

Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

2015

Annual Report

March 2016

Foreword to the Annual Report 2015

There has been a significant gap between the production of the last Annual report for Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum (LAF) and this one.

During this time the forum has been very busy working alongside Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) to ensure a significant proportion of the rights of way network in the County continues to remain open and that it improves year on year.

I would like to thank the previous Chair Karen Burch for her hard work over the past 3 years and look forward to continuing to work with Karen who remains as Vice Chair of the Forum.

In this my first year as Chair of the forum, there have been a number of areas where in my opinion the Forum has made significant progress and had an input into the future of rights of way management within Carmarthenshire / Wales. These have included:

- Working closely with CCC's Environment Department with regards to consultation concerning the introduction of Dog Control Orders under the new Public Spaces Protection Orders legislation.
- Improving the awareness of the existence of the Forum by ensuring increased input into consultations relating to access within the County, working closely with the forums Natural Resources Wales Representative and contacting all Community Councils within the County to remind them of the forums existence.
- The attendance of Councillor Deryk Cundy . CCC Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee at the last meeting of the year, which has assisted with getting the forums views and opinions heard at a higher level within CCC.
- Providing an in depth response to the Welsh Assembly Government's Green Paper on Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for Responsible Recreation, which will influence policy regarding rights of way management for the next Assembly term.
- In depth discussions with regards to the Brechfa Wind Farm projects and how they may affect the rights of way network within the County.
- The recruitment of four new members who are:
 - Becky Chunisingh
 - Richard Leggett
 - Jane Evans
 - Geoffrey Williams (Previous Chair of Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum)

In these times of reduced budgets for local authorities the forum has noticed a significant reduction in the numbers of local authority staff on the ground and would like to formally thank the small team that remain for doing the best they can to look after the rights of way within the County.

It is hoped that the results from the consultation on the Welsh Government Green Paper: Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for

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Responsible Recreation will be used to influence policy in the future and reverse the trend of continuing budget cuts for a resource that is significantly important to this rural County and tourist destination.

I would like to thank Jonathan Tudor for the time he has spent and advice he has given the forum as secretary for the past few years.

I would also like to thank all forum members for the time and expertise they give to the forum.

Mark Hadley
Chairman
Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum

Introduction

The Carmarthenshire LAF was established in September 2002, and covers the County of Carmarthenshire, excluding the area of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for which their Western Area LAF has responsibility. The Local Authority had a statutory duty to establish the LAF as required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

The statutory function of the Forum is to advise the authority, Natural Resources Wales and others as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, with regards to the needs of land-management and the natural beauty of the area.

The remit of the Forum is now widened to advise not only the appointing authority (in our case Carmarthenshire County Council), the Highway Authority and other bodies as may be prescribed by regulations but to advise on the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Wardening, the making of bylaws and long term exclusions and restrictions on access.

The views of the Forum should be sought on any new regulations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the management of the new rights of access, the strategic priorities for the public rights of way and cycle networks and all other forms of open air recreation.

Forum members are committed to attend outside groups if appropriate and are encouraged to do all they can to engage with the public.

All meetings of the Forum are open to the public. Minutes of meetings and other LAF details are available on the Carmarthenshire County Council website at: <http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/residents/leisure-outdoor-activities/public-rights-of-way/local-access-forum/#.ViuVxZUvnIU>

The National Assembly for Wales regulations require appointing authorities to prepare an annual report for each LAF for which it is responsible as soon as possible after the end of the financial year. This report incorporates Natural Resources Wales guidance on the production and content of Local Access Forum Annual Reports.

The annual report will serve several purposes:

- a) A summary record of the previous year's work. Minutes of individual meetings and other documents produced will give greater detail but the annual report will summarise the LAF's work.
- b) A work plan for the coming year. This will be the plan agreed between the LAF and the appointing authority, in accordance with regulation 16(2)(b). It is acknowledged that changing priorities and pressure of other work may prevent the plan being adhered to in full.
- c) A publicity document. The annual report must, by statute, be made available for public inspection and it must be available for the public to buy.

The Year Reviewed

Reporting of the Statutory Function

This section of the annual report focuses upon the LAF's performance of its statutory function during the year ending 31st December 2015. This function, as included in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 is to advise:

- a) The appointing authority.
- b) Any body exercising functions under part I in relation to land in that area.
- c) If the appointing authority is a National Park Authority, the local highway authority for any part of that land, and
- d) Such other bodies as may be prescribed.

As to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area.

The bodies mentioned in a) to d) above shall have regard, in carrying out their functions, to any relevant advice given to them by a LAF under this subsection or any other provision of this Act.

The LAF held 4 meetings in the period 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015. These meetings can be summarised as follows:

- a) 26th February 2015 . CAVS, 18 Queen Street, Carmarthen
- b) 21st May 2015 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre
- c) 27th August 2015 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre
- d) 19th November 2015 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre

Matter Considered by the LAF 1st January – 31st December 2015

1. Topic Considered: **GLASTIR**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015, 19th November 2015

Summary: Presentation from Jane Tibbott from the Welsh Assembly with regards to the new scheme and the LAF's responsibilities regarding approving permissive access requests under the new scheme. At the 19th November 2015 meeting the first of these requests was discussed and agreed as acceptable.
2. Topic Considered: **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015

Summary: Mark Hadley was elected as Chair & Karen Burch as Vice-Chair.

3. Topic Considered: **Dog Control Orders**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 21st May 2015,
27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: The LAF have had lengthy discussions with CCC and provided advice to CCC with regards to the implementation of dog control orders within the County.
4. Topic Considered: **Maintenance / Grant Works Update**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 21st May 2015,
27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: Updates from CCC on grant improvements / works to the rights of way network.
5. Topic Considered: **CCC I Local Web Site**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 27th August 2015
- Summary: CCC have been keeping the LAF up to date with the process of adding details regarding public rights of way onto the Council I-Local website.
6. Topic Covered: **Active Travel**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 21st May 2015,
27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: The LAF has received a number of emails over the year regarding active travel. Meetings have been requested with the relevant officers but this has not happened during the year. David Stacey attended a consultation and training exercise organised by Sustrans in May 2015.
7. Topic Covered: **Cross Compliance**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015
- Summary: Update to the LAF concerning the fact that the requirement to keep public rights of way open and unobstructed could be included in the Single Farm Payment scheme in the future.

8. Topic Covered: **BOAT 58/14**
Date(s) Considered: 26th February 2015, 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015
- Summary: This route, which is partly in Carmarthenshire and partly in Ceredigion is going to the planning inspectorate for consideration of its status in Ceredigion. It is currently a Byway in Carmarthenshire and Restricted Byway in Ceredigion. The LAF recommended that it remain a Byway in both counties.
9. Topic Covered: **New Members / Recruitment**
Date(s) Considered: 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: Becky Chunisingh membership agreed on 21st May 2015.
Jane Evans membership agreed on 19th November 2015.
Geoffrey Williams membership agreed on 19th November 2015.
Richard Leggett membership agreed on 19th November 2015.
10. Topic Covered: **Contact with Town/Community Councils**
Date(S) Covered: 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015
- Summary: All 72 town and community councils were contacted to remind them about the existence of the LAF.
11. Topic Covered: **Annual Report**
Date(s) Covered: 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: The requirement to produce an annual report has been discussed at these meetings.
12. Topic Covered: **Archive Services**
Date(s) Covered: 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
- Summary: Issues regarding the closure of the Carmarthenshire Archive in Carmarthen and the fact that rights of way research is proving difficult due to this have been raised.

13. Topic Covered: **LAF Connection with the Council**
Date(s) Covered: 21st May 2015, 27th August 2015
Summary: LAF members have raised concerns that Council Members are not attending LAF meetings.
14. Topic Covered: **Welsh Government Green Paper: Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for Responsible Recreation – Consultation**
Date(s) Covered: 27th August 2015, 30th September 2015 (Sub Committee Meeting), 19th November 2015
Summary: LAF members were asked to comment on the Green Paper, which was looking into the future of rights of way management within Wales.
15. Topic Covered: **NRW / Welsh Government: Developing Guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way**
Date(s) Covered: 27th August 2015
Summary: LAF members were asked for comments regarding updating the advice from the Welsh Government to Local Authorities on public rights of way.
16. Topic Covered: **Big Pathwatch**
Date(s) Covered: 27th August 2015
Summary: Geoffrey Williams from the Carmarthenshire Ramblers Association gave a presentation on this national project to map all public rights of way and their status within the country.
17. Topic Covered: **LAF Conference**
Date(s) Covered: 27th August 2015, 19th November 2015
Summary: The LAF National Conference was discussed at the meetings shown above.

18. Topic Covered: **Public Path Diversion Orders**
Date(s) Covered: 27th August 2015

Summary: The chair informed the LAF that all diversion orders are passed to the Chair of the LAF. It was agreed at the August meeting that all these orders would be forwarded to all members contactable by e-mail in the future.
19. Topic Covered: **NRW Targeted Consultation on Draft Guidance for the Review of ROWIPS**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015

Summary: LAFs and other relevant organisations were asked to comment on the suggestions put forward by Natural Resources Wales for the review of ROWIPS. The LAFs response was submitted on the 26th November 2015.
20. Topic Covered: **Meaning of Consultations**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015

Summary: Following concerns raised by members regarding the forum not being properly consulted on various issues the meaning of consultation was discussed. It was agreed that consultation had to be undertaken at a point in any process when the outcome of any decision-making process could still be influenced.
21. Topic Covered: **Brechfa Forest Wind Farm**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015

Summary: Issues regarding the forums views that it had not been properly consulted by RWE N Power on its Access Management Plan for the Brechfa Forest Wind Farm project were discussed.
22. Topic Covered: **Towy Valley Cycleway**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015

Summary: The proposed Towy Valley Cycleway was discussed.

23. Topic Covered: **Cambrian Way**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015
- Summary: Geoffrey Williams informed the LAF that the Cambrian Way is being re launched with a new guide and website.
24. Topic Covered: **Penstacan Byway TRO**
Date(s) Covered: 19th November 2015
- Summary: The LAF discussed a request from a landowner for a TRO on this route. It was agreed that this would be dealt with by the Byway User Group.

Other Chair / Deputy Chair / LAF Activities

List of other engagements carried out by the Chairperson / Deputy / Other LAF Members in pursuance of the aims of the forum:

Date	Event Attended	Nature of Attendance	Attended By
30/03/15	Byway User Group Meeting	Local User Group Representatives / LAF Members	Mark Hadley / Karen Burch
22/04/15	Treadlightly Signposting Project	Treadlightly Representative / Byway User Group Member / LAF Member	Mark Hadley
23/09/15	Byway User Group Meeting	Local User Group Representatives / LAF Members	Mark Hadley / Jane Evans
29/10/15	Towy Valley Cycleway	Member of the public / LAF member	David Stacey
27/11/15	Across the Beacons Cycle Route	Member of the public / LAF member	Mark Hadley
09/12/15	Byway User Group Meeting	Local User Group Representatives / LAF Members	Mark Hadley / Karen Burch / Jane Evans

LAF Committees / Other Meetings

LAF regulation 13 allows for the establishment of committees of a LAF. The Forum established the following committees / attended the following meetings in 2015:

1. 16th April 2015 . Mark Hadley, Caroline Evans & Jon Tudor met with Michael Roberts (Enforcement Policy and Strategy Officer . Environmental Enforcement Unit) and Alan Evans (Assistant Solicitor for CCC) and discussed the implementation of Dog Control Orders within the County.
2. 30th September 2015 . Mark Hadley, Keith Morgan, Chris Rankin, Dai Stacey, Karen Burch, Jon Tudor & Geoffrey Williams (LAF Observer) met to discuss the Welsh Government Green Paper: Improving Opportunities to Access the Outdoors for Responsible Recreation . Consultation. A formal response was sent from the LAF to the Welsh Assembly on the 1st October 2015.

Presentations to the LAF

The following presentations were given to the LAF in 2015:

1. 26th February 2015 . Jane Tibbott from the Welsh Government gave a presentation on GLASTIR.
2. 21st May 2015 . Michael Roberts (Enforcement Policy and Strategy Officer . Environmental Enforcement Unit) and Alan Evans (Assistant Solicitor for CC) gave a presentation on Dog Control Orders and their implementation within Carmarthenshire.
3. 27th August 2015 . Geoffrey Williams from Carmarthenshire Ramblers gave a presentation on the Big Patchwatch.

Work Plan 2016

Regulation 16(2)(b) requires that a LAF annual report includes a programme of works which have been agreed between the forum and the appointing authority, which the forum plans to undertake during the next twelve months. The following items are included for 2016:

1. Items expected to be referred to the LAF by other bodies:

Local Authority:

It is anticipated that the following items will be discussed with CCC in 2016:

- Active Travel
- Towy Valley Cycleway Project
- ROWIP Review
- Planning
- Diversion Order Process
- Grant Improvement Works Programme
- Public Rights of Way Furniture Responsibilities

Welsh Assembly Government and Natural Resources Wales

It is anticipated that the following items will be referred to the LAF by the Welsh Assembly in 2016:

- ROWIP Review Process
- Outcome of the Green paper on Rights of Way

The following are matters that NRW and WAG anticipate that they will refer to LAFs during the year. This is for guidance only and may change to reflect work priorities. **It should not be taken as definitive.** In addition Local Authorities and National Park Authorities will refer matters to LAFs. LAF members themselves should also be encouraged to put forward agenda items.

- Engagement with other organisations.
- Publicising the LAF and its work.
- Influence . Monitoring the impact of advice and recommendations.
- Work Plan for the year.
- Membership.
- Role and governance of the LAF.
- Look at support for LAFs.

2. Items Proposed by LAF Members and Others:

LAF members have requested that the following items be discussed in 2016:

- Active Travel
- Towy Valley Cycleway
- ROWIP Review
- Annual Report
- Statutory Consultees
- Herrick v Somerset Council . Legal Case
- Diversion Order Process
- Public Rights of Way Furniture Responsibilities
- Regular updates on the grant improvements programme and right of way work undertaken by the authority
- Recruitment of other members of the public / groups that are not represented on the LAF

Proposed Meetings in 2016

The proposed schedule for meetings in 2016 is as follows:

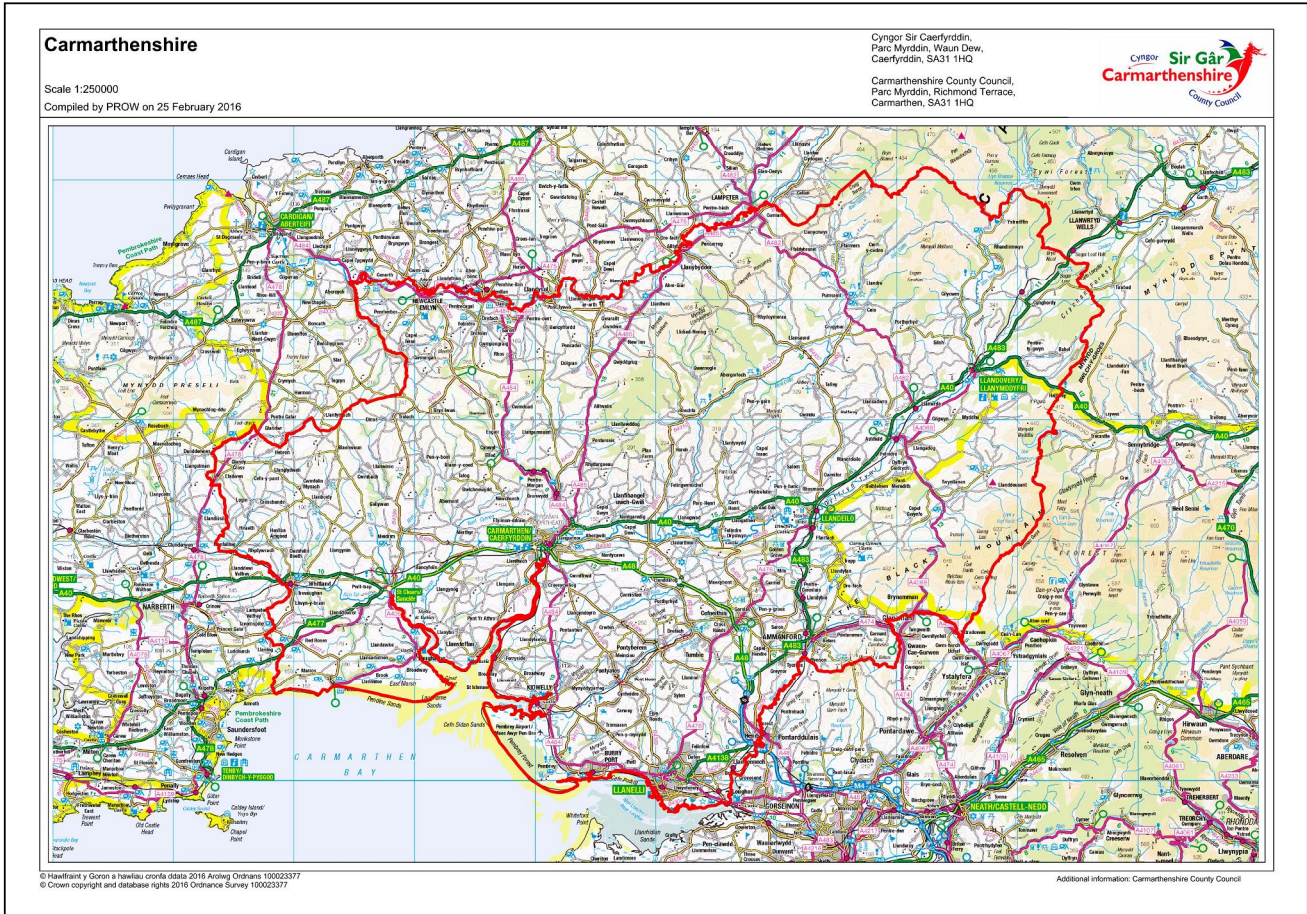
- 18th February 2016 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre
- 12th May 2016 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre
- 22nd September 2016 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre
- 8th December 2016 . Carmarthen Leisure Centre

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Appointing Authority Details

Name of Appointing Authority:	Carmarthenshire County Council
Area Covered by LAF:	The whole of Carmarthenshire except that part which lies within the Brecon Beacons National Park.
Secretary:	Jonathan Tudor, Countryside Access Manager, Countryside Recreation and Access Unit, Carmarthenshire County Council, Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park, Heol Hirwaun Olau, Tumble, Carmarthenshire, SA14 6HU.
Telephone:	01554 747511 (ext 3811)
E-Mail:	JPTudor@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2 – Map of Local Access Forum Area



Key

Area Surrounded in Red = Carmarthenshire
Area Surrounded in Yellow = Section of County in Brecon Beacons
National Park (Not Covered by Carmarthenshire LAF)

Appendix 3 – Membership / Recruitment Details

In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Countryside Access (LAF) (Wales) Regulations 2001, all members of a forum are appointed for three years from the date of the first meeting of a three year cycle that a forum exists for.

At the meeting of 26th February 2015 Mark Hadley was elected as Chair and Karen Burch was elected as Vice Chair. The following table contains brief details of the membership up to 31st December 2015.

Name	Date Appointed to LAF	Date LAF Membership Terminated	Brief Background Details / Interests
Mark Hadley (Chair)	26 / 02/15	N/A	Tourism, Walking, Motorised Access
Karen Burch (Vice Chair)	26/02/15	N/A	Equestrian Access, Tourism
Jonathan Tudor (Secretary)	26/02/15	N/A	Countryside Access Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council
Alan Warner (Council Appointed Member)	26/02/15	N/A	Countryside Operations Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council
Edward Percy	26/02/15	N/A	Motorised Access
Caroline Evans	26/02/15	N/A	Landscape / Ecology Protection, Tourism, Open Access
Eric Jones	26/02./15	N/A	Farming
Jillie Gardiner	26/02/15	N/A	Equestrian Access, Tourism
Chris Rankin	26/02/15	N/A	Horse Riding / Driving Access, Landowner
Keith Morgan	26/02/15	N/A	Local Community Council, Farming
Glyn Evans	26/02/15	N/A	Farming
Eric Davies	26/02015	N/A	Farming
David Stacey	26/02/15	N/A	Cycling, Countryside Management, Agricultural Environment
Becky Chunisingh	21/05/15	N/A	
Jane Evans	19/11/15	N/A	British Horse Society
Richard Leggett	19/11/15	N/A	Carmarthen Ramblers
Geoffrey Williams	19/11/15	N/A	Walking

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The LAF Members attended the following LAF meetings in 2015:

Name	26/02/15	21/05/15	27/08/15	19/11/15
Mark Hadley (Chair)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Karen Burch (Vice Chair)	Yes	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Jonathan Tudor (Secretary)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alan Warner (Council Appointed Member)	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Edward Percy	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	No
Caroline Evans	Apologies	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Eric Jones	Yes	No	No	No
Jillie Gardiner	Apologies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chris Rankin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Apologies
Keith Morgan	Apologies	Yes	Yes	Apologies
Glyn Evans	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Eric Davies	Apologies	Yes	Apologies	Apologies
David Stacey	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Becky Chunisingh	N/A	Yes	Apologies	No
Jane Evans	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
Richard Leggett	N/A	N/A	N/A	Apologies
Geoffrey Williams	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes

Key

Yes

Attended meeting

Apologies

Apologies of non-attendance received

No

Did not attend meeting & no apologies received

N/A

Person was not a LAF member at this meeting.

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A number of advisors have attended LAF meetings throughout the year as shown in the table below.

Name	Organisation	Meetings Attended
Jane Tibbott	Welsh Government	26/02/15
Phil Stone	Natural Resources Wales	26/02/15, 27/08/15, 19/11/15
Geoffrey Williams	Carmarthen Ramblers	26/02/15, 21/05/15, 27/08/15
Jason Lawday	CCC Countryside Access Assistant	26/02/15
Michael Roberts	CCC Environmental Enforcement	21/05/15
Alan Evans	CCC Legal Department	21/05/15
Councillor Deryk Cundy	CCC Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee	19/11/15

Appendix 4

LAF Annual Report Distribution List

CCC Website
CCC Libraries
CCC Customer Care Centres
Community Councils
CCC Members
CCC Chief Executive & Directors
Carmarthenshire Tourist Association
Ceredigion Ramblers Association
Pembroke Ramblers Association
Llanelli Ramblers Association
Dinefwr Ramblers Association
Carmarthen and District Ramblers Association
Lampeter Ramblers Association
Carmarthenshire Riders
British Horse Society
Green Lane Association
Treadlightly
Trail Riders Fellowship
Welsh Trail Riders Association
Auto Cycle Union
British Motorcyclists Association
Sustrans Cymru
Natural Resources Wales
Farmers Union of Wales
National Farmers Union
Neighbouring Authority LAFs
National Trust
Open Spaces Society
Byway & Bridleways Trust
British Driving Society
Cyclists Touring Club
LARA (Land Access & Recreation Association)

Appendix 5

Further Reading

LAF Annual Reports

All appointing authorities are required by statute to produce annual reports. These can be obtained from the relevant LAF secretary. Agendas, minutes and other papers are also available for individual LAF meeting at:
<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/residents/leisure-outdoor-activities/public-rights-of-way/local-access-forum/#.ViuVxZUvnIU>

Government Act

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; The Stationery Office Ltd (2000).

National Assembly Wales

The Countryside Access (Local Access Forums)(Wales) Regulations 2001; The Stationery Office Limited (2002).

Natural Resources Wales

LAF Guidance 1: The Establishment of Local Access Forums . Advice and Best Practice Guidance (2002).

LAF Guidance 2: The Role Duties and Functions of Local Access Forums (2002)

Appendix 6

Glossary

The list below shows the full definitions for the acronyms used throughout this annual report:

LAF	Carmarthenshire Local Access Forum
CCC	Carmarthenshire County Council
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan