



The Clackmannanshire Access Forum

Note of Annual General Meeting held on Monday 22nd February 2010 at Alloa Town Hall

	Action
<u>Present</u>	
Members of the public: Alan Hunt, Jane McArdle, Ian Whyte, Francis McKay, Nan Preston	
Landowners/Land Managers representatives: Sir Robert Stewart, James Cullens	
Agency and advisory representatives: Alistair Lawson, Colin Ward, Chris Stark,	
Community group representatives: Dick Clark, David Scott, Caroline Crawford, Enid Trevett	
User group representatives: Drew Michie, Colin Thomson, Gordon Durward, Linda Howson,	
Council officers: Martin Dean, Euan Hills, Niall Urquhart	
Apologies: Councillor Harry McLaren, Councillor Walter McAdam, Brian Poett, Dugdale Bradley	
<u>1.0 Welcome and report from the Chair of the Clackmannanshire Access Forum on the work of the Forum and its achievements</u>	
1.1 Alistair Lawson welcomed everybody to the Annual General Meeting of the Forum.	
1.2 He delivered his report which is attached as an appendix below.	

2.0 Presentation on outdoor access in Clackmannanshire	
2.1 Euan Hills gave an informative presentation on the work of the Ranger service and of the role they play in outdoor access.	
3.0 Election of Forum members to stakeholder groups	
3.1 Alistair identified that vacancies existed in each of the four stakeholder groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners/Land managers - 1 • Agency and advisory groups - 2 • Community groups - 1 • User groups - 1 	
3.2 He then highlighted how these would be filled and elections took place.	
3.3 The following were elected to the Forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency and advisory - Alan Hunt and Jane McArdle • User groups - Nan Preston 	
3.4 Sir Robert Stewart was re-elected to the landowners and land managers group and Caroline Crawford was re-elected to the community group.	
3.5 Chris Stark and Mike Shepherd (agency and advisory groups) and Drew Michie (user groups) have stood down from the Forum.	
3.6 Current members of the Forum are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners/land managers - Sir Robert Stewart, Jane Coull, James Cullens and Brian Poett • Agency and advisory - Alistair Lawson (Chair), Colin Ward, Alan Hunt, Jane McArdle • Community groups - Dick Clark (Vice Chair), Caroline Crawford, David Scott, Enid Trevett • Users - Linda Howson, Gordon Durward, Colin Thomson and Nan Preston • Council - Councillor Harry McLaren, Councillor Walter McAdam, Martin Dean, Niall Urquhart and Euan Hills 	
4.0 Questions and discussion	
4.1 Alistair invited questions, after which he thanked people for attending and concluded the meeting.	

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Annual General Meeting - Monday, 22nd February 2010 at Alloa Town Hall



2009 – 2010 Annual Report by Alistair Lawson, Chairperson

Since our equivalent meeting at this time last year, the Forum has met 3 times, in May, August and November. The usual meeting place has been the Council buildings at Kilncraigs, though one meeting was split between Kilncraigs and a field visit to Tillicoultry Glen. In addition, a small sub-group met in order to revise our Partnership Agreement, which is the Forum's founding and guiding document.

At the close of last year's Open Meeting, we still had two vacancies, which were subsequently filled by invitation (see * below). Those who have served on Forum in the course of the year have been:

Agencies and Advisors: Alistair Lawson, Mike Shepherd, Chris Stark* and Colin Ward

Community Organisations: Dick Clark, Caroline Crawford, David Scott and Enid Trevett*

Land Owners / Managers: Jane Coull, James Cullens, Brian Poett and Bobby Stewart

Recreational Access-takers: Gordon Durward, Linda Howson, Drew Michie and Colin Thomson

Council Representatives: Cllr McAdam, Cllr McLaren, Martin Dean and Euan Hills

Following comment from the floor at last year's Open Meeting, the Partnership Agreement has been revised slightly, in order to clarify the procedures for (a) the election of new members to the Forum, and (b) the attendance of substitutes when full members cannot attend. Provision has also been made for members of the public to attend Forum meetings as observers with prior (2 days) notification to the Access and

Countryside Projects Officer and also for them requesting items for inclusion in the agenda.

The principal item of progress in the course of the year has been the formal adoption, by the Council, of the Core Path Plan. The preparatory stages, i.e. two rounds of public consultation, followed by consideration by Community Councils and by the Access Forum, went remarkably smoothly, and the fact that we were able to proceed so quickly to the adoption stage was largely due to the positive manner in which the Forum dealt with what could have been difficult and time-consuming objections. Clackmannanshire has, therefore, avoided the need to hold any Public Inquiries, which is what is holding up our neighbours in Fife and in Perth & Kinross.



The next stage in the Core Path process will be the provision of new signs on those routes which are not already signed as rights of way. Forum members participated in a consultation exercise as to the design and style of signs and waymarkers, and provided a range of detailed responses, which have guided the Access Officer in his selection of materials, locations and wordings. These materials are currently being ordered and will be in the ground very shortly.

The Forum has hosted 3 visits in the course of the year, from (a) Jane Begg of “Woodlands in and around Towns” (WIAT), who told members of her remit to improve neglected woodlands and at the same time improve recreational access where necessary, (b) Julia Lawrie of the “Ochils Landscape Partnership” (OLP), who is working on the second stage of the funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has to be submitted by the end of March, and (c) Richard Cook, Convenor of the National Access Forum (NAF), who explained the work of the NAF and encouraged us to establish contact with our counterparts in neighbouring Council areas.

As mentioned above, part of one of our meetings was spent on a field visit to Tillicoultry Glen, in order to assess, at first hand, the bridge across the Gannel Burn, below the nose of The Law. This bridge is known to be approaching the stage when repairs or replacement will be needed, and the question arises as to whether it represents an undue temptation to walkers of limited experience to continue beyond the safe and managed loop walks in the lower glen. The Forum's advice to the Council was (a) that the turnaround point of the loop walk should be reinforced visually, such that walkers of modest ability should be in no doubt that they should remain on the managed route, and (b) that, if the bridge did have to be removed, some sort of crossing, probably in the form of stepping-stones, should be provided.



Those of you who were here last year will remember that there was brief comment about the illegal, anti-social and dangerous use of off-road trail bikes and also of kiddies' mini-motos. Regarding the former, attempts have been made to find a suitable site which could be developed as a legitimate track for trail-bikes, as is done successfully in North Lanarkshire and at Cardenden in Fife, but this search has so far been unsuccessful. In the meantime, the Community Wardens continue to interface with bikers and to provide advice and guidance. The matter of the kiddies' mini-motos was felt to be beyond the scope of the Forum, the way ahead being for retailers to be encouraged to provide relevant advice at the point of sale.

In addition to the new Core Path signs which will appear shortly, new signs of a different sort have been provided by ScotWays (the Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society) in connection with their current Heritage Paths Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and by Scottish Natural Heritage. Rather than pointing the way, as signs traditionally do, these new signs tell the history of each path. Those installed so far tell the stories of (i) the Old Coach Road between Dollar and Muckhart, (ii) the route taken by farmers bringing their grain to Muckhart Mill, (iii) the Drovers' Route between Castle Campbell and Glen Devon, (iv) the miners' approach to Devonknowes Colliery, (v) the Right of Way from the top of Mill Street in Tillicoultry, over the hills to Blackford, (vi) the Gartmorn Lade, from Forestmill westwards to the Dam, and (vii) the approach to Clackmannan Tower from the top of the High Street in Clackmannan.



During the autumn, the question of locked gates has been considered, with particular reference to the four locked gates on the track up the Silver Glen from the east end of Alva. Stiles are provided alongside each gate, but the further question arises as to whether horse-riders, cyclists and people with disabilities need to be able to open the gates. The Access Officer has met the owner and discussed the difficulties of ensuring that stock are kept in the areas where they should be. The few horse-riders who do use the route have an arrangement for obtaining keys. The question will be re-assessed in the light of the fact that the cables from the Burnfoot windfarm will probably be brought down that track, which will provide an opportunity to re-assess all related matters.

Finally, horse-riders are awaiting the long-delayed installation of special traffic-lights on the A908 at Devon Village.

The Forum has, therefore, had a full and interesting agenda over the course of the year. Members are to be congratulated on their regular attendances, their lively and balanced input to discussions and the range of useful opinions they have offered.

Chairman

Alistair Lawson –
