

Ceri Daugherty – Editorial for Ranger 76

Having been a contented member of CMA for around 7 years now, I do still sometimes think about why I continue to be involved with what was traditionally seen as an association for practitioners even though I have now been sitting at a desk writing policy for longer than I was a countryside ranger. The answer is always the same for me, it's the link to all the other people involved in the same area of work with the same interests as me, both on the ground and at a desk! I, and many others, may have abandoned windswept beaches and serenely beautiful forests for noisy, overcrowded offices, computer screens and endless meetings but the reasons for working in this field are the same as ever. We all, as members of CMA, value our countryside and urban greenspace both for its role in sustaining our planet and the part it plays in making the lives of locals and visitors healthier and happier. We also value everyone who plays a part in protecting, enhancing and ensuring responsible enjoyment of such environments. These roles are as varied as the locations from which they are delivered and I do sometimes wish I could do my present job overlooking Three Cliffs Bay on the Gower Peninsula rather than overlooking a road.....

This leads me, if you will humour me, to explore further the 'linking' role of CMA for countryside and urban greenspace managers. At our 2004 Conference, one of the speakers, Ellie Robertson from the National Trust encouraged CMA to further promote the real achievements of our members in delivering against Government agendas against challenges such as diminishing budgets. Since November 2004, we have been working on collating best practice in order to demonstrate just this. Our initial trawl for ideas took place at Conference 2005 and we have now reached a stage where we have twelve really good examples of CMA members projects. Dave Solly and I have been looking at how such projects deliver against what Government wants and are amazed at the wide range of issues our work is addressing, from traditional areas such as biodiversity through to health and well-being, agricultural practice and community involvement.

We are very grateful to those who have been involved to date and you will soon get to learn more about these examples and how they relate to the wide variety of strategic agendas. In Ranger 77 we will be looking at the best practice examples and then tracking through to see how such practice on the ground delivers against a range of strategic agendas. In Ranger 78, we will be highlighting a particular agenda, that of improving the nations health and exploring how the best practice examples impact upon this. As most of us are aware, a clean, safe, attractive environment is linked to better health and well-being whilst the broad range of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in a wide variety of settings and through different activities can increase physical activity and therefore improve health and well-being. It is encouraging that the issue of 'health' is no longer confined to the NHS and organisations such as my own, the Countryside Council for Wales are playing an important role in this arena. So the links continue to be made and to be made stronger. I hope you enjoy this issue of Ranger and can start looking forward to the next two!

Ceri Daugherty

Vice- Chair, CMA & Health & Recreation Policy Officer, CCW.