

Meeting note

Title of meeting: National Access Forum for Wales Meeting No 75

Date of meeting: 6 July 2023

Time of meeting: 10:00-13:00

Present: **Members and Official Observers:** Geraint Davies (NRW Chair), Ian Doyle(O) (Angling Trust), Helen Donnan, BHS, David Morgan (O) Canal and Rivers Trust, Claire Wright* CLA, Phil Stone (Canoe Wales), Gwyn Teague* (WROWMWG), Rachel Evans (CA), Gwenda Owen (Cycling UK), James Nevitt (Defence Estates), Paula Brunt (O) (Disabled Ramblers), David Evans (Elan Valley Trust), Dr Nick Fenwick (FUW), Ruth Rourke (IPROW), Dave Waterman (O)(LARA), Hedd Pugh* (NFU), Jonathan Hughes (National Trust Cymru), Beverley Penney (OSS), Matthew Williams (WSA Outdoor Pursuits Group), Rebecca Brough (Ramblers Cymru), Paul Renfro (WATO), Peter Rutherford (WNPA), Simon Pickering (WG), Sarah Smith (WG), Rosie Plummer (NRW), Ruth Jenkins (NRW), Jont Bulbeck (NRW), Carys Drew (NRW Secretariat)

(O = Online

*= deputising for named representative)

Presenters and guests: Dr Emma Edwards-Jones (Snowdonia Active), Alison Roberts (NRW), Dave Ashford (WG), Dawn Thompson (NRW), Anna Jones (Wales' Designated Landscapes)

Apologies: Julie James MS Minister for Climate Change, Chris Mills, Afonydd Cymru, Dr John O'Connor Angling Cymru, Eben Muse (BMC), Charles De Winton, CLA, Adrian Walls (WROWMWG), Jen Newman (Dŵr Cymru), Ian Maberley & Tony Rooney (WLAFs), Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU), Steve Williams & Emma Henwood (Sport Wales), Fiona Clay-Poole (WLGA), Anthony Richards (WNPA), Emma Robinson (YHA)

Observers: Mark Weston (BHS), Kieron Foster (Cycling UK), Michael Benjamin (Caerphilly LAF Chair), Eifion Jones (Ceredigion Council), Peter White (Ceredigion LAF Chair), Cllr Jill Kibble (Powys LAF), Sioned Jones (NRW), Stephen Jenkinson (Kennel Club), Gruff Owen (NRW), Quentin Grimley (NRW), Rachel Parry (NRW), Chris Heaps (NRW), Michael Smith (NRW), Ash Pearce (NRW), Lewis Hillier (NRW), Dave Maccallum (NRW)

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1. **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, both in the room and those joining online.

2. **Countryside Code and Countryside Code promotion strategy and action plan**

Alison Roberts, Specialist Advisor Responsible Recreation, NRW introduced work on the Countryside Code and the new Countryside Code Strategy and Action Plan for Wales.

NRW has a statutory duty for the preparation and publication of a code of conduct, and work in partnership to deliver the Countryside Code across Wales and England. The continued vision is that the Countryside Code has the right balance between encouraging access and informing people of their rights and responsibilities in the outdoors.

NRW will be continuing to work alongside Natural England (NE) to deliver key shared actions at Wales/England cross border level and to implement with partners and stakeholders the strategy for Wales and associated actions.

Welsh Government provided funding in 2022/23 for NRW to undertake non-legislative work in relation to responsible recreation. Alison shared videos with the meeting of the new content and an overview of each work area:

- **Behavioural Insights (BI) work:** Continuing the Access Reform work around Dogs on Leads. This utilised BI to identify how messaging for improved dog control in the countryside around livestock could be implemented. A webinar will be set up to run through this review with partners.
 - **Branding guidelines** – have been reviewed and there are new guidelines for NRW/NE and partners to follow when using the Countryside Code logo.
 - **Media content** – commissioned a creative agency to do Countryside Code social media films on [responsible walking with dogs](#) and [preparing ahead](#) – these are branded with Countryside Code rather than NRW to enable partners to share more easily. Also commissioned a general Countryside Code leaflet to cover the main points of the Code. A [toolkit](#) is available for partners to download to help promote the code; including videos, images and specific topics.
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Promotional activity:

- [New Countryside Code website](#) – in partnership with NE there is a standalone Code website, this includes information about code champions who promote and share the code more widely. NRW has undertaken some promotion but more needs to be done to engage with the right audiences.
- [Shaun the Sheep Countryside Code Campaign](#): was launched at the end May. This is being led by NE with input and support from NRW. The campaign is aimed at raising awareness with children, young people and families. Teaching resources are also being developed. Queries on downloading need to go to the NE Countryside Code team (via Alison Roberts). NRW will be building Shaun the Sheep in to promotion over the coming year.

Countryside code strategy and promotional action plan

Recognising the need to better engage with audiences, stakeholders and partners, NRW commissioned Snowdonia Active to develop a strategic promotion plan & action plan and Alison explained the intentions of this work.

Dr Emma Edwards-Jones, Snowdonia Active shared the work carried out for NRW. The aim was to look at how to improve the information delivery of the campaigns for the promotion of the code in order to encourage responsible recreation behaviours.

There was a need to keep in mind that behaviour change is the reason behind promoting the code, so things have to be done in ways that generate behaviour change. There was a need to be realistic, take account of currently available resources, identify key opportunities to enhance current working and look at ways work could be developed in order to secure future funding.

Survey work was undertaken to look at familiarity with the code, there are 13 points to convey in the current code (revised in 2021). Emma noted that it can be tempting when looking at campaigns to keep adding things in – she noted a need to be wary of this because the more you add in, the harder it is to promote. The code itself is quiet unwieldy, even the short version of the code includes a lot to convey at once – so there is need to look at using it more effectively. Emma noted that there is the Countryside Code for visitors but also the Countryside Code for landowners. To date these have been delivered separately and she saw the benefit in aligning these more closely, so that there is a partnership between those using the land and the landowners and joint commitment to care for the environment and countryside.

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In reviewing the origins of the Countryside code, Emma noted that it is rooted in post-war society that were used to receiving and adhering to authoritative public information messages, at a time when there were fewer tv, channels and print outlets which made things simpler. The Countryside Code was promoted through mainstream public general information and not through specialist outdoor organisations. There were also comparatively lower numbers of people participating in outdoor recreation.

Now, she said, we have a more liberal society, that is less inclined to conform to a code of conduct. Communication now is more complicated, with many more channels, with chatter and misinformation that needs to be counteracted. There are also significantly higher numbers of people participating in outdoor recreation.

Emma shared the [most recent Countryside Code](#) film from NE and NRW noting this is a change in approach to promoting. Reflecting on this, Emma suggested that to reach people that are engaging in irresponsible behaviours, there needs to be something in it for them, not just the Code messages i.e. they need to be entertained first but with the messages on the back of that. There's a role for films like this but there's a need to engage creatively with key audiences – she was delighted to see Shaun the Sheep back on the scene.

Emma outlined the work undertaken to inform the strategy which included significant level of stakeholder consultation, including reaching out to groups that have not been traditionally involved together with a review of information and evidence. Emma shared the key points from these findings and set out the thinking behind the vision for the Promotion Strategy and Action Plan.

The code is important for maintaining a baseline understanding within the general population but there is also need to respond to changes and be more flexible and nuanced in how the code is used. Promotion of the code requires a collaborative approach, to achieve a high level of visibility.

Emma concluded by sharing details about the areas that the strategy sets out:

- the audiences (targeted and general population)
 - messages (need to reconfigure for social media and make bitesize, respect/protect enjoy, improve clarity of communication of PROW definitions)
 - resources (do one big thing well, toolkit and continue to promote), and
 - partnership working needed to deliver (proposal is to have a national network of Countryside Code partners, coordinated effort to promote themes, partners to work together)
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Jont Bulbeck, Outdoor Access and Recreation Team Leader noted the Forum members have been supportive of messaging in this and in access reform work. NRW has adopted the Promotion Strategy and whilst there is good work going on, there are also issues and challenges. Jont shared a diagram indicating how different organisation roles could work and invited members to consider.

Whilst NRW has a lead role there are questions for Forum members, particularly around how organisations can better work together. There are areas of work that need to be carried out collaboratively.

The way NRW envisages working in future to develop and promote the Countryside Code would be to lead the work with a standing core group of organisations which is more collaborative and cooperative in terms of developing work and also having a wider interest group of organisations that would like to use, but not necessarily be involved in developing materials. Jont invited members to consider and comment on that approach.

Discussion points:

- Comment that it feels that there has been a lack of Government activity to educate people over the last 30 years on the Countryside code. View that there is a need to have public information broadcasting used rather than relying on promotion through social media by individual organisations and engagement is needed with those responsible for the education curriculum, given devolution there is opportunity for Welsh Government to be proactive.
 - Jont responded that the strategy identifies better engagement within the education sector and NRW education specialists are involved. opportunities to communicate with schools and informal education sectors will be considered and pursued. He asked people to consider how do we work together on this?
 - Suggested that there is opportunity to work with organisations that bring groups to the countryside e.g. Duke of Edinburgh award who were particularly good at bringing young people out from urban areas.
 - Noted that there are two lengths of video for the Dog Walking Code, the longer version includes releasing dogs if owner feels threatened by livestock.
 - Jonathan Hughes NT Cymru, welcomed this work and delighted to see standalone website and having the Code as a single point of reference. Suggested that the only way to reach new audiences and to get enough traction is to work in collaboration, NT is happy to work with NRW in a collaborative approach.
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- Important to reach out to other individuals and groups to spread the message, suggestion that effort needs to come across different government departments – into social and housing sectors.
 - Jont noted that inclusivity is a key issue identified in terms of reaching the right audiences as well as looking at diversity of representatives supporting this work.
 - Good practice examples of collaborative work would be drawn on. Members highlighted the example of New Zealand's Leave no Trace Campaign [Leave No Trace New Zealand | Promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation](#)
 - Suggestion that there is a need to understand how far adrift from the Code messages, public behaviour is currently.
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3. **Welsh Government update on the Agriculture (Wales) Bill and the Sustainable Farming Scheme**

Dave Ashford, Engagement Manager from Land Management Reform team in WG presented. His wider team has responsibility for development of Sustainable Farming Scheme and the Agricultural Wales Bill.

The Bill was introduced to the Senedd in September, and last week passed final stage of voting and scrutiny in the Senedd. The Bill is set on four sustainable land management (SLM) of objectives, one of which specifically includes public access. The four SLM objectives will be used to underpin agricultural support going forwards. Welsh Ministers will have legislative duty to consider all four objectives together when developing support. The SLM objectives are not hierarchical but have equal weighting. Dave set out the next steps for the Agricultural Bill to become the Welsh Agricultural Act once it receives Royal Assent – this will give Welsh Ministers the power to provide support.

The main new support that the Bill will enable will be the Sustainable Farming Scheme, Dave noted that there was not much update as matters are currently between consultations. Outline proposals were published last summer and these were used to then underpin the co-design stage which was mainly focussed at farmers. Welsh Government spent recent months considering the outcomes from the co-design to date. The Minister for Rural Affairs would be issuing a statement and publishing reports on co-design shortly, this would not contain decisions or firm commitment but rather outcome of co-design activity and Welsh Government response to those.

Officials will use results to combine with policy development. Dave noted that the outline proposals last summer were deliberately high level, as WG

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wanted to engage farmers in ways that they could contribute their ideas and experience. WG were pleased that so many had taken part in that process.

Dave summarised the next steps as the Statement from Minister was expected shortly (*post meeting note this is available here: [Oral Statement: Government response to the second phase of the Sustainable Farming co-design \(11 July 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)*)

The next consultation stage was expected to take place toward the end of the year, following this, final scheme details were expected to be published in 2024 and then for farmers to be able to join the scheme itself beginning 2025.

Discussion points

- The proposals were for a three tier scheme, universal actions will apply to most farms, there would then be a series of optional actions, and collaborative actions. Dave confirmed that there are no mandatory universal actions for access but a number of optional actions are proposed. The information from co-design will be fed into further developing the next consultation. Collaborative elements have fewer parameters, clear that access lends itself to collaborative actions.
- Concern about running out of time to develop the collaborative layer and that with having no cross compliance for access combined with only having optional actions that this won't assist in addressing access problems in Wales.
- In terms of piloting the collaborative element, there are already experiences from collaborative elements and work already underway. Integrated natural resources schemes (INRS) there are a number of lessons to learn from.
- The Agricultural Bill going through Senedd, Scheme is in advanced development but ultimately the money comes from UK Government and WG are dependent on budget from UK Government. In terms of cross compliance and regulations, it has always been clear that SFS has to sit above regulation, can't pay farmers to comply with regulation, PROW sit within regulatory layer and there is a big piece of work needed to consider compliance with regulation as part of managing eligibility of the scheme.
- In terms of priority for public access, public access proposals listed the 10 SLM outcomes – enhanced access and engagement is one of the things that it wanted to achieve and is explicitly listed on the Bill itself – the challenge is turning this into action, but it is in there.
- Since the 2018 consultation WG have been clear that future payments need to be linked to climate change action. There is a perception that payments to farmers disappear so have to link and

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demonstrate what payments will deliver. Budget scales are not known at the moment and will be a matter for Ministers.

- Suggestion that with WG listing public access as one of things to be delivered and be enshrined as one of the land management objectives, it is imperative that this is matched with promotion and education of the Countryside Code.
- WG appreciate that the budget is what people want to know. The financial modelling is in progress, consultation is ongoing, and it is therefore difficult to attach final payment rates. More information would likely be included about methodology of transferring from BPS to SFS
- Comment welcoming prospect of genuine consultation later in the year
- Point made that it is easy to underestimate the importance of access to people in Wales and that it would be helpful to get some focus on messaging around access
- NRW welcome invite to provide information, such as the Countryside Code and Land Managers code to the scheme.
- Access is underestimated, access to the countryside should also include access to blue spaces as it is often not clear if this is included.

The Chair thanked Dave, and suggested that Wales already delivers with huge potential for rural Wales to deliver against the Agricultural Bill objectives.

4. What is the future of recreation on the land cared for by Natural Resources Wales (NRW)?

Dawn Thompson, is on secondment from Forestry England to lead piece of work to develop new Recreation Strategy for NRW, she shared her background as Head of Recreation and Engagement for West England.

Introduced the recreation strategy and opportunities to get involved. Request for NRW Recreation Strategy was made by NRW Board. Scope is to set a strategic direction for freehold and leasehold land that is managed or cared for by NRW, to support local decision making - including things that need to develop and things that need to stop, and to tell the story about what NRW does and why. Need to answer the question of nature and climate emergencies and the wellbeing of future generations.

Dawn set out the aims for the work and areas of focus to achieve the vision, to support the delivery of the new NRW Corporate Plan and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. It will need to work at strategic national level and work at local level. Needs to be responsive to change and have an annual

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review process and to measure impact of it's delivery – particularly focussing on the wellbeing benefits to society, environmental sustainability and financial sustainability.

The likely structure of the strategy was set out, including vision to 2050, and monitoring and evaluation framework, and the areas of focus that will be explored. The engagement and consultation plan and timeline for the Strategy's development was shared. Stage 1 had been insight and evidence gathering working with internal stakeholders, Stage 2 Design and Development which will be the opportunity for Stakeholders to be involved to shape the Strategy, Stage 3 consultation on the draft strategy and Stage 4 publication in June 2024.

She summarised the work to date to develop the strategy, which included bringing in an external agency to support engagement in the process, holding internal staff engagement and workshops to gather insight and evidence, vision and objectives – this has generated a lot of data that is being analysed and the report on that will be taken into Phase 2 design and development.

The report from Phase 1 will be available from July. Phase 2- August to October would involve:

- focus groups with staff to further develop objectives and commitments
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Online workshops to input into the design and development of vision, areas of focus and objectives.

Once the draft strategy is published there will be further opportunity to be engaged and provide feedback.

Discussion points

- Comment that it is important to understand the role of NRW land specifically, and WG land in general. The importance that access policy on that land has, it was suggested that this creates the norm by which private landowners develop policies and manage issues e.g. mountain bike issues and liability. So it needs to set the exemplar which others tend to follow. It can influence management of land beyond NRW.
 - Suggestion that access policies on NRW land could usefully be applied onto other land owned by WG and Councils as there is a need for more cohesive and consistent access policy across Welsh Government.
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- Question about how different the new strategy will be from what NRW is or should be delivering now?
- Dawn noted that NRW doesn't currently have a clear vision for recreation and direction into the future so that will be a change. It is not clear how different it will be at this stage – but needs to set good strong direction that NRW can work from and teams on the ground can use to support their decision making.
- Question about whether least restrictive access will be built into the strategy, whether it will include a review of resources including rights of way network, whether access to water issue will be addressed separately on NRW managed land and whether external consultation will go to Local Access Forums.
- Dawn confirmed that Local Access Forums involvement was already being considered and likely to be involved in the Phase 2 engagement as well as being consulted on the draft Strategy in Phase 3. Dawn is in discussion with WG on access to water and access reform in general, WG are keen to see Access Reform within the strategy but the level of detail yet to be decided, it would likely be scoped around trials in the first instance. Least restrictive access question will be part of the next phase of design and development to explore.
- In response to a question on whether NRW can expand on thinking on motorised off-road user groups to use NRW managed land rather than more vulnerable land. Dawn noted that the Strategy will be guided by Corporate Plan objectives, and look into offroad activity, possibilities in terms of zoning land for activity but that would be looked at.
- The statutory duties in 2013 articles for NRW to provide access and recreation, were raised and it was noted that these matters would be considered in developing the strategy which would include access and statutory duties and the links to access reform would also need to be considered.
- Suggested that since evidence shows that people care for things that they have a sense of ownership over and a stake in, it would be helpful to see stewardship being incorporated into the strategy.

5. Review of Forum Terms of Reference

Updated and revised Terms of Reference had been circulated and the meeting endorsed the new version which would reviewed again in 2026.

6. Written contributions

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The meeting went through the written contributions that had been circulated previously and contributors had the opportunity to speak about the items submitted and questions were invited.

Anna Jones Diversity and Governance Excellence Strategic Lead across all of Wales' Designated Landscapes shared information about her role and invited members to get in touch with her. She made members aware of the work that [Tirweddau Cymru](#) are doing including running a pan Wales educational resource.

Helen Donnan BHS noted that the 'All Saddles Welcome' project is a Welsh Government Funded project that has been running for 3 years, working with Cycling UK to promote a long distance riding and cycling route from the Vale of Glamorgan to Merthyr.

Gwenda Owen, Cycling UK noted that the Glamorgan Way was a really good example of collaboration between user groups and a number of local authorities and Wildlife Trust. 'Trails for Wales' document has been launched about frustration around progress in Access Reform, reminding WG about the reasons why reform is needed. Launch date for Traws Eryri – working with NRW in North Wales 23rd August in Conwy.

Rebecca Ramblers Cymru encouraged members to look at the Paths to Wellbeing website, working with communities to develop routes.

Paul Renfro shared the Economic and Social Evaluation of the Outdoor Activity Sector in Wales, in partnership with the other members of the Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation (WATO) and to highlight some key findings. The full report is available online and non-executive summary will be shared.

7. Update on the Access Reform Programme

Forum members had prepared questions for the Minister, however due to the Minister being unable to attend, these were answered by Simon Pickering, Head of Designated Landscapes and Countryside Access.

Question and Answer

Ruth Rourke, IPROW: Resources in local authorities for countryside access are very stretched. On several occasions officers have submitted recommendations for simple changes which could help reduce burdens for landowners and local authorities such as removing the need to advertise orders in local papers. Could the Minister assist in ensuring these much needed reforms are undertaken in the near future?

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Response: WG are hoping to begin an engagement phase with local authorities later this year (September/October) with regards to access reform in that area.

Gwenda Owen, Cycling UK: Can the Minister provide time scales for progress on access reform? Given WG's stated commitment to reform in 2019 and the significant contribution made by a wide range of stakeholders into the ARAG process it would be a shame for this to be lost given the importance of reform to the health and wellbeing of the people of Wales and the benefit to sustainable tourism. Noted disappointment that the Minister was unable to attend as members had come a long way.

Response: WG does appreciate the effort that has been invested in this area by stakeholders and it remains something that WG are looking to take forward. There are some constraints, in terms of budget and resources and access to a legislative slot to take forward reforms, which WG have been looking to secure, but haven't yet been successful. WG have been prioritising areas where progress can be made. In terms of trial of ARAG approaches on NRW managed land, WG are in discussion with NRW. Beginning process of considering what a trial might test, noting that for a trial to be beneficial there is a need to understand what questions were still in the ARAG report, to maximise the benefits and outputs from a trial and to understand resource and other implications – WG have been in contact with NRW and doing further work internally and also plan to engage with other landowners. Simon was not in a position to provide timelines, noting that those for legislation changes are dependent on having a legislative slot.

Rebecca Brough, Ramblers Cymru: Has WG struck the right balance in its support for access to the outdoors - whether for leisure or 'purposeful' journeys - including helping authorities deliver on their obligations to maintain and promote access? Concern about huge disparity between how walking and cycling access is being treated and lack of integration.

Response: WG have continued to take forward the Access Improvement Grant funding to local authorities – having managed to take that from an annual programme it is now a 3-year committed programme and Simon noted that this enables authorities to structure some of their projects to a greater degree. He continues to talk to Active Travel colleagues to try to maximise the links.

Helen Donnan, BHS: More equestrians would like to use their horses to do short active travel journeys to post a letter, go to the local shop, visit friends but the exclusion of equestrians from many active travel routes is hampering this uptake and exclusion means that equestrians are left to ride on the very

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roads that are considered to be dangerous for cyclists and walkers to use safely – what can the WG do to rectify this?

Response: Active Travel Act doesn't include horseriding and carriage driving in the definition of Active Travel, because this Government's analysis is that both activities are not commonly used for utility journeys. There are good examples where multipurpose routes are enjoyed by all users, where active travel routes link up with bridleways and WG do encourage local authorities to consider the best solution for local circumstances. He flagged that Road Safety Wales does highlight vulnerability of horses and their riders. Simon invited Helen to send details of the example shared of horseriders having to go alongside dual carriageway rather than use an active travel route.

Phil Stone, Canoe Wales – report from National Access Forum Access to Water Subgroup, the report submitted doesn't give all the answers, but does give a great platform for the organisations to talk together about the ways that access to inland water can be increased. Asked if Minister would revisit that and open up conversations again.

Response: Simon noted that the Government's main commitment around recreational use of water, is on the Programme for Government commitment in terms of use of inland water for recreation. As part of that work a sample survey report was commissioned to get better understanding of inland water activities and usage – report on this was published May 2023 and this information will be fed in to development of taking forward the commitment. As part of that there will be a trial on 7 pilot sites around the designation process in the next year. Learnings from that will consider anything that comes forward around access. Simon's team talk regularly to Water Branch and mention the importance of access and remind about the Sub Group report so it is included as part of considerations. Simon added that when that piece of work was initially asked for, it was to focus on establishing better relationships and it was good to see the co-working, it was also framed in terms of making current arrangements work better, so anything further that can come from stakeholders about strengthening arrangements would be welcome. Simon would feedback the point that a lot of water recreation is based on a journey (5-15km in a day), so trials based on points may not consider more widely what is needed.

Ian Maberley Welsh LAFs: (question submitted in advance as unable to attend): When are the updates to LAF regulations likely to be implemented?

Response: WG are drafting regulations at the moment and aiming to complete during the autumn and working with stakeholders. WG hope to have draft regulations ready for consideration in the next few months.

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Eben Muse, BMC: It's been stated by the Minister in the past that the intention for the Agriculture Bill is that payments are given for improving public access but we are yet to see clarification on how this would work in practice. Can the Minister elaborate on the practical mechanisms by which this will be monitored and put into practice so that access is actually improved, not just maintained?

Response: Noted the update provided by Dave Ashford and next stages in the process and that there would be a statement about progress from the Minister.

Peter Rutherford, Wales NPA: Noted that there is a deep sense of frustration among access professional officers and NGOs post ARAG, despite effort and consultation there didn't seem to progress. IPROW and WROWMWG have put in proposals for technical changes to legislation and there are workable solutions for access to water.

Response: Simon noted the frustration which has been echoed by others, he will brief the Minister and feedback views that have been put forward.

Beverley Penney, OSS: Asked how the meeting felt about inviting the Minister to meet at her convenience as it seems something that members feel very strongly about.

Chair: Noted Beverley's point and would address in item 8.

Mark Weston, BHS: Asked if WG has any information about what percentage of use of active travel routes are for recreational purposes and the percentage for utility trips.

Response: Simon offered to look into whether there was information on this.

The Chair thanked Simon for attending and answering all the questions.

8. The Chair invited members to consider how they would like the next meeting to be arranged, given costs of attending in person. It was agreed to hold the next meeting on 7 November in person (hybrid) rather than online as planned as WG advised that the Minister would attend and members noted that they would appreciate the opportunity to share thoughts with the Minister directly.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all presenters and members joining, in person and online, for participating and for the wealth of experience everyone brings to discussions.
