
CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: SOAC Land Manager/Owner Responsibilities

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Purpose: To advise the CNPA Access Team over steps towards promoting the SOAC to landowners & managers.

Advice Sought

Does the LOAF agree with the following proposal to promote/publicise ongoing compliance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code towards tackling landowner/manager related breaches affecting access rights?

Background

1. It is noted that the principal subject of complaint in the range of cases reported to the CNPA over the last 3 years concerns issues relating to landowner/manager responsibilities towards access takers such as locked gates and prohibitive signage.
2. There is, therefore, interest in ensuring landowners continue to be aware of their responsibilities as set out in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and further detailed in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
3. The CNPA has a legal duty to publicise the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and does this as an ongoing undertaking through such as the CNPA website, seasonal campaigns (i.e. lambing, dog walking) and day-to-day references to the Code in carrying out the Authorities' various functions and actions.

Proposed Activities

4. A small number of Scottish Local Authorities seek to promote landowner/manager best practice and compliance specifically, through their websites. The information available is generally succinct and tends towards 'signposting' of other fuller sources of information and guidance. The following webpage from Argyll & Bute Council is a good example:
 - <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/assistance-and-advice-land-managers>

5. Other existing sources of information aimed at guiding landowner/manager actions and understanding in respect of public access, include the following (some of which are referenced by Argyll & Bute Council):
 - <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com>
 - <http://www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk>
 - <https://www.nfus.org.uk/>
 - <http://www.gillespiemacandrew.co.uk>

6. In recognition of the value in this approach, which requires minimal additional resources to achieve, we propose a limited (seasonal) campaign with the purpose of raising awareness and promoting good practice through:
 - a. creation of a principal webpage summarising and signposting information on key considerations relevant to landowner/managers and public access,
 - b. promotion of the webpage and ongoing good practice via social media channels and other electronic networks on a seasonal basis.

Objectives

7. The campaign will have the following aims:
 - a. Promote ongoing compliance with the LR(S)A and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
 - b. Reduce the number of cases reported where avoidable landowner/manager breaches are a cause.
 - c. Improve CNPA engagement on the theme of landowner/manager responsibilities.
 - d. Encourage best practice.

Monitoring

8. Complaints to the Authority over access rights will be monitored in order to identify reductions in the number of cases reported where issues relate to landowner/manager responsibilities.

9. It should be noted that the number of cases reported, including the type referred to above remains low overall.

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