**BBNP LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

**Minutes of the 1st Meeting held at 14.00 on Tuesday 9th August, 2011 at Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Head Quarters**

**Present**

Secretary and Chairman: - Richard Ball

 Julian Atkins (JA)

 Janet Bailey (JB)

 Pam Bell (PB)

 Gwyn Gwillim (GG)

 Ian Mabberley (IM)

 David Mantle (DMa)

 Denis Murphy (DM)

 Mike Scott Archer (MSA)

 David Sharman (DS)

 David Thomas (DT)

 Pavel Vitek (PV)

 Hilda Williams (HW)

 Colin Woodley (CW)

 **Observers:**

 Avril Barnes Rights of Way Assistant, BBNPA

 Eifion Jones Rights of Way Officer, BBNPA

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

RB welcomed all members.

There were no apologies

1. **Introduction of members**

All members provided brief introductions.

1. **LAF Business and Administration**

RB explained that LAFs are statutory bodies established under sn 94 of the CROW Act. Their statutory function is to:

‘advise the Appointing Authority, CCW, WG and others as to the improvement of public access to land in its area for the purposes of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area , and as to such other mattersas may be prescribed’.

RB referred members to a booklet ‘The role, duties and functions of Local Access Forums’ produced by CCW.

RB explained the process of Election of Chair and Deputy Chair to members.

CW proposed the Chair and Deputy Chair be elected for a period of 12 months instead of the full term of the LAF.

MSA secondeded the proposal

**Agreed**

 **All members agreed that the Chair and Deputy chair should be elected for a period of 12 months.**

RB led members through the Terms of Reference which had been previously circulated.

CW asked for the annual Election of Chair and Deputy Chair to be added to the Terms of Reference.

**Agreed**

The Terms of Reference were unanimously adopted by members subject to the revision above being included.

Expenses claim forms were circulated.

**Action**: RB to redraft Terms of Reference as described above.

1. **Access Management in the BBNP**

EJ directed members to an organisational chart containing the structure of the Wardens Service and Property Management Team and explained each sections role and funding.

Access is managed through 3 teams, Access, Rights of Way and the Wardens.

Access (RB and JasonRees) is responsible for the management of access land (restrictions and exclusions) as well as managing some key strategic routes such as the Beacons Way. The Team is also responsible for managing the effects of upland erosion and is heavily involved with large scale projects involving the uplands.

Rights of Way (EJ and AB) is responsible for the management of the rights of way network in co-operation with the Warden Teams. The rights of way network in the National Park (which comprises 2000km of rights of way) is managed by BBNPA on behalf of the 7 unitary authorities that have rights of way within the Park. Namely, Powys, Monmouthshire, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Rhondda CynonTaff. A delegation agreements exists between the Park Authority and each Unitary Authority whereby a financial contribution is made in most cases to the Park to manage each Authority’s network. The Park Authority therefore undertakes repair, maintenance, signposting and enforcement across the whole network. It also undertakes Definitive Map work (under section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981) in each unitary area apart from Carmarthenshire. The Park Authority has its own powers to make public path orders and traffic regulation orders.

JA explained that the above section is only a small part of the Countryside and Land Management Directorate Team and the full organisational chart should be circulated to all the LAF members.

**Action: RB to circulate Countryside Directorate organisational chart.**

1. **Access to inland water**

RB provided a presentation about the BBNPA Splash project. Issues regarding access to reservoirs, rivers and the canal were discussed. It was noted that the BBNPA is in the process of negotiating a licence with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water that would allow BBNPA to issue passports to approved outdoor providers to access certain reservoirs for certain water sports.

DM expressed concerns about child safety in relation to reservoirs

RB stressed that the scheme would only permit access for approved providers who would have to be licenced by the Adventurous Activity Licencing Service or a National Governing body and as such would be required to demonstrate adequate risk management. It was also stressed that swimming would definitely be outside the scope of the agreement.

IM asked who will police the passport.

JA explained that it will be self policed by providers and National Park Authority and Welsh Water wardens.

1. **The Countryside Council for Wales proposed work programme.**

RB circulated a CCW work programme relevant to the LAF and added that the BBNPA would also be consulting LAF members on Exclusions and restrictions if necessary, a policy on Mass participation events, the Splash project and water related issues, the ROWIP, PROW diversions etc,Recreation Strategy and Off roading issues. It was also likely that the LAF would be consulted on other issues throughout its term.

1. **Any other business**

RB proposed any items of other business should be forwarded to the second meeting of the LAF.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm