



HLF Programme Objectives			
Objective	Outcomes	Main Objective (tick one box only)	Links to other areas
1	The heritage will be better managed		✓
2	The heritage will be in better condition		
3	The heritage will be identified/recorded		
4	People will have developed skills		✓
5	People will have learnt about heritage		✓
6	People will have volunteered time		✓
7	Negative environmental impacts will have been reduced		✓
8	More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage	✓	
9	The local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit		✓

Objective 9: Improve the range of recreational opportunities to enjoy Elan

9: Making the most of Elan



Summary

Access and recreational activities have historically been a big part of Elan and this project sets out to ensure a variety of users can enjoy and love Elan as much as possible.

This project has been shaped by the development of an **Access and Recreation Plan** and following consultation and action group meetings, the proposals this project delivers, are aimed at allowing all users to 'make the most of Elan' and what there is to offer at Elan.

The Plan identified key themes which have been used to develop the proposals of this project. The works to be completed include improvements

	<p>to the existing routes/provisions to enable further and easier engagement with the landscape and heritage around, new routes for walking/running, cycling and horse riding. This project will also develop new 'hubs' away from the 'honeypot' area of the Visitors Centre. These will provide visitors with additional information, interpretation and a variety of routes.</p> <p>These projects aim to allow a variety of users to enjoy Elan and to progress their skills and ability. They hope to allow a greater audience to utilise Elan and be able to get out on the Estate to better appreciate the landscape and heritage that surrounds them.</p>
<p>Project Details</p>	<p>This project looks to further develop and promote Elan's recreational potential to ensure that this location continues to meet the needs of the visitors and continues to build relationships with the public so it remains a place to love and enjoy.</p> <p>In preparing this project the Elan Links Partners have prepared an "Elan Valley Access and Recreation Plan", which can be found in Appendix LCAP2 and should be read in conjunction with these proposals. This plan has formulated the information gathered and defined the proposals which are to be completed under this project.</p> <p>Under this Plan the following key themes have been identified as important and required in Elan over the delivery phase of the HLF project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Maintenance & Continuation: to ensure the current offering is maintained, reviewed and renewed. ✎ Information, Interpretation & Waymarking: Elan needs to improve the way it provides information both in terms of waymarking and in interpretation, on both new and existing routes. ✎ Variety: to provide a diverse range of activities which reflects the current needs; such as a choice of route length, locality and difficulty, and trends so that we are encompassing the needs of the visitor. ✎ Progression: a vital message was that of progression and the visitors potential to progress from simpler waymarked routes to more diverse landscapes which were more challenging physically and mentally in terms of map reading. ✎ Hubs: in aiming to attract visitors to more areas away from the 'honey-pot' of the Visitors Centre, the creation and promotion of 'hubs' that provides an increased level of information (waymarking and interpretation of the landscape and heritage) and routes are required. ✎ Accessibility: Away from the Visitors Centre and the Elan Valley Trail there is little available to less-abled visitors or visitors utilising pushchairs (for example). Alongside the 'hubs' this should be a primary consideration to aid these visitors to access a larger range of the Estate. ✎ Collaboration: To maximise the present opportunity our Elan Links Partners can add value to the information provide for visitors and a forum to test ideas, routes and route information. <p>From these key themes the proposals of Project 9 have been formulated. It is proposed that:</p>

	<p>Maintenance & Continuation The existing provision will be benefited through clearer and consistent methods thus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚶 Improving promotion of the existing walking routes (10); 🚴 Improving existing cycling and MTB routes promotion; 🐎 Review and promotion of horse riding routes (where safe to do so); <p>Information, Interpretation & Waymarking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚶 Improving and consistent waymarking; 🚶 Improving and consistent route information (and access to the information and heritage); <p>Variety & Progression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚴 A woodland cycle route (rated MTB green to blue); 🚶 Install new 'Garreg Ddu Roundabout' section taking walkers off the busy farm track; 🚶 Develop orienteering route(s) (and their promotion); 🚶 Identifying new (longer) walk routes, ideally two each year to be recc'd and promoted; 🚶 Identify areas to promote the Elan Valley Dark Skies Park and provide information materials to all levels of competency. 🚶 Provide an additional more remote site for star gazing. <p>Hubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🚶 Penbont Hub: Circular (existing) permissive route which provides a wide range of interpretation and heritage focus opportunities; 🚶 Claerwen Hub: Currently an under-utilised area on the Estate with the opportunity to offer accessible routes and wider access onto the Estate; 🚶 Nantgwyllt Hub: Utilisation of the Llanerchi loop with waymarking and information boards on the surroundings plus access to the Garreg Ddu roundabout. <p>Appended to the Access and Recreation Plan is a more site specific proposals document including maps, which identifies how these met the needs identified in the Access and Recreation Plan.</p>
<p>Need and Opportunity</p>	<p>Chapter Three of the LCAP identifies a series of threats and opportunities that Elan has. This project has been identified and developed in order to maximise Elan's potential against these threats and for these opportunities.</p> <p>4.2.4 Problems associated with over-use and inappropriate use Development of the Access and Recreation Plan has sought to address issues, such as the threats associated with over-use and inappropriate use, by appreciating the wants and needs of visitors compared to the capability of Elan and then developing proposals and statements to enforce what is sustainable usage.</p> <p>4.2.7 A challenging economic and policy environment for Elan and the surrounding area Tourism is a vital part of the localities income and as such this project works to strength the tourism provisions of Elan (see 4.3.2.3 below).</p>

	<p>4.3.1.3 Sustainable usage This projects proposals have the opportunity to develop with this hindsight and to ensure the same issues are considered in advance of all new and promoted routes and hubs, to enable sustainable usage and access to Elan and Elan's heritage.</p> <p>4.3.1.4 Development of a strategic approach to evidence gathering, monitoring and archiving Through the provisions of interpretation and additional information to visitors, through information boards at the proposed hubs or on the routes, there is the opportunity for people to know more about Elan's heritage and to appreciate the works the Elan Links suite of projects are undertaking and thus collectively will address threats towards the protection of Elan's heritage whether built, ancient, natural or cultural.</p> <p>4.3.2.3 Opportunity to become an exemplar for public access, recreation and enjoyment. From Elan's tourism rich heritage, there is the potential to be an exemplar in public access and recreation and really thrive towards the Welsh Governments goals in the Future Generations Act. Through working in partnership both with the project partners and through the sub-committee there is a forum of which different users can voice their needs and requirements which gives Elan a better and more diverse opportunity in reaching these needs. By aiming for this opportunity we also will attempt to negate some of the identified threats towards tourism as Elan will be improving on the tourism provisions to attract the widest range of visitors possible, and through the Elan Links partners will be improving the relationship and tourism provisions between Rhayader and Elan too to support the local economy.</p>
Project Management	Access and Recreation Officer, reporting to Access and Recreation sub-committee in the first instance.
Project Partners	DCWW, EVT, CARAD, Tir Coed,
Project Development	<p>As referred to in 'Project Detail' these proposals have been identified through the Access and Recreation Plan. This Plan has been prepared by the Elan Links team and in coordination with the principle partners in relation to access to Elan; DCWW and EVT.</p> <p>In the Plan the following methodology has been followed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of the legislative, policy and historic context for access and recreation provision in the Elan Links area. 2. Consultation with stakeholders, including (but not limited to) project partners and gateway communities 3. Identification of access and recreation strategic principles with partners and informed by stakeholders. 4. Evaluation of current interpretation provision including web-based and literature. 5. Evaluation of current provision on the ground, including the walking of key routes and visits to key locations. 6. Development of draft proposals for access and recreation

	<p>programme of works:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. in the five years of Elan Links Delivery Phase, b. beyond Elan Links as a legacy, both for review by partners and stakeholders. <p>7. Development of the Elan Links (5 year) principle projects and actions.</p> <p>Under point 2 the following public consultations included elements relating to access and recreation:</p> <p>03/02/2016: Access and Recreation Sub-group meeting, CARAD. 29/04/2016: Access and Recreation consultation drop-in at Elan Valley. 24/10/2016: Consultation event, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. 26/10/2016: Consultation event, Elan Valley Visitor Centre 26/10/2016: Consultation event, Aberystwyth 18/02/2016: Consultation event, Rhayader 23/05/2017: Stakeholder meeting – review of Elan Valley Access Plan</p>							
<p>Key Audiences (Please see Audience Development Plan, appendix LCAP3, for more details about Elan Links audiences.)</p>	<p>Audiences that will be primarily targeted through this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Visitors from Birmingham (Birmingham residents); ✎ Visitors who are within 1 hour's drive away; ✎ Visitors coming for a specific activity; ✎ All other visitors; ✎ Families; ✎ Recreational groups; ✎ Residents of Elan and Rhayader; ✎ Artists; ✎ Local Schools; ✎ Volunteers; ✎ Businesses in Elan and Rhayader. 	<p>Secondary audiences who will also benefit as a result of this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✎ Organisations working with the harder to reach individuals locally; ✎ Organisations working with the harder to reach individuals in Birmingham; ✎ Land managers including landowners, tenants and commoners; ✎ Birmingham schools 						
<p>Activities and Timescale</p>	<p>The following table outlines the proposed timescales for the proposals referred to above (Project Details) and brief details and to the works undertaken.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Year 1 Actions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Formalise membership of the Access and Recreation Sub-Committee</td> <td>Informally, this groups have already met and discussed the proposals. Going forward they will be a forum to discuss routes and interpretation information.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Promotion of walking routes</td> <td>Review and renew existing route cards and literature including GPS data for the website and the app. Develop a consistent branding which will be used throughout this project and in conjunction with the Interpretation Plan and the estate signage.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Year 1 Actions		Formalise membership of the Access and Recreation Sub-Committee	Informally, this groups have already met and discussed the proposals. Going forward they will be a forum to discuss routes and interpretation information.	Promotion of walking routes	Review and renew existing route cards and literature including GPS data for the website and the app. Develop a consistent branding which will be used throughout this project and in conjunction with the Interpretation Plan and the estate signage.
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	Upgrade Waymarking	In coordination with the above branding implement a new system of waymarking.
	New walks routes	Development and recce of new walk routes to be promoted (2 per year), to include preparing route cards, adding to website and app.
	Review and promotion of horse riding routes (where safe)	Involve a working group to recce the existing bridleways and possible permissive routes. Promote and develop literature if suitable routes are agreed.
	Develop Cnwch (short) orienteering route	Work with local group to develop mapping data and route.
	Install new 'Garreg Ddu Roundabout' section	Clear brash and improve the surface where necessary to the new section. Alter the map on documentation and website. Enlist route on the new app (as and when).
	A woodland cycle route	Contract route builders and progress plans. Apply for NRW consent and planning consent, as required. Tender work and prepare contractors.
	Year 2 Actions	
	New walks routes	Development and recce of new walk routes to be promoted (2 per year), to include preparing route cards, adding to website and app.
	Improving existing cycling and MTB routes promotion	Review and renew existing route cards and literature including GPS data for the website and the app. Develop a consistent branding which will be used throughout this project and in conjunction with the Interpretation Plan and the estate signage.
	A woodland cycle route	Physical route creation. Build works.
	Claerwen Hub	Replacement gates. New interpretation and information boards/app data. New route materials.
	Continuation	Ensure regular review and maintenance of routes (particularly horse routes), waymarking and

	literature.
Year 3 Actions	
New walks routes	Development and recce of new walk routes to be promoted (2 per year), to include preparing route cards, adding to website and app.
Penbont Hub;	New pathways and steps to create a mix of circular and linear routes in Penbont woods. Prepare information and route cards for the hub. Promote with wider interpretation through the app.
Dark Skies location	Identify and promote an additional, more remote site for star gazing. Promote the Elan Valley Dark Skies Park and provide information materials to all levels of competency.
Continuation	Ensure regular review and maintenance of routes (particularly horse routes), waymarking and literature.
Year 4 Actions	
New walks routes	Development and recce of new walk routes to be promoted (2 per year), to include preparing route cards, adding to website and app.
Develop Gwaelod (long) orienteering route	Work with local group to develop mapping data and route
Nantgwyllt Hub:	New pathway waymarking to create a mix of circular routes. Promotion of routes and increase level of interpretation material including information boards and maps on site.
Continuation	Ensure regular review and maintenance of routes (particularly horse routes), waymarking and literature.
Year 5 Actions	
The majority of the physical works should have been completed and year five provides an action window if seasonal deadlines have occurred.	
It is vital that reviewing the routes and material is carried out and that the sub-committee are kept engage to ensure longevity and continued partnerships.	

	<p>Consultation would be beneficial during the period and particular once all are complete to ensure we are meeting the needs of visitors and the future works are informed.</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🦿 Visitors will have clear routes of progression in building their confidence for recreational use of the Estate. 🦿 A network of improved routes for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, and orienteers. Their experiences will have improved through ease of navigation both before and during their activity; 🦿 A suite of new routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elan’s first purpose-built woodland cycle route; ○ New section to the Garreg Ddu roundabout; ○ Two orienteering routes; ○ 2 new waymarked walking routes a year (10 total) with the opportunity to link gateway communities 🦿 Three new Hubs with the benefits of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More opportunities for families to explore away from the Visitors Centre; ○ A range of walks in length and variety for visitors; ○ More information and interpretation available on the heritage surrounding them; and ○ More accessible routes for disabled and limited mobility users.
Output indicators and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🦿 Trail counters will give us data of users’ access routes. We will install these on the Elan Valley Trail and new woodland cycle route. This will enable us to monitor levels of usage; 🦿 Two new walk routes will be added each year for five years = 10 new (described and marked) walking routes; 🦿 We will ask users to tell us the time (in hours) they have spent engaged in recreation (through our website and using technology e.g. e-surveys at the Visitor Centre). 🦿 Trail counters will give us data of users’ access to routes; 🦿 We will aim to survey 500visitors each year to gauge their opinion of the improvements in access and recreation; 🦿 The mobile application development is likely to have the capacity to provide data of trail/ activities usage.
Outcomes	<p>Heritage Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🦿 The resilience of Elan is strengthened for the future; 🦿 The heritage of Elan is better interpreted and explained to a wider audience of people in an interactive way; 🦿 Children will have engaged with the heritage of Elan. <p>People Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🦿 Families will have engaged with Elan; 🦿 People of all ages will have had an enjoyable experience in Elan; 🦿 Children will have enjoyed themselves. Better health and wellbeing from increased exercise and time outdoors; 🦿 More and a greater range of people, will have enjoyed time in Elan’s wonderful outdoors and experienced Elan’s natural heritage; 🦿 Increased access to Elan’s heritage sites is increased making the areas more open and accessible and easier for the community to access the different strands of heritage on offer. <p>Community Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🦿 With increased economic wealth the area will be a better place to

	<p>live, work and visit;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Communities will have a better knowledge of Elan as a destination for enjoyment and the importance of safeguarding it and this will in turn reduce the risks for future harm through irresponsible access behaviour, farming activities or neglect; ✘ Elan will become more widely known as an area with good open access and recreations facilities and this will help to build the reputation of Elan as a tourism destination; ✘ Our local economy will be boosted as a result of additional visitors spending longer in the area as there is more on offer to occupy them; ✘ The resilience of Elan is strengthened for the future.
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Capturing visitor data, both qualitative and quantitative from the outset will be important in evaluating change. Understanding the current use of the Estate will provide baseline data to achieve this. Contacting visitors can be achieved relatively easily including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Trail counters will give us data of users' access routes. We will install these on the Elan Valley Trail and new woodland cycle route. This will enable us to monitor levels of usage; ✘ Two new walk routes will be added each year for five years = 10 new (described and marked) walking routes; ✘ We will ask users to tell us the time (in hours) they have spent engaged in recreation (through our website and using technology e.g. e-surveys at the Visitor Centre). ✘ Trail counters will give us data of users' access to routes; ✘ We will aim to survey 500 visitors each year to gauge their opinion of the improvements in access and recreation; ✘ The mobile application development is likely to have the capacity to provide data of trail/ activities usage.
Evidence	<p>We can look back to the Birmingham Corporation Water Act 1982 which gave to the public 'a privilege at all times of enjoying air, exercise and recreation' over the open hill land. Since then (and even before that time), the Elan & Claerwen Valleys have been a place of recreation. In more recent years, the development of marked and maintained routes, events and interpretation have added to the enjoyment of experiencing Elan.</p> <p>Adding to Elan's access and recreation story, our consultation events have been well attended and suggestions have shaped our plan. Our gateway communities both in Wales and Birmingham have commented on how they would like to experience the Estate (consultation reports available).</p> <p>Access to the natural environment and engaging in recreational activities, continues to be prioritised in Welsh Government strategies:</p> <p>According to the document: Facilities for Future Generations (Welsh Government, 2016) "High Quality and fit for purpose facilities are an essential part of creating a healthy and active Wales" The same document cites off-road cycle trails as an excellent example. Recreational facilities make important contributions to the physical infrastructure of communities positively affecting people's perception of their communities (Sport Wales, 2011). Encouraging time spent in Elan, will also improve knowledge of local natural and historical environments, thus adding value to complementary</p>

	<p>objectives. The improvements in Elan recreation (particularly the family routes), will match the Child Poverty Strategy (March 2015): “the right to play and its contribution to children’s development and resilience”.</p>
<p>Wider Context</p>	<p>Elan hosts a range of recreational users and activities each year and this tourism is a vital part of Elan's heritage and future.</p> <p>Historical forms of tourism have been part of Elan's landscape for centuries, ranging from the monks and their guests between Abbey Cwm Hir and Strata Florida Abbey, to our more recent past in the Victorian era when the public visited for 'taking the waters' and the area had strong connectivity with local towns, such as Llandrindod Wells, which also promoted health and wellbeing benefits from water (for more details see Chapter 2 of the LCAP).</p> <p>Powys reportedly had 4.5 million tourist visitors in 2010, therefore improvements in our recreation and access provision, will aim to exceed the increasingly discerning expectations of visitors to attractions in Wales.</p> <p>Gateway communities including Rhayader and Cwmdauddwr rely on the Elan Valley to serve as the major tourist attraction in Mid Wales. The landscape itself and man-made dams serve as a major draw. However, keeping up with visitor trends and demands is important if this area is to continue to be a chosen destination for day trips and holidays.</p> <p>A more varied and sustainable use of the estate will build upon visitors' positive attachment to the area. Local people will also have opportunities to discover more about their environments and cultural & social history. This makes it more likely gateway communities will buy-in to the continued development, conservation and preservation of the estate.</p> <p>In relation to the Elan Links projects this project will also increase awareness of several different projects including the Natural Heritage projects of 1-3. Project 9 plays an integral part in informing the public of the heritage around them and the heritage the Elan Links project is helping.</p>
<p>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</p>	<p>These projects will build our visitor capacity to progress in using the Estate more regularly, perhaps trying a different activity, going a little further and learning a little more. We see this investment in our visitors developing an attachment to the Estate which instils a connection, which encourages future conservation, preservation and access.</p> <p>As with many services, the quality of route information and waymarking has peaked and troughed. To combat dips in the quality of our routes, we will develop an 'adopt a walk/ ride scheme'. Within this, we will ask our volunteers to periodically check their designated walks. This will develop a place attached to the estate and routes.</p> <p>We are also making the heritage of Elan more visible and as such gives more people the opportunity to love and enjoy it. This relationship will support the long term management and sustainability of the area.</p>
<p>Risks and risk mitigation</p>	<p><u>Risk 1:</u> Difficult to prioritise all user groups' wishes. <u>Mitigation:</u> Some conflicts are likely to arise in terms of the use of the estate for recreation. Open communications through the Access and Recreation Sub-committee will help mitigate this.</p>

	<p><u>Risk 2:</u> Illegal off-roading activity has been present on the estate for many years. <u>Mitigation:</u> An increase in recreation generally, might add a spot light on the area further. Conversely, more visitors using the estate in a legitimate way might report and discourage illegal off-roading.</p> <p><u>Risk 3:</u> Visitors accessing areas of the estate which have tended to see less traffic might have some conservation and preservation implications. <u>Mitigation:</u> Visitors are most welcome, however access and recreation plans will always be developed in conjunction with conservation and preservation plans.</p> <p>All of our access and recreation plans hold a low to medium risk, in terms of the activities undertaken. All developments will be risk assessed and training provided to staff and volunteers where required.</p>
<p>Links to other Elan Links Projects</p>	<p>Objective 1a, 1b, 1c & 2a: The proposed routes and rights of way may go through some of the habitat areas in these projects. Project management for these projects as well as the project management for objective 9 need to be aware of the different habitat areas and ensure that the proposed routes does not interfere with the work proposed to the habitat and does not effect the rare upland birds in objective 2a.</p> <p>Objective 3d: Those keeping cattle on the open hill need to be aware of all the paths and routes across the estate and more importantly on their own land. If cattle are grazing near a route, land managers need to let the project management aware of this as cattle can be a danger to recreational users. Communication needs to happen between both parties to ensure that both recreational users and cattle area safe.</p> <p>Objective 6: Monitoring of the work carried out through this project will be done through objective 6. This will ensure that there is evidence of the work carried out and that the progression of the areas can be used for future exhibition material and archived for the future.</p> <p>7b: This project will link closely with the app in particular, as all the new routes for walkers, cyclists, horseriders etc will be promoted via the app.</p> <p>Objective 7a: Some of the trails and routes proposed in this project will be interpreted and some of the interpretation work will come fro this objective.</p> <p>Objective 8: The volunteers that are required for this project can be selected from the database of volunteers that is collected through objective 8. Volunteers who participate in activities that aren't already part of Friends of Elan can be referred over and from there they will be offered a wider range of volunteering opportunities.</p>
<p>Background information</p>	<p>Elan is situated, 5 miles west of the market town of Rhayader in Mid-Wales in the county of Powys within the mountainous area known as the Cambrian Mountains.</p> <p>Elan is 72 square miles of lake and countryside comprising of the Elan and Claerwen valleys and their entire water catchment. The five reservoirs are</p>

a chain of man-made lakes created from damming the Elan and Claerwen rivers and are known as the Claerwen, Craig Goch, Pen y Garreg, Garreg Ddu, and Caban Coch.

The, Elan Links: People Nature and Water Landscape Partnership Programme, is a 3.3 million pound scheme part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is a programme designed to preserve and improve the ecology and cultural heritage for posterity through the implementation of twelve objectives and twenty-seven projects.

The community of farmers, tenants, the town of Rhayader and the village of Elan are the backbone of this vast area, with farming and tourism activities being the most significant economic activity in the area.