

National Access Forum Written Contributions

NAFW 78: 2 July 2024

Introduction

This note is collated and edited by NRW from submissions from Forum members and NRW staff prior to National Access Forum Meetings to facilitate the sharing of information.

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Natural Resources Wales

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Countryside Code campaign 23-24

To support elements the Countryside Code Strategy 2023-28 aims and objectives and action plan recommendations, a Countryside Code campaign was developed and run between October 2023 and March 2024. A key issue when promoting the Code is reaching a wider audience which was identified through stakeholder consultation. As a result, an external contractor (Working Word) was tasked with developing a campaign plan outlining promotional actions up to 2026 that supports delivery of a programme of innovative projects that would promote the Countryside Code in as creative way as possible.

Publicising and promotion of the Countryside Code is part of NRW delivering its duty to prevent damage and encourage responsible behaviour of visitors to the countryside, including protected landscapes and natural areas in Wales.

Outputs from the campaign

Output	Description
PR Campaign plan and project delivery during 2023-24	Development 3-year campaign plan identifying promotional delivery up to April 2026 (funding dependant). Leading on delivery of projects identified in campaign plan for 23-24
Project delivery:	
Focus groups x 2	Countryside Code based focus groups for 14-18 & 18-35 yrs. age groups to identify: Awareness of the Code; how messages resonate; how and where the Code is most effectively promoted.
Partnerships x 3	Extending the reach of the Countryside Code, links with new partners to promote and share messages were made. Partnerships generated: Mind Cymru: Film focussed on mental health and being outdoors: Mind Cymru: walking in nature with the Countryside Code (Eng) Mind Cymru: cerdded ym myd natur gyda'r Cod Cefn Gwlad (Cym) Football Association Wales: linking Welsh Cymru Premier league locations to Code messages – To be released soon. Ysgol Hamadryad: Gogglebox style lesson for children featuring Shaun the Sheep – To be released soon
PR / articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to be great outdoors in South Wales this Christmas• 10 ways to be egg-cellent outdoors this Easter
Social media/ influencers x2	Influencers content shared with their wider network of followers on social media accounts, whilst referencing the Countryside Code. Running Punks: Guide to the Countryside Code Welsh Mummy Steph: Capturing the Outdoors
Countryside Code Stakeholder workshop	Communications and promotion stakeholder workshop to increase engagement and build relationships with existing and new stakeholders across Wales.

Supporting Countryside Code work

Video reels: Short Dog Walking Code and Countryside Code reels created to enhance the social media offer. Short reels provide focused behaviour messages.

Dog Walking Code advert: Placed in North Wales Tourism publication (Go North Wales).

Leaflets: Dog Walking Code & Countryside Code reprint / Shaun the Sheep activity leaflet. These will be distributed around Wales.

Education resources: A suite of Countryside Code materials for teachers based around the Countryside Code is in development. This includes Activity plans, information notes, fact files, short film and resource cards.

Shaun the Sheep will be making an appearance at the Royal Welsh Show (RWAS) 2024. A statue of Shaun (under the Aardman licence) will be on the NRW stand to support and champion information about the Countryside Code.

Please link to and share Countryside Code content: [Countryside Code Toolkit](#)

Responsible Recreation with Dogs study

A study was commissioned in October 2023 to develop interventions that would encourage responsible behaviours of those exercising dogs in the vicinity of livestock. This work is a continuation of a literature review and behavioural insights study undertaken previously which examined dog control around livestock.

Following recommendation an approach was developed to test intervention methods through signage and social media, which aimed to promote positive behaviour change and to reduce the incidences of livestock worrying in a real-world scenario e.g. on sites where footfall was high enough to obtain suitable evaluation and where livestock incidences have previously been reported.

On behalf of NRW, a contractor (Snowdonia Active) negotiated trial sites with partners before designing and developing signage and social media communications targeted at dog walkers in those areas. Monitoring effectiveness of signage intervention was via on-site QR codes linking to an online survey. This survey remains open across the summer months. A report has been submitted to Welsh Government.

Study Outputs

Output	Description
Trial site selection	3 sites selected: Newborough Warren NNR, Great Orme (Conwy), Moel Famau & Dinas Bran (Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB)
Online surveys	Survey 1: Exercising dogs around livestock – aimed at dog walkers Survey 2: Dog related incidents & horses – aimed at equestrians
On site interventions	Signage varied across sites depending on audience and desired affect (Educational style/ shock tactic style/ welfare of dogs approach).

Social media	English and Welsh, social media posts were generated based on the graphics developed for each field trial.
Evaluation	Online evaluation survey (still open) - QR codes on site and social media.
Project report	Responsible Recreation with Dogs & Intervention Measures – To circulated post-election 2024.

National Trails and Wales Coast Path Marketing update

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The Welsh National Trails continue to benefit both from promotion partnership both with Natural England and with the Wales Coast Path. Key joint activity is via the PR contract with Working Word and driven by the 2024 – 2029 Marketing and Promotion Strategy underpinning annual action plans.

WCP = Wales Coast Path
NT = National Trails
ODP = Offas Dyke Path
GW = Glyndwrs Way
All = WCP, ODP and GW

Key themes for the strategy are:

- Inclusivity
- Communities
- Economic and health and wellbeing benefits
- Partnership

What's been happening

Inclusive access

- Following the north Gwynedd pilot project we have been working with Experience Community CIC and more local authorities to assess candidate/potential accessible sections along the wider WCP. The assessments are informing bids for improvements in information or on the ground where required.

Collaborations

- WCP - Work with wheelchair user Amanda Harris to promote Llanfairfechan section of the WCP as accessible in collaboration with Visit Wales
- WCP - Muslim Hikers did 2 guided walks on Gower and Porthmadog in the summer of 2023 – reaching a more diverse audience. A positive collaboration also with Transport

for Wales (a train journey was part of the Porthmadog walk) and engaged with local businesses. Wide and engaging social media coverage

Travel Trade

- WCP and National Trails in Wales were represented at the Visit Wales trade roadshows autumn 2023 hosted by Visit Wales and Southern Wales. It was an opportunity to show the WCP and NTs as routes to explore Wales as a visitor destination.

Marketing Activity 2024-2025

Inclusive Access

- ODP – Following on from the successful collab with Muslim Hikers on the WCP, an influencer trip is planned in autumn 2024 with 2 or 3 representatives of the Muslim Hikers.
- They will walk some of the ODP and create social media content to promote Offa's Dyke Path and the local area as walking destination in North East Wales. We are working with Denbighshire Tourism team to work with local businesses. We hope to have a wider walking event (akin to the WCP ones) in 2025-2026 financial year. This influencer trip will be used to encourage their members to come on a walking event the following year.
- ODP – UK Influencer trip was done during May 2024 (National Walking Month). This Girl Walks did 3 Offa's Dyke Path circular routes in north and mid Wales and created some engaging content showing the variety of landscapes on the trail.

Economic and Well-being benefits

National Trails Business Toolkit and Brand Guidelines

These are on the the National Trails Website [Business Resources – National Trails](#)

Wales Coast Path Visitor Survey to include National Trails

The draft specification for this financial year for surveying to span 4 seasons next financial year. The survey will help us to understand who is benefiting from the trails, visitor experience and spend.

Connecting people to nature

- There is an additional focus on biodiversity on the routes and on trail officers who maintain and carry out work to improve the trails. As part of this there will be seasonal blogs for the Welsh trails on the National Trails website and to be shared on social media.
- Many sections of the Wales Coast Path pass through National Nature Reserves and we will be creating content featuring coastal NNRs and the wellbeing benefits that walkers derive from being in nature.
- Biodiversity content will be created and promoted to connect people with nature whilst on the trails – to be done in partnership where possible eg Wildlife Trust

Partnerships

- **All – New circular walks** have been created for all of the routes and hosted on the Ordnance Survey platform. 33 WCP are the website and for ODP and GW are soon to be published on the OS website – our partnership with OS means that the new routes will benefit from a much wider audience reach and additional promotion and publicity.
- **WCP - Sustainable transport** – A successful partnership with Transport for Wales and Cambrian Railway Partner has led to update Cambrian Line information on the WCP website and new leaflets at train stations long the Cambrian Line.
- **Bus network** - Working with Traveline Cymru to improve information about using buses to walk the routes.
- **ODP and GW - Rail To Trail walks** from Offa's Dyke Path and Glyndwr's Way. Guidebook author Paddy Dillon has created short walks on Offa's Dyke Path and Glyndwr's Way connecting to railway stations as part of the Rail to Trail project. These are published on the National Trails website and promoted by Transport for Wales. You can see the Rail to Trail campaign publicity at railway stations along the trail.

For Information

Assets available for our partners to promote the trails are as follows:

[National Trails website](#) - Jointly managed by Natural England and NRW.

[Wales Coast Path website](#) - managed by Natural Resources Wales

Photography – Official photography all the routes is on [Visit Wales Asset library](#)

There has been additional photography commissioned showing walkers from diverse demographic groups walking on the trails. This is part of wider work within NRW to create a more diverse image bank for our promotional material.

Video - Videos by Mother Goose is available on YouTube for partners to share.

[WCP](#) , [Offas Dyke Path](#) , [Glyndwrs Way](#)

People and nature thriving together

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“People and nature thriving together”, the new strategy for how we manage access to nature on the land in our care was approved by the NRW Board in public session in May 2024, and runs until 2030 with a vision to 2050 for ***a future where every person, regardless of background, can access the land in our care to enable a connection with nature.***

It was created collaboratively with staff and stakeholders, through an extensive engagement process, to set a strategic direction for outdoor recreation on freehold and leasehold land in our care, including the Welsh Government Woodland Estate and the National Nature Reserves in our direct care.

The strategic shift in the strategy, which flows from our Corporate Plan 2023 – 2030, is that the themes of access to nature and of social justice are stronger. It means that we will put more into managing (and in some cases restricting) recreational activity to protect nature, to enable people to connect with nature, and into helping disadvantaged people gain health and well-being benefits from “local, everyday” access.

The strategy, which will be published on the NRW website, is intended to provide a framework for local decision making on all aspects of providing and managing access to nature. It will be implemented via our integrated service planning approach, with indicators of the outcomes we want so we can track achievement.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank NAFW members for their contribution in developing the strategy, and hope that it helps to optimise opportunities through meaningful partnerships, and provide better coordination and guidance for people that want to support NRW’s work through actively contributing to its management.” Dawn Thompson, NRW

Wales Integrated Natural Beauty Mapping

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This project forms part of NRW’s Designated Landscapes Programme, funded by Welsh Government.

The project will provide mapping of natural beauty across Wales to inform future decisions on positive landscape interventions. Potential interventions include landscape designations, landscape partnerships, local/regional projects. The mapping tool will help provide focus and identify areas for protection or improvement.

The project will also provide mapping of nature recovery, climate resilience and wellbeing in a landscape context, integrating with other projects and SMNR and well-being goals.

The mapping is at a strategic, landscape scale and could potentially inform Future Wales, Area Statement work, SoNaRR. It is not intended for site based work but could highlight areas where more detailed assessment is needed.

The project methodology has been under development since 2023, with consultation, testing and adjustments ongoing. Draft mapping will be available via a consultation hub in September 2024, with stakeholder workshops to explain and demonstrate the tool and an opportunity to provide feedback. The mapping is to be published in 2025.

Please contact Olwen Maidment if you would be interested in attending the September workshops or viewing the consultation hub. An update and demo could also be provided to the forum in November.

New Welsh National Park Proposal

The assessment of the case for a new National Park in Wales is progressing on schedule. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is currently working with Gillespie's LLP on the detailed landscape evaluation of the study area.

This work is informing the development of a draft boundary, in September 2024 we will have a new map with justification for any areas excluded or included. This will go forward along with supporting evidence and analysis to inform a public consultation commencing in September this year.

We have also produced a report summarising the 2023 Engagement period and addressing the eleven most common themes that emerged from around one thousand questionnaire responses in 2023. This will be published shortly after the election in July 2024.

"It proved invaluable for us to gain a thorough understanding of the area being assessed at the engagement period in 2023. This informed our work greatly and since then we have set up regular advisory group meetings with the Local authorities potentially affected and other stakeholders.

We are now ready to share the results of our work so far in a public consultation this autumn (2024). There will be time after that for further refinement ahead of a statutory consultation in the autumn of 2025, so plenty of opportunity for everyone to participate over three consecutive years."

Ash Pearce – Programme manager

Please keep an eye out for our forthcoming updates and engagement report publication on the project webpage:

[North East Wales National Park Designation Project Information Page - Natural Resources Wales Citizen Space - Citizen Space \(cyfoethnaturiol.cymru\)](#)

ENDS