Tracks & Trails Steering Group Meeting – 15th April 2026

Attending:

Members:

Barbara Heys (Chair)
Anne Underwood
Ian Mawdsley
Kelvin Varney
Sallie Roderick
Irene Brooke

Officers:

Colette Bosley [online]
Ruth Rourke [online]
Carl Touhig [online]
Andrew Blake
Celyn Davies

Apologies:

John Askew

Key Takeaways

- Four priority routes agreed: Grove Road (Whitebrook), the Maypole Road cluster (Whitebrook), Tintern Road (Tintern), and Chapel Hill Road (Tintern).
- A new UCR info hub is in development to improve public communication and manage expectations.
- Aspirations for a monitoring trial which will use AI cameras on Tintern Road and Grove Road to gather objective usage data, including separating motorbikes from other users.
- Public workshops should be planned to update residents and gather support future management actions.

Steering Group Remit

- A mismatch exists between public expectations and the group's remit.
- The project has been dominated by discussion around vehicular use on UCRs; however, a broader focus should be adopted to align with the five themes in the Tracks & Trails Strategy & Action Plan: Awareness, Management, Data, Access, and Implementation.
- Recognised need to improve public communication to manage expectations and gather further evidence, including anecdotes, photos etc. to support future actions.
- Action: Start looking at the develop a “Wye Etiquette guide" – effectively an enhanced countryside code, potentially using a Swedish guide as a model.

Priority Routes & Management Options

- Four priority routes have been agreed in the two target areas:
  - Whitebrook: Grove Road & the Maypole Road cluster.
  - Tintern: Tintern Road & Chapel Hill Road.
- Discussed Management Options, including:
  - Route surface management, consolidation & drainage

    - Directional Restrictions: A one-way downhill restriction was discussed for Grove Road to reduce erosion and noise by eliminating challenging uphill sections.
    - TROs (Traffic Regulation Orders): A potential tool, but require strong evidence (physical and anecdotal) to succeed.
    - NRW Felling Operations raised, near Chapel Hill Road. Risk that heavy machinery could destroy recently implemented water bars.
        - Action: Contact NRW to ensure infrastructure on UCRs are mapped and protected.
- Agreed to arrange a site visit to Tintern Road.

Monitoring & Evidence Gathering

- Agreed need to gather objective usage data to support any management decisions. However, standard counters cannot differentiate between user types (e.g., motorbike vs. bicycle).
- Proposed Solution: Trial AI cameras, which can detect and count users by shape and movement.
    - Locations: Tintern Road and Grove Road, using existing lampposts for power.
    - Rationale: This establishes a baseline to measure impact of signage when installed, allowing for a data-driven assessment of its impact.

Signage Strategy

- The agreed plan is to install signage on the four priority routes to clarify user rights.
- Signage may be installed on existing waymarker posts where appropriate to reduce the number of new posts needed.
- Action: Celyn will work with Ruth and Carl to identify exact sign locations.

Public Engagement Workshops

- Suggest holding two public workshops in the summer to update residents.
- Locations: Penallt and Tintern village halls.
- A presentation and Q&A session was favoured over a drop-in format to ensure a coherent message.
- Constraint: MCC officer capacity will be limited in May/June due to the RLDP inquiry.
- UCR Information Hub
- A new UCR information hub is in development on the Wye Valley National Landscape website.
- This will provide clear, accessible information on UCRs, their history, legal status, and how to report issues.
- The hub will need to be reviewed by MCC, then the steering group, before being made public.

Next Steps

- Celyn:
    - Circulate the MCC legal advice summary on TROs.
    - Finalise and circulate the TUCC letter response.

- Schedule and organise the public workshops for the summer.
- Coordinate with Ruth and Carl to pinpoint exact sign locations on priority routes.
- Explore logistics for the May site visit to Tintern Road.
- Contact NRW to confirm felling plans near Chapel Hill Road and ensure UCR protection.
- Schedule the next steering group meeting for late July/early September.