

# MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

## GUIDANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

### BACKGROUND

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is currently in the process of seeking nominations from members of the public for membership of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum. The Forum has been in existence since 2000 and has now completed its latest term of office.

The function of the Forum is to advise the local authority, Natural Resources Wales and other bodies exercising functions under Part I of the CROW Act, as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. These bodies must, by law, have regard to relevant advice given by the Forum.

Regulations require the Forum to meet at least twice a year and additional meetings can be arranged as needed.

### AREAS OF WORK

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is in the process of reviewing its rights of way improvement plan and LAF members will be an integral part of this review. This plan will outline how the Local Authority will manage and improve the Public Rights of Way (Prow) network over the next 10 years. The Forum will work with the Council's Prow team and help advise Officers to ensure work carried out benefits all users for healthy exercise and mental well-being, improved management of the network and key strategies and key aims are achieved.

The Forum will consider all forms of access, including horse riding, cycling and off road driving, and not just access on foot. The exact nature of this work will be decided upon by the LAF itself based on the key strategies and key aims outlined in the Merthyr Tydfil ROWIP in agreement with the local authority.

There are certain issues upon which a Local Access Forum must, by statute, be consulted. These include:

**The preparation** of draft maps of open country and registered common land;

**The appointment** of wardens as respect to access land;

**The making** of Byelaws relating to access land;

**The preparation** or review of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan; and

**Applications** for long-term exclusions, or restrictions on access to access land.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The following is a list of criteria against which applications will be selected. However, applicants will not necessarily have to comply with all of the criteria to be successful.

### **It is essential that a LAF member will:**

#### **Be committed to the function of the Forum:**

The function of the Forum will be to advise the local authority, Natural Resources Wales and others as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open- air recreation and the enjoyment of the area;

**Be willing and able** to play a full part in all aspects of a LAFs work -persons who are only willing or able to represent a narrow specific interest may not be suitable members.

### **It is desirable that a LAF member will:**

**Have a wide** range of experience of access issues in the area;

**Have experience** of working on, and contributing to, similar Forums in the past;

**Reside in**, be particularly familiar with, or have any other interests especially relevant to, the area of the Forum;

**Be able** to network with a wide range of organizations and individuals, with an aim to disseminating the LAFs work.

**Be able** to attend all meetings of the Forum (deputies will not be permitted).

**Favourable** consideration will be given to those applicants representing youth, mobility and/or sensory needs and/or ethnic groups.

These are unpaid positions but Forum members **will** be able to claim reasonable expenses including care costs for children and elderly or disabled dependants.

If you wish to be considered for membership please complete the application form and return by email to **[rightsofway@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@merthyr.gov.uk)**

**Closure date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday  
September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022**

## MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

**Please note: Closure date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022**

### Application for Membership

Name: .....

Address  
.....

Home telephone number .....

Daytime telephone number .....

Email .....

Occupation.....

How did you learn of the Local Access Forum? .....

Please state why you feel you would make a good member of the Local Access Forum. In particular, you should relate your response to the '*Criteria for Selection*' enclosed on the '*Model Terms of Reference for Local Access Forums*'.

*Continue on a plain sheet of paper if necessary*

*I declare that the information I have given is to the best of my knowledge and belief true and complete.*

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In order to ensure that our equal opportunity policy is effective, we would be grateful if you would complete the details below. This form will be separated from the application form and will not be used in the selection process.

**Gender** ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say

### Age

☐ 18 – 24 ☐ 25 – 34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45 – 54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65 – 74  
☐ 75 + ☐ Prefer not to say

### Ethnic Origin (Please tick):

☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Asian  
☐ Mixed ☐ Prefer not to say

Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

### Do you identify as disabled?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

### Can you speak Welsh (Please tick)?

☐ Fluent ☐ Working Knowledge ☐ Learner -Beginner  
☐ Learner–Intermediate ☐ Learner -Advanced ☐ No

## **MODEL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR LOCAL ACCESS FORUMS**

### **TITLE**

1. The Local Access Forum shall be known as the Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

2. The function of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum is to provide advice to the relevant local and National Park authorities, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and others as appropriate as to the improvement of public access to land in the area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area in ways which take account of land management, social, economic, environmental and educational interests.

3. The Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum will fulfill this role by advising on issues of particular local relevance, including:

- a. supporting the implementation of the new right of access to open countryside;
- b. improving the rights of way network; and
- c. Developing recreation and access strategies that cater for everyone.

4. The Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum will work to:

- a. develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside;
- b. respect local circumstances and different interests whilst operating within national guidance;
- c. provide advice on issues of principle and good practice;
- d. engage in constructive debate and seek consensus wherever possible; and
- e. Where consensus is not possible, make clear the nature of differing views, and suggest how they might be resolved.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

5. The membership will include:

- a. a Chair and Deputy Chair elected in accordance with the LAF regulations;
- b. a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 other members, which must include a balanced representation of i) recreational access users and ii) landowners and occupiers -together with representation of other interests especially relevant to the area.

6. The membership will:

- a. be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group;

- b. represent a cross-section of interests in the area; and
- c. Live or work within the area or have a sound knowledge of the area.

**7. Members will be expected to:**

- a. adhere to the sections relating to LAFs in the CROW Act and regulations and these Terms of Reference;
- b. show commitment to achieving the aims of the Local Access Forum through constructive working with other members;
- c. be able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings and to network outside meetings;
- d. have sufficient experience of access to the countryside in the local area to be able to make an informed and constructive contribution to improving access provision; and
- e. Be capable of working with a wide range of interest groups.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **SECRETARIAT**

**8.** The Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum will have a Secretary appointed by the appointing authority who will be responsible for:

- a. providing support to the chair of the Forum;
- b. ensuring that the Forum is set up and run according to the CROW Act, Local Access Forum regulations and these Terms of Reference;
- c. managing any resources dedicated to its work;
- d. arranging and promoting meetings, including arranging the delivery of papers and information to Forum members and the public;
- e. producing minutes of Forum meetings

### **MEETINGS**

**9.** Meetings are currently held at least twice a year, and more frequently as and when necessary, to be agreed by the LAF and the appointing authority.

**10.** Meeting agendas will be agreed between the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Secretary –although any member may suggest agenda items for consideration.

11. Meetings will be advertised in advance and the minutes published.
  12. The Chair will invite observers/advisors to the meeting when appropriate.
  13. Observers/advisors will be able to contribute to the proceedings at the discretion of the Chair.
  14. One representative of each of Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Government and any officer of the appointing authority will automatically have observer status.
  15. If necessary, Local Access Forum committees will be set up by the Chair after agreement with the members.
  16. The chairing, membership and terms of reference of committees will be agreed by the Chair and members.
  17. All meetings of the LAF will be held in public. However, the person presiding, following a request from a member or members, may decide that the public should be barred for particular items for reasons of personal privacy or commercial confidentiality.
  18. Meetings will be held in various formats including in person and on the platform of Microsoft teams
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## **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

Information you supply is processed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, which will be processed in line with the requirements of the GDPR and Data Protection Act.

- This application will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose to appoint the Merthyr Tydfil Local Access Forum membership. After the three year term of the Merthyr Tydfil LAF, the applications will be disposed of in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's confidential waste.
- Only the appointed Forum names will be published on [www.merthyr.gov.uk](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk) on the Local Access Forum website page and within the minutes published following the public meetings the forum holds.

If you wish for your name not to be included in the publications, please contact the Public Rights of Way Team. Civic Centre, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8AN email: [rightsofway@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@merthyr.gov.uk)

For further information on the Council's data protection requirements, please contact; the Data Protection Officer, Civic Centre, Castle Street, Merthyr Tydfil ,CF47 8AN email: [FOI@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@merthyr.gov.uk)