

Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Access Forum

Annual Report 2017

Foreword

We are pleased to present the 2017 Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Access Forum (RCT LAF) Annual Report.

The report is a brief summary of the Forums Key Achievements during 2017.

We would like to thank members for their efforts since the 5th term of the new RCT LAF commenced as it remains a challenging time for everyone involved in the public sector as budget pressures continue to impact on our services.

We would like to thank our Forum members for their efforts and support and guidance provided throughout the year.



Committee

The forum is required to be re-appointed every three years. Following the final meeting of the 4th term of the LAF on 12th May 2016, a recruitment exercise was undertaken and the 5th term of the new RCT LAF was established in January 2017.

Members

Chair – Steve Carter
 Vice-Chair – Mike Ash
 Jay Kynch
 Tony Yule
 Mark Steer
 Patrick Byrne
 Richard Barrett
 Mary Harvey
 Delme Rees
 Christian Servini
 Michelle Bracey
 Wynford Price
 Elizabeth Thomas

Secretary

Jason Bragg
 6th Floor Sardis House, Sardis Road,
 Pontypridd CF37 1DU



What is the Local Access Forum (LAF)

The RCT LAF is a group of 10-22 individual members appointed in a voluntary capacity to give advice to various government authorities and other bodies on how to provide access to land for open-air recreation and enjoyment. Members of the RCT LAF are appointed by the Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Authority and reflect the views of both land managers and recreational users of the countryside.

The RCT LAF may also have members who represent the interests of conservation, tourism, and people with disabilities, transport or other interests.

The forum always welcomes assistance from outside sources so if you are interested in contributing, please contact us.

The Local Access Forum provides advice and feedback as well as monitoring the progress of these initiatives through regular reports from Local Authority Officers

Meetings

The new Forum met for the first time in February 2017.

Following a brief welcome and introduction from the secretary who outlined the functions of the LAF and the current responsibilities of the Rights of Way department, the members went on to appoint Councillor Steve Carter as Chair and Mr Mike Ash as Vice-Chairman.

In addition to the meeting in February 2017, meetings were also held in May, September and November 2017.

Meetings will be held quarterly and the voluntary sub-group committees will meet as and when required to cover any interim work as agreed between the LAF and the Authority.

The forum works to balance the desire for greater public access to the countryside with the needs of landowners and land managers and to ensure the natural environment is not damaged as a result. It also gives advice to planners on major developments about protecting existing Public Rights of Way and incorporating the needs of walkers, cyclists, off-roaders and horse riders alike.

Summary of the Year

- **Off Roothing**

The forum has engaged with South Wales Police and the Community Safety Partnership and discussed ways in which the illegal off roaders can be tackled. This is an ongoing issue and to be included in the program of works for the forthcoming year. The council will start linking in with the PCSOs to deal with reports.

- **Highways Improvement Scheme A465**

The forum heard from Chris Meredith whom is the Public Liason Officer for the A465 Heads of the Valleys Project. Adam Priestly, Environmental Scientist at Jacobs, had previously given a presentation about the proposals for the A465. Jacobs has been commissioned to undertake the A465 dualling project in sections 5 & 6 which is from Dowlais, Merthyr to Hirwaun, Aberdare. The Scheme has a complex design over 16KM and works are hoping to start in 2020.

- **Consultation Responses**

A LAF sub-committee was formed 24th May 2017 consisting of 4 members. They undertook the role of responding to various Welsh Government consultations. The forum also responded to Welsh Government proposals relating to Access to Outdoors in Taking forward Wales` Sustainable management of Natural Resources in September 2017.

- **Definitive Map & Statement**

The Definitive Map & Statement (DMS) is the legal record of all Public Rights of Way in the county and underpins what the Public Rights of Way team do. Since the publication of the first DMS in 1971, only the Taff area has not been reviewed. The Borough of Cynon Valley and the Borough of Rhondda were updated in 1995 and 1992 respectively.

The Council appointed a consultant to undertake the review of the Taff area map, the consultant attended a LAF meeting to explain to members the process and details of what the next steps are. Quality Assurance of the Taff Definitive Map is ongoing.

- **National Access Forum**

The forum was represented at the National Access Forum in July 2017 and also the National Chairs Access Forum in December 2017 in Welshpool.

Summary of the Year - Continued

- **Active Travel**

Active Travel is focused on getting people to walk or cycle short-distance journeys to school, work, or for access to shops, services and bus/rail stations rather than use a car. Active Travel does not include journeys made for recreation or social reasons. RCT liaised with other authorities to take a more regional approach and the Integrated Network Map (INM) for active travel is now available to view online. The forum receives regular updates from the Highways Integrated Transport Unit on the development and consultation of the INM.

- **Penrhys Pilgrimage**

Pererindod Penrhys Pilgrimage route - A presentation was forwarded to the members depicting the history, creation and the proposed development of the route, from Llandaf to Penrhys.

Anyone that wishes to be involved to contact Helen Lloyd Jones, the principal coordinator:- helenlloydjonesradyr@gmail.com

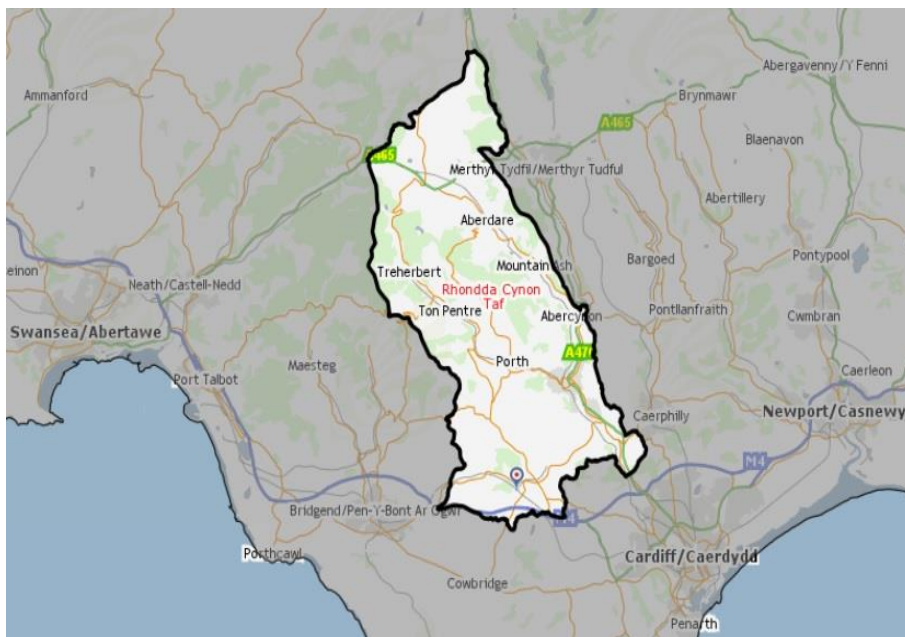
- **Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

ROWIP Sub-Committee was formed 24th May 2017 consisting of 3 members. The ROWIP sub-committee met and discussed the Local Authorities 'Out & About' Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

They assisted specifically by addressing how to consult and engage with Land managers/owners and address Future public need. The input from the LAF and the sub-committee has been very helpful.

As a result of the work, the assessment report concludes that a formal review of 'Out & About: the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf' is necessary.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL ACCESS FORUM AREA



Beat the Street Initiative

The initiative has been re-launched to get people out walking and cycling.

The advertising and launch was done through the schools via an engagement officer.

The initiative is taking place from the Heads of the Valleys, right down to the A473 corridor

Adopt a Path Scheme

"Adopt a Path" is a scheme that anyone can join and an opportunity to make improvements to your favourite footpaths, bridleways and byways.

There are paths available to adopt in every part of the county and we hope to see individual people, families, local user groups, schools, community and voluntary organisations getting involved and enjoying the benefits.

Volunteers are not required to do any practical work but the information you provide will be valuable in helping the Council to keep the Rights of Way network in good condition for everyone to enjoy.

For further information please email us at

ParksCountryside@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Council updated and re-published promotional literature as part of a relaunch of the scheme in 2017.

