

LLANTWIT MAJOR TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE FOOTPATH FORUM
HELD ON 1 APRIL 2014

Present: Councillors: K Geary
E Williams
D Foster

Mr M Lewis – NFU
Mrs B Richards – History Society
Mr G Ingram – Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales
Mrs A James – U3A Representative
Mr I Fraser – Ramblers Association
Mrs B Greenfield - Glamorgan Heritage Coast

Apologies: Councillor M Marsh
Mr G Teague – Public Rights of Way Officer

Councillor K Geary opened the meeting by welcoming Cllr D Foster to his first meeting and introducing the members present.

Report

Footpath Forum members had previously been circulated with a copy of the report of the meeting of the Footpath Forum which had been held on 7 January 2014. It was agreed that the report was an accurate recording of the meeting.

Rural Footpaths Grants

Mr Teague was unable to attend the meeting but emailed his updated notes on the progress of the Rural Footpath Grant application. Unfortunately, the update was not received until 2 April 2014 which is now attached as are the Issue Inventory Report and the Maintenance Report.

Member's Reports

Mr Fraser reported that he had attended a presentation in the Galilee Chapel promoting walking in the Vale which had been organized by Creative Rural Communities. Among the proposals were: a St Illtud's Trail, circular routes along the coast using the Coastal Path and 5 inland routes. In addition there is a scheme to adopt a Valeways Route, where volunteers check a designated route at least twice a year and report back on the condition.

Mrs Richards submitted a copy of the annual Footpath Report prepared on behalf of the Llantwit Major History Society. This Report will be available to members once it has been approved at the History Society AGM on 9 April 2014.

Mr Lewis advised that as we had experienced such a mild winter we could expect heavy growth on the footpaths requiring increased maintenance.

Mrs Greenfield reported that a lot of work had been carried out with the storm damage to the beaches and that they were experiencing reduced staff numbers with further cuts expected within the department. The new information board for the beach was still being worked on.

Mr Ingram delivered his report:

The Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales organised the final scrub clearance working party of the season, as spring is just around the corner, the hedges are starting to come into leaf, and the wild birds on the Reserve are beginning to sing and searching out nest sites.

A substantial area of blackthorn, alder and brambles has been cleared as part of the ongoing management programme to restore the natural grassland and habitats for a variety of nesting birds and the numerous butterfly and mammal species.

Visitors to the Reserve will notice that over 60% of the invasive blackthorn on the Castle Ditches iron- age fort has been cleared revealing the substantial height of the 2000 year old rampart. This will gradually regenerate and it is anticipated that the grass cover and scarce flowers that previously grew here will re-establish themselves.

During the year Gwyneth Price a sculptress from Llantwit Major and a member of the Llantwit Major Arts and Crafts Society and the Sculpture Cymru Group, used the Reserve for a 24 hour exhibition of her work. The Arts and Crafts Society have been very supportive and their members have held an exhibition last October, at St. Donats Arts Centre, based on Cwm Colhuw.

Councillor Geary thanked all members of the Footpath Forum for their contributions throughout his year as chairman and wished them all well for the future.

Dates and Time of Next Meetings

The provisional dates for the next 4 meetings were 1 July, 7 October, 6 January 2015 and 7 April 2015 at 6.30pm in the Heritage Centre subject to the approval of the full Town Council at the Annual Meeting on 8 May 2014.