly in terms of enjoyment of the National Park. Being a lowland National Park, using Rights of Way is a way of getting people out to enjoy it. Most land is privately owned so access is important. Rights of Way network is part of the historic and cultural landscape of National Park. Lots of Rights of Way are on old routes. For example the Funeral Path at Manorbier was used to carry coffins en route to the Church and is an important part of the village. We are contributing to cultural history by keeping such paths open.

DM - National Trail is a linear route, 240 km of which is off road. Management of PROW takes conservation into account. Cutting creates a microclimate, particularly rich in wild flowers. Different to the rest of the network. Primary way that people of modest means can access the Park and see the wildlife and coastal geology. We don't use chemicals - parts are in agricultural use and some chemicals are used by farmers. The local economy is supported (£1/4 million comes in from inland Rights of Way, bit less for National Trail). The National Trail funding supports 7 full time post equivalents as well as wide benefits through contractors and other suppliers. Report commissioned by CCW in 2006 (Benefits to Business of National Trails in Wales).

National Trail user survey 1996/97 – long distance walkers gave direct benefit of £4m to local economy. Total benefit £14m (with the economic multiplier - £20m). Bit nervous about it at the time, however the foot and mouth outbreak led us to believe it, people didn't come. Integral part of people's visit to be able to walk, even a little bit. Continue to use electronic counters which monitor usage. Trend of numbers has continued. Comparable to user survey year.

50,000 walkers;

1999 - 53,000;

2003 - 52,000

2007 – 40,000

2010 – 57,000 – this is just below highest year in last 15 years.

The economic benefit of the National Trail hasn't decreased.

MU – What sort of counters do you use? How regularly do they get damaged?

DM – Managed under a contract since 2003. Easier to believe if someone else does it. Pressure pad counters – send data to data loggers. Can be interrogated by the minute. People can't see them – have to dig up data logger to service it.

LT – Same company has contract for CCW nature reserves.

DM – Might be worth talking to Stuart France at Linetop.

KS – Trail – people can't wander off it as with some of our paths.

TN – Most routes can be managed so that people are directed in such a manner that they cross them.

LT – Not only do we meet NP purposes, but also meet 7 out of 8 corporate objectives.

Q2 – How does the promotion of various routes impact on your work?

LT – practical management of route – helps us to prioritise which are most important. 200+ walks on website - they get higher management. Look to promote routes that are more meaningful and give views.

GH – How are routes promoted?

LT – Webwalks that we do. Available by a variety of means – website, CD, Info Centres. Gives public transport information, WC's, etc as well as interesting things to see on the walk. Can search all sorts of walks on web.

There are a number of other promoted routes within the county where we're involved and consulted – PCC, PLANED, etc. Try hard to work with them to ensure they don't promote paths we think are not appropriate. Can't think of anywhere that some paths are over used. Barafundle – plenty of visitors, but not having impact on network. Fairly robust, not susceptible to extreme weather. SPARC (predecessor to PLANED) put in place many walks with capital grants with no thought to long term use. Had loads of old stiles, routes not on the legal line etc. Sorted that out now and hope we don't go back down that route.

TN – Standards of promoted routes for easy access is higher, so costs more.

GH – Is that economically sustainable?

TN – Hopefully, we are careful to spec the routes to a higher standard when undertaking the initial works, but it's a significant hit at the start.

LT – Put in better surfaces, drainage, better quality furniture, etc

GH – sounds very impressive.

MU – sometimes disparity between grant funded capital works are not matched by funding to maintain.

TN – The nature of grant funding means we have a short period of time to plan our work

LT – Have to know your network and know what's easy to maintain. Proud of our relationship with landowners. Benefit of having our workforce instead of contractors. Some are awkward, but most welcome our staff.

DM – Around 150 landowners on National Trail

GH – Know there's huge support for Park

DM – The National Trail is a promoted route in itself. Has its own website/guide books, etc. Other promoted paths that impact on it. For example Sustrans route which has potential for conflict (hasn't developed as I feared however). Wales Coast Path being promoted on top of it. WCP identity is much stronger than National Trail identity –

upped profile of our Coast Path now, but time will tell whether WCP takes over completely or funding will fade away.

GH – Certain number of promotion on route (races, triathlons) how does that affect your work?

DM - Triple marathon (3 consecutive days) Dale to Pwllgwaelod; and a triple event on the Broad Haven to Dale section 10km; half marathon and marathon simultaneously. Appeared in last 5 years. Iron Man last summer. Red Bull event at Abereiddi in 2012.

Don't impact hugely on my time – managed by event co-ordinators. The damage is similar to sheep on land. Triple events (one autumn, one spring) happen when not many people around so conflict isn't too bad. Bit like sheep damage that disappears quite quickly. Monitoring it at present. Haven't had many complaints. Worried about risk assessments however. Some people have died from falling off the cliffs in past years. Risk is multiplied with runners, particularly if they haven't been warned. Think it's been addressed by triple marathon people.

LT – Difference between people who ask our advice beforehand and those who don't.

MU – Do they need permission?

DM – No, provided they are legally entitled to use a route of that status.

TN – Cyclists/motorcyclists need landowner permission to go on footpaths.

LT – Better if they come to us up front – can't stop them, but can give advice.

GH – Warned that increasing

DM – Alarming development, but so far our fears haven't been realised. However, economic benefits to business.

Question 3 – How does the fact that there are anomalies between what is on the ground and what is on maps impact on the work you do?

TN – Definitely – much of my time is spent dealing with anomalies. They exist for a host of reasons – route obstructed and been opened on another line; mapping so poor that you're not sure where it went. The most difficult to deal with are those PROW which are on a property boundary. Neighbour disputes will result in paths becoming obstructed and are very difficult to deal with..

MU – How long does it take to sort out?

TN – Started one in 2005 and completed in 2011. PCC has to be involved as well. Where it fits into PCC priority system is a problem.

MU – How many anomalies have you got?

TN – Hundreds, if not thousands. Working with PCC to digitise Definitive Map, but haven't quantified it?

MU – Do you get payment from PCC?

TN – No. We have delegated agreement, but no financial contribution.

MJ – Any manpower contribution? Do you work together if border is close?

TN – We work well with our immediate colleagues but these decisions are beyond their level. Need to sort out the delegation agreement. No manpower contribution. We do not have the capacity to maintain metalled surfaces but we currently do not have any provision to pass these back to PCC. . People within department who have skills.

LT – Legal work is biggest problem. Field complaints from public. Have to go out to talk to landowners.

MU – Coastal path. Bits fall into sea that cause problems?

DM – Pragmatic management rather than pedantic. Better to spend money to ease of passage rather than having paper right. Most cases are not an issue. One caused problems last year where 3 routes on map. People following map. Landowner issue couple of years before. Few days spent on each. Coast path, people look at view – don't follow maps. May change with use of GPS where walkers may decide to take 'proper' route. Asked for procedure that will enable us to deal with non-controversial lines. That doesn't mean TN has to do hundreds of orders. With GPS and digital mapping you can zoom in to greater detail than the maps were originally drawn up on this could show up hundreds of problems. Something needs to be done otherwise coast path, with compensation, could cause £750k to sort out.

TN – Property sales/planning. Unless we know where path goes, we could store up all sorts of problems. Sales held up because of anomalies.

#### Question 4 – What are the main obstacles to maintaining the whole footpath network?

LT – Practical point of view – byway network more difficult to maintain; legal aspects; costs of processing orders and changing maps – costs are huge. Support to take tougher line isn't there. Always tried to work with landowners. To change that may take enforcement action would be a complete change to the Authority's stance. Huge problem. Got maps of network. Few obstructed paths left in south – most are open – very lucky.

TN – Quality standards expected are rising. How many can we maintain at that level. Legislation holds us back.

MJ – People asking for circular routes now?

TN – Yes

LT – Key missing links on routes that would be meaningful. Carew links – obstructed. Making progress, but .... Can see logic of opening them and they're a higher priority.

MJ – Geraint Harries pointed that out on site visit.

MJ – Thank you. Appreciate time you've taken to come here. And effort you've put into it.

LT – Condition surveys in my area – interesting for you to see.

#### **Session 2 - Staff**

**Invited Participants:** Geraint Jones (Farm Conservation Officer),  
Michel Regelous (Conservation Policy)  
Charles Mathieson (Team Leader)

Question 1 - What do you see as the main impacts, if any, of route promotion on biodiversity and the countryside.

- GJ We see route promotion as a positive targeted way of managing the rights of way network by promoting certain routes and not others. Nature conservation can be taken into account in that prioritisation process. This needs to be put into historical context – our approach has been linear – focussing on width of path and not taking into account either side of path. For us that changed 12 years ago when we looked anew at managing the Coast Path. We then changed from our linear approach to area based approach. We looked at the site as a whole including vegetation control either side of path. There are clear benefits in terms of biodiversity and also clear benefits to the public. People like to walk footpaths but don't like walking through brambles. The approach is integrated with Charles team and we see promotion as a very positive thing.
- CM We don't have the same issues with erosion as Brecon. We have some places but you worry less on the coast as it is going back anyway and therefore the problem is temporary and manageable. When I first started with the National Park we would take out mini diggers on to the Coast Path. This would cause a lot of damage but in a year this damage would disappear.
- GJ You worry about the scar along coastline however very quickly the impact ceased to be dramatic. Long term impact improvement in land use either side of the path – active grazing key element. 12 years ago we got to grips with that and made a real impact in terms of biodiversity and improved visitor experience.
- MR The benefits are in terms of public awareness and enjoyment of wildlife. The public can be our eyes and ears and let us know if anything is happening. There is also a local benefit in terms of local users. If you take away the benefits then the visitors won't come.
- CM We underestimate the impacts. When we had to close footpaths because of foot and mouth disease, one place that really struck me was St Govans. In the area between the footpath and the Chapel the grass is usually kept very short however when it was not being used it suddenly sprung up with orchids – we didn't know they were there because of the level of grazing and trampling down by visitors. Another problem with grazing is that although we may have an agreement with a particular farmer he may not abide by it. There is also the recreational interest – walkers are not the only users. It is also used by fisherman, used for coasteering and by a full range of other people.
- MJ Repairing bridges can be quite costly – Aberiddy – great piece of work.
- CM Bridges are our biggest single expense apart from realignment. Bridges can be quite large and expensive. Would like to hand back bridges over a certain scale to the Council as they have bridge inspectors which we don't have.
- GH Have the Council refused to take back the maintenance of bridges or have they just put off making a decision.
- CM We never received an answer.
- GH It think that is outrageous.

- CM We don't report to the Council and let them know what's happening however, if they don't provide any funding then we should not have to report to them.
- MU The interesting thing it has flagged up for us that we are still under an Agreement from the 1980s which has never been renegotiated.
- CM We were recently going to hand paths back to the Council but that has changed. We wrote when Park was created asking for them to take over paths but we never got a reply. Now there is a problem as they say they never agreed to it. Risk of acquiring miles of rights of way for insurance purposes is significant.
- MJ I have seen evidence of bracken burning in Park Briefing. Is a risk assessment done for this?
- GJ We have our own process of burning but we don't burn bracken as this makes it stronger. We have embarked on a process of controlling bracken in the Newport area – real problems involved as we were going to aerial spray but this didn't happen. In terms of bracken control we operate exclusively using mechanical means where we can get machinery to a site however we do have hand held sprayers. A potential problem is that from December next year the active ingredient is being outlawed so there won't be anything available which is specific to bracken. In terms of general burning there are authorised burns for heather and Grass Burning Regulations. There are also malicious burns.
- MU How many malicious burns do you get?
- GJ Authorised not a problem. Malicious burns are an issue. Increased bureaucratic element – lots of burning gone underground – very difficult to police. Not hugely problematic on coastline. No big summer burns which are hugely destructive. Problem with Preselli Hills – significant decrease in number of grazing animals on big Preseli commons – lead to increase in vegetation and hills becoming difficult to shepherd. There are now practical difficulties in walking in certain areas of both big commons. Universal access is becoming increasingly problematic. Vegetation elements do impact either negatively or positively on biodiversity.
- GH We have an increasing number of walkers going through fields of grazing animals and being attacked. We arrange for grazing animals to be put in certain field. This decision is weighed on the potential impact on animal welfare and the welfare of walkers and the site location, nature of site and terrain are all taken into account. Within the farming environment the issue is with cows with calves at foot and people walking dogs which is a toxic combination. Landowners are aware of the law on where cattle can graze and landowners have a responsibility for cattle on their land.

Question 2 – What impact would you expect the Natural Environmental Framework to have on managing Rights Of Way in the Park?

- CM I hope we are doing everything we need to do as a small organisation. The position of Head of Recreation Management is very different from being a Rights of Way Officer and how you do your job is different. I have perceived my job as a manager and as a promoter and we have historically gone too far on the management side. At a Members Seminar 4-5 years ago we were told we should be doing more on the promotion side. We have now changed that. I hope we are doing quite a bit and with our new structure the Delivery Team will respond to the needs of about five different commissioning bodies. Coast Path needs to be cut about May/June time and we have approximately 100 miles to be cut. At the moment we cut it and leave it on the

ground which is not ideal. New structure might enable us to cut, pick it up and take it away.

- GJ Joined up thinking – holistic approach. Concept of eco system services. Focus you and make you think about what you are doing. National Parks are generally ahead of the game and have informed the development of the Natural Environmental Framework. It is important that other organisations adopt this agenda. Dubious as to whether the NEF will get off the ground however it would be a shame if it didn't. NEF is a positive thing.
- MR One thing framework will achieve – announcement of single environment body. Cynically it could be said that's all it was intended to achieve.
- MU It is interesting there are some funding schemes which are being looked at as being in the bottom drawer. Could be where Coast Path funding is to go.
- TB There are far too many empires to be disintegrated for NEF to work properly. John Griffiths very much in favour of NEF and will push as hard as he can. Don't know what outcome will be as he is pushing against a strong tide.
- MU Doing nothing is not an option. We digress.....
- MR From what I've seen of the principles emerging - Running through it is the idea of human, physical and mental well being – reinforces the argument that ROW access recreation will be bound up. We will have to wait for the details. Environmental Bill Green Paper coming out next year.
- MU It is due out on 30<sup>th</sup> January – with reference group already.
- MR This will be a key milestone in our understanding of what it is all about.
- MU We should now try to build in Authority time to debate and discuss as the consultation period is quite short.

Question 3 – Are we delivering our public Rights of Way duty effectively and providing value for money?

- CM I think we are delivering it more effectively than we were 10 years ago. We are now more mechanised and we are maintaining 20% more in terms of length of path with same workforce. We are really focussed on reducing transport time to avoid people driving when they should be working and to reduce mileage and wasted time. We are expensive compared to Brecon and this is something we need to look at. This could be the method of calculation or maybe we need to do things differently. It may be expensive as we use our own staff however I would fight to maintain this. All the work we do is on someone else's land. There is a communication issue – farmers have long memories – if you do a bad job (bad fencing, turn up late, leave gate open) it will be remembered forever. However if you turn up and do a good job it sends a good message to farmers. There is a cost comparison between using own staff and contractors however a contractor will do exactly as specified in the contract but staff will do that little bit extra and this makes the cumulative cost for the contractor not very much lower.

It is also expensive as we use Welsh oak furniture – built in our own workshop and it is difficult to be cheaper than private sector however again there are lots of add-ons (not using chemicals, woodland). Hard to decide if we are good value for money but we do provide a Rolls Royce service and we have the finest landscape in the country.

- GJ I would like to echo Charles' comments. Contractors generally want a quick in and out and the most cost effective way of working. If we are fencing a straight line a contractor will be more effective than us. Generally terrain we manage is difficult and awkward e.g. stony and muddy. Contractor will give you a price but because of the difficulties it will be sky high. Contractors can do some jobs effectively but not the more difficult, awkward tasks. I believe that our in-house teams are cost effective and we have won international praise for what we do. Historically we have set the bar high and we have had the resources to do that. One option would be to take things down a notch but there would be consequences and the public would not like that. It would need a political will to do that. Think it would be a retrograde step. Internal teams – years of experience and landowner/public relationships.
- KS You can't put a price on those relationships.
- MU Defining value for money is not necessarily about how much you spend per kilometre. What does the service mean to the people who use it?
- CM If you ask people what activities they undertake the majority of people would say a short walk of up to 3 hours. I changed my job to include the tourism element of the Park – what I have tried to get across is I introduce myself as the person who manages Pembrokeshire's biggest tourist attraction – the Coast Path. More people use the Coast Path than Oakwood or any other attraction. The tourism trade has a huge interest in the Coast Path.
- MU Do you think networks may well be less joined up and less effective if you didn't have the tourism overview?
- CM It is difficult to sustain both. Very different roles – one is a policy role, one is team leader for a large team. Good for Authority to split them into two. Lost some focus on team.
- TB Firstly we must as an Authority investigate why Brecon is cheaper than us. Secondly we must maintain our own staff and as long as I am a member I will fight that not one Warden loses his position. Absolutely paramount that we keep warden services going. Through them we have interaction with farmers, visitors and tourism industry – absolutely essential.
- MJ Totally agree. With Community Councils, Wardens and Rangers are first point of contact and this is very important to keep.
- GH I agree – this is a manifestation of best practice.
- MR Perception of value for money and customer satisfaction. There are different experiences we need to service – this has implications on cost basis.
- GH There are ever increasing expectations of delivery. This poses a real problem and is a very important point.
- CM The high quality end is selling and we need to promote this. People want different things. In remote areas we don't add in circular walks – we could add them but once you start to do that your mind set changes – risk assessment changes – need more signs and footpaths. We need a range of opportunities. Some people want a rugged path to walk.

Question 4 – Is the management of the public Rights Of Way Network helping to meet National Park Purposes?

- MR This question is related back to questions of disturbance. Firstly maintenance of the public Rights of Way network is synonymous to second National Park Purpose and related to first National Park Purpose. This is integral to what we are about as a National Park Authority. In relation to disturbance point – to look at the effects of disturbance you have to look at what effects that access might be displacing. In Castlemartin the military activity is replacing agriculture – same in regard to coast path – if we didn't have one we would not have a coast path corridor like we have today – management for conservation purposes.
- GJ I echo that. Great strength is clarity of statutory remit. Absolutely clear on first and second purpose. Principles are there and set. It is a question of managing those principles. Management of woodland estate is a good example of good practice. We have created for the first time a whole network of woodland paths which are popular. Driven by biodiversity and nature conservation policies but we now have a wonderful network of woodland paths.
- MJ We saw evidence of this in our site visit with Geraint Harries.
- GH As well as the purposes we have economic responsibility. Huge tourist attraction – we fulfil that as well.
- CM We have a Recreation Plan. There was a danger of promoting things we couldn't manage. No point promoting Tenby as it is already busy. There are some places that need more promoting. Freshwater West – big beach, undamaged – quality is remoteness –this gets very busy with perhaps 90 cars in the summer. Heavy use of camping in dunes, surfing, fires. When writing articles in Coast to Coast we should think about what we are promoting. Instead of promoting somewhere which is already busy like Freshwater West we should promote somewhere that perhaps does not get as many visitors i.e. Angle Peninsula. More remote places which are not easy hits for promotion. Don't promote places which are already busy. Martins Haven in spring when all boat trips are going does not need promoting. However we have economic drivers for example Red Bull Cliff Diving next year – sometimes we have to look at economic benefit even though we might not want to. Could perhaps promote the event with a little bit of spin on it.
- MU Do you have Marine SACs as honey pots are issues we face in Brecon.
- CM We have 3 but they don't have a great effect. We have the Pembrokeshire Marine Code which is a voluntary code of practice. If there is wilful disturbance that causes damage we could prosecute but does not happen very often.

MJ then brought the session to a close.

**Session 3 - Users**

**Invited Participants:** Mr Mike Phippard, Pembrokeshire Ramblers Association (MP)  
Mr Peter Harwood, Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum (PH)  
Mr Tony Rooney, Trail Riders Federation Wales (TR)

Q1 – How would you like to see us promote the Rights of Way (RoW) network

PH – All of the questions are complicated and require discussion. Promotion can take many facets, have to recognise that key word is resources. Budgets/resources are a complicated

game of staff and Authority Members making decisions at all levels to ensure budgets are put into effect. Need to consider before all else. Evidence is needed to show the value of RoW and thus justify the resources to ensure they are promoted in the right way.

Excellent study on the Economic impact of walking and hill walking in Wales published by Cardiff University in June 2011 which outlines the benefits that RoW are having. Very comprehensive. Many other studies have been undertaken, all show advantages of RoW network. The study states that hill walking in Wales generates approximately £562M from which you have to deduct costs of opening up new, and maintaining existing, RoW. Know costs over whole Wales amount to £35m to maintain existing network and increase to a degree. Therefore still a lot of economic benefit. This kind of return is really positive and shows that the sector deserves promotion.

MJ – as far as tourism is concerned, national trail is way ahead of bluestone, and other attractions in Pembrokeshire

MP - Coast path so good, users delight in it, then go home work out other routes – other inland paths not so good and people then complain to The Ramblers.

MJ – parks aware of situation regarding inland paths

GH – this is second questions – is

MP – economic downturn is quite recent – 1/5 RoW in park not available for use.

GH – where I live, coming down from Carningli, there must be 12/15 different ways of coming down. Many of them parallel

PH - 72 RoW in Newport

TR - Newport special case. One of better examples. Other areas lot worse

PH – promotion – aware cross cutting issues – those that even more enhance value of RoW network. Need work closely with tourism, Welsh Government (working with Ramblers) British Horse Society, Trail Riders Federation, Sustrans, cyclists touring club. All have inputs into own rights of way – BOATS, RUPPS, footpaths. All need to be consulted.

MJ – after lunch have tourism, farming interests and business interest. Will have input from them.

PH – bodies must be consulted and promotion schemes worked out. Need to highlight to Senior Management Team and Members other aspects – all Wales coast path, health agenda (7/8 diseases which walking cycling horse riding improves dramatically – diabetes, heart disease, cancer, anxiety, etc – many in health field) think in more innovative ways.

MU – in Brecon looking at prescription walking along some paths eg canal.

TR – like to see more joined up promotion – diff orgs in National Park, PCC promoting diff things not as one voice. Planed did promotion on routes over Preseli's some years ago – several are now impassable (very boggy). I know routes, but others from away. Shouldn't have been promoted if not open.

MJ – park won award for horse riding in Preseli's - positive things are happening.

TR – that an example.

MU – we faced similar – pots of money sometimes have to be spent.

GH – can you suggest better ways of doing something?

TR – Anthony Richards on case – have looked at it and reviewing a way of sorting out – eg putting in a raft.

GH - How could people be informed before they set out?

TR - Internet based – warnings.

MU - Planned to update website – beyond our control. Happens in Local Authorities and elsewhere

PH – part of problem is that in past WAG have worked in silo's – transport provided impetus for walking and cycling strategy – other strategies in recreational section where most of tourism related stuff takes place. Hope have one strategy that covers all and that funded

JAB – 25/30 years paths that were RUPPS/BOATS downgraded to footpaths caused probs. At least 5 RUPPS mainly at behest of ramblers. Think totally wrong – were open to all. Could prove been used by vehicles in last 50 years, inspector decided to downgrade.

MP – RUPPS usually downgraded to bridleways

TR – depends on inspector.

MP – in 2000 series of walks led by rangers/voluntary wardens – they stopped. Walk was a good intro to park. Lady came out and did an inspection – too many white middle class participants and can't continue and it stopped.

JAB = do still organise walks as well as the annual coast path walk event

MP - Price of coast path walk gone up 25%. PCC has website – could there be cross fertilisation. Longest path on National Park website is 8 mile walk. When do organised walk doing 12 – 14 miles per day – these are experienced walkers there needs to be longer walks.

CM – change in walks programme and web walks. At time change was made, emphasis to encourage new walkers. Experienced walkers have range of books, etc. Had biggest activities and events programme of all National Parks, thought it better to prioritise those that attracted most people – tended to be shorter walks. Those who wouldn't otherwise be attracted. Experienced walkers go and plan own walks.

MP – can be very unlucky if the walk you plan includes a path that is inaccessible. Publicise walks in free paper – read and then forgotten about. Good radio station in Pembrokeshire. Could promote specific walks on Radio Pembrokeshire.

MJ – the National Park has a slot every Friday morning.

PH – increasing crucial importance of volunteers. Are several teams in Pembrokeshire sure the same in Brecon. Also have to deal with issues of insurance. Have 30 volunteers in Newport. Do masses of work which helps Park enormously. Other is ROWIP – are v closely monitored by statutory Local Access Forum's – appeal that Local Access Forum's are considered as 1<sup>st</sup> option. Provide advice to councils. V important tool.

Q3 – Why do you/your members use the Rights of Way Network

TR – enjoyment of countryside. Trailriders – very little in way of byways in Pembrokeshire – few unclassified road. Not much offroad. Horse riders – wonderful networks and places to see – see more than if walking.

PH – I work from a map if possible hate signposts. In countryside – all slides on screen in PCNPA reception.

MP – ramblers meet every week of year – to enjoy countryside – in park and PCC . paths are also intercommunity links. Economics of driving – people walking more these days.

MJ – did discuss circular walks earlier.

MP – in RoWip

TR – measuring where to use resources. Also awareness of where is being used. Chicken and egg – maintenance and use. In real world all can't be open and used.

#### Q4 – How can we improve the Rights of Way network?

KS – dependent on resource

PH – open up all paths and then decide on priorities. Have to prioritise. RoWip does this. Deciding not to open path has dangers. May not have been used for 30 years until opened up. Needs to be evaluated when deciding which paths to open. Some will be totally illogical, but won't know until evaluate until potential for popular use.

TR – biggest thing – varies nationally – is basic signage. Motor cycle riding – where not correctly signed- byway rather than bridleway. People end up in wrong place. Especially in mountains where multiple paths. Do enjoy map reading.

KS – is a balance between people wanting to find own way.

PH – survey of people walking – only 15% said could read map.

Even more important with hand held GPS. Even using Google earth.

TR – use new technology to promote routes that way – that are 100% usable. Others could be in a different colour.

MU – can make signage less obtrusive.

MP – is a legal requirement to signpost from road. Signage important at a farm – which way through? Divert farms around farms. Highly dangerous places. Also feels obtrusive. People want to get away from technology when walking

TR – work going on with RoW in Park is good. If there is money know where it can be spent. Trying to achieve 100%. Eventually opening up more and more.

PH - In BBNPA- groups of children doing duke of Edinburgh. Excellent way of introducing youngsters to countryside.

#### **Session 4 - Business**

**Invited Participants:** Chris Hogarth (Chief Executive Pembrokeshire Tourism), Stephen Watkins (CLA), Rebecca Voyle (Farmers Union of Wales)

Question 1 - How does having the rights of way network open and promoted affect your business?

- RV From landowners perspective – some farm business diversify i.e. Bed & Breakfasts and Campsites and they will use Rights Of Way network to their advantage to encourage people to come to the area. However for some landowners there are more negatives than positives due to issues of having people crossing their land. However because of the way National Park's deal with the problem we have very few problems even though we dislike having the network we don't have huge problems. Issues can be day to day management problems – we need to consider which fields are used at different time of the year for livestock. Problems with dog walkers – liability if something happens. Have been instances where people have been seriously injured or killed when dogs are involved. Big area of concern to landowners. Education process need to be done with people who walk their dogs if there are livestock in fields. Secondly be aware that if livestock do become interested then let the dog go as this is safer. It's the dog they are interested in and not the person. In Pembrokeshire lots of people not used to be around livestock as they come from urban areas need to be educated. Maintenance issues for landowners. Lots of work done by NP to keep main routes clear but landowners have to keep other areas clear. Concerns with regard to trespass. Concerns with regard to security. ROW near to main building – don't know who is walking on the routes – increasing issues of theft in rural areas. ROW network does give people more access. Two not necessarily linked but does not help. People may take opportunity to take things that don't belong to them. For any industry where you have people accessing your property you will be nervous about it. There can be issues that need to be addressed. Liability is the biggest issue.
- CH Message that is coming out for tourism it is essential. Most people come to walk. Over and over again the ROW is essential. Circular walks particularly important to people. 80% of trade coming from walkers.
- SW As a farmer I approve of the ROW network. I am a walker so take a keen interest from that point of view. Two fold answer – good and bad aspects. Good – potential source of income from this recreational activity is enormous – should I want to exploit that I could take advantage of several paths coming through farm – sales of local produce to people passing through. Bad aspect – perhaps the worst aspect is security. Theft from farms is becoming increasingly regular and it is very difficult to be able to secure property if you have a ROW coming through it. Some people ignore the fact that there is no right of way through our farm yard and walk straight through. Exacerbated by people coming through with people coming through with dogs not on leads. Going through a farmyard with dogs not on a lead can be dangerous. Livestock get very excited by dogs. Other potential lack of security is if you live in a house which NP staff have described as iconic, very old property, we do get increasing numbers of people who walk to the house and then walk back simply out of curiosity. I make a point of speaking to them but some only take pictures of the house.

Question 2 - How Could We Improve The Way In Which We Promote The Rights Of Way Network?

- SW Would suggest we have to get away from the idea – wholeheartedly agree with the principle that no paths should be shut – however I also think the path network should be rationalised. The idea that it is a necessity to keep every path open is completely unsustainable. Not asking for them to be closed but to quietly fade away. Main paths that are a great attraction could be made more appropriate if diversions from the paths are made simpler and quicker. Process for diversions are

lengthy – all boxes have to be ticked because of all the bodies involved. If process could be simplified and made quicker would be beneficial.

Second thing would be easement of intransigence of alteration (possible to avoid going through a farmyard) of status quo on footpaths with some bodies. Individual members of bodies are pleasant. Causing bad feeling on the part of the landowner and on the part of the walker. Security aspect is the most serious.

GH which bodies do you think are intransigent.

SW From observation – Ramblers Association.

CH No. of suggestions backing up what Steve said. We do have levels of paths in some ways. Some really well used and others not. Does it make sense to keep up the paths that are very rarely used. Should we concentrate on those best used. Possibly a rating system. A1 fantastic route – others that are not of much use. Difficult to say to close paths but using resources to keep open paths that are not well used could be a waste of money. Clear message is any blocked path is a problems. Tourists will not like this. People need to know more about circular walks – Coastal path well represented – circular walks are amazing and deserve to be just as well known. Keep people in a smaller locality – good for accommodation providers.

One concern is that sometimes the routes publicised include road walking and roads are getting busier. More specialised cycle and horse riding routes which do not take you on to the roads network.

Cows and horse issue for walkers also. Even experienced walkers can find it daunting with a field of cows. Some specific thing Milford Golf Club has a problem with a path that was promised but not finished.

Concerns about parking charges – particularly Poppit Sands – very expensive. Suggest Information Sign is in the wrong place –

MJ this is being dealt with.

CH Suggestions of promoting package walking holidays to give a better idea and better flavour. Links to public transport, coastal buses – tourist providers try to promote these.

Suggestion to allow more kiosks or café to allow walkers to pick up snacks en route. Accommodation providers side – you are not able to pick up walkers using your car. If you advertise your accommodation and say you will pick up walkers at the end of the day you have to then treat your car as a taxi even if you don't charge for picking them up.

MU In Spain they take you to the beginning of the walk and then pick you up at the end of the walk but they cannot do this here.

CH Local Authorities won't allow us to do this. It does not make sense. Possibly insurance implications also.

Inland walks need more promotion – they are stunning.

North Pembrokeshire is somewhat neglected is one comment I received.

VH Does come down to prioritisation of funding. Promoting routes – well used routes promote themselves – others (circular routes inland). Certain row are not of any interest of anyone now. Would not be the best use of limited resources to open these routes. No matter how much you promote people will not use them for a number of reasons.

Would suggest as well as promoting the paths we should educate people and let them know what they should be doing when using the paths – health & safety, rubbish, gates being left open. How they need to behave in the countryside.

### Question 3 What Do You Do To Promote The Rights Of Way Network Through Your Own Business Management?

- CH Because we are attracting a lot of walkers we have to do a lot for them. There is a Walkers Welcome so you have to display the Countryside Code, separate drying areas for clothes and boots and washing facilities, you have to have maps – we have a library of walking books. That is the same for most of the people who responded. All providing at least some walking information to their guests. Keep public transport timetables and promote the use of public transport. One Member keeps photos on the wall of places you can walk to. They lend people maps and waterproofs also. They ask guests to tell them if they hit problems and they will then report it so future guests don't have the same problem. Tell guests where to look for tea, toilets, walkers welcome places – things you need. Obviously the most key thing is to talk to their guests and find out what they are interested in and send them on walks that will meet their needs. Find out if they are interested in history, seals, that sort of thing. Try and tailor it to the guests that you get. One responder had helped to put together a village footpath booklet in the past – would be interested to expand this and wondered if money was available.
- MU People reporting problems back to you – what do you do then?
- CH there is nothing specific in place. I would find out where the problem was and try to pinpoint the problem. I would then contact the council and try and get it sorted out.
- MU would it help if there was a list of simple guidance – if you find this problem this is the person to contact – NP Footpaths Officer, PCC
- CH Also if there was a list of known problems (i.e. landslip that would take time to sort) we could warn the guests not to use it.
- TB Very interested in diverse opinion between this group and the previous group. On that we had a member of Ramblers who stated that the Park had been in existence for 60 years and had not opened all the paths – one fifth still closed. We are not closing but not maintaining certain parallel paths because it is a waste of money to be maintaining paths that are 50 to 100 metres apart going to the same place. Diversity of opinion is fantastic.
- SW We don't promote the row through our business at the moment but we could. We have one cottage that we let out but mainly only to friends. I would say that if you are encouraging people to go on walks then you should know the walk yourself. You know the length and time it takes, points of interest, what they should wear, where to get a drink – know your walks. Clear guides and possibly grading is a very good idea. Grading in terms of ease and grading in terms of interest. Believe in two car walks – leaving the car in one place then going and walking to another place. Sorry to hear about officialdom in picking people up from their walks. Coastal buses can help – one car – walk then coastal bus. Feature walks on your website for accommodation. Drying room was incorporated in the cottage when we altered it. Large comfortable shower. Local culture is immensely important – song, venues, food. One technical thing which we do as far as promoting is we are careful where we place livestock if we know a path is going to be regularly used – benign in our use of the slurry spreader.

MU taxi regulations. Is that peculiar to Pembrokeshire or does it apply elsewhere.

Julian – should apply everywhere through taxi licensing.

CH Asked what is the penalty and its £5000 fine.

TB National policy and covers whole country.

GH as we are in the EU this does not seem to cover other European countries. Very disappointing as it would be very helpful to walkers.

RV No further points. We would not actively promote the row network. Realistically those members that have a business in tourism it would have covered the points already used.

### **Session 5 - Forum**

**Invited Participants:** Mr Derek Rowland, a Voluntary Warden and leader of annual coast path walk  
Henry Langen – LAF – Pembrokeshire access group  
Mike Phippard - Footpath Ramblers  
Jill Eaton-Evans - Friends of PCNPA  
Anton Wislocka – St Dogmaels Footpath Group  
Jill Wislocka – St Dogmaels Footpath Group

Derek Rowland

#### **Q1 If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?**

Should still go into PROW if reduced, Voluntary Wardens could do more. Currently spare 1 day per month, we could be out 2x per month, so funding could be made up. More funding could go to doing more for disabled – some paths are more wheelchair friendly – probably no more than ½ mile in total.

#### **Q2 What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?**

All ROW to be opened and cleared. Walked over 200 walks – all on website – did report. Then did PCC. All in NP were fine, those in PCC were disappointing. PCC had idea – just to tick box for CROW Act – 84 walks documented to go on PCC website, but never did. PCNPA footpaths are marvellous. Not think of RoW that is not available. More being done with bridleways.

#### **Q3 What, if any, other key issues for the future of the Rights of Way network do you wish too bring to our attention?**

Think do wonderful job. Plugging for long Annual walk that is organised. This year there were ladies from Texas and Switzerland who were over the moon. Not much more to be done.

Henry Langen

#### **Q1 If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?**

More disabled access – accessibility for all – where possible. There is not going to be 100% on this. But there is a lot you can do. Spent lot time in France, where they tarmac accessible paths. Would be good here – stone paths can be washed away in heavy rain. Obviously not every path. Go extra bit where possible, especially where funding available.

**Q2 What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?**

Not know much about acts and laws, as to whether being met or not.

**Q3 What, if any, other key issues for the future of the Rights of Way network do you wish too bring to our attention?**

Key future for RoW network is to consider area to bring quality up to disabled access. 23% of population of UK are disabled. Not just wheelchairs.

Mike Phippard

**Q1 If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?**

200+ walks on website should be walkable. Also those advertised in NP publications. Have a statutory responsibility to open RoW. Park was established 60 years ago, yet 18.5% of paths are not available 125miles. Ok if not enough funding, but think that there is a lack of will.

MJ - Prioritising those that are well used to ensure accessible.

MP – Nothing seems to happen very quickly.

MJ – also legal requirements – talking to landowners.

**Q2 What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?**

1/5 that not open, should be opened up.

Enforcement – attitudes of landowners seems to be delay. They don't fight, but delay. There is a path at Cresswell Quay that would avoid road, can also be used by locals to get to the pub also. Is a path, but blocked for years, goes through someone's garden – has been 'looked into' for years. Just sorting out legal aspects.

MJ – this is part of the purpose of scrutiny, to highlight those things that not working.

MP - also paths by Foel Drigarn, Crymych. Route on map, to avoid road, but it is not available.

MP – Also maintenance takes place over summer, not opening up RoW. That is restricted to winter when weather not so good. Some work should be focussed over summer.

MP – Cemaes head path opened up in winter, all but a signpost, which was left lying on ground until the following spring.

CM – not done over summer as Wardens fully committed to cutting paths.

Mr Phippard asked to provide a copy of list of paths which he would like to see opened.

Jill Eaton-Evans

**Q1 If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?**

All paths that are open to remain open. Good job to replace styles with gates. Footpaths that give access to coast should also be prioritised.

**Q2 What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?**

All paths open. Lot people want to walk circles, and not all footpaths behind coast path are accessible.

Appropriate car parking facilities.

Animals in fields – separating people/dogs from cattle/sheep.

Acceptable diversion around active farmyards

Making sure that can find out what is open and what is not

KS – rating to define how open or not/accessible or not. From time to time or year to year.

HL – some paths I tested were ok first time, but after heavy rain they become inaccessible. Said previously not everyone who is disabled requires wheelchair access. If there was a drive to make all paths freely accessible for all, would end up doing nothing. Many people could cope with minimal changes.

KS – 23% pop of the population has disability.

MJ – gates that open both ways.

HL – signage is important. Signs for Horses, walkers, disability accessible badge should also be displayed to know whether a wheelchair user could attempt that path.

Jill Wislocka

**Q1 If Rights of Way funding were reduced where would you like to see us focussing our funding?**

Links. From St Dogmaels people walk to Moylegrove, people think there is a nice connection back to St Dogmaels but it's blocked. There are key blockages. Consequence is people have enjoyed path, but come across obstructive path, conclude that locals are not friendly and walkers not welcome – they will go to other areas that seem more welcoming.

2012 Wales Coath path – coastal strip very narrow – use momentum to complete loops and links – bring benefit to communities. NPs have a duty –St Dogmaels only a mile outside of National Park yet it can't be searched for on the website. More mutual benefit with National Park and centre like St Dogmaels. Llwybrau Llandudoch said would benefit if better for loops and links. Make a different experience for visitors. Important out of season when coastal buses don't run every day. People longer to explore NP focuses on South and north is neglected.

A Pembrokeshire based package holiday for Pembrokeshire. Needs to be more precise – people coming by public transport.

Car Park Charges – charging for £5/ day is of putting.

MP – if walk from St D's – walk along road. Not even a pavement. Why not follow coast.

DR – on going debate of where path starts – I think it starts in Poppit.

CM – Wales Coath Path one of top priorities was to negotiate a path between Poppit and St Dogmaels, but landowner not willing. Political will not there – as the land is outside the NP.

MP – if that was attitude, path would never have opened. 40 years to get last bit open

**Q2 What key aspirations do you have for the Rights of Way network that are currently not being met?**

JW - Park has 2 purposes – all threatened by invasion of Himalayan Balsam - recently cleared 5 acres at Cippyn and Poppit, however a similar area remains by Cemaes Head, and it has the potential to spread. Like to work together to prevent ecological disaster.

Definitive maps poorly digitised – problems when developed

Maps that park produced should have better publicity – for sale in shops, etc

Links to Community websites

Key things missing on website – people want café and toilets, etc marked.

No path between Poppit marshes

On side of maps a pointer to say “café 10 minutes”

DR – as a walk leader, park victim of success, since maps produced, fewer walkers on guided walks, as people saying why pay for a guided walk when can download it for free.

AW – coast path is jewel – walkers want to sample – want to have a base and walk from, not carry everything. Loops and links essential otherwise places become bypassed.

AW – no public transport routes in St Dogmaels on a Sunday. Feel ignored by National Park.

GH – interesting to know if other areas had a similar problem with transport.

MU – problems of people not being able to collect at end walk – taxi licensing.

CM – Coastal buses are fewer in winter. More than there were 10 years ago. Almost never enough and are also under used.

JW – That is why we need a Pembrokeshire based company.

CM – Planed did run company. Perhaps not commercial?

GH – many companies come from holiday booking companies in Scotland and England.

MP – paths in St Dogs rather above normal quality. St Dogmaels CC always very active.

DR – NP is 250m<sup>2</sup> and has over 200 walks. Can make any distance you like by combining shorter walks

OS Map shows all paths, whether or not they are open. Website maps more readily available.

JAB - take on board points made, but impossible under financial constraints. Impossible to keep paths open. Agree that ours way ahead of PCC paths.

With PCC you have to chase and chase to get open. Signpost left sitting. Where Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire join, footbridge sat on bank for 4 years.

MP – comparison with PCC not valid – NP doesn't have to grit roads or provide sheltered housing – they have other priorities.

AW – National Park is a treasure. Think should not be saying where efforts can be reduced.

JEA – will have to work with PCC to ensure loops and links open.

Send copy of key issues report to Henry Langen.



It costs £2,000 to carry out a Diversion Order.

One future law that may be beneficial when it comes into effect is a SSSI Diversion Order, which would allow CCW the power to divert routes if they are impacting upon an SSSI, which does apply in this case.

The current solution though, is to encourage visitors to follow the promoted route which doesn't actually follow a right of way but is the safest option.

***KS enquired as to the extent of the mismatches between map and on the ground routes.***

JH confirmed that there are 600 anomalies.

HP added that a large number of these anomalies occur as a result of the original method of draughting maps, in that squares of mapped terrain were put together but the squares were perhaps not matched correctly giving rise to disjointed ROW. Also, in some cases historically the definitive path would stop at a farm gate leaving gaps in the ROW. Also, where property has been sold and changed hands in the past the owner has occasionally blocked access.

JH – The Authority would have to invest a large amount of resources in contesting anomalied paths on privately owned land.

HP – The ROWIP funding can only be used on ROW.

***MU suggested that perhaps caveats to the ROW could be put into NP leaflets and/or published on the website?***

HP responded that for the NP to produce their own maps would be at cost. It is possible to contact Ordnance Survey, the ROW would remain on the map with the permissive path shown as a red dotted line. If a path is diverted it is usually waymarked.

As there are anomalies between the NP promoted routes and what is on the OS maps, visitors to the area are regularly getting lost, even though they have sensibly taken an OS map with them. To minimise the number of visitors getting lost maps the NP has undertaken to produce own maps.

HP – At the waterfalls, some Diversion Orders can be carried out with ease e.g. there are ROW that go down sheer cliff faces and across the top of a waterfall.

There is a hierarchy within the ROW network as to where the ROWIP funding and resources are to be targeted and often it is the paths that are used in large numbers which receive priority attention.

The ROWIP funding has been extremely beneficial in that there is a more focussed approach towards the ROW network. It will assist with highlighting circular routes around communities and with providing the waymarking around the route.

HP added in respect of the Waterfalls area - As much of the funding is based around the ROW when the major routes in the area are off the ROW it is difficult to find funding to improve them despite them perhaps being the best routes for visitors to take.

**2. What are the main obstacles to maintaining the footpath network?**

HP responded with the following list:

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Lack of staff | 5. Landowners     |
| 2. Money         | 6. Access         |
| 3. Time          | 7. Increased use  |
| 4. Legislation   | 8. Climate change |

JH expanded on the **lack of staff** issue by explaining that they have lost 5 members of staff since 2009, which equates to a third of their overall workforce. The bulk of wardens' time is spent on public rights of way with an emphasis on access.

**Money** - The nature of jobs to do include mending wobbly stiles, waymarking and correcting missing or incorrect signage. Many jobs can be carried out with very little cash input just using staff time, for example, keeping drains clear of debris can ensure a path stays well maintained. Often stiles or gates can be repaired rather than replaced. Vegetation clearance involves staff time without much expense.

HP if there is not the funding in place for materials, work can still be carried out, such as mending drains, there is a lot of work on the ground without funding.

The Wardens' service is experiencing cuts in their budgets but there is an increase in the path network usage.

A scheme whereby farmers have received payment for installing/replacing stiles and gates on their land has proven very successful (CCW funded).

JH - The wardens' service has good links with and works regularly with volunteers and the army. Volunteers are used as much as possible but they often lack the skills required for a lot of the work to be carried out. Also, volunteers need supervising and planning etc. Great success has been found with trainee wardens who work with the wardens for longer periods of time enabling them to be trained up and gain necessary skills and who also benefit from the arrangement.

The wardens also use contractors for the larger jobs, mainly resurfacing work, but again a lot of time and effort goes into procurement, planning and supervision.

Public Liability Insurance costs the NP around £5 million and involves a large amount of paperwork before a permit to work can be granted.

JH A major aspect of wardens' work is that whilst carrying out PROW work they liaise well with and within communities giving out a positive NP message and forging good links with local groups and individuals.

***Cllr Mike James enquired as to whether there were many problems encountered within the BBNP with dog walkers crossing fields with cattle, especially bulls. A PCNP issue.***

HP responded that there are occasional occurrences of this nature but it is not a major issue.

**Time&Legislation-** HP – It is important to target resources. At the end of day there are tasks that must to be carried out, such as complaints have to be dealt with, a broken stile has to be dealt with. If an SSSI is in a poor condition because of footpath issues this has to be dealt with. HP estimates that approximately 95% of their time is spent on these 'have to do' jobs and confirmed that the results of under-management can be devastating.

JH gave an example of a complaint received in the Summer of 2011 where a homeowner in Penderyn with a PROW running along the side complained that people were dumping rubbish and fly tipping against the wall of their property causing the wall to lean into their

garden. On checking the definitive map it was discovered that the path in question passed through gardens and houses on the housing estate and would cost £1,000s to sort.

**Landowners** – Ensuring that landowners comply at all times with legislation can be very time consuming. To understand from the landowner perspective, many footpaths pass straight through farms and only do so because they are following old postal routes. Permissive routes which temporarily divert around private land are often the best answer.

**Access** – Many routes are in hard to reach areas and as such can prove very difficult to maintain.

**Increased Use** – The rise in popularity of the ‘staycation’ where people are increasingly choosing to stay at home or not travel far and take part in an ever broadening range of outdoor activities means that routes are becoming more quickly eroded. HP highlighted the irony of their workload in that they spend half their time clearing vegetation which has built up due to under use and the other half improving/repairing eroded paths due to over use.

**Climate change** – An increase in the wet Summers we are experiencing along with the improvement in wet weather gear widely available leads to devastated paths as visitors are less put off taking to the path/outdoor activity by rain or bad weather as they are better equipped and wet or sodden ground can be more quickly eroded with usage than when dry.

### **3. How does the promotion of various routes impact on your work?**

HP confirmed that promotion of a route has a huge impact on the wardens’ work and added that so often a route is promoted before consideration of how this will impact on user numbers, and then we are left to deal with the consequences. The promotion doesn’t only take the form of leaflets but is often broadcast to huge audiences via TV and radio as well. This promotion is frequently carried out by the NPA organisation itself.

For example, the high profile programme ‘Weatherman Walking’ was filmed at the Waterfalls site and broadcast 6-7 years ago on the BBC Wales channel, this led to a noticeable increase in visitors.

There is of course promotion that is initiated from outside the NP which causes major problems, such as guest houses which offer 4WD activities.

JH – added that it is important to join up the various departments with the National Park and open up lines of communication as the process is not always as smooth as it could be.

The Beacons Way footpath which crosses the National Park was created in 2005 in consultation with the Brecon Beacons Park Society. The process was not seamless and there are some glitches along the route but it is a Cat 1 route and has been done properly.

The Tourism section develops new routes and this puts added pressure on the wardens particularly in the Waterfalls area. If a route is promoted, it is essential to consider how the increased visitor numbers will impact the path and area as a whole.

HP – footpaths need to be robust enough for the footfall, especially within an SSSI as fines can be incurred if they are not up to standard.

***Cllr Mike James added that similarly, a high profile event recently took place in Tenby, the Ironman competition, which involved 1,500 competitors and many more visitors to the area as spectators and broadcasters. Good to host high profile event but the impact on the area must be considered.***

#### **4. What, if any, other issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?**

JH – feels that the Authority should seek to develop cycling within the National Park. This should include more off road cycling and family routes. 9% of the ROW is open to horses and push bikes and as such cannot easily be promoted to the relevant user groups as is. There is a lack of routes which means less choice for the user and also some gnarly farmers. There are certain times of year e.g. lambing season, when some farmers are not happy with people using the ROW and this leads to a less than positive visitor experience.

There is a lack of resources to be able to tackle the legal issues. There is limited legal time and the required consultation period leads to back up. There have never been any court proceedings for Obstruction.

HP felt that it is important to consider who is using the ROW? There has been a huge increase in popularity and also in the range of outdoor activities available and this has impacted massively on the ROW network. HP felt that far too often the focus is on walkers, cyclists and horse riders but at the waterfalls area daily visitors include organised or formal groups of walkers, gorgewalkers, climbers and cavers.

Life span/quality of materials. A minor point but the quality of the timber currently used is not lasting as long as it used to. Perhaps the price of the timber is cheaper but it gives rise to a false economy as often wardens who have been with the Park for 10 years or so are having to replace timber they remember installing originally. Better quality timber may be more expensive but will last longer.

Value for Money. HP feels that the system of Estate Wardens within the National Park is outstanding. The expertise and efficiency of the wardens in maintaining and improving rights of way is excellent. They are specialists in carrying out this work. The NPA does occasionally outsource such work to contractors or volunteers, both viable options but wardens provide the best value for money.

HP felt that the system of prioritisation doesn't really reflect what needs to be carried out on the ground and needs strengthening. For example, if a complaint is received about a path it has to be acted upon whether it is a priority route or not. This is the case even if it is only, say, one complaint a year.

The wardens are increasingly working with other public bodies to get their work done. The wardens can offer specialist teams that are efficient at carrying out work to the network whereas other public bodies often have the funding but not the specialist staff – e.g. NP wardens worked with Forestry Commission Wales very closely and are currently in the process of planning work with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

JH highlighted the fact that the funding contributions from the Local Authorities with respect to ROW network maintenance are trivial amounts in terms of what is carried out on their behalf on the network. These amounts have been frozen for the last few years and in this respect the Las are receiving excellent value for money.

HP the Wardens carry out ROW work during the day and then quite often catch up with emails and paperwork out of hours say, in the evening or on the weekend. This should be appreciated.

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**Expert Witness: Bradley Welch – Management Plan Officer  
Impact on Countryside and Policies**

### **1. What do you see as the main impacts, if any, of route promotion on biodiversity and the countryside?**

The impact is both positive and negative and the nature and extent of the impact is specific to the site and its relative sensitivity. Other considerations would be what the conditions are, what the special features of it are etc but also what then are the drivers and stressors and agents of change within that area. This is going to be dependent upon the mechanism or the type of use/recreation/promotion in the area and so generically speaking, the more intense and the more technology involved the greater the impact per person (e.g. walking vs using an ATV). Generally, the more people you get in an area the greater the impact but this all depends upon the local conditions as well and the activity taking place. So bearing this in mind and looking at positive and negative aspects we look at promotion. In terms of natural resource management, promotion provides us with a conundrum on our first and second purposes. So if you don't have the promotion, if you don't have the awareness, reasoning and understanding that goes behind all this then ultimately you lose the political will and the acknowledgement behind that and the funding that's needed to protect the natural resources in the first place. Basically if you don't have that then you lose the protection. So that's important, however, as you do that you make more people aware of the areas, you bring people to it, you have more impact, you could say that in a way 'you love the resource to death' – if you are not careful. Natural resource management is about balancing those two elements. This is an essential role of the NP.

When promoting an area, care must be taken as to where you promote and how you promote it.

A lot of factors must be taken into consideration, what do we do? Where do we do it? Where don't we do it?. The greatest form of impact is erosion and this depends upon soil type, the slope/aspect, numbers of people visiting, accessibility (how easy is it get to the site), and what are the special features of those areas, the natural qualities of the National Park that we are looking to protect. The Waterfalls Area is a good example of this. A lot of people visit this area but we have a lot of organisms that are very sensitive so they are going to be impacted and they don't have a lot of resistance in ecological terms to be able to take the impact in the first place and they also don't have much resilience again, in ecological terms, and are unable to bounce back very easily once they are impacted. From an ecological standpoint, these two considerations are very important with respect to species found in the National Park.

Another example would be Traeth Mawr on Mynydd Illtyd Common, if we were to significantly promote this area then it might receive a lot of visitors roaming over it and this would essentially render it a wetland. If you were to promote it, it might not be around for very long in the future.

Pen y Fan, although there isn't much we can do about not promoting Pen y Fan however, as recently as four years ago there was grass on the top which has now disappeared. Also, there is evidence that there was once a thick peat layer there which is now not there any more. However, if you don't get people out into the countryside to enjoy it, understand it and relate to it then you don't have the political will.

### **2. What effects do you think that the remote area work together with the landscape character assessment will have on how we manage the ROW network?**

There are a lot of components to this work. One is looking specifically at the remote area, the Mynydd Du area and then what we have discussed in the remote area working group is

expanding that concept of remoteness or wildness across the NP because it is one of our special qualities and it is essential we protect that special quality. So it is important to define what it is and what it means to us today and this would then be used in our landscape character assessment that we are hoping to conduct across the National Park. These tools will allow us to put some geographic reference to the special qualities that we have in the National Park Management Plan. The special qualities in the National Park are at the moment a list on a piece of paper which is fine, but from a planning perspective, specifically say looking at a planning application or rights of way issue there is no geographic reference to quantify them. To define these special qualities we talk about remoteness, tranquillity, peace but where in the National Park do these special qualities actually exist because they are not going to be ubiquitous for each special quality everywhere and there will be different combinations of these characteristics.

The landscape character assessment allows us to look at those within a given area and say which ones are most significant, which are least significant and which characteristics may not be present at all. As a planning tool, as well as a management tool it allows us to identify, within a given area, those qualities that we want to conserve and enhance, our first purpose. In terms of promotion, this tool can then be used because we look at the area we are considering promoting and we can be smart about how we promote it, where we promote it so that we take these special qualities into consideration.

### **3. Will developing technologies such as remote monitoring and GIS have an impact on how we manage the ROW network?**

Yes definitely and this is related to question 2. We tend to use GIS as a tool to make maps but it can actually do far more. It allows us to look at all the different factors that we need to take into consideration (as discussed previously) where we have data available, and put them together in the form of layers. In the late 1960s, prior to our current computer sophistication, a land planner Ian McHarg did something similar with see through layers of plastic. This then shows up where it is best to do something or to not do something. So, for example, if wetlands were a key component of the landscape that we want to protect we could map all the wetland areas which can then be overlaid with water quality, which can then in turn be overlaid with slope, aspect, soil types etc. By putting all this information together, with the potential to add weight to any one of these in terms of their importance and layers can be subtracted or added – then this information can be used to help make decision. It doesn't make the decision for you but it gives you a different way of looking at all the information that is available.

More recently, information has been gathered from remote sensing via aerial flights. A lot of work was carried out earlier this year on those areas that were burned and by using infra red data we can study particular habitats to see what condition they are in etc. This is relatively up to date and can be updated fairly regularly enabling us to carry out comparative analysis over time. We can then maybe see areas that have degraded since the 1940s, 50s and 60s since when information has been gathered via aerial flights and compare with the information received in more recent times to allow comparisons in a specific area.

We can also gather information from satellite imagery, whereby the satellite image will show reflectance from the vegetation and this can then be interpreted in terms of what different types of plants are there etc this will allow us to assess how the landscape and vegetation is changing over time.

### **MU – How much of this technological data are we able to access for our planning of the rights of way network?**

BW – More and more every day. There is a lot more open access data which is information now available online. This may not necessarily cost us anything, except for time. Information gathered from the aerial flights over the burned areas in the Black Mountains is available, although collected for one purpose can often be used for another.

Shaun Lewis our GIS Technician is absolutely brilliant. He is very quick and technically great which has been crucial to our ability to develop this system. More and more information is becoming available where it might not have been available before. There are still chunks of data that is difficult to get hold of, such as, soil data and there are restrictive rights issues which limit some forms of data sets along with costs and who owns the rights to them etc. Again, a lot of these difficulties are being overcome as we develop and there is more demand for this data to be openly available. The GIS system is significantly better than it was say, 12 months ago.

**MU – In terms of managing the rights of way network do you have good links with Eifion [BBNP Rights of Way Officer] as to what areas and sites need managing and where a site may be promoted?**

BW – A good example of this would be when a couple of months ago Richard Ball [Access Manager], Shaun Lewis and Richard Tyler [Tourism Manager] and Brad met to look at the rights of way surveys carried out in 2006 and 2010 comparative data. Segments of the network are studied in detail and some overlap some do not. We can look at the data sets and the GIS information available and we can look at their condition and how it has changed over time and then factor in how much money has been spent in certain areas against others. We can then break this down into cost per segment or km etc and then factor in other elements such as slope and question why and how a specific area has improved or worsened in condition. This collaboration was brought about, in part as Richard Tyler has a number of indicators he is developing for tourism and some of these questions have been raised at meetings held a year or so ago for the Tourism Strategy. We are trying to look at these issues more critically both as an organisation and as a team.

**MU – Is this evidence available for the Scrutiny review to draw upon for the report?**

BW – It is in its rawest form and has perhaps not been developed into an accessible format. BW is not sure if Richard has used the information or if it remains as it was.

(Action – find this data)

**4. What, if any, other policies or issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?**

Firstly, impact assessment – if an external body came to the NPA and wanted to promote an area or put a route through a certain area they have to do an impact assessment in order to get permission to do that but we don't do this internally – and this is something we probably should do for a number of reasons. We should have an evidence base to say 'what type of potential impact is this right of way or promoted route going to have on an area?' Have we thought about SSSIs etc? BW is aware that colleagues Gareth and Paul Sinnadurai are quite often consulted on a route to be promoted but it is usually after the fact at the last minute and often on eve of publication – this should be done at the start of the process!

This brings up the issue of habitat regulations assessment, an assessment of likely significant effect. BW is not sure how this would apply to promoted routes if it even does but probably in the same instance an impact assessment would be required and this may be something that needs to be looked at with special areas of conservation and potential impacts.

Other policies or issues to take into consideration would be, for example, carrying capacity or to put this another way 'limits of acceptable change'. That is, when we are examining an area or route for possible impact we must bear in mind that some impact is inevitable but it is essential to set a limit beyond which impact is unacceptable. We accept that footfall is always going to have some form of impact, some of which will be positive and some negative but at some point there will be a limit where we don't think that change is worthwhile.

This then raises the 'range of opportunities spectrum' which according to Circular 1399 we are required to ensure that we do not single out any form of activity and identify them as unallowable in the National Park, we have to manage them all. However, we do recognise that there are certain types of activities that are acceptable in some areas and not in others and this would be particular to the individual characteristics of a given site. Taking all this into consideration, we have to provide a range of opportunities for the public for a variety of activities and not only are there different types and conditions but some people have different perceptions of what these opportunities are.

If, for example, we take remoteness, coming from the States, Mynydd Du is not particularly remote to BW but for some people it is and for some people Brecon is remote so we must take into account this perception concept and make sure we provide a range of opportunities across the National Park where people can have extremely remote areas and areas that are less remote to have a sense of getting out and enjoying the National Park.

**MU – You mentioned Circular 1399?**

BW – This is a document that originally came out before the National Parks Statement from the Welsh Parks - I have a copy. Some of the phraseology in the Access and Rights of Way section of the National Park Management Plan paraphrases this document.

**MU – Please could you pass a copy to Lora.**

**MJ – Climate change – how is that going to change how we manage the network?**

Climate change will have a significant impact given the predictions that we have been given. If you have slopes and the type of soils, say carbon soils, that are going to be affected by all of this and if you have significantly dry periods followed by extremely wet periods this will give rise to a large amount of erosion. These conditions will basically exacerbate any issues that you may already have.

Again, using GIS we can set up a model for climate change and demonstrate that in an extreme event this is what would happen in a certain area e.g. increased rainfall etc.

**MU – Do you see GIS data being useful in that respect?**

BW – Absolutely yes.

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**Expert Witnesses: Alan Bowring – Geopark Development Officer  
Arwel Michael – Former BBNP Member**

- 1. Given that the Geopark designation is a tool to help area regeneration, how do you balance the promotion of the area against the carrying capacity of the ROW network?**

AB – Firstly, it is worth noting that access to and within the Geopark uplands is often not via PROW but instead they are paths with another status and it is a complex mixture of the two.

The issue of balancing promotion with carrying capacity is one that has been discussed in a Geopark context over an extended period. The development the trails under the Geopark

banner is carried out under and with the guidance of a number of strategies and policies (Walking Tourism Strategy, Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the forthcoming Visitor Management Plan) that exist currently both across the Park as a whole but also for specific areas where we know that there are issues in terms of numbers of visitors and the problems that arise on the ROW network as a result of these numbers and the fragility of the paths and habitats. For example, the Waterfalls area – where there is in place a Waterfalls Management Plan and the Geopark, especially AB, have played a significant part in contributing to this. Therefore the development of trails is carried out in the light of those plans.

A consultative mechanism involving both internal and external parties has been put in place and has the potential to uncover conflicts. The details of any route which it is proposed be promoted through e.g. trail leaflets, are circulated to a range of interested parties within the Authority including ROW and Access staff. Their observations are taken along with those of wardens, conservation teams etc and if required, modifications would be made to the proposals which themselves would then be consulted upon.

As and when a new trail is developed there is a consultative process that is still developing but has been in place for 3-4 years, whereby the consultation is both internal to the Authority i.e. other officers having interests in different aspects of managing the area albeit the rights of way network would primarily habitat management. This consultation also extends to outside the Authority too, which may involve landowners such as National Trust, CCW in respect of some of the nature reserves etc. There is therefore a process whereby we are aiming to uncover any potential conflicts and the potential for any undue effects on the network and we may, and indeed have, altered the proposals in the light of information we have received back from these consultations.

Externally, consultation also takes place with interested parties such as the community council and unitary authority where, as is often the case, a part of the route extends beyond the boundaries of the National Park/Geopark.

It has been observed that the time allowed for consultees to comment constructively is not always sufficient – this can be for reasons outside the control of officers and may be grant body driven. This is an ongoing issue that we need to address.

It is certainly important to promote the area, indeed the Geopark area was originally designated to focus more attention on the West of the National Park and to bring more visitors to the area, inevitably this will have some effects. Hopefully, some positive but yes we are on the lookout for negatives as some paths will get more use. What we have tried to do is invest in the maintenance and upgrading of some of the paths before we have promoted them, an example of this would be a couple of promoted routes we have developed in the Brynaman area (of 'From Cwm to Cwm' a joint project with the Black Mountain Centre at Brynaman) and we ensured that there was work done on the path network. We were unable to take the original route we had chosen to take because of the cost of the investment that would have been required so we changed the plans and the routes that have resulted are still good routes but slightly different from the original plan. This necessitated work both by our own wardens service and also from our partners in Carmarthenshire County Council as the two routes straddled the border and partly in the designated area and partly outside of it.

We and indeed the local community wanted to increase the number of visitors on this path but we needed to strike a balance and in this case pre-emptive action was the key to it. The work carried out prior to its promotion were checks to ensure it would be able to cope with the passage of extra feet and all that the weather throws at that part of the world.

## **MU asked if there were monitoring figures available on the usage of the paths?**

AB responded that monitoring was a difficult process that they are trying to do but that leaflet sales were a form of indication as to popularity of routes or if they are not priced publications the rate at which they are taken up. We can get an indication in this way of how popular the routes are but it is a difficult science if it is a science at all as it open to so much vagueness. It is based on the assumption that somebody that picks up a leaflet then goes on to walk the route or one person may pick up a leaflet on behalf of a group of say 30 others. Also, anecdotal evidence from the local community, which AB does request and receive, act as a measure of usage. They have a vested interest in the usage numbers too and will report any particular issues to either AB or ROW section.

Geopark is currently entering into the second of its four year action plan and for 2012 – 2016 period there is a plan to improve monitoring. This was discussed at a working group only last week and AB and colleagues will look to improve this in the future as the Action Plan needs to be based upon evidence. Surveys have been carried out at the Waterfalls Area but it is difficult to get hard and fast evidence and it is resource intensive.

AM – spoke of the area he knows very well – the Black Mountain area, specifically Mynydd Du above and around Ystradgynlais. Despite its part in the Geopark there is no dramatic increase in usage of the paths here, no large influx of visitors to the mountain itself and the paths are generally, in a good condition. AM is a keen and frequent walker here, most weekends, and these are his observations. He would say that there has been a decrease in the number of visitors to the Mynydd Du area over the last 6-7 year.

The Geopark is considered to be very beneficial to the area and AM is Chair of a Heritage and Language Forum in Ystradgynlais which seeks to highlight to people outside and within the locality, the industrial and geological history within the area. The majority of the Parish of Ystradgynlais is within the NP, although Ystradgynlais the town is outside.

## **KS – has the designation of the area as part of the Geopark helped at all?**

AM – It may have helped around Craig y Nos itself but not broadly. It is a vast remote expanse and as such it is difficult to ascertain numbers.

There are a couple of key features e.g. Carreg Goch, a millstone grit outcrop which demonstrates possibly the best glacial striations in South Wales but you do not see many people visiting it. Also there is the ruin of a Wellington Bomber at the base. Fifty or so years ago there were even less visitors but they have since levelled off and even perhaps dropped off somewhat.

## **2. Some of the focus of the Geopark is about economic well-being, does this have any impact on the usage of the ROW network?**

AM felt that, specifically in the Ystradgynlais area, individuals and the Council do not sufficiently highlight the fact that they are within the Geopark and market it as such to get people to come into the area. Within the area, there are historically significant industrial remnants of ironworks dating back to 1612 (prior to Blaenavon). David Thomas developed a pioneering blast furnace which used anthracite coal back in 1837 and once the Americans heard of this, he and his blast furnace were taken out to the US to lead the Crane Iron Company. Basically, he was the demise of Merthyr Tydfil and iron production generally in South Wales but more should be made of this heritage and historical significance within the area. AM confirmed that, despite having only been existence for 18 months, the Heritage Forum hopes to work closely with the National Park to correct this.

AB – strong arguments were made in 2001 as to the connection between the health of rights of way networks and opportunities for obtaining economic benefits for local communities, the FMD epidemic of that year having highlighted the importance of an accessible countryside (and indeed a positive perception of that accessibility) to visitors' enjoyment of it. The development of Geopark trails is a considered process and new walks are developed through the consultative process outlined above – the original suggestion for the route may have come from NPA staff, the local community or representative of a partner body such as the British Geological Survey, Cardiff University or the Brecon Beacons Park Society.

The geological/glacial and industrial legacy (the latter manifested in the form of industrial archaeology on the southern fringe of the Park) is recognised but the NP perhaps shies away from promoting routes within the wilderness (formerly known as the remote) areas and perhaps have concentrated more on the peripheral area which can take the footfall, where the path networks literally provide a firmer base examples of these would be ironworks, collieries, lime kilns and the old tramways etc.

Thus far the literature that has been produced is specific to certain areas, inevitably. There are five geotrails at present – Llandovery Town, wholly outwith the designated areas but the story is one that relates to both designations, to Garren Goch, which is a National Park Authority property, a couple of lowland routes within Brecon itself which can take a lot of traffic and finally Mynydd Illtyd. There are more in the pipeline but we have shied away from taking people into the remote areas for reasons of health and safety, liabilities and what the ground can take i.e. the sensitive vegetation etc.

**KS – In light of what previous speakers have said, what is becoming clear is that if people are going to come into the area we need to anticipate and invest in the ROW network in advance as correcting the damage caused afterwards will never be as satisfactory as preparing the network for increased usage. Would you confirm that you are concentrating efforts in this way and only promoting routes that can withstand the increase in numbers?**

AB – It has been a policy decision to do just that, yes. We haven't had the resources available to make some of the other routes tough enough and it may not be appropriate for other reasons to do that e.g. an area may be too sensitive for increased footfall anyway.

AM – It would be difficult to develop routes in semi wilderness area as AB has mentioned. In respect of Pen y Fan and Corn Du, if you are caught out in fog etc with a reasonable amount of mountain knowledge and with it being a clear and well stoned path you can get out of trouble, however, in the Black Mountain/Mynydd Du area during AM's period as a Member on the NPA, efforts were made to steer people away from this area as it is possible to get lost quickly and quite dramatically.

### **3. How people use the ROW network has changed over time, do you think that this has had any impacts on the landscape of the National Park?**

AB – It is undoubtedly true that changes in this fashion have impacted on the Park.

AM – A route up to Llyn y Fan Fawr and then up from the lake to Bwlch y G and Fan Brycheiniog on the Shepherds' Way used to be a grassy path about 20-25 years ago. The NP has had to carry out an immense amount of work over the last 20 years bringing material in to try and combat the erosion that is occurring on these mountains and escarpments. Due to the erosion that has occurred water comes down from the escarpment bringing debris into Llyn y Fan Fawr etc. Further West, Llyn y Fan Fach again a number of years ago there wouldn't be any tracks at all but now it possible to be thigh deep in mud.

Walkers cause problems as they will often walk the well-trodden path and also those walking groups will follow one behind the other. In 1961 there was grass all over the top of Pen y Fan, this is no longer the case. We do not see this level of erosion around Ystradgynlais or Brynamman but the 'honeypots' of the National Park area show quite obvious erosion.

At Sarn Helen a huge amount of damage has been caused. Some of it by the lorries carrying limestone chippings to the area and some by those users of RUPPS and BOATS, that is, vehicles going up and going off the track causing vast mud holes. The National Park is not to blame. Outdoor activities such as abseiling, not normally considered to be erosive do indeed cause damage. AM has written a letter to John Griffiths the WG's Environment Minister highlighting these very issues and stating that the National Park is not funded sufficiently.

AM has a catalogue of photographs of various sections of the National Park dating back to 1971 which by simple comparison would demonstrate the damage occurring. AM reiterated that he is not critical of the NPA.

AB – agreed that in his 5 years with the NP there has been an impact. There has been a general decline in the number of equestrians in recent decades which has allowed for the partial recovery of certain over-used routes whilst the increase in the popularity of mountain biking has, in places, had an opposing effect.

There is evidence of the former in the Llanthony Valley and there was evidence of the latter on Allt yr Esgair, although this has now been attended to. An Adopt-a-Mountain Bike Route scheme was established during 2011 to enable interested parties to monitor and report on chosen routes – a useful partnership between users, the trade and the Authority.

Abuse of the network, and adjoining open land by a sizeable section of motorised users has had a much more damaging effect in certain areas, notably sections of Sarn Helen and along the Southern Fringe of the Park and north escarpment of the Black Mountains, sometimes to the extent that enjoyment by legitimate users is severely impaired. Lack of funds for maintenance is a problem which is additional to the damage caused in this way.

The impact of walkers has varied with time and place. These observations extend to routes other than those recorded on the definitive map as public rights of way – the public will generally make little distinction between the legal status of paths, particularly in open country where, often the trodden route has no recorded legal status. One may observe that the great evolutionary biologist, Alfred Russell Wallace, in walking to the top of Pen y Fan from Neath in the 1840s, noted the extensive peat hags on it's summit. Vertical aerial shots of the mountain taken during the Second World War reveal only the faintest traces of any trodden routes. By way of contrast, the current situation will be well-known to all members of the Panel; large parts of the summit are completely devoid of vegetation – indeed to an extent that considerably enhances the opportunity for geological interpretation – but hardly in a way that would have been planned nor thought desirable. Continuing damage and erosion to peat areas across the uplands of the Park is of concern and these fragile habitats which are often SSSIs.

Partly due to the improvements in wet weather gear available to walkers there are greater numbers of people enjoying the countryside and accessing it via the path network in adverse conditions. Path surfaces are less resilient to wear in these conditions – the combination of boots and water is more damaging than either alone.

The army training that is carried out in the area does so in all weathers and as many as 150 army trainees can be crossing areas of the NP.

Particular events can have, and indeed have had, impacts on the ground e.g. a mountain bike event organised by Glanusk over the Allt. Steps are nowadays taken to preclude this kind of problem arising.

There appears to be a relatively larger increase in visitors to the Black Mountain escarpment (Beacons Way) than elsewhere – but no precise data is available on this.

**4. *What, if any, other issues do you think we need to be aware of in how the ROW network is managed and maintained?***

AM felt that when the ROW is waymarked properly this does help the farming community by cutting down on the number of people straying from the path.

In the early 1980s in the East of the National Park farmers were paid a small amount to put in a stile or erect waymarking signage. AM believes that much of the farming community would generally be in favour of this scheme being reintroduced.

AB – In the real world, there limited resources and there is focus on the most popular routes. Visitors expect and indeed largely receive a well-maintained path network across the popular parts of the Park. The network elsewhere can be patchy. With limited resources, it is appropriate that these are focused on the most well-used parts of the network but his Authority, in common with the majority of other authorities in Wales, is unable to provide the necessary level of resources to maintain the entire network to legally required standards.

AB feels there is a need to develop circular routes and there may be the resources to address this in the Geopark section – AB plans to consider this with colleagues. It is essential though that for any promoted route there are the funds available for its maintenance. It is vital that routes are usable and accessible. If a visitor has a poor experience they are less likely to return.

Visitors expect and indeed largely receive a well-maintained path network across the popular parts of the park. The network elsewhere can be patchy. With limited resources, it is appropriate that these are focused on the most well-used parts of the network but this Authority, in common with the majority of authorities in Wales, is unable to provide the necessary level of resources to maintain the entire network to legally required standards.

AB understand that the cost and scale of capital works and subsequent maintenance works required to ensure that the BBNPA provides a well managed access network is problematic – not least in times of funding scarcity. Funding for maintenance is essential but not ‘sexy’. The success of access-based interpretive projects rests on continued funding at adequate levels.

AB highlighted the issue of cross border working. It is important that constructive relationships are developed and maintained with neighbouring unitary authorities who have statutory responsibilities for the rights of way networks immediately outwith the park boundaries. Much of the effort of the Geopark has focused on communities which are marginal to it and which potentially have the most to gain from the development of enhanced interpretive and access facilities. It is almost inevitable therefore, that considerable sections of routes which we wish to promote, fall outside the park and hence we are obliged to rely on our neighbours to do their bit to ensure an integrated network – the public do not generally recognise the boundary. An example would be ‘one of the most popular routes in the national park/geopark’ – one which is not in fact in the National Park. This is the riverside footpath from the Angel Inn at Pontneddfechan up the wooded gorge of the NeddFechan to the confluence with the AfonPyrddin and thence onward either to Pont MelinFach or to SgwdGwladus. The path to that point lies outside of the designated area, only by a matter of tens of metres but nevertheless its upkeep is the responsibility of Neath Port Talbot County

Borough. Its health is integral to people's enjoyment of a much wider network but this Authority does not have control over it. There are similar situations concerning parts of Offa's Dyke National Trail and the Olchon Valley in the North East and also along the southern fringe at Cwmamman, Brynaman, Ystradowen, Abercraf, Coelbren, Merthyr Tydfil and around the county boroughs of Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen e.g. paths from the Lwyd valley onto MynyddGarnwen and MynyddGarnlochdy in the southeast.

AB – aspirations of the authority and those of local communities will often be in step but may not always be so.

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**Expert Witness:      Punch Maughan**

Punch Maughan – Director of Brecon Beacons Tourism, Member of Tourism Trade Association, owner of 5\* holiday let property in Brecon and a 20 bed bunkhouse in the area.

Tourism and the impact on local businesses

***Qu 1. What do you consider to be the main economic importance of the ROW network?***

Key visitor surveys have revealed that walking is the main reason visitors come to the Brecon Beacons National Park area. The ROW network therefore should be seen as a building block to infrastructure for activity tourism. Walking may be the main reason but this area offers a unique destination for off route horse riding and is also one of the few areas offering 'natural' MTB routes within a managed forest environment. They are also key drivers for getting tourists to come here and these should be exploited. The tourism team have put a lot of money into raising the profile of the MTB, cycling, horse riding and walking trails in the area.

The niche markets of horse riding, mountain biking and cycling are huge in Wales and therefore this sets the Welsh National Parks above the competition.

It is important to provide effective mapping of routes with things to do along the way and PM feels it is critical to provide reasons for visitors to stay and stay long.

***Qu 2. What benefits for their clients do local tourism operators gain from the ROW network which is effectively provided free of charge to them?***

PM – there is a misconception that tourism operators can offer the ROWs 'free of charge' to visitors but in reality they pay for these through their local taxes and ROW maintenance is a legal duty of the Highway Authorities. However, they gain by being able to offer their visitors a broad range of places to explore depending on their location.

PM is currently working in partnership with the BBNP and other tourism providers in producing a new Destinations website which will link places to stay overnight. Tourism providers should pay to be profiled.

PM is not against the principle of paying and would consider some form of contribution.

***Qu 3. In terms of visitor expectations, what would you expect visitors to be able to find in the network?***

Open and unobstructed Rights of Way with structures like gates and stiles in good working order and legal. They must be also be in the condition appropriate to what they are

marketed for, especially if they are a widely promoted route. Visitors expect to be able to use the network and find open and unobstructed ROWs with structures like gates and stiles in good working order and in compliance with legal requirements. PM is aware and mindful of the resource implications but there is a level of visitor expectations which must be met.

**Kathleen Silk enquired as to the extent to which visitors come expecting something different to what they experience in terms of the Park as a whole and not just the path network?**

PM felt that there are some access issues with the higher areas but in her experience there are not too many issues with visitors getting lost in comparison with other Parks across the UK.

PM – there are a good range of walks and mountain biking routes available in the Park.

MU – We have talked about the active user so far, how many use their car to get to a short walk?

PM – responded that there were a lot of visitors that sought a short walk of around 2 hours and that there were plenty of opportunities within the Park for this kind of activity. In questionnaires that PM has asked visitors to complete after their stay in the Park, ‘walking’ [as an activity that they have enjoyed during their stay] gets a tick every time.

MU asked if, in respect of these short walkers, the NPA is providing enough interpretative panelling and signage at car parks?

PM responded that perhaps more use could be made of the canal and at the newly improved bus interchange in Brecon to tap into the incidental walkers.

The Information Point signed in Sennybridge is not sufficient and more information could be available.

Mike James remarked that circular walks are possibly more popular and perhaps more should be made of these.

Visitors expect to be able to refer to their OS maps to plan their route and then be able to go on any ROW marked on these maps without finding their chosen route obstructed, overgrown or even unfindable. Signposting as required by law should be fully implemented and not left to the discretion of the wardens.

**Qu. 4 In your opinion, what other elements might improve the value of the ROW network for tourism?**

PM responded that it will be key to link places to where visitors can stay, eat and use a loo on their way. This is something that PM is working on, in conjunction with the National Park, in the form of a ‘Destinations’ website.

Abergavenny and Hay are gaining in status and are receiving more and more day trip visitors. These day trippers could be encouraged to stay in the area longer by linking in with these towns and highlighting other places near the network to stay and visit. This requires a collective effort and both Abergavenny and Hay are actively pursuing this by supporting the Walkers and Welcome scheme.

PM reiterated the point that signage and interpretation could be improved.

Also, information on the Park should be as accessible as possible and more should be made of web based data, such as downloads, mapping tools and apps for smart phones.

PM added that as a result of information given secondhand there are duties that a landowner should be addressing which are not being suitably enforced, such as, the upkeep of gates. Other Authorities ensure that landowners are fulfilling their duties in this respect and publish those who do not comply on their websites. In the nature of good relations, the NP is not enforcing this compliance and perhaps this should be corrected.

**Qu. 5 Do you have any views on a visitor payback scheme which would help with the ROW maintenance?**

PM has spoken to Phil Park (??) of the National Trust who are implementing a charge at Storey Arms and have already introduced similar schemes elsewhere. It is made clear that the money received will be used to maintain the path, people have not made a fuss and don't seem to have an issue. This is a positive way for money to be given back to resources. On the coast and at National Trust properties it is usual to charge and is accepted, this is how money is collected and how you inform the public and change perceptions.

Visitor Charter – to use our place carefully for them and us, and some contribution would not be out of step.

**KS –B&B asking for a contribution – small but targeted – people staying at a B&B will have used and enjoyed the Park.**

PM – some would do that and some would not e.g. Beacons Cottages do this for the National Trust (they have 400+ properties) and it would encourage local businesses to do this.

Visit Wales Destination has been good – the website is to be supported by the NPA and others. The positive role of the NP will be expanded to balance the negative statutory stuff!!

**MU – Will this have a positive impact on the use of the ROW?**

PM – A marketing action plan making this clear, there are some honey pot areas but there need to spread the load and the local tourism businesses are conscious of this. Its not about thousands of people visiting in the peak season of August but there should be a good spread of visitors throughout the year and encouraging them to spend more money by finding additional things for them to do so they are encouraged to spend a night or two.

**MU – are there good links with wardens and the biodiversity teams – outside tourism?**

PM – will be signing off a new tourism strategy to the NPA on the 9<sup>th</sup> December – talks about work versus whole Countryside team. Concerned that we'll see them as much at Sustainable Tourism Meetings – need better understanding of our mutual pressures. Will wardens come to us? Do we need a Countryside report on the tourism population? (good point) overlapping roles?

PM – need more working group meetings. Strategy will help that as long as embraced by the whole NPA at every level.

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*PM's notes included direct responses to the four general questions that the review aims to answer.:*

***Is the management of the Public Rights of Way network helping to meet National Park Authority purposes?***

No it is not. If the ROW network is not fully open, then the pressures of promoting public enjoyment of the Park cannot possibly be met.

***Are we delivering our Public Rights of Way duty effectively and providing value for money?***

No. The ROW department does not perform its duties in the way the various ROW legislation intended. Duties imposed on landowners are not enforced, using the excuse that a 'relationship' should exist. In practice, this means that landowners are free to ignore their responsibilities (clearance, gates etc) and the wardens are having an annual struggle trying to keep a few routes open. Other counties rigorously enforce the division of duties between landowner and HA and therefore their costs per mile of cleared network are far lower. In addition, they publicise this division of responsibilities on their web sites and literature, so no landowner can plead ignorance.

***Can we establish criteria for PROW data to enable comparisons between our two National Parks to help us assess our performance in the future?***

Bureaucratic exercise where results can be manipulated – spend the money on the routes!

***Is it a realistic ambition and an effective use of resources to seek to open 100% of the PROW network in each National Park?***

YES. It is what the law requires and what the visitors expect, especially in a National Park. It does not require a lot of extra money, just a total change of attitude and a willingness to take on vested interests.

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**Expert Witness – Jackie Charlton**

**Equalities and Access**

**Qu. 1 What do you think are currently some of the main barriers to use of the ROW network?**

One of the main issues is to understand 'access' – this means different things to different people. For somebody with a disability or perhaps doesn't find mainstream access achievable then they have other considerations and that may well be where the barriers are. If you focus on barriers you might address overcome the barriers for one group but not for another group. So it is essential to understand what all the barriers are and perhaps coming up with something that is 'open and accessible to all'. There are some places that simply cannot be accessed by some people, and there are disability groups that would concur with this. Also there are places where you may not believe that they could reach but that they can access with perhaps special facilities and these do not have to be permanent fixtures they could be 'on the day' facilities. During JC's time as a Member on the NPA she believes this was well catered for and well understood.

A specific example would be a blind group that used to visit the National Park and with their walk leaders were able to go anywhere. They were able to do this because they understood what their needs were. Therefore, it doesn't necessarily mean the National Park has to make special provisions but the NP must understand that there are certain groups who may want to access areas which may not be primarily considered accessible.

There are some people with quite severe disabilities who are really keen to get to the top of Pen y Fan. They can get there with special support and it is important to understand what

that special support might be and enabling it to happen. The National park doesn't have to provide the special support or put lots of resources into it but just to understand what that support might be.

JC has heard the question 'If they are that disabled why do they want to go to the top of Pen y Fan?' Well why does anyone want to get to the top of Pen y Fan, it doesn't and shouldn't make any difference who you are. JC appreciates that this is NT land but it provides an example of the barriers.

MJ agreed with JC's points and informed the group of a partially blind lady who had recently walked the 186 miles of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path with a walk leader. This demonstrates that it can be achieved.

The key is understanding and being positive – changing from a negative attitude of perhaps 'we can't afford to do it' to- 'we will do whatever we can within resources we have'.

**Qu. 2 The Health and Well Being Agenda is becoming increasingly important. How do you think the ROW network can help to deliver on this important topic for its users?**

There is already huge amount being done on this at the moment and is important to not try and reinvent the wheel. No point in putting a lot of effort into something new when there is an awful lot going on out there. Perhaps the first step is to undertake a mapping exercise to recognise the current state i.e. Walking on Prescription, Volunteering, Woodland Group, walking festivals.

Walking on Prescription – This has been very difficult to set up. JC remembers when in Monmouthshire they were endeavouring to introduce this, everybody was behind but the GPs were unable or unwilling to put it into a prescription. This is because a prescription is understandably historically about medication and not about exercise but this has changed and has been successful. It is important to reach the GP to reach the people who need it and the links need to be there and work within a NP.

**MU – so what we could do is identify a 1 mile, 5 mile or maybe an hour's walk, perhaps graded and give in prescription form to the GP or to the surgery?**

JC doesn't believe the NP would need to go to that length. The GP will understand the concept of walking on prescription but they may want to access different areas. An important area to target for JC would be the Valley communities due to their proximity to the National Park. WoP suspects that this is focussed on a socio economic group that already knows about walking but wants to be able to WoP so that they know they are walking correctly according their condition. Whereas there are other people who could probably benefit from WoP but wouldn't have considered it at all. It is important to reach these different groups. GPs are the key link here as they are already doing this but JC is unaware as to what extent. Momouthshire started this many years ago – again a socio economic group already aware of walking. The areas to target would be Swansea, the Valleys, RCT, Blaenau Gwent etc

Volunteer Walking – deaf, blind – we did have good links through Community Development but the Officer left – he had a particular interest in disabled access and we need to recapture that. There are a large number of voluntary groups out there.

Woodland Groups – There is an active Woodland Group in Llangattock which JC is involved with. The key performance indicator is to encourage people with disabilities, encourage those people who wouldn't normally consider carrying out woodland work, encourage families to take part. In this way we can see what its like working with children and people

who need a little assistance etc. Gaining access – through organisations such as the Woodland Group this is a way of looking at other types of interpretation and access ability which is easy to get to.

Walking Festivals – This is very strong locally. They (Crickhowell) do include accessible walks (JC chases them up on this each year) but perhaps because creating an accessible walk that has wheelchair access needs a little more attention and they perhaps don't have the required number of volunteers to make much progress on this. Last year they created 'accessible walks for all' which meant you could take pushchairs and the signage included a pushchair symbol. If access can be gained by a pushchair it can probably be accessed by a wheelchair too. If you can get a wheelchair along a particular walk then this means it will be a fairly easy walk so people with a disability may be more encouraged to take this walk – if you have to consider specific issues such as ascent or speed of walking etc. This has worked very well and last year JC led a walk which was very easy except for one part, JC knew that it included this part and that someone on the walk with a pushchair wouldn't be able to follow this section so they arranged to meet at a point further along. It meant the pushchair missed a section of the walk but not the whole walk. Its important the festival includes all range of walks and label them with a clear symbol so that, for example, a walk with a pushchair symbol will probably be accessible by wheelchair. It is important also that if anyone were to query a walk and its accessibility the person handling the query should know what they're talking about.

This all comes into the Health and Well Being Agenda by making these activities accessible and making them part of this agenda. For example, the Woodland Group is not just a group that comes along and deals with trees it takes a much more holistic approach.

**Qu. 3 Do you think that there are any unseen barriers to use of the ROW network and how might we address them?**

Probably not as many as you think! Barriers are often perceived rather than actual. The biggest issue around this is that NPs have 60-70 years of history but the original drivers for their establishment, i.e. for the middle classes, this perception still remain if perhaps not as strong as it used to be. This then gives you the next the perception which is that anywhere you walk in the National Park is going to be really hard when in fact this is not true. A lot of walks are accessible.

The physical barriers are the gates and obviously on farmland there are specific reasons for gates and in a lot of cases special types of gates (which are more user friendly) have been installed. These have mostly worked very well but they have been expensive to install and they can't be installed everywhere but it doesn't take a lot of forward thinking to know that every barrier is at some stage going to need replacing so when you replace it you replace it with something that is open and accessible. To be fair the BBNP did have this as part of their strategic plan but it can be forgotten if there is not somebody in place constantly reminding the relevant department to do this. Although, on the whole this has been undertaken quite well.

Also, we all need to know what we mean by barrier. What do we anticipate to be a barrier? Is it a physical barrier or is it another form of barrier? Once we have identified what these barriers are, it is usually quite easy to break them down.

JC stressed the importance of the Members of the National Parks. From JC's experience people get very hot under the collar about planning issues but if instead they got a bit more hot under the collar about access – a lot of the barriers would be broken down very easily as then the NP as an organisation would be considering it more often. With the huge emphasis on planning other issues tend to move down the list of priorities and actually NPs were

originally intended to be open and accessible to all and this must be the primary context within which this issue should be scrutinised.

**MU – Question 3 refers to ‘unseen barriers’ which includes those that are perceived and those are intellectual, we have covered the perceived barriers do you think that the BBNP has addressed those that are intellectual ie language etc?**

JC – in her time as a Member at the NP was very impressed with the interpretation team here at the Park – they worked very very closely with access groups to make all the interpretation accessible. Most of the interpretation around the National Park will have Braille. The audio information is good but it also important to think about the commentary. The words and they way they are written should be accessible to all.

It is a difficult issue but we should also consider language, not just the English language but other languages as well. We do want people from other countries to come here and JC has never seen anything in French or German anywhere. JC knows that the Mosaic project have been particularly involved with the Campaign for National Parks and have carried out a lot of work on language for interpretation - providing Urdu translation etc. These are not minority languages as they are used by a lot of people.

JC was particularly impressed with the Mosaic project during her involvement with them, especially around the area of the Peak District NP and some of the NPs around the centre of England. People were going into these areas from Bangladesh, Pakistan and from other areas, they were first generation immigrants to the country, the area brought back memories of their childhood because the landscape is very similar. It is key to recognise how important recognition of landscape can be to individuals. JC was impressed at how comfortable the people felt with the landscape but they didn't necessarily feel comfortable with going to the landscape because they felt that there were lots of barriers for them around language & understanding what National Parks are about.

JC believes that access to the website is becoming increasingly important. Most people have access to some form of technical communication and you ignore this at your peril

**MU – modern technology, generally, presents us with some challenges in how we best convey information. One possibility is to publish a number within the interpretation which when contacted sends information via text by return.**

There are people with specific disabilities that find this form of communication very useful. JC is unable to use a mobile phone for speaking but will perhaps get one to be able to send and receive texts. Worth being innovative with the technology and not just using it in one way but using it in other ways too.

**MJ – PCNP use Facebook and Twitter to regularly update followers on the PC National Park news.**

**Qu 4 Given our limited resources, what improvements could we undertake that might have maximum impact for users?**

JC considers that BBNP probably does this anyway but the people who are most visible within a National Park are the Wardens, the visitor centre staff and the receptionists at Plas y Ffynnon. These will be the first point of contact for members of the public to ask questions about accessibility etc.

Also, with regards to the Wardens, as well as being the personal contact for the public they are also responsible for the paths i.e. where there are blockages, where there are new stiles

needed (JC has noticed in her area there are a lot of the old fashioned sort of stile). They are responsible for the work plan and as such they have the highest understanding of what is actually out there. JC suggested that the NP could (without much cost) embed into regular training the subject of understanding the need for accessibility. This is not disabled access, this is accessibility wholly so that everything is covered. The wardens are the eyes, ears and muscle of the organisation and are responsible for ensuring that everything is kept as open as it can be. This would be a small cost for maximum benefit.

Visitor Centres – it is important that they have the best quality training possible in understanding access issues. Again, this should be embedded into any training they receive anyway.

Receptionists at head office as well and the telephone system must be adaptable for those with hearing problems. Everyone who rings the NP must feel welcomed and be able to use the telephone system and not have to press a button for a particular option – this would include not just those with a hearing problem but plenty of people who would prefer to speak to a person. Again, this would not cost a fortune.

**MU – Do you think it would be useful to have something like a Minicom system?**

JC – This is actually quite difficult to use. Text and email are both good ways of getting information – JC tends to ask people to email her information. The NP should be open to different people's different needs rather than just the needs of the organisation.

**KS – In your responses to just about all these questions you haven't identified anything physical that we need to do. It is very interesting that what you have concentrated on are the embedded perceptions that people have. So it is the perception of a barrier in the minds of people stopping them from getting out and enjoying the NP and the mindset of the NP in understanding and dealing with people with accessibility problems that we need to concentrate upon.**

**Apart from suggesting that we replace stiles and gates with a more accessible type when they need replacing you haven't made any suggestions as to how we might reconfigure what we do here at all and this is really interesting that the focus should be completely on the mindset of individuals and the organisation.**

JC – The reason that JC takes this approach is because JC has been working within equalities for so long and JC is fed up of hearing the excuse that 'its too expensive, we can't do it'. People can and will overcome anything if they have to. A person, with a disability, who wants to come to the National Park should be welcomed and given every possible support and assistance but then this is what the NP should be doing for everybody, it doesn't make any difference. Overcoming disability issues don't have to cost money they just have to be understood.

**MU – 'Access training' is needed not 'disability access training' e.g. putting certain things on lower shelves, using a certain language, installing step stiles rather than old stiles.**

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*This was the end of the Hearing session, Members broke for lunch and the Panel Discussion group continued in the afternoon*

## **BBNP Hearing Panel evidence**

<b>Karen Burch</b>	<b>Chairman of Carmarthenshire Riders Group British Horse Society Access &amp; Rights of Way Officer Vice Chair of Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Robin Mainstone</b>	<b>Llandrindod Wells Walking Group Four Wells Ramblers Group Brecon Beacon Park Society Member</b>
<b>Roger Austin Brecon</b>	<b>Brecon Beacon Park Society Pontypool Ramblers Crickhowell Walking Festival Crickhowell Resource &amp; Information Centre</b>
<b>Peter Blackburn</b>	<b>Head of Plas Pencelli Outdoor Centre (owned by Swindon LA)</b>
<b>Anna Heywood</b>	

### **1. What key aspirations do you have for the ROW network, that are currently not being met?**

KB – Does not have personal experience of Pembrokeshire but KB has spoken to some of her Members in the area and they have similar issues.

- There is a big opportunity for a long distance trail for horse riders utilising the National Park.
- The routes need to be more horse friendly possibly with some permissive links to make up the gaps where routes do not meet up.
- Some of the gates that KB has encountered in her attempts to ride in the NP are not horse friendly and bordering on being dangerous because they are sprung and they do not allow sufficient time for a rider on or leading a horse to get through.
- More consideration should be given to those riders with mobility issues so better parking facilities are needed as a lot of groups such as the elderly and mobility impaired use horse riding as a way to access the countryside. 10% of their (Carmarthenshire riders) membership are in their 70s.
- Gates are mountain blocks particularly, are issues, and horse handles on the gates to make them easier would be KB's recommendation.

RM – Considers the Park in terms of two different areas in that there is the higher and the lower levels. In RM's opinion the higher level paths are well defined because of their continued use and popularity but RM is disappointed that at a lower level, many paths are blocked, often with overgrown vegetation, one or two traverse through farms and are very badly signposted. RM doesn't believe there should be too many signs, part of the enjoyment is to find one's own way using a map and compass but where the ROW crosses farmland/buildings it is easy to trespass if there is no signage. Whilst the majority of farmers are quite accepting of the ROW crossing through their territory some can be quite aggressive. It can put people off, RM is aware of several ladies especially who will not walk on their own for this reason.

RM would like to see the lower level paths kept clear.

RA – Agreed with RM on the high and low level ROW difference. It is important to look at the variety of walkers - some visitors walk 100m, some a mile, there are dog walkers, half a day walkers, enthusiasts passing through the lower level to be able to get to the high ground – mountains and moorlands. Generally, the lower level paths are quite good eg the canal is very easy walking and in Crickhowell there are even some tarmaced paths which are comfortably accessible to a variety of users. Similarly in Llangattock it is very easy for people to go walking, it is the next stage where problems arise. Once off main roads there

are no signs and overgrowth as the route deteriorates – this doesn't encourage people to walk. NP are mealy mouthed about landowners that allow obstructions on their land. RA has experience of ROW in Suffolk where landowners who do not maintain ROWs on their land are faced with the Council bringing in contractors and then receiving the bill for the works carried out. RA is not aware of the NP ever taking a firm stand with landowners who allow obstructions.

RA would recommend fingerposts at beginning of walk, decent stiles, waymarking.

PB – manages a LA owned 115 bed hostel and activity centre, one of many in the country currently under threat from LA cutbacks. Pencelli OEC is breaking even so it's future is safe at present. The aim of the centre is to make a difference to young people at an early stage in their life by improving their personal development, social skills and increasing their environmental awareness.

Wild terrain is the best terrain for the Centre's activities, which include hill walking, abseiling and climbing and PB has found a particular challenge in accessing the start point for the activity. Therefore, suitable waymarking to access points is crucial.

Problems encountered also include signposts that aren't replaced that often, there are often leaning posts – there should be a rotation of replacement and repair of the furniture.

Parking is a challenge particularly in the Northern area of the Park. Although there may be a road and a footpath there is often nowhere to park a vehicle, enough space for a minibus or two and room to turn round.

A more proactive approach is needed – talk to us! Make more of the website for reporting faulty or missing furniture – more links.

AH – a large proportion of the feedback AH receives from visitors (about half of whom are from overseas) focuses upon signage. DH provides quite detailed route notes and maps for visitors but certainly on the promoted NP long distance routes eg the Beacons Way, the Usk Valley Walk and cycle routes such as the Taff Trail AH considers signage to be very important. People are coming specifically to follow a particular route and they will be comparing it to other trails they have followed in the UK eg Offas Dyke path can be followed without a map this is not to say that visitors are not capable of following maps etc but it is in line with their expectations of a national trail. In particular, North Americans and Europeans are more used to a higher level of way marking, whether this is appropriate within the natural landscape of the NP is a matter of balance.

AH reiterated the need for better signage around farm as there is more potential for getting lost but there is a need for some waymarking on the open hill areas particularly the Beacons Way which is lacking apparently. In parts, waymarkers have been left in place where the actual route has been changed leading to a mismatch between the map and what is on the ground.

In terms of mountain biking – more could be made of link routes and there are sections where the bridleway turns into a footpath. With regards to the mountain biking pack that the NP has produced it is really important that the promoted routes therein are well maintained.

RA – agrees with PB's comments on access. The County Council is closing toilets and it is important to have somewhere safe to leave your car. The walking group chooses their starting points in terms of available parking and toilets. RA's experience of Pembs Coast Path is that signs in general are good but could perhaps say where the footpath destination is.

The interpretation in Crickhowell car park is a very pretty sign but conveys only mountain biking information whereas most people who come with bikes already know Crickhowell is good for biking and where to go. Signage and interpretation is a waste of money if it is not targeted correctly.

## **2. Given our limited resources, what could we do that would make the biggest impact?**

KB – Suggested that bridleways should be waymarked around bogs, this could take the form of a line of posts or a pile of stones indicating a safe exit route and KB is suggesting that this waymarking need only be sited where there is the danger of bogs. This would also apply to walkers and cyclists. The gates are also a major issue – these could be more accessible for riders.

AH – Long term sustainability – the biggest impact would be to encourage collaboration with voluntary groups to work with the National Park to co-ordinate and communicate and tap into this existing resource to help keep the ROW up to scratch. AH has just started up a voluntary scheme for mountain bikers to report back on routes. [INFO]

RM – would suggest making use of volunteers. RM helps PCC ROW people maintain routes. RM appreciates that it would not be possible for volunteers to use power tools for example but there is plenty of useful maintenance that can be carried out with a pair of secateurs, say.

Important to inform landowner if such work is to take place.

RA – Involve the local community and the community/town councils more. Remembers in the 70s RA's parish council used to have a walking sub committees. Some Community Council members have tended to be dominated by landowners and were not necessarily that keen on ROW issues. Crickhowell not via the town council but through the CRIC is about to host their fifth Walking Festival involves 80 walks in 9 days – should be doing this or similar all year round. It started as a means of kick starting the holiday season early on. A good walker only needs a good walk but the next stage of people need perhaps a glossy brochure to attract them or some food at the end of the walk. How about asking community councils to set up their own walking sub committee and look to their own paths?

### **MU – has Crickhowell Town Council contributed to the Walking Festival?**

RA – they've not been asked but it's not really necessary as CRIC is the hub of Crickhowell and has started many initiatives within the town and as such hasn't needed the input of the TC.

AH – Similarly, the Walkers are Welcome scheme is being established for Hay on Wye, Crickhowell and Talgarth. This will involve the town or community council and in HoW they have approached HTC who will provide representation for the scheme. Town and community councils are often willing to help but they perhaps need to know what it is specifically they could do.

PB – strategic thinking and planning for future. What would be ideal? With regards to volunteers there is a lot going on in the National Park but this needs to be reported. The AHOEC and the SWOAPG organisations are very successful and cohesive they could have a system of reporting where the ROW needs attention.

Perhaps the young people staying at the Pencelli Centre could take part in a small way in the upkeep of the environment, such as picking up litter, reporting where work needs to be carried out and even carrying out work such as maintaining or reinstalling a stile.

PB suggested a system of 'path adoption', for example, Pencelli Centre could adopt the paths within a two mile radius and report on their safety.

**KS – agreed that we should be using all these networks for reporting back. All the different users should be the eyes and ears reporting to the ROW department or wardens.**

KB – Volunteers for Carmarthenshire County Council use own insurance and riders are encouraged to take along a small saw or secateurs on a ride to hack back at any overgrowth etc. Also riders are encouraged to carry a mobile phone – to take photos of problems with a path with exactly where the problem is and map reference. People are generally willing to help out but need to have a more realistic idea of how long things take to fix. KB liaises between riders and the ROW Officer in Carms Council. Communication is important.

RA – to take this a little further, do NP keep list of how many stiles were repaired in 2010, say? This could be used for good publicity.

KB – users who have tried to use a path or bridleway and found it blocked or too difficult are unlikely to go back there for a year or more. Whereas if it is advertised or publicised that clearance work has been undertaken they will know to return.

**MU responded that yes there is a list of works to be carried out and priority is given to those works that would otherwise cause a danger to the public.**

**3. In your opinion – which areas of the ROW network should we be giving priority to?**

RM – Higher level walks are more popular suffer more wear and tear and therefore should receive priority for more maintenance. The other issue which needs attention is that of 4x4 and motorbikes. They cause a large amount of damage to paths – perhaps contact the groups and suggest that they take a day to come along and repair/shore up the paths.

**MU – BOATs make up approx 10km of Pembs CNP ROW and 1.2 km of Brecon BNP. This is a problem as this sector often stray from the legal sections onto sections of the ROW that are not permissible for motorised vehicles.**

KB - The group 'Tread Lightly' is a vehicle user group who have been waymarking vehicular routes to avoid vehicles taking the wrong route. This has certainly been undertaken at Brechfa Forest where they have also fixed some gates and they do promote lawful use of the countryside and they have a large number of good contacts and partnerships. Carms CC have agreed to work with them to repair some of the popular tracks that they are using and KB suggested that BBNP could perhaps contact them [ to arrange similar.

RM –enquired as to where the dividing line of responsibility lies between the NP's authority and the local council's authority on byways?

**MU – Confirmed that it is NP duty to maintain the ROW network which consists of footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and BOATs but that unclassified roads are maintained by county councils.**

- PB – The tracks to the honeypots of Pen y Fan and from the top of Blaen y Glyn to Craig Fan Du for example, are well worn and perhaps take priority for good signage, maintenance and ensuring safety.
- Suggested that rocks at the foothills at Storey Arms could be moved to enable easier and safer sledging for those who visit from Merthyr and Cardiff etc.

- Single track mountain bike course needed in the area.
- Better links to access land to get to wild areas away from people. It wouldn't draw many people from Storey Arms which is popular for its accessibility and the
- Theft – PB has experienced a few of his vehicles getting broken into and perhaps CCTV could be installed at car park hotspots. At Blaen y Glyn there are almost monthly break-ins – the OEC use an empty bus system so there is nothing to steal but many tourists are hit by this problem.

**MU – we recognise the problem of theft and have recently established a parking warden scheme for example at Porth yr Ogof where we contributed a proportion of costs and the police helped fund the remainder, unfortunately the police have since pulled out of this scheme so with limited resources the NP has to make a difficult decision as to whether this scheme can continue or not.**

RA – Hopes the NP continues the practice of replacing stiles with gates – these are much easier for the older people who have trouble getting over the stiles. Also some stiles are not dog friendly and people have to carry dogs over stiles in some cases – perhaps install stiles that have a facility for dog to go through or replace with a gate. RA knows of a farmer in Crickhowell who has put in his own gates.

AH – Easily accessible routes are more popular, better signage on other routes would attract users away from the hotspots of say, Pen y Fan and may even be more rewarding. By improving the provision of information and signage on these lesser used walks/rides would attract people more to some really great routes and areas. Erosion on the popular routes may also then be reduced.

KB – The ROWIP identified a lack of horseriding opportunity in the NP. Although there has been some improvement in the East of the Park there has been no change in the West. The areas of the Black Mountain, Ammanford and Brynamman provide a really important link for a cross county route that KB's org has penned around the top of Carmarthenshire which means all the other counties could link to it which would lead to a really good National Trail. There is also the Great Dragon Ride which is coming down from Prestatyn to Margam and opening in Sept 2012. BHS has identified a route to Libanus which would link to this via Brynamman. They do have the local authority, community and town councils on side and they are all very keen to open this up but there is a big problem with bogs in this area.

Walkers have Open Access Rights but horseriders are legally bound to stay on the bridleways, however, if they can't find the bridleway due to lack of signage they have a problem and if they do have a map and GPS and they follow the bridleway we end up in the bog. This is a big problem particularly in the Brynamman area – this is definitely a priority as it would improve the local economy and they already have all the right people in the right places on side.

### **Open Forum – any other issues not already covered?**

PB – suggested that NP wardens could pop into the Centre for an informal chat, then at this time any information on ROWs etc could then be reported to them.

RA – Face to face contact is always best. Email is problematic and often not dealt with. RA has encountered problems or delays with sending in information via email to BBNPA.

RM – The reporting mechanism needs to be clear, if a user finds a problem on the path they want to know how and who to report it to; a sign with telephone number etc in major car parks would help. There are a lot of people who spot problems but who do not know how to go about reporting them.

AH- perhaps some sort of App could be developed?

PB – There are some very interesting historical features tucked away from sight in the National Park, such as an Iron Age Fort above Talybont that has very little signage and is overgrown and quite difficult to get to – more could be made of this and others. Sarn Helen also – there is no ROW access to this.

PB - This area has many iron age features which many visitors aren't aware of – more could be made of their significance and therefore enhance the visitor experience.

KB – Technology – The potential of information sharing websites such as You Tube, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter etc should be considered. Has the Park researched what is posted on these sites about the Park? In this way complaints could be addressed but also there is a wealth of information that users are sharing – this could be encouraged instead of perhaps producing costly information leaflets this is a source of media that could be exploited with benefit to all. For example, a rider that finds a B&B that takes horses shares this information.

RA – Footpaths along the Grwyne are very bad. It is not possible to walk from Abergavenny to Brecon as the path ends on the A40 with no footway. A permissive path through the Glanusk Estate is needed from the AA box opposite Nantyffin.