

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIFTH MEETING Community Hall, Boat of Garten

Wednesday 4th August 2010

Summary of Action points arising from meeting

AP1 – AQSS to liaise with Roger Searle and Catriona Rowan and arrange a site visit looking at horse riding issues.

AP2 - AQSS to make necessary changes and circulate around Forum members and publish on the CNPA website.

AP3 – BG/FP to write to SNH welcoming this important initiative and advocating the additional uses of the HFTSH website.

AP4 Anne Grey agreed to provide an update on the pilot in 6 months time.

AP5 - FP to confirm at which meeting it was minuted that the Abergeldie cases had been officially closed.

Forum members in attendance

Paul Corrigan (Convener)	Bob Kinnaird
Simon Blackett (Vice Convener)	Roger Searle
Juliet Allam	Jeremy Usher Smith
Nic Bullivant	Rachel Bromby
Hebe Carus	Debbie Greene
Andrew Dunn	Catriona Rowan
Peter Holden	

Others in attendance:	
Bob Grant, CNPA	Katrina Brown, Macaulay Institute
Fran Potheary, CNPA	Ann Gray, SRPBA
Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA	Joyce Lyle, AoCC
Pete Crane, CNPA	Fiona McInally, PFAP

Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Convener thanked Forum members for coming to the meeting especially since he had requested the change in the date. He welcomed Katrina Brown of Macaulay and Ann Grey of the SRPBA for coming to present to the Forum and he welcomed Eric Baird and Dave Fallows as CNPA Board members who were in the audience.
2. He thanked staff for organising an interesting and informative site visit and asked that RSPB staff be thanked for their time. He asked staff to consider a focus on horse riding issues for the next site visit.

API – AQSS to liaise with Roger Searle and Catriona Rowan and arrange a site visit looking at horse riding issues.

Item 2 - Apologies

Dave Craig	Thomas MacDonell
John Grierson	Richard Wallace

Item 3 - Minutes of the last meeting – approval and matters arising not otherwise appearing on the agenda.

3. The minutes were agreed.

Action points arising from the last meeting

- API – Discharged- covered in paper 1.
- AP2 – Discharged- covered in paper 3.
- AP3 – Discharged
- AP4 – Discharged
- AP5 – Discharged

Item 4 – Operating Procedures

4. AQSS reiterated that the Operating Procedures (OP) are the bedrock of the Forum and ensure that it runs smoothly and stays within its remit to advise on issues concerning outdoor access. He drew members’ attention to two key points (1) that the Forum had already had a lengthy discussion on the OP at the last meeting and these changes had been made in the wake of that, and (2) that the text from the agreed Communications Plan had been incorporated into the OP. Forum members had not seen this new section so further comments are welcome.
5. The Convener reminded the Forum that any changes had to consider the future boundary change. Concern was raised that the new OP had a requirement for no less than four meetings a year and the risk that as a consequence there might be meetings for the sake of it. The Convener reminded all that the reason for stipulating four meetings a year was to avoid excessively heavy agendas but that the OP would be reviewed as a standing item every two years and changes could be made at that time.
6. The following changes were agreed for the final OP:
 - Add Dundee Courier to Section 6b;
 - Add Parklife to Section 6b;
 - Add “within the National Park boundary” at 6b
 - Expand section 1b to include water as well as land;
 - Change section 6d to “convening a public event or meeting ...”

AP2 - AQSS to make necessary changes and circulate around Forum members and publish on the CNPA website.

Item 5 – Heading for the Scottish Hill website

7. Anne Gray of SRPBA introduced the Forum to the new Heading for the Scottish Hill (HFTSH) website being run as a pilot this year. The website supersedes the old Heading for the Scottish Hills book, produced in 1996, and combines this approach with the Hillphones system that is already up and running. The underlying principle is to provide stalking information with the objective of making it easy for walkers and stalkers to have minimum impact on each other's activities.
8. Using an interactive mapping tool estates can provide three types of message:
 - A year round default message with basic contact information;
 - A stalking season message with general requests e.g. keep to paths and ridges or;
 - A specific time and area message e.g. stalking on 31/10/10 in Glen Dubh.
9. The purpose of the pilot is to iron out any difficulties and there is a downloadable questionnaire for users to comment on it. Future development will focus on improving estate coverage, developing text and email alerts and looking to develop links/overlays of other relevant site information such as car parks and toilets.
10. Members highlighted that it wasn't just hill walkers that would benefit from this website but others such as event organisers, commercial businesses and publishers of information about outdoor access. Members felt that this was just as important as improving communication between stalkers and hill walkers. Some members did express concerns that walkers will ignore messages if they are too generic.
11. Members asked Ann Gray what she felt they and the CNPA should do to support this new website. In the first instance this would be to try it out and report back on any issues using the on-line questionnaire. From a public agency point of view support would help strengthen the case with SNH for continued funding.
12. The Vice Convener highlighted that the East Grampian Deer Management Group were working with the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group to develop a standard sign for the Park which could include the some of the same information that will be on the website.

AP3 – BG/FP to write to SNH welcoming this important initiative and advocating the additional uses of the HFTSH website.

AP4 Anne Gray agreed to provide an update on the pilot in 6 months time.

Item 6 – Update on the Biennial Event

13. AQSS highlighted that in consultation with the steering group (Paul, Bob K and Nic) four options for the Biennial Event were being pursued:
- **Option 1** - In partnership with COAT, the LOAF would jointly host a gathering for all the voluntary health walk leaders and key partners to launch the COAT Health Walks Evaluation Report; highlight the work of the Cairngorms Health Walk Project and bring key partners together. All timed around World Diabetes Day in November.
 - **Option 2** – In partnership with the Cairngorms Business Partnership the LOAF would jointly host a training event for businesses in the Park, such as activity providers, accommodation providers, guide book writers and many others, around a theme of “making the most of the outdoors for your customers”. This would fit into the marketing strategy and training requirement for the CBP and provides the LOAF with the opportunity to push the key messages about *promoting access opportunities responsibly*. This would occur sometime in November.
 - **Option 3** - The November business meeting would be expanded to include some key note speakers and advertised widely.
 - **Option 4** - The LOAF co-host the biennial Outdoor Access Events Open Meeting for land managers and event organisers with the CNPA and the new CBP Events Officer. It would give LOAF members the opportunity to look at some of the issues around organised events, bearing in mind the likelihood of future LOAF advice on the Aviemore Half Marathon. The date would be 27th October.
14. Discussions with COAT and the Cairngorms Business Partnership had been positive but both parties felt that the timing wasn't right. From COAT's perspective as a young organisation they were concerned about the focus of the event being diluted and for the CBP's position it was a question of timing and resources. AQSS highlighted that effectively there are three choices - to go with Option 3 or 4 or to postpone the event till 2011 when option 1 and 2 could be explored further.
15. The Convener highlighted that whilst on paper option 4 looked good in his experience it was a rather complex meeting between two very specific groups and wouldn't lend its self as an event to promote the work of the LOAF.
16. The forum agreed that the preferred format was to look a joint meeting with another organisation and this would mean postponing till next year.

Item 7 – Role of the Ranger Services in the Cairngorms National Park

17. PC introduced this paper highlighting that the CNPA has been grant aiding 8 of the current 11 ranger services in the National Park since 2008. As the CNPA is coming to the end of its corporate plan cycle it is opportune to

look at the priorities delivered by the rangers using CNPA funding. He stated that ranger managers and the Sustainable Tourism Forum would be commenting in similar terms before a paper is presented to the new Board in October.

18. The CNPA Board agreed that the priorities for the ranger services in the National Park in order were:
 - Influencing responsible behaviour;
 - Raising awareness of the special qualities of the National Park and;
 - Conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park
19. The Forum was asked if these were the right priorities and do we need to expand the number of services to deliver them effectively.
20. A couple of Forum members expressed concerns that all the CNPA has effectively done is maintain the status quo. The existing services are not providing effective coverage in the National Park. Invercauld estate expressed a desire to have a supported ranger service on their ground. Opportunities for coordination between ranger services are limited so now is the right time to look again at the context in which the rangers work.
21. Others felt that increasingly the issues that need to be addressed in the Park require a high degree of intervention for rangers, above and beyond education, and that there may be a need to look at rangers taking on a more regulatory role in and around certain hot spots. Other contributors felt that at certain sites rangers need the *support of* regulatory authorities – e.g. the police – and this should be enhanced.
22. Glen Clunie was highlighted as an area where ranger intervention was required and where the current funded service had not been active in addressing the problem of irresponsible camping.
23. Concerns were raised that in parts of Deeside the loss of outdoor education facilities has had a big impact on environmental education and that a priority should be working with school groups in the area.

Item 8 – Outdoor access, LOAF's and the Norwegian perspective

24. Katrina Brown of the Macaulay Institute gave a short presentation on her recent work looking at the differences between access legislation in Scotland and Norway and the challenges they both face. In 1957 the Norwegian Government codified the custom of “allemansretten” - loosely translated as “all man’s right” - which is an important part of Norwegian national identity. Both systems of access rights are built upon social norms and are primarily governed by behavioural regulation; self policing and based on a common sense approach to behaviour in the outdoors.
25. In Norway the key problems are:

- Participation - there is great fear that as the population becomes more urban the behavioural norms of the outdoors are lost because they are not being passed on through the generations;
- User conflicts – especially between traditional and new outdoor activities;
- Dogs - dogs have to be kept on a lead from April to September which has led to a lack of motivation in owners to train their dogs properly and problems during the rest of the year;
- Commercial activities - traditional activities have a strong anti-commercial element which means that trekking clubs often have sole access to certain areas, and are sole providers of training;
- Privacy – especially in coastal areas.

26. With regards to advisory Forums, Norway has Inter-municipal Outdoor Recreation Boards who do provide advice but they are made up of mostly public agencies and they also deliver and manage outdoor access, even buying land to tackle certain issues.

27. KB was asked if she thought it was a better system than in Scotland. In her view the profile and importance of outdoor access in planning leads to better infrastructure close to where people live.

Item 9- Outdoor Access Casework

28. FP introduced this item by focusing on what had been achieved vis-à-vis resolving horse-riding issues, ranging from contacts with long distance riding interests to removing barriers on popular routes.

29. FP also highlighted that the casework spread sheet and protocols has been changed as per the minutes of the last meeting. This prompted further questions from the Forum on why contact had not been made for Case 21 and why had the Abergeldie cases been closed. AQSS responded that Case 21 was part of a wider discussion with the estate which would focus on encouraging the trial of new gates on site.

AP5 - FP to confirm at which meeting it was minuted that the Abergeldie cases had been officially closed.

Item 10 – Update and forward look

30. AQSS introduced this item, highlighting that the Core Paths Plan had been published and distributed to the key stakeholders. Everybody else who took part in the consultations received a newsletter. Attention was drawn to the preliminary results of the monitoring as well as the ongoing work regarding path leaflets and path signs audit.

31. BG went onto to highlight that COAT are looking at developing a four year business plan which will be taken to the CNPA Board in the autumn.

32. Progress on the Speyside Way Extension is being hampered by the fact that there will be an inquiry over the Path Order which Major McLaren of Kinrara has objected to. The inquiry could take up to six months to resolve and, if a decision is made in the Park Authority's favour, will be followed by a 12 week pre-planning consultation required as part of the planning permission process. Work is still ongoing on other sections of the route to reach agreements with land owners.
33. BG also highlighted that the CNPA had recently met with Invercauld Estate and Scottish Enterprise to discuss how to take forward a new camping site to alleviate the pressures in Clunieside.

Item 11- Ideas for future meetings

34. The Convener requested that members email ideas to him for future agenda items.

Item 12- AOCB

35. AQSS proposed the dates for Forum meetings in 2011. Members were content with the dates and the proposed locations.

Date of next meeting

36. **Tuesday 9th November, Ballater, Deeside at 16:30**