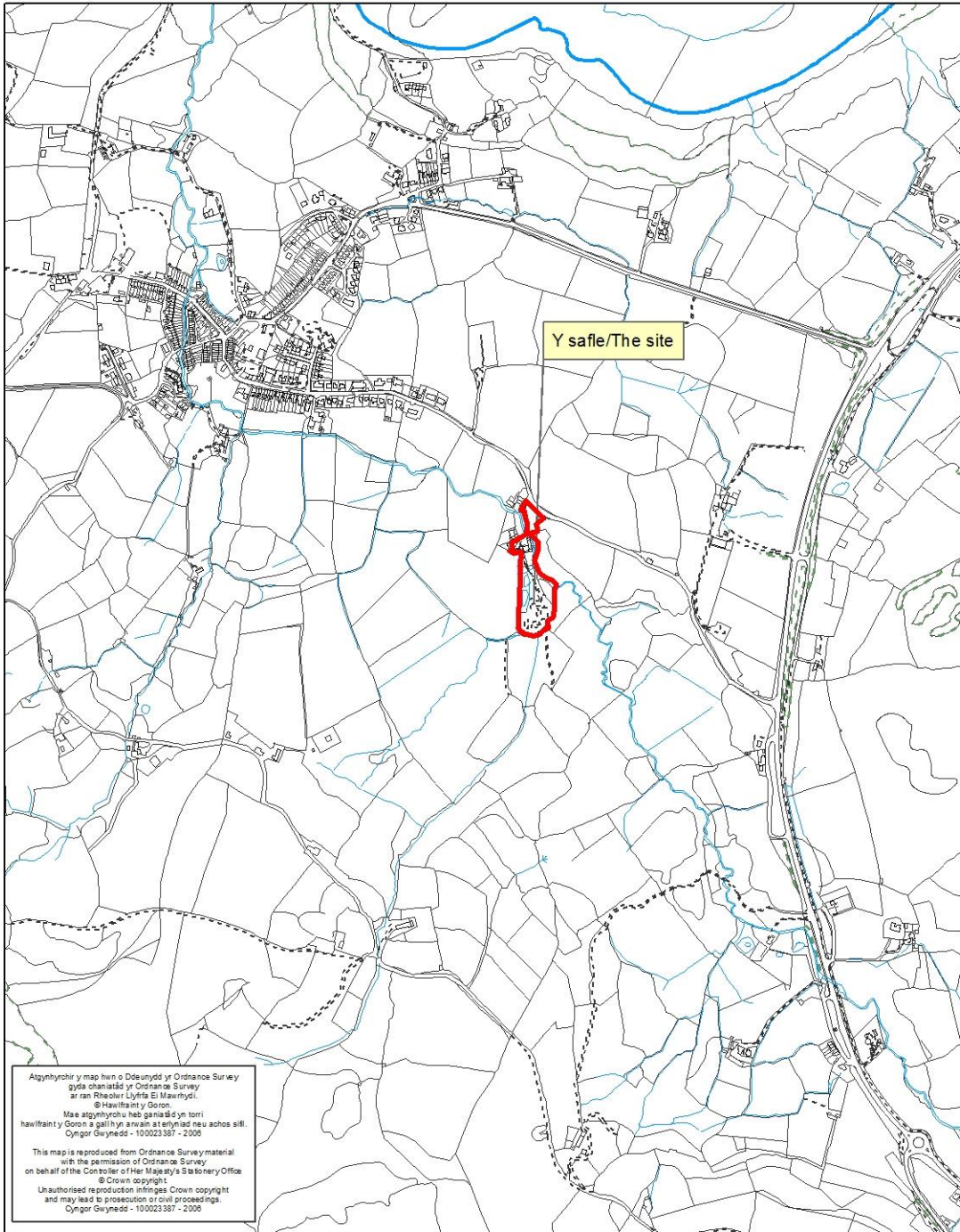


Number: 4



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15-0034-37-LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C15/0034/37/LL
Date Registered: 21/05/2015
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community: Llanaelhaearn
Ward: Llanaelhaearn

Proposal: CONVERSION OF EXISTING TOILET BLOCK INTO A HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION UNIT, THE ERECTION OF A NEW TOILET BLOCK, THE SITING OF TWO STATIC CARAVANS, THE SITING OF FIVE TOURING CARAVANS, ASSOCIATED PARKING AREA AND LANDSCAPING.

Location: ELERNION CARAVAN PARK, TREFOR, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, LL54 5AA

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

1. Description:

1.1 There are many parts to this application:

- Conversion of existing toilet block into self-contained holiday accommodation
- Building a toilet block /new facilities
- Siting of one new static caravan
- Siting five touring caravans (in place of five caravans with exemption certificates)
- Landscaping work including planting trees and creating hard standing areas for parking

1.2 The following information was submitted with the application:

- Survey Report on Protected Species
- Design and Access Statement

1.3 The site is in a hidden area from nearby roads but is visible from higher ground within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast. Mature trees border the site on three sides, with an agricultural field on the other side. Access to the site is past a building converted into a dwelling house and a grade II listed building from the third class county highway that runs to the village of Trefor from the A499. Public footpath number 9 Llanaelhaearn crosses the northern part of the site.

1.4 A discussion on this application was deferred at the meeting of the Planning Committee on 06/07/15 at the request of the applicants in order to amend the plan to include one new static caravan, rather than two.

2. Relevant Policies

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

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2.2 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

STRATEGIC POLICY 17 – TOURISM

Proposals to develop or improve the variety and quality of tourist facilities and attractions will be approved provided they do not significantly harm the environment, the area's cultural characteristics or the amenities of nearby residents.

POLICY B8 – THE LLŶN AND ANGLESEY AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Safeguard, maintain and improve the character of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by ensuring that proposals conform to a number of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features of the site in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT

Proposals that are likely to cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species and their habitats will be refused unless they can conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN

Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

POLICY B23 – AMENITIES

Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

POLICY B24 – ALTERATIONS AND BUILDING EXTENSIONS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES, RURAL VILLAGES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Ensure that proposals for alterations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area.

POLICY B25 – BUILDING MATERIALS

Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

POLICY B27 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

Ensure that permitted proposals incorporate high quality soft/hard landscaping which is appropriate to the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

POLICY B29 – DEVELOPMENTS ON LAND AT RISK FROM FLOODING

Manage specific developments in the C1 and C2 flood zones and direct them towards suitable land in zone A, unless they conform to a series of criteria that are relevant to the features on the site and to the purpose of the development.

POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE

Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use rather than demolition will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

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POLICY CH33 - SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

POLICY D15 – SELF-SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Proposals for developing new, permanent self-catering holiday accommodation and adaptation of existing buildings or existing establishments will be approved provided the design, setting and appearance of the development is of high standard and if it conforms to criteria relevant to the location and scale of the development, impact on the permanent housing stock and on residential areas and availability of this type of holiday accommodation.

POLICY D17 – UPGRADE STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVAN AND UNIT SITES AND EXISTING HOLIDAY CHALETS

Proposals to upgrade static holiday caravan sites and existing holiday chalets using specific methods will be approved if they conform to criteria regarding improving the range and quality of accommodation and facilities; substantial and permanent improvements to the design, setting, and appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape; along with increasing the number of units.

POLICY D19 - NEW SITES FOR TOURING CARAVANS, CAMPING AND TOURING UNITS

Proposals for developing new touring caravan, camping, or touring unit sites will be permitted provided they conform to specific criteria regarding the design, layout, appearance and location of the development, traffic issues, and restrictions on the use of the units and the accumulative impact on the local area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Holiday Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Converting buildings in the countryside and in rural villages

2.3 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 7, July 2014

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism

Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk

3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C03D/0153/37/LL - SITING TWO ADDITIONAL CARAVANS ON EXISTING STATIC CARAVAN SITE: Approved 19.05.03
- 3.2 C02D/0592/37/LL – SITING FOUR ADDITIONAL STATIC CARAVANS ON EXISTING STATIC AND TOURING CARAVAN SITE: Refused 20.01.03
- 3.3 C02D/0578/37/LL – ADAPTING OUTBUILDINGS INTO SELF-SERVICE HOLIDAY UNIT: Approved 16.12.02
- 3.4 C01D/0365/37/LL - SITING FOUR ADDITIONAL CARAVANS ON EXISTING STATIC CARAVAN SITE: Approved 15.10.01

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3.5 C00D/0128/37/LL - SITING TWO ADDITIONAL STATIC CARAVANS ON EXISTING STATIC CARAVAN SITE: Approved 15.05.01

3.6 9800344FUL17 – ADAPTATION OF PART OF OUTBUILDING INTO TOILETS FOR CARAVAN PARK: Approved 10.10.98

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Support

Transportation Unit: No objection

Trees Unit: No observations to offer.

Footpaths Unit: Observations
Anxious to ensure that public footpath no. 9 Llanaelhaearn is protected during and at the end of the development.

AONB Unit: Observations
Having introduced additional landscaping as proposed it is not believed that additional caravans would impair the AONB.
There is concern regarding the design of the new mono-pitch building and the opinion is that a more traditional building would better suit the site.

Welsh Water: Standard observations regarding sewerage disposal.

Natural Resources Wales: Observations
Part of the site is within a C2 Flooding Zone, although the site of the building proposed to be converted into holiday accommodation is a little outside the Flooding Zone. Considering the scale of the development it is thought that the flooding risk would be acceptable.
There is a need to keep to the recommendations of the Protected Species Survey.
Observations for the applicants regarding the sewerage system.

Biodiversity Unit: Observations
Following the Reasonable Avoidance Measures included in the Survey Report of Protected Species it is considered that the development is reasonable.

Caravan Officer: No objection

Fire Service: No observations to offer.

Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion Management Unit: Standard observations to protect watercourses.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The consultation period has expired and several letters have been received objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- The site is big enough already

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- Detrimental impact on the AONB
- Detrimental impact on the Welsh Language

In addition, a comment was received that is not a planning issue

- The existing activity of the caravan park causes difficulty to public footpath walkers.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 Strategic Policy 17 in the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan supports proposals to develop or improve the variety and quality of tourist facilities and attractions provided they do not significantly harm the environment, the area's cultural characteristics or the amenities of nearby residents. In addition, Policy D17 GUDP supports proposals to upgrade static holiday caravan sites if they conform to a series of relevant criteria.

5.2 On the basis of the above policies the principle of a plan that improves the provision for the users of this holiday site is acceptable, dependent on the details of the plan and the impact of individual elements. These will be discussed in turn below in the context of the most relevant policy considerations.

Conversion of existing toilet block into self-contained holiday accommodation

5.3 Policy C4 of the GUDP supports proposals to adapt buildings for re-use provided they can conform to a series of criteria. It is considered that this development meets with those criteria for the following reasons:

- 5.4
- i. The building is already used as a serviced unit and therefore it is agreed that it is of permanent construction and structurally sound
 - ii. The plans show that the building is suitable for the proposed use
 - iii. The minor alterations to the external appearance would not harm the appearance of the building, indeed continuing to use the building for a positive economic purpose would be a means to protect an attractive and traditional rural building.
 - iv. Conditions may be imposed to ensure that there would be no change in the nature of the external activity.
 - v. That the development would not lead to a dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice the vitality of towns and villages.

5.5 Policy D15 approves proposals to convert existing buildings into permanent self-serviced holiday accommodation if the design, layout and appearance of the development is of a high quality and if the proposal meets with a series of criteria. It is considered that the design proposed is standard and suitable for the building and also that the development meets with the criteria as:

- i. The scale is appropriate for the site.
- ii. It will not result in a loss of permanent housing stock.
- iii. There will be no harm to the area's residential character.
- iv. It will not lead to an over-concentration of such accommodation.

5.6 Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets with the requirements of Policies C4 and C15 of the UDP and is acceptable in principle.

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5.7 The proposal, despite changing a little of the building's external appearance, would help to protect its character and by so doing would protect the area's visual character. There would be no impact on neighbours and the changes would not be obvious or detrimental from any public areas. It is therefore considered that the application would meet with the requirements of policies B22 and B23 of the UDP.

5.8 Subject to relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposal to convert the toilet block building into a self-serviced holiday unit is acceptable under the policies of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan.

Building a toilet block /new facilities

5.9 The proposal is for a building with timber walls and a mono-pitch grey coloured roof. The building would measure 9.6m long, 4.8m wide with a height of 3.5m to the highest point. It will be located on the western boundary of the site near the access to the main caravan area. There is some existing screening by trees and a wall on the western boundary of the site; however, it is likely that it would be seen from higher ground to the west and from the public footpath nearby. Having said this, it is considered that the materials and colours chosen are fairly inconspicuous and the building would take its place within the site without appearing to be prominent or intrusive in the landscape. Therefore, it is considered that this element would meet with the requirements of policies B22, B23 and B25 of the GUDP that deal with design, materials and the impact of buildings on amenities.

Siting of one new static caravan

5.10 The main policy to consider when assessing the increase in numbers of static caravans is policy D17, GUDP. The policy permits applications for upgrading existing static sites, minor extensions to the land area, relocating units or for a small increase in numbers provided that the three relevant criteria can be conformed to.

5.11 **Criterion 1:** that the proposed development is part of a scheme to improve the range and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities on the site. It is agreed that the proposal is part of a wider scheme to improve facilities on the site. Also, considering the concealed nature of the site and the fact that an addition of one static caravan would not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, it is considered that the small increase in the number of static caravans is acceptable under the requirements of criteria 1.

5.12 **Criterion 2:** that the development offers significant and permanent improvements to the design, layout and appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape. Considering the small increase in the numbers, it is not considered that the scheme offers sufficient improvements to the internal environment of the site to satisfy this criterion.

5.13 **Criterion 3:** that any increase in the number of static holiday units is minor and is commensurate with the scale of any improvements to the site. The policy elaborates further, and states that the increase in numbers should be no more than 10% above the number when the first application to increase the number of units was made. In this case, the proposal entails one new static caravan; an increase from the current 12 to 13, namely an 8.3% increase which satisfies this criterion.

Siting five touring caravans (in place of five caravans with exemption certificates)

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- 5.14 Although the site is already being used for touring caravan purposes for the Caravan Club; the development is considered as a new site as the current site is not open to the general public. The Caravan Club has been issued an exemption for its sites and therefore they do not require formal planning permission to use the site for the siting of touring caravans provided they meet with the conditions of that exemption. Consequently, the main policy to consider when assessing the principle of the development is policy D19. The policy approves proposals to develop new touring caravan, camping or touring unit sites provided they comply with the relevant criteria, namely:
- 5.15 Criterion 1: The site is not considered to be prominent or intrusive in the landscape as the site has been screened from the majority of public places by forest. It is proposed to incorporate some landscaping on the western boundary of the site and considering the concealed nature of the caravan sites, it is believed that touring units can be incorporated easily within the landscape and in an appropriate way that does not significantly harm the visual quality of the landscape. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal complies with Criterion 1 of Policy D19.
- 5.16 In terms of **Criterion 2** the touring caravan site is located approximately 100m from the county highway which is therefore close and convenient and the Transportation Unit has no objection to the access arrangements. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal is not contrary to criterion 2 of policy D19.
- 5.17 It is possible to control the use of the site for touring caravan purposes for holiday use with appropriate planning conditions, and it can also be possible to ensure that the units will be moved from the site during the periods when they are not in use. Therefore, the application is not considered contrary to **Criterion 3** of Policy D19.
- 5.18 **Criterion 4** stipulates that there is a need to take into account the cumulative impact of approved touring caravan sites within the immediate locality and that the proposed development will not exceed the capacity (e.g. environmental, social and cultural, road network, amenities etc.) of that locality to reasonably accommodate such developments. It is not considered that the vicinity of the application is noted for its high density of touring sites and it is not considered that approving this use of caravans is beyond the reasonable capacity of the vicinity to accommodate such developments. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to criterion 4 of policy D19.
- 5.19 Having weighed up the principle of the proposal of creating a site for five touring caravans in the context of Policy D19, it is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the design, setting and appearance of the site and the modifications would be in a well-screened unobtrusive location and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable under policy D19 of the GUDP.

Landscaping work including planting trees and creating hard standing areas for parking

- 5.20 The landscaping work includes planting a 3m wide plot along 45m of the site's western boundary and this would offer screening to the two new static caravans, and other caravans in the south of the site, from the direction of higher ground in the west. It is also proposed to create a hard standing for parking for seven cars near the entrance to the caravan area.

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5.21 Policy B27 GUDP encourages high quality landscaping schemes. When assessing the suitability of a landscaping scheme consideration has to be given to several factors including:

- That the proposed planting creates a link with nearby planting - the proposed planting would link with the forest to the south and would fill a gap in the screening boundary and create an extension to the habitat for wildlife.
- Ensuring that existing features of the landscape are protected during the development process – no harm will be caused to the existing landscape features.
- That any planting should use local native species – this can be controlled via a condition.
- In the case of sites that are visible from the Llŷn Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that important views in or out of the sensitive landscapes are protected – because of the concealed nature of the caravan park and its distance from the main viewpoints in the AONB, it is considered that there would be no harm to any important views in or out of the AONB.

5.22 Considering the above, it is considered that the proposed landscaping satisfies the requirements of policy B27 of the GUDP in terms of the external appearance of the site.

General Matters

Transport and access matters

5.23 The site is convenient for the nearby public highway and as the increase in the number of customers who use the site will only be small, it is considered that there will be no detrimental impact on any public road stemming from the development and therefore the application is consistent with Policy CH33 of the UDP.

Impact on the Llŷn AONB

5.24 Policy B8 of the UDP requires developments to safeguard, maintain and enhance the character of the AONB. Due to the concealed nature of the site and its distance from prominent public viewpoints within the AONB, it is considered that the development would not be harmful to the quality of the landscape in the protected area. Some concern has been expressed by the AONB Unit regarding the design and materials of the toilet block, however, due to the size and materials of the proposed building and the existing screening on the site it is considered that the development would not be intrusive in the landscape and therefore there would be no harm to the AONB.

Flooding matters

5.25 Part of the site lies within a C2 Flooding Zone as defined in Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk, and Policy D29 of the UDP encourages directing developments away from C2 Flooding Zones. However, considering the scale of the development and the site and the new elements proposed, it is considered that the flooding risk would be acceptable and therefore the proposal meets with the requirements of Policy D29. Natural Resources Wales have confirmed this in its observations.

Biodiversity Matters

5.26 A report on the protected species survey was submitted in relation to the proposal to change the use of the existing toilet block and this came to the conclusion that there is no evidence of bats using the building and it suggests mitigation measures to ensure that there is no harm to bats or nesting birds in the future. The report is acceptable to

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the Biodiversity Unit and it is considered that by following the mitigation measures suggested in the document that the plan meets with the requirements of Policy B20 GUDP.

Response to the public consultation

5.27 It is considered that the relevant issues that have arisen in the objections have received attention within the above assessment. No other matters have arisen that suggest that the recommendation should be changed.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 The application before the committee shows an improvement to the quality and facilities of the site, and the increase in the number of static units proposed is acceptable. The increase is equivalent to an increase of 8.3% in the existing number that is less than the 10% permitted by Policy D17. Having weighed up the proposal in the context of this specific site, it is considered also that the proposed improvements, along with the concealed nature of the site, means that there would be no significant harm in exchanging the existing five touring caravans with exemption certificates for five touring caravans with planning permission and, therefore, the scheme satisfies the requirements of Policy D19 of the GUDP.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To approve subject to conditions:
1. Five years
 2. In accordance with the plans
 3. Materials for the buildings
 4. Biodiversity conditions
 5. Landscaping conditions
 6. Touring caravans' standard holiday season
 7. Touring units must be removed from the site out of season
 8. Holiday use only – static and touring caravans
 9. Must maintain a register of users

Notes for information:

Public Footpath Number 9 – Llanaelhaearn must be safeguarded
Observations of the Flood Risk Management Unit
Observations of Natural Resources Wales