



The Clackmannanshire Access Forum

Minute of meeting held on Tuesday, 24th November 2009 at Kilncraigs

	Action
<u>Present</u>	
Landowners/Land Managers: Brian Poett, Sir Robert Stewart	
User group representatives: Linda Howson, Colin Thomson	
Community group representatives: Caroline Crawford, David Scott	
Agency and advisory representatives: Alistair Lawson, Chris Stark, Colin Ward	
Council officers: Councillor Harry McLaren, Martin Dean, Euan Hills	
<u>1.0 Presentation by Richard Cooke, Convenor of the National Access Forum</u>	
1.1 Richard explained that the National Access Forum (NAF) was established following the passing of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, that it does not have any statutory basis and that it was created to assist Scottish Natural Heritage publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.	
1.2 He was elected as Convenor to the NAF in November 2008 and took-up the post in January 2009.	
1.3 Richard has considerable experience of access issues gained from his work as factor for Dalhousie Estate, liaison with Angus Council on the Brechin Footpath Network, from creating a Country Park at Brechin and from involvement in Deer	

Management Groups (Secretary of the East Grampian Deer Management Group from 1979-2005 and Secretary of the Association of Deer Management Groups from 1992).	
1.4 The NAF is an advisory body, with 25 full and 70 corresponding members, but does not have any statutory powers, nor any budget. Its overarching aim is to facilitate enjoyment of the outdoors and to encourage responsible land management.	
1.5 The NAF has voiced concerns to MSPs that funding given to local authorities for access is not ring fenced.	
1.6 Richard said that he would like to see consistency and co-ordination on access matters.	
1.7 He would also like to see a Local Access Forum (LAF) network developed and better links between the NAF and LAFs. He highlighted the need for information and education on access legislation.	
1.8 There was some discussion over whether Paths For All (PFA) had any role in communication between Access Fora. Colin W stated that PFA's role is to promote good practice and that they had organised regional events for Local Access Fora in the past. He also commented that some LAFs had held joint meetings.	
1.9 Brian raised concerns that there weren't sanctions for irresponsible access takers. Richard commented that the Scottish Outdoor Access Code attempts to clarify what responsible access is, that education is essential in tackling irresponsible access and that LAFs can provide advice on local issues.	
1.10 Linda referred to inconsistencies between access legislation and other legislation affecting equestrian users. Richard commented that he didn't believe that access rights of equestrian users should be compromised because of technicalities and that progress in dealing with such inconsistencies could be made by better communication and consensus.	
1.11 David asked what measures were being taken to address irresponsible wild camping. Richard referred to good practice in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park where partnership working involving police, rangers and others had made some progress in tackling the issue.	
1.12 Alistair thanked Richard for his presentation and concluded by saying that he thought there would be benefit from improved communication between the NAF and LAFs, and between LAFs.	
2.0 Apologies	
2.1 Apologies were received from James Cullens, Dick Clark, Enid Trevett, Gordon Durward, Drew Michie, Mike Shepherd and Niall Urquhart.	
3.0 Approval of minutes of 25th August 2009	

3.1 Colin T proposed that the minutes of 25th August 2009 were approved. This was seconded by Councillor McLaren.	
4.0 Matters arising	
4.1 Woods In and Around Town Councillor McLaren commented that he thought that the paths in Clackmannan Back Wood are, in the most part, fit for purpose. Alistair enquired if the advice given by Forum members to the Woodland and Greenspace Officer had been helpful. Martin advised that he was in regular contact with the Officer and that he understood that the advice had been useful to them.	
4.2 Ramblers Scotland Gordon will continue to be the link between the Clackmannanshire Access Forum and Ramblers Scotland.	
4.3 Partnership agreement Alistair asked about progress on the paper highlighting how the Forum can advertise what it does to the wider public. Martin agreed to raise the matter with Niall.	MD/NU
4.4 Pegasus crossing Linda advised the Forum that the pegasus crossing still hadn't been installed. It was agreed Martin would contact Roads Contracts to find out when it would be installed.	MD
4.5 National Access Forum Martin reported that he had advertised the joint meeting between the NAF and LAFs to the members who weren't able to make the last meeting of the Forum, but that nobody was able to attend. He went on to say that he had attended the joint meeting and that it had been an informative and useful day.	
4.6 Signage advice Brian requested that signage promoting responsible behaviour be posted on core paths. Alistair reminded members that SNH had produced signage that can be useful in some situations.	
4.7 Ochils Landscape Partnership Martin reminded the Forum that it was represented on the Ochils Landscape Partnership Access Sub-Group by Gordon. Colin T reported (on Gordon's behalf) that progress had been slow.	
5.0 Partnership agreement	
5.1 The Working Group (of Alistair, David, Drew and Martin) met to review the Partnership Agreement.	
5.2 Proposed changes were circulated in advance of the meeting and affected the following sections: - Appointing a representative - Substitute - Administration of meetings - Communications	
5.3 It was proposed that the substitute section be further changed	

by replacing "Convenor" with "Access and Countryside Projects Officer".	
5.4 There was some discussion over the frequency of meetings, with some questioning the need for so many meetings and others pointing out that there was always things to discuss and advise on at the meetings.	
5.5 Acceptance of the proposed changes was proposed by David and seconded by Brian.	
6.0 Attendance	
6.1 The Partnership Agreement has a section on failure to attend meetings. It states that "Should a representative, or their deputy, fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings of the Forum, then the Council may, and taking account of any advice provided by the Forum, take the decision to rescind their membership."	
6.2 Two members of the Forum have failed to attend 3 consecutive meetings and it was agreed that Martin contact them to make them aware of the agreement and enquire if there are any reasons for it.	MD
6.3 There followed some discussion about the timing of meetings and, whilst some thought the timing of meetings during afternoons might negatively impact on attendance (especially for those in full time employment) , others said they found evening meetings inconvenient. The consensus was that the Forum should continue to meet in the afternoon.	
6.4 Chris said that she is moving jobs to Highland Perthshire and asked whether her successor could replace her on the Forum. It was suggested that her successor attend the AGM and stand for election.	
7.0 Annual General Meeting	
7.1 The AGM will take place at 6pm on Monday, 22nd February 2010 in the Main Hall at Alloa Town Hall.	
7.2 There was some discussion about whether to limit the participation from each group, but the consensus was that the meeting should be open to all who wanted to attend.	
7.3 It was agreed that Martin will advertise the AGM and invite the Chairs of neighbouring Access Fora.	MD
7.4 At the AGM Alistair will review the year and Martin and Euan will give a presentation.	AL MD/EH
7.5 The following were identified as 1 of the longest serving representatives of each stakeholder group who would stand down at the AGM, but be eligible for re-election: - Landowners/Land Managers - Sir Robert (will re-stand if required) - User group representatives - Linda (will re-stand if required)	

<p>- Community group representatives - Caroline (will re-stand if required) - Agency and advisory representatives - Mike (needs contacted and asked if he will re-stand)</p>	<p>MD</p>
<p>8.0 Tillicoultry Glen bridge advice</p>	
<p>8.1 Martin thanked the Forum for the advice that it gave on the Tillicoultry Glen bridge. This was that the bridge should be repaired, with stepping stones a second option.</p>	
<p>8.2 Martin also brought the advice from Friends Of The Ochils to the attention of members of the Forum. This was included in a document on Access/Walking routes for the OLP (Ochils Landscape Partnership). Their advice was to install another small, unobstrusive bridge along similar lines to the existing one. They also stated that "we think it would be inappropriate to improve the paths approaching either side of the Gannel Burn, as to do so could entice non-hillwalkers inappropriately onto what is in fact an extremely steep and potentially slippery stretch of path up The Law."</p>	
<p>8.3 It was noted that some works to the bridge might be possible as part of the Ochils Landscape Partnership project.</p>	
<p>9.0 Locked gates</p>	
<p>9.1 Gordon had raised the issue of locked gates on the west side of Silver Glen at the last meeting.</p>	
<p>9.2 Both Martin and Alistair have visited the gates. All are padlocked and topped with barbed wire, and have adjacent stiles which provide access for pedestrians, but not for pedestrians with limited mobility, nor for other users such as horse riders.</p>	
<p>9.3 Martin has also met with the farmer and been advised that the gates are padlocked because they have been left open in the past and that this has allowed farm animals to move from one field to another and caused associated problems.</p>	
<p>9.4 Martin further advised that the farmer was accepting of self closing gates being installed (by the Council) to replace the stiles.</p>	
<p>9.5 He also highlighted that Wind Prospect are wanting to run the cable from Burnfoot Hill Wind Farm to Fishcross via the track and, should this happen; it could impact on any newly installed self closing gates.</p>	
<p>9.6 There followed lengthy discussion about the adequacy of stiles in such situations, with some, but not all; feeling that they were a barrier for some access takers.</p>	
<p>9.7 It was agreed to await the outcome of Wind Prospects planning application to run a cable down the track, prior to making a final decision on the matter.</p>	

10.0 Any other business	
10.1 Linda brought to the attention of the Forum 2 holes that have appeared on the Devonway at Blackfaulds and Marchglen. It was agreed that Euan would visit the path and arrange for any necessary repairs.	EH
11.0 Time and date of next meeting	
11.1 The next meeting of the Clackmannanshire Access Forum will be its AGM at 6pm on Monday, 22nd February 2010 in the Main Hall at Alloa Town Hall.	