



For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Alvin Nicholas (Tel: 07980 682749 Email: Alvin.Nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk)

Date: **09 May 2024**

To whom it may concern,

A meeting of the Eastern Valleys Local Access Forum will be held at the Blaenavon Word Heritage Centre on Monday, 17th October 2024 at 6.00pm to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request. Minutes of this meeting will be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

Yours faithfully,

ALVIN NICHOLAS
SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Grant funding programmes (verbal update)
 - a. Access Improvement Grant
 - b. Shared Prosperity Fund

c. Others

4. Maintenance (verbal update)
5. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (verbal update)
6. Members updates (verbal update)
7. Landscape crime (verbal update)
8. Common land projects / issues
9. Any other business

Os oes gennych ymholiad sy'n ymwneud â'r agenda hwn, cysylltwch ag Alvin Nicholas (Ffôn: 07980 682749 E-bost: Alvin.Nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk)

Dyddiad: **09 Hydref 2024**

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Bydd cyfarfod Fforwm Mynediad Lleol Cymoedd y Dwyrain yn cael ei gynnal yng Nghanolfan Treftadaeth y Byd Blaenafon ar Dydd Iau, 17 Hydref 2024 am 6.00pm i ystyried y materion ar yr agenda a ganlyn. Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod. Bydd angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os ydych yn dymuno gwneud hynny. Darperir cyfieithiad ar y pryd ar gais. Bydd cofnodion y cyfarfod hwn ar gael i'w gweld ar wefan y Cyngor, ac eithrio'r trafodaethau hynny sy'n cynnwys eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

ALVIN NICHOLAS
YSGRIFENNYDD Y FFORWM MYNEDIAD LLEOL

AGENDA

1. Cyflwyniadau
2. Cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol
3. Rhaglenni a ariennir drwy grantiau (diweddariad llafar)
 - a. Grant Gwella Mynediad
 - b. Y Gronfa Ffyniant Gyffredin

c. Eraill

4. Cynnal a chadw (diweddariad llafar)
5. Cynllun Gwella Hawliau Tramwy (diweddariad llafar)
6. Diweddariadau gan yr aelodau (diweddariad llafar)
7. Troseddau ar y dirwedd (diweddariad llafar)
8. Prosiectau / materion tir comin
9. Unrhyw fater arall

Eastern Valleys Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2024 at the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre

Present:

M Panniers – TCBC
A Nicholas – TCBC
G Teague – BGCBC
S Cresswell – BGCBC
J Norris – BGCBC
B Page
C Powell – BHS
P Fowler – Pontypool Ramblers
A Price – Commoner
K Beese – Commoner

Item No	Action required	Officer
1.	Welcome & Apologies AN welcomed attendees. Apologies received from: J Cranden L Winnet J Tenison	
2.	Appointments Appointment of attending LAF Members.	
3.	Member Introductions Introductions – round table Secretary gave control to GT to chair the meeting. Several LAF applications have been filled in and considered. LAF requires 10 Members minimum plus chair and deputy chair. Any others would have standard observer status. GT said as applications come in, we can go through process again. AN confirmed as secretary – takes minutes and sends our agendas (min 7 days).	

	<p>Posts will be held open for others to apply so that the 12-member threshold can be met. AN outlined applications received to date.</p> <p>MP appointed on behalf of Torfaen, Lisa Winnett (Chair of Planning Committee) Blaenau Gwent.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Outline of Service Areas – Access Teams</p> <p>BG Access Team GT outlined access team responsibilities i.e.</p> <p>Waymarking / signing Maintenance – surfaces, furniture – noting who is responsible in law. The landowner / occupier is responsible for maintaining all such structures on public rights of way in a safe and useable condition. LA responsible for removing vegetation growing out of the surface. Landowner is responsible for cutting back hedges and other vegetation overhanging the path, the LA has a duty to ensure that this is done. LA has power to require the owner or occupier to lop back or cut back overhanging branches and vegetation. In practice, LA often steps in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enforcement duties - Keeping records - Dealing with issues – resolving & negotiation - Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) responsibility - Other making duties including diversions / extinguishment - Improvements – often through grant assistance - Information on network – including route promotion - Active travel and cycle tracks - Access land <p>LAF is statutory forum than can lobby WG to improve funding. GT said that in BG access is run through JN – Principal Access Officer who leads team and has active travel background. Significant amount of ROW work is done through grant assistance.</p>	

	<p>Questions: PF asked how, given a lack of resources, ROWs are managed. MP outlined TCBC resources / resource issues and current access team which lacks a dedicated ranger. BG pulled together a team including rangers, but external funding runs out March 2025. GT said LAF is a statutory forum. Can lobby organisations and LAs/give steer on issues. AP raised an issue on the common in BG – gates smashed etc and asked on behalf of commoners who to contact. GT said they can call him.</p>	
5.	<p>Appointment of Chair / Deputy Chair</p> <p>AN adjourned the meeting. GT outlined how election of Chair and deputy Chair is carried out. Must be Members of forum. Cannot be GT, JN, SC or AN.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>None</p>	
7.	<p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>Taken as read</p>	
8.	<p>Grant Funding Programmes</p> <p>Access Improvement Grant SPF – BG ranger team, SC Access Strategy Officer role MP mentioned TCBC SPF illegal off roading project Others: LPN/Active Travel/HLF</p> <p>MP/GT: Access Improvement Grant ring fenced: 54 and 56k respective Access Improvement Grant ring fenced which is reduced by 25% if there is no ROWIP. Neither BG nor TCBC have a ROWIP at present, though WG have removed threat of reducing BG funding due to progress facilitated through SC / SPF.</p> <p>GT/MP said LAF work plan ideas welcome. Work plan provided to WG. GP said BG would share workplans with LAF.</p>	

	<p>GT explained that SPF levelling up is a bit more flexible. All revenue funding, BG have recruited staff.</p> <p>Similar money for active travel and infrastructure. We don't know if SPF will be replaced. Flexible at the moment, may be more targeted in future.</p> <p>AP asked who looks after money. GP said in BG it was skills, business teams, etc.</p> <p>MP said TCBC has an SPF officer. TCBC Environment has around £1 million. Other forms of funding include Local Places for Nature.</p> <p>JN outlined Active Travel Grant – cycling schemes are mainly shared use grants, BG has applied for £1 million grant funding and has got just under £100,000. Schemes include Glyncoed, Brynmawr and feasibility studies.</p>	
9.	<p>Maintenance</p> <p>GT and MP outlined current issues. Numbers of complaints continue to rise. GT said BG had identified 1500 issues. MP mentioned purchase of 2 bridges that require instillation.</p> <p>KB: Cwmcelyn – said there will be no HLF funded bridge at pond.</p> <p>GT gave update on Blaina Road. Said BG will be bringing in web mapping.</p>	
10.	<p>ROWIP</p> <p>SC: Initial BG consultation complete and report complete, Workshop sessions to be held – two physical sessions and one online,</p> <p>MP: TCBC – initial consultation to be advertised.</p>	AN
11.	<p>Members Update</p> <p>CP asked about what type of members are required on LAF. GT said there is a requirement to have a balance of interests and that there is a need to ensure minorities and persons with disabilities and represented.</p>	

12	AOB LAF meeting frequency to be determined at next meeting. Secretary required to send agenda to Chair and Deputy Chair for agreement 7 days in advance. Secretary must also post notice of meeting for TCBC and BG websites.	
13.	Date of Next Meeting 13 May 2024	