

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FOURTH MEETING Richmond Memorial Hall, Tomintoul

Tuesday 6th of November 2012

Summary of Action points arising from meeting

AP1- AQSS to circulate SOAC review link.

AP2- AQSS to invite Graeme to the next meeting

AP3 AQSS to present a paper on “fit for purpose” to a future LOAF meeting.

AP4-FP to present a paper on the long term cases for advice and review.

AP5- AQSS to present an amendment to the Operating Procedures to allow members to extend their membership beyond 7 years.

AP6-PC to write to existing members about their attendance.

Forum members in attendance

Paul Corrigan (Convener)	Peter Holden
Hebe Carus	Catriona Rowan
Nic Cole	David Lyle
Jeremy Usher Smith	Eric Baird
Nigel Williams	Thomas MacDonell
Paul Webster	Dave Craig

Others in attendance:	
Bob Grant, CNPA	Ian Cox
Katrina Brown, James Hutton Institute	Fran Pothecary, CNPA
Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA	Murray Ferguson, CNPA

Item 1 – Welcome

1. Paul Corrigan the Convener welcomed and thanked all for coming. A special welcome went to Eric Baird as the newest member of the Forum, here to replace Andy Dunn as a community representative. Thanks also went to staff and the caterers for organising the meeting and refreshments.
2. Since the last meeting PC highlighted that the Moorland Forum and the National Access Forum had updated and published the Guidance on Electric Fences in the uplands. There had been a joint NAF/LAF meeting in Falkirk and that two events - the Outdoor Access Events Open Meeting and the Developing Cycling Workshop had been hosted in the Park.
3. PC also highlighted his recent visit to the Sport Northern Ireland conference looking at events in the Mourne Mountains. He was overwhelmed by the interest

and enthusiasm for the Guidance on Outdoor Access Events and was reminded how lucky we all are in Scotland with such progressive Land Reform.

4. PC highlighted that Scottish Natural Heritage were carrying out an online survey into the Code and the promotion of the Code. The deadline is the 8th of November and he urged all to respond. PC also highlighted that Scottish Land and Estates had updated their resources for land managers with various case studies and information sheets.

API- AQSS to circulate SOAC review link.

Item 2 - Apologies

Gordon Riddler	Richard Gledson
Richard Wallace	Malcolm McIntyre
Robbie Nicol	Ian Hill
Graeme Prest	

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

5. The minutes were agreed subject to one small change.

Action points arising from the last meeting

- API - Discharged.**
- AP2 - Discharged.**
- AP3 - Discharged.**
- AP4 - Discharged.**
- AP5 - Discharged.**

Item 4 – Forestry Commission- car parking

6. The Convener introduced this item highlighting that Graeme Prest, Forest District Manager for the Highlands had unfortunately tendered his apologies again. This was due to the fact that FCS staff had been very busy surveying Ash trees for signs of the Ash dieback. Graeme is very keen to come to the next meeting as he is aware that this is the second time he has submitted an apology.

AP2- AQSS to invite Graeme to the next meeting

Item 5- Core Paths Plan review update

7. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that since the last meeting there had been an informal review of the Core Paths Plan with all the Community Councils. In assessing the new paths being put forward for the formal review the CNPA

posed a number of questions in relation to principles in the plan and on specific paths.

8. The first question relates to the apparent risk of over provision in and around communities arising from the desire to designate more of the existing road and pavement network. The issue here was both in relation to over sufficiency and to the fact the core path designation would extend access rights to pavements for horses and cyclists which could lead to conflict between users. Members questioned what was the apparent motivation for this desire. It was felt that this was perhaps due to the keenness to recognise existing promoted routes in the plan as well as future proof routes against development. On the second point the view was that this was a valid justification for considering a route and on the former the view was very much that on balance additional roads and pavements would be over provision.
9. The second question highlighted in the informal consultation was the desire to see more high level routes through the core mountain areas for example Jocks Road and the Minigaig. AQSS reminded members that previously advice had been that only “robust” route through the core mountain areas should be considered and that their designation should be seen the content of the sufficiency of the whole plan. Bob Grant reminded the Forum that when the initial drafts of the core paths plan were being developed the effect was very much like a doughnut with paths around the edge of the Park but not linking across it. In the discussion that followed concerns were raised about the resourcing of the plan and that would extra paths such as these mean less resources being spent elsewhere? The view was very much that these sorts of routes, that are often rights of way, don’t need additional protection or future proofing against future developments and as such should be left to those with a more adventurous bent.
10. The third question, is the challenge of including routes that could take more than two years to deliver eg LBS124. LBS124 in Aviemore is an example of a route the Park Authority and others would like to develop but which land owner agreement is not been given. At present the line of the route can be accessed but isn’t being used. The question does arise that without support from key stakeholders should such a development aspiration be kept on as a core path? The view was very much that there needs to be a future proof element to the plan and but this should to be backed up with strong community support and fit with the objectives.
11. Finally AQSS referred to one route in particular for inclusion, the Thieves Road between Loch an Elieen and Feshiebridge, that was highlighted by the Board at the adoption of the existing Core Paths Plan. At that time environmental sensitivities meant that it was discounted early on. It is recognised that there is a need to actively manage access through sensitive sites and that core path designation would be a useful tool. The Thieves Road is a very popular route and that as a result there are issues that need to be addressed. Further negotiation will be needed between the parties to inform any decision on its adoption into the core paths plan.
12. A short discussion took place on how we measure progress in path condition.

AP3 AQSS to present a paper on “fit for purpose” to a future LOAF meeting.

Item 6- Outdoor Access Volunteering

13. Bob Grant introduced this paper highlighting that at first, the notion of volunteers doing path works seems simple but that managing such a programme is very labour intensive and does require a fair degree of coordination. He also highlighted that it shouldn't be underestimated what is already happening and by whom.
14. Members with experience of volunteering highlighted that it is quite easy to get volunteers for the practical work but that volunteers were generally not so keen on paperwork or coordination type tasks. Others highlighted that it takes quite of work to set up a scheme initially but the providing the support is in place they tend to run themselves.
15. Members suggested three courses of action that could usefully be followed these were:
 - Build on the existing volunteer programmes rather than inventing something new;
 - Consider linking communities to ensure a greater pool of resources; and
 - Use Ranger work programmes to ensure a minimum level of volunteering opportunities exist across the National Park.

Item 7- Outdoor Access Casework

16. Fran Potheary introduced this item highlighting new cases around deer stalking signage, water based activities, riding events and poaching. Turning first to the issue of out of date stalking signs she highlighted that colleagues had developed a standard stalking sign promoting the Code, which is being rolled out across the Park. These signs would be used in conjunction with the blue and white temporary signs when stalking is actually taking place.
17. The second issue highlighted related to concerns raised by the Spey Fishery Board about canyoning on the Truim and the potential disturbance to the salmon runs. The issue will be raised at the next Spey Users Group.
18. The third issue related to a horse event which had to change its route when discouraged by Estate keeper. Discussions are taking place with the estate regarding the management of the ROW through their ground.
19. Finally she highlighted a case in Laggan where a gate on a right of way had been locked to prevent illegal vehicular access and poaching. The Estate recognises the importance of the route and has agreed to install a side gate.

20. In the discussion that followed members raises concerns that there were a number of cases still on the books that had been open for a long time. The question was asked as to why these had not been resolved or stronger sanctions taken. It was highlighted that these cases relate to very minor issues that are generally resolved through opportunities such as forestry management plans or other developments. It was recognised that a review should be done on these cases and decisions taken on how to take these forward.

AP4-FP to present a paper on the long term cases for advice and review.

Item 8- National Access Forum Updates

21. BG introduced this paper highlighting that he and Nic Cole had attend the recent National Access Forum and Local Outdoor Access Forum meeting.

Item 9- Update and forward look

22. AQSS highlighted the recent Outdoor Access Events Open meeting attended by both event organisers and land managers. The meeting has now moved to annually rather than biannually and was very well attended. Key topics discussed were the development and growth of local events and concerns that event organisers from outwith of the Park are still unaware of the guidance.
23. BG highlighted the recent Developing Cycling Workshop which was attended by over 40 delegates from estates, business and other key stakeholders. A report of the meeting will be circulated.

Item 11- AOCB

24. BG highlighted that the Land Reform Review Group had met and are currently agreeing the terms of the review into the Land Reform (Scotland)Act. The main focus will be on parts two and three which relate to land ownership. The CNPA is keen to see some sections of Part one discussed in relation to tightening such procedures as path orders and adopting core paths.
25. AQSS highlighted that both Paul Corrigan and Catriona Rowan appointments will be up in April 2013 and that to ensure consistency of advice on the Core Paths Plan it was proposed that they be kept on for one more meeting after that i.e. the May meeting.
26. Members questioned the attendance rate of some existing members and asked that this be taken up with them.

AP5- AQSS to present an amendment to the Operating Procedures to allow members to extend their membership beyond 7 years.

AP6-PC to write to existing members about their attendance.

Item 12 - Date of next meeting

27. **Tuesday 5th February, Boat of Garten**