Appendix 2

Gwynedd Rights of Way Report

Date presented: 2022-10-14
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Contents

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1.   Introduction

The Rights of Way Imrovement Plan (ROWIP) is a strategic document to be used by Local Authorities in order to plan for the management, development and promotion of their rights of way network. The ROWIP will set a framework for identifying, prioritisng and planning for improvements to their rights of way network and access to the countryside for the benefit of walkers, cyclists, horse riders, individuals with mobility problems and others.

Rights of Way include footpaths, bridleways and byways (usually narrow lanes, often unsurfaced), but do not include roads.

2.   Methodology

In order to ascertain the opinion of Gwynedd residents on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan, a questionnaire was used as a method of gathering information.

The questionnaire was open from 27th June until 30th September 2022.

A digital questionnaire was placed on the 'Have your say' page, which is a consultation site on the Council's website, in order to collect the opinion of the general public.

We contacted the Council's Residents Panel with a questionnaire in order to find out their opinion.

Paper copies of the questionnaire were provided in each of the Gwynedd Shops as well as the libraries across the county as well.

The consultation was promoted through the 'Have your say' page, and also through the Council's social media, namely Facebook and Twitter. The questionnaire was also promoted by Snowdonia National Park.

Responses were received by post and through online questionnaires.

3. Responses to the questionnaires

This part of the report will analyze responses to the questionnaires.

3.01 How were responses received?

A total of 296 valid responses to the questionnaire were received.

Most (91.9%) of the respondents answered as an individual, with 6.1% answering on behalf of an organisation, group or business.

	Number	%
As an individual	272	91.6
On behalf of an organisation, group or business	18	6.1
No repy	6	2.0
Total	296	100.0

The following organiosations responded.

Cyngor cymuned Llanbedr
Dim ateb
Cyngor Tref Caernarfon
NFU Cymru
Bryncroes
Aberdyfi Community Council
Mynediad Ceffylau Gogledd Cymru
Cyngor Cymuned Llanwnda
Snowdonia Slate Trail Trust
Llanegryn Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Betws Garmon
Cyngor Cymuned Pistyll
Grŵp cerdded Pen-Y-Groes, Dyffryn Nantlle. 10 o'r gloch bob dydd Iau o'r Ganolfan Hamdden
Eryri Ramblers walks secretary
Fforwm Mynediad Arfon Dwyfor a Fforymau gogledd a de Parc Eryri (yn gyfunol) // Arfon Dwyfor & Snowdonia Local Access Forums – north and south combined
Rhodwyr Llyn Ramblers representing 140 regular walkers mostly based in Dwyfor
Meirionnydd Ramblers
Cyngor Cymuned Llanengan

Categorising paths (section 2.4)

Although there is criticism of the current categorisation system, in the short term this is the most practical system that allows the most popular routes to be in a satisfactory condition.

It should be recognised that it is not possible to give full attention to all routes in Categories 1 and 2*, and that a lack of maintenance on the rest of the network leads to a backlog of work and costs if they are to be restored to an acceptable standard.

A survey of the state of Gwynedd's rights of way will be carried out to be used to establish a baseline that can be used to measure performance, assist with the work of re-categorising routes and to prioritize projects for grant funding. This will be a long-term commitment and cannot be fully achieved with the current staff resources, efforts will be made to use volunteers or temporary staff to speed up the work.

It is intended to re-assess route categories and update it if necessary to create a network that better reflects the needs of the County's communities. The work is done in conjunction with Community Councils

*Paths Category 1: Paths that facilitate the movement of people. These will usually have significant use or form a link in towns, villages or between public transport facilities, car parks and leisure attractions.

Category 2 Routes: Popular routes used primarily for pleasure including routes around communities, circular routes, access to beaches or promoted routes.

3.02 Do you agree or disagree that the current system of categorising rights of way should continue?

See from the table below that 67.9% (N=201) of the respondents agree that the current system of categorising rights of way should continue, while 17.2% (N=51) neither agree nor disagree, and 12.5% (N=37) disagree.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	9	32.8
Somewhat agree	104	35.1
Neither agree nor disagree	51	17.2
Somewhat disagree	20	6.8
Strongly disagree	17	5.7
No reply	7	2.4
Total	296	100.0

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3.03 Further comments here

Those who were identified as strongly agreeing, agreeing to some extent and neither agreeing nor disagreeing were asked to indicate any further comment. Of the 252 possible responses, further comments were received from 70 respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
All routes need to be open to all (walkers, cyclists, horse riding, disabled access) / Not prioritising.	18	25.7
Easy to use categories e.g. colour-coded categories	11	15.7
Les popular paths shout not be ignored	9	12.9
Agree with the proposal	8	11.4
No change required	7	10.0
Paths should be improved and maintained	7	10.0
Some categories should be combined on some paths	5	7.1
Concern that land owners remove signs / stop access.	3	4.3
Prioritise specific paths	2	2.9
Respond when paths are misused	1	1.4
Designated mountain bike paths	1	1.4
The Slate Trail should be in Category 1	1	1.4
Prioritise long distance paths	1	1.4
Need to re-examine which way some paths go (e.g. Recent developments opening to some routes)	1	1.4
Ensure that Sat Navs do not lead tourists down certain lanes	1	1.4
Not relevant to the Question	7	10.0
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 70		

3.04 Do you have ideas about how work can be prioritised on the network?

Those who were identified as disagreeing to some extent or disagreeing strongly were asked if they had ideas about how work on the network can be prioritized. Of the 37 possible responses, further comments were received from 30 respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Maintain all paths (all categories)	9	30.0
Every path should be inspected regularly	4	13.3
Employ more staff / more funding	3	10.0
Extinguish some paths to give or resources to others.	2	6.7
Stop landowners from stopping access	2	6.7
Make the categories clearer	2	6.7
Reclassify some paths as bridleways and by-ways	1	3.3
Prioritise equestrian routes	1	3.3
Community Council should take more ownership.	1	3.3
Prioritise paths used by vehicles / circular routes.	1	3.3
Not relevant to the question	4	13.3
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 30		

3.05 How would you go about reviewing and updating the categorisation procedure and who should be involved in this work?

A response was received from 119 individuals. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Create a group with a combination of stakeholders / local consultation on routes	31	26.1
Path users/ local volunteers / walking groups	25	21.0
Community Councils	17	14.3
Another consultation on route use / Review of the categories	10	8.4
Aerial surveys / use drone / digital mapping	9	7.6
Involve landowners	7	5.9
Improve signage / waymarking	7	5.9
The Council not to ignore concerns / complaints about routes / take more ownership	6	5.0
Additional funding and staff	4	3.4
maintain every path	4	3.4
Better explanation of the differences between categories	3	2.5
Community groups	2	1.7
No need to create new paths	2	1.7
Review speed limits on some paths	1	0.8

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Tourism tax	1	0.8
No categorisation – all paths are important	1	0.8
Prioritise circular routes	1	0.8
Prioritise paths with the highest level of use.	1	0.8
Use Young Offenders to maintain paths	1	0.8
Not relevant to the question	9	7.6
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 119		

Grants (section 2.6)

The grants available to improve the path network prioritize the following:
• Upgrading bridges and structures;
• Making routes more accessible;
• Multi-use routes;
• Projects that facilitate access to nature.

3.06   Do you agree or disagree with these priorities for using grant funding?

See that almost three quarters of the respondents agree with the above priorities (72.6%, N=215). 9.1% (N=27) of the respondents indicated that they they disagreed with the priorities, while 6.4% (N=19) neither agreed nor disagreed.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	119	40.2
Somewhat agree	96	32.4
Neither agree nor disagree	19	6.4
Somewhat disagree	13	4.4
Strongly disagree	14	4.7
No response	35	11.8
Total	296	100.0

3.07   Please enter any further comments here

112 respondents indicated a further comment. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Promote and maintain existing paths	28	25.0
Include equestrian routes	12	10.7
Access to nature / nature conservation	9	8.0
Access for all	9	8.0
Better signage	8	7.1
Facilities and access for the disabled	7	6.3
Links between villages	6	5.4
Improve bridges and structures	6	5.4
Segregate walking and cycling paths	5	4.5
Use digital technology to promote paths	4	3.6
Agree with the recommendation	3	2.7
Consider the needs of all users	2	1.8
More bins needed	2	1.8
Co-ordinate volunteers	2	1.8
Community consultation with all stakeholders	2	1.8
No responsibility on the landowner	1	0.9
Green lanes	1	0.9

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Restrict access by motor bikes	1	0.9
More maps	1	0.9
Access and safe crossings near schools	1	0.9
Not relevant to the question	16	14.3

The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 112

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Efforts are made to resolve disputes through discussion and negotiation with land owners and stakeholders. If there is no choice but to take formal enforcement action, priority will be given to effort on category 1 and 2 routes

3.08 Do you agree or disagree that enforcement should be prioritized on category 1 and 2 routes?

See from the table below that 67.6% (N=200) of the respondents agree that enforcement should be prioritized on category 1 and 2 routes. 15.5% (N=46) disagreed and 14.2% (N=42) did not agree or disagree.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	115	38.9
Somewhat agree	85	28.7
Neither agree nor disagree	42	14.2
Somewhat disagree	18	6.1
Somewhat disagree	28	9.5
No response	8	2.7
Total	296	100.0

3.09 Enter any further comments here

Additional comments were received from 79 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
All categories (subjects to financial constraints	20	25.3
Concern about the possible impact on some communities	1	1.3
Agree with the recommendation	8	10.1
Prioritise the Councils objective and not those of landowners	1	1.3
Enforcement already happens at local level	1	1.3
If possible resolve the problem before taking enforcement action	8	10.1
Consider the impact on farmers / landowners	9	11.4
The Council has a legal duty for all paths and not just for those in certain categories.	3	3.8
Landowners and other know that there is no penalty if the path isn't in category 1 and 2.	8	10.1
Landowners often break the law	13	16.5
The views of landowners should be respected	1	1.3
Bridleways are important	5	6.3
Public access is what's important not the path category.	12	15.2

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Enforcement is important		3	3.8
Community Councils should take an enforcement role.		1	1.3
Signs should be improved		1	1.3
No opinion / not relevant to the question		7	8.9
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 79			

Making Use of Technology (section 2.11)

It is necessary that the Countryside Service makes use of technology that allows officers to work effectively and to respond efficiently to complaints from the public. Existing systems including the website will be reviewed and updated.

3.10 Do you agree or disagree with the intention to encourage the public to make more use of Gwynedd Council's website for contacting access issues?

80.7% (N=239) of the respondents agreed with the intention to encourage the public to make more use of Gwynedd Council's website for contacting access issues. 5.4% (N=16) disagreed with 11.5% (N=34) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	150	50.7
Somewhat agree	89	30.1
Neither agree nor disagree	34	11.5
Somewhat disagree	12	4.1
Strongly disagree	4	1.4
No response	7	2.4
Total	296	100.0

3.11 Enter any further comments here

Additional comments were received from 116 respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Agree with the recommendation	30	25.9
Concern that some individuals (elderly) may not have the technical knowledge to use the website.	24	20.7
Alternative means of reporting also require – phone or face to face.	21	18.1
On line systems make it difficult to speak to Council officers and receive a response.	16	13.8
On line leaflets showing paths.	11	9.5
Must be easy to use	11	9.5
The Council must ensure that they respond to all complaints.	9	7.8
Online issue reporting portal	8	6.9

Need to keep details on the web accessible	6	5.2
The public need a contact point.	3	2.6
Use a drone to survey paths	2	1.7
The main problem is to ensure that work happens on the ground	2	1.7
Include Community Councils	1	0.9
Concerns that the Council will receive many more unnecessary enquiries.	1	0.9
Disagree with the recommendation	1	0.9
The ability to download photos and videos of paths would be useful.	1	0.9
Make better use of social media	1	0.9
Use apps such as Strava to see which path are popular.	1	0.9
Not relevant to the question	4	3.4
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 116		

Strengthening Links with Organisations and Individuals (section 2.12.5)

The Countryside Service will identify opportunities to extend and strengthen links with organizations and individuals who are keen to volunteer and seek funding in order to support the work they do.

3.12 How can the Countryside Service encourage more volunteers to contribute towards the work of maintaining rights of way?

174 of the respondents commented. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Promote volunteering opportunities	49	28.2
Contact relevant groups (walking groups, Community Councils)	40	23.0
Use social media	36	20.7
Advertise opportunities in local papers / leaflets etc	16	9.2
Make sure that the volunteers benefit	15	8.6
Contact schools and youth clubs	14	8.0
Staff required to supervise volunteers	13	7.5
Needs to be managed at a local level, communities to take ownership	12	6.9
Promote completed work and provide information about what needs to be done.	10	5.7
Provide volunteers with the necessary tools and equipment.	9	5.2
Disagree with using volunteers	8	4.6
Develop contact with agriculture	8	4.6
Volunteers must be given training	8	4.6
A wide range of different times to volunteer	5	2.9
Open day for volunteers	2	1.1
Organise free training	1	0.6
Be inclusive	1	0.6
Using volunteers can be difficult due to insurance and other matters.	1	0.6
Trial using volunteers on some paths.	1	0.6
Community Service	1	0.6
Business that benefit from paths should contribute	1	0.6
Volunteers need assurance that the work will be maintained for some time	1	0.6
Ensure that all user types are able to use the paths.	1	0.6
Not relevant to the question	8	4.6
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator =174		

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3.13 Are you a member of an organization that is keen to work together with the Council's Countryside Service?

17.6% (N=52) of the respondents stated that they were a member of an organization that wanted to work together with the Council's Countryside Service.

	Number	%
Yes	52	17.6
No / Not applicable	231	78.0
No response	13	4.4
Total	296	100.0

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Multi-Use Routes (section 4.6)

The Council will favor improvements to the network that offer multi-use provision.*

*Multi-use routes: Routes for walkers, cyclists, horse riders which also meet requirements with mobility problems.

3.14 Do you agree or disagree that the provision of additional multi-use routes should be prioritized?

The 69.6% (N=206) indicated that they agreed that the provision of additional multi-use routes should be prioritized. 19.3% (N=57) disagreed, while 7.8% (N=23) neither agreed nor disagreed.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	140	47.3
Somewhat agree	66	22.3
Neither agree nor disagree	23	7.8
Somewhat disagree	33	11.1
Strongly disagree	24	8.1
No response	10	3.4
Total	296	100.0

3.15 Enter any further comments here

Further comments were received from 135 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Need to be inclusive / accessible for disabled people and mobility problems	17	12.6
Safety of path users	14	10.4
Valuable for some groups e.g. horse riders, cyclist, children	14	10.4
Maintenance	11	8.1
Look at each path separately / Depending on the path / Not always suitable	9	6.7
Cost / funding	8	5.9
Network to connect villages / active travel	7	5.2
Need some pedestrian only routes / Different routes for cyclists	7	5.2
Disagree with multi-use paths / Risk that the paths are not suitable for anyone / Problems with this type of paths	6	4.4
Need to keep the character of the path	6	4.4
All paths should be multi use / agree	5	3.7
Difficult / A big effort to do this / Obstacles to change existing routes to be multi-use	4	3.0
Need to respect others / this need to be promoted	4	3.0

Risk to the natural environment	3	2.2
Encourages going out / active travel	2	1.5
Negative impact on landowners	2	1.5
Consider need of cyclists / mountain bikers	2	1.5
Multi-use paths can be difficult to use e.g. for cyclists when busy	2	1.5
Segregated paths / lanes need for cyclists and walkers	2	1.5
Promote paths	1	0.7
Carry out a survey of the current use of the routes	1	0.7
Not relevant to the question	19	14.1
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 135		

Use of the Lonydd Glas Network by Riders (section 4.6)

3.16 Do you agree or disagree that horse riding should be allowed on the entire Lonydd Glas network?

54.4% (N=161) of the respondents agreed that horse-riding should be allowed on the entire Lonydd Glas network. 18.9% (N=56) disagreed while 23.0% (N=68) neither agreed nor disagreed.

	Number	%
Strongly agree	99	33.4
Somewhat agree	62	20.9
Neither agree nor disagree	68	23.0
Somewhat disagree	24	8.1
Somewhat disagree	32	10.8
No response	11	3.7
Total	296	100.0

3.17 Please note any further comments regarding this

Further comments were received from 92 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Include horse riding in a qualified manner / a positive step / a good idea	22	23.4
Riding can be dangerous / paths not suitable for others (e.g. pedestrians, disabled people, bicycles)	18	19.1
Nothing to add	18	19.1
Horses can cause potholes and can lead to more maintenance	7	7.4
Safety - It is safe for riders to share the trails / riders need a safe place to go	6	6.4
Lack of respect/ guideline or code of conduct needed for users	6	6.4
Horse manure can be a problem	5	5.3
Paths need to be suitable	5	5.3
Signs needed	5	5.3
Unintended negative consequence e.g. opening the paths to motor bikes affecting landscape when expanding paths	4	4.3
Busy paths	3	3.2
Proposal for suitable paths – former railway lines.	2	2.1
Budgets and funding	2	2.1
Will increase use of the Lonydd Glas	1	1.1
Requirements will help other users	1	1.1
Some 'restrictions' e.g. time	1	1.1
Consultation needed	1	1.1
Not relevant	1	1.1

Further Comments

3.18 Is there any area of work that has not been touched upon sufficiently or not at all in the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan that you would like to see included?

A response was received from 124 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Maintenance	21	16.9
Nothing	13	10.5
Horse riding	10	8.1
Information panels and signs	10	8.1
Accessibility for those with mobility problems or a disability	9	7.3
Litter, dog waste, anti-social behaviour, environmental impact	8	6.5
Local input / volunteering	7	5.6
Property owners and landowners obstructing paths / Access must be maintained on all registered paths	6	4.8
Funding	6	4.8
Re-categorise paths / non-categorised paths	6	4.8
Rights of way/ walkers' rights/ cyclists / motor cyclists	5	4.0
Time table / plan is vague / targets	5	4.0
Accuracy of maps	5	4.0
Promotion / marketing	3	2.4
Multi use paths	3	2.4
Education	3	2.4
Cycle paths	3	2.4
Reopen paths / increase number of paths / upgrade paths	3	2.4
Paths between communities	2	1.6
Parking	2	1.6
Safety	2	1.6
Section on vehicles is week	1	0.8
"Ownership"	1	0.8
"dog friendly"	1	0.8
l Not relevant	6	4.8
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 124		

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3.19 Are there any issues being proposed by us that you feel would have an impact on the Welsh language in any way, and specifically therefore could affect opportunities for people to use the Welsh language or would treat the Welsh language less favorably than the English?

A response was received from 80 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
No	34	42.5
Retain / promote / teach about Welsh place names / Welsh first	14	17.5
Bilingual signs etc	13	16.3
Promoting the history of areas e.g. through talks about the history of places on signs etc	4	5.0
English is treated less favourably / Bias towards the Welsh language	3	3.8
Paths that link communities	2	2.5
Need to be inclusive	2	2.5
Places that inspires people to learn about the culture	1	1.3
Historic paths are important to communities.	1	1.3
Encourage volunteers and people who move to an area to come together and help learn Welsh	1	1.3
Funding to promote the language the language e.g. bilingual mountain leaders etc	1	1.3
Use signs to help learners.	1	1.3
Be careful when translating	1	1.3
Other	5	6.3
The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 80		

3.20 Any other comments?

A response was received from 46 of the respondents. The table below shows the themes that arose from the responses.

Theme	Number	%
Funding and resources	6	13.0
Tourism	5	10.9
Thanks / support	5	10.9
Health / active travel	5	10.9
Problems noted with the document, its accuracy and elements that have not been included	4	8.7
Safety	4	8.7
Working with local groups / stakeholders/ community councils	4	8.7
The benefits and importance of paths.	4	8.7

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Property and landowners obstructing people from using paths.	3	6.5
Network requirements and ideas / additional paths needed	3	6.5
Need to be inclusive of all needs including cyclists, wheelchair users, horses	2	4.3
Horse riding	2	4.3
Survey of paths that are unavailable	2	4.3
Negative effect of extending the existing network	1	2.2
Availability of toilets.	1	2.2
Impact of not being able to use existing paths	1	2.2
Motor cycles using paths.	1	2.2
Vandalism	1	2.2
Need for map to show the path network	1	2.2
Not relevant / other	2	4.3
No further comments	5	10.9

The percentages will not add up to 100 as more than one theme arises per comment. Denominator = 46

Prepared by