

Barmouth VAG

From: Kate Bradford [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 June 2013 21:59
To: enquiries@b-vag.org.uk
Subject: Proposed plans for walkway

Dear B-Vag committee,

I was unable to attend your public consultation in the Theatr y Ddraig but would like to add my comments to the proposed walkway plans, especially in light of the social media coverage and letters published in the Cambrian news which seems to have sparked considerable interest and emotional debate.

I visit Barmouth every school holiday with my family and we regularly use the bridge by accessing it via the pavement opposite Porkington Terrace. We cross the road half way up the terrace as the road is straighter, has better visibility, and works for us because we approach the bridge from the top of Porkington Terrace. We also use the steps in Orielson gardens by the old lifeboat station.

I am delighted that the dangerous corner and narrow pavement on Porkington hill have been highlighted as such a danger because this poses a real threat to pedestrians, wheelchair users, cyclists, dog walkers and pushchairs. For over 40 years I have had to 'tuck right in' to the cutting with my grandparents, parents and now my own children and therefore would be really pleased if this forms a priority in your plans and that a solution involving widening this pavement, cutting further into the rockface or having single lane traffic is considered. Crossing the road as highlighted in your video is only part of the issue; just walking on the pavement is very frightening and it will be wonderful to have this addressed.

Please find below a few considerations for the project committee:

1. There is a small wall between the pavement and the entrance to the bridge which, if removed, would prevent people from having to walk into the road. This short term solution would immediately make access safer for many users.
2. In the most recent edition of the Cambrian news it was highlighted that the sea level is due to rise by 1-2 metres in the next 100 years and therefore this should be taken into account when designing the proposed coastal walkway. It will need to be accessible at all states of the tide. Have all possibilities at going over or alongside the railway been thoroughly exhausted? What recent discussions have taken place to bring the path through tunnel gardens/free wales rock/Craig fach? It would be a travesty to invest such a large amount of money on a solution that only solved part of the problem for some of the time.
3. A local councillor highlighted on Facebook that the council cannot afford to clear the sand from the walkway between Ynys y Brawd and the promenade, which restricts accessibility. I have struggled myself to cycle, pull a pushchair and take a wheelchair across the soft sand that piles up on the walkway and the promenade, in all seasons! On your site visits, you will have noticed there is a large sandbank that has accumulated behind the bridge at Borthwen beach (this did not exist when the old wooden bridge was in place because the sand could blow straight out between the crossbeams) - the sand currently blows into the corner of the beach but is washed away by the tide. Building a concrete or stone walkway will suffer the same fate as the barrage with accumulation of soft sand. Therefore, what are your views on considering a very modern stainless steel/meshed structure bolted to the rock that would prevent the build up of sand?
4. This winter, the run off water from the mountain came through the railway embankment at head height and temporarily washed away large expanses of the sandy beach. How can this be factored into the design to ensure the new path is safe for users and not flooded, icy or eroded?

5. How feasible is it to put disabled access in near to the toll house via Orielton gardens? Which is more restrictive to wheelchair users, the steepness of the entrance to the bridge, crossing the road or Porkington hill itself? There is a regular bus service that stops opposite the gardens so potentially wheelchair users could access the bridge via the park?

Out of interest, I have attached some pictures below of radically designed walk ways which could make the coastal pathway architecturally spectacular. Experience shows that in Barmouth concrete walkways cause more problems than they solve.

The embankment project is ambitious and if done correctly, could enhance the natural beauty of the area with an iconic modern design, encompassing the entire problem.

Thank you for all your efforts so far in raising awareness of the project and I hope my comments are received constructively as part of your open consultation.

Finally, please do not ignore the root of this issue which is the narrow pavement. If you are going to offer a solution, the underlying cause really needs to be addressed fully. In other words, if a man has tooth decay, you could offer to tube feed him straight into the stomach and bypass the problem or you could take a more practical approach and repair his teeth!

Yours sincerely

Dr. Kate Bradford









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