

## Notes from Volunteer Footpath Group Meeting Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 – Llangybi Hall

Many thanks to the 31 people who have so far come forward to volunteer to be part of this new initiative to help MCC to clear and maintain our local footpaths.

For those who were unable to attend the meeting I made a few notes:

\* Firstly Tom and Morag wanted just to introduce themselves; Morag has worked with volunteers groups for several years and Tom has recently been employed as a full time Links Officer.

\* I explained that my initial email to the MCC countryside dept was to ask why so many of the issues that both Llanhenock and the old Llangybi CC had reported to MCC had not been done for several years now. Having seen that ,of the MCC Countryside department of 15 people, only 3 wardens actually work in the field to cover the whole county; it is not a surprise therefore that so many jobs cannot be completed. Tom and Morag agreed and said this is why volunteer groups are so important.

\* Tom explained that they will need to give us training on : risk assessments; rules of rights and responsibilities of the landowners; inputting data onto the MCC mapping system. The database of recording footpath issues needs to be coordinated too.

\* Public rights of way include footpaths, bridleways although green lanes may sometimes be recorded as highways which are no longer used for vehicles. Community Councils do have some powers in relation to maintaining them.

\* Morag will supply us with their current job list recorded on the system and would initially like people to walk these routes and identify the issues and give more detail ( such as photos) and a more specific location ( such as a what3words marker or to use the MCC mapping tools)

\* Tom asked if anyone had questions:

*Does he work weekends?* - he said yes he can help out on certain projects on weekends if needed

*What resources does he have?* - Tom has a selection of tools that can be borrowed if needed. Money is tight, but they may be able to source some power tools such as brushcutters and hedgecutters ( but not chainsaws!). There are grants and some funds available - if the community council are on board they may have a better chance of securing grants from "Keep Wales Tidy" for example.

*Is the landowner responsible for paying for repairs to stiles and gates etc?* - yes but MCC will pay 25% of costs for materials and they usually pay for footbridges too.

*Could stiles be made of recycled plastic like the park benches, as they might last longer than wood?* - yes it is a possibility

*What is the next step now?* - this large group needs to be split into smaller manageable sections and then allocated to certain areas to cover considering the current list of jobs incomplete so far. Tom and Morag would like me to send them email addresses of team leaders so that they can send some extra information and then arrange some training dates ( which could be online zoom meetings or face to face as needed.).

I look forward to meeting you all again and will be in touch soon

Many thanks again for your enthusiasm :)

Debra