

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIRST MEETING Albert Hall, Ballater

Tuesday 7th February 2012

Summary of Action points arising from meeting

API - AQSS to amend Operating Principles to include timed (5 minutes) slot for the public to present points of view on particular items.

AP2 - BG to present a paper on the review of the Core Paths Plan at the May meeting.

AP3 - FP to present a revised protocol for discussion at the May meeting.

AP4 - AQSS to give update on the Dulnain Grantown Cycle route.

Forum members in attendance

Paul Corrigan (Convener)	Peter Holden
Richard Gledson	Catriona Rowan
Nic Cole	David Lyle
Gordon Riddler	Nigel Williams
Robbie Nicol	Ian Hill
Dave Craig	Andy Dunn

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

Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Convener, Paul Corrigan thanked everyone for coming and especially welcomed Gordon Riddler, CNPA Board representative, Katrina Brown of the James Hutton Institute and Ian Cox of the AoCC. Special thanks went also to the caterers for the soup and sandwiches.
2. Paul highlighted a number of matters of interest to the Forum as follows:
 - The recent Sheriffs decision on rafting on the River Tay;
 - The “Do the Ride Thing” mountain biking guidance circulated by Adam Streeter-Smith (AQSS) for comment and
 - An update from the pre-Christmas meeting held with Katrina Brown to discuss the findings of the James Hutton Institute study into the LOAF (agenda item 6)

3. He also highlighted that after the last meeting, a member of the public in attendance had wished to contact him but had been unable to do so directly raising issues about whether Forum members should be more easily contactable.
4. Paul also said that he had been at the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust workshop for developing their next business plan.

Item 2 - Update on LOAF Membership

5. David Lyle was welcomed onto the Forum as Juliet Allam's replacement. David is a recreational representative who brings a wealth of experience as a retired solicitor and as a long standing member of Ramblers Scotland. The Convener highlighted that both he and staff had been in correspondence with Juliet Allam and discussed her commitment to the Forum. As she had been unable to commit time to the Forum the decision was taken to offer her seat to David Lyle who was on the reserve list from the last round of recruitment. The Convener wished Juliet well with her future endeavours.

Item 3 - Apologies

Richard Wallace	Hebe Carus
Thomas MacDonell	Paul Webster
Jeremy Usher Smith	Graeme McLean, Cycling Scotland

Item 4 - Minutes of the last meeting – approval and matters arising not otherwise appearing on the agenda.

6. The minutes were agreed with Forum members in attendance added

Action points arising from the last meeting

API- Discharged

AP2- Discharged - date to be fixed later in the year.

AP3- Discharged

AP4 – Discharged

Item 5 – Scottish Mountain Bike Framework

7. In lieu of the presentation by Graeme McLean, who had to tend his apologies, Bob Grant gave a short update from Pete Crane, Senior Visitor Services Officer, CNPA.
8. BG highlighted that the Scottish Mountain Bike Development Consortium are continuing with the Highland Cluster Development. The first piece of work is a study by UHI on mountain biking in Highlands looking at provision, economic benefit, constraints and opportunities. The CNPA have provided additional funds to make sure the study covers all the CNP.

9. The National Park Plan Consultation produced a range of responses mainly supportive of concept of a development cluster. Some suggested that the work should consider all forms of cycling and there were several concerns about damage to paths and increased wildlife disturbance (issues that were raised at last LOAF). Also many responses were clear that responsible cycling needs to be promoted.
10. At the Sustainable Tourism Forum the consensus was that cycling in the CNP presents opportunities and challenges. The CNPA and Cairngorms Business Partnership are agreed that:
 1. This work needs doing;
 2. This work should be done at a CNP level in partnership with a Highland Cluster;
 3. This work should include all cycling not just mountain biking.

There are indications that key areas that people want to see promoted may be:-

- Development and promotion of safe off road cycling on existing routes for a wide range of users (off road family cycling)
- Development and promotion of functional routes
- Development of fun parks e.g. Anagach Woods, Grantown.

The agreed way forward from STS is that CBP and CNPA organise a conference in May for land managers, tourism businesses (activity providers), cycling groups, transport providers, LOAF etc to look at the issues and opportunities and develop an 'action plan' to take forward this work. The CNPA are keen to have the continued input and involvement of LOAF and STS in this process.

Item 6 - The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum - A Way Forward

11. AQSS presented this paper highlighting that the report written by Katrina Brown of the James Hutton Institute had highlighted a number of creative tensions and some key challenges. The report did not reflect on the risk to the Forum from not dealing with issues or give them any degree of priority. The question "does the Forum think any work is required to address this issues?" was posed to the Forum.
12. The Convener highlighted that he'd been to a number of the NAF/LAF events and had been struck at the diversity of Forum practices. Many worked hard to reach consensus on issues which created a lot of tensions. He has always maintained that, as an advisory body, consensus isn't always necessary and that a range of views is just as valuable.
13. There was broad view from members that the LOAF and other access forums have evolved over time as demands have been placed upon them. The LOAF is

very businesslike, much down to the role of the Convener, and strikes the right balance between being strategic and practical. It was stressed that as a mix of professionals and lay people it was important not to go to extremes of either role - for example becoming quasi-judicial.

14. A lot of the discussion focused on the role of the Forum in dealing with access issues. Many felt that this was a key area of work but equally the Forum shouldn't be out 'looking for' cases. The Access Authority should always be the first point of contact but the role of the Forum should be articulated early on. Likewise if the public wishes to present their view on a case at a Forum meeting they should be allowed to.

API - AQSS to amend Operating Principles to include timed (5 minutes) slot for the public to present points of view on particular items.

15. The discussion turned to the public profile of the LOAF and it was felt that whilst there were advantages to making the public more aware of the work of the LOAF and what it provides the correct channel for raising issues should be through the Access Authority. It was recognised that more could be done through existing publications and newsletters to raise the profile of the LOAF.
16. Members also took the view that, as casework was such a small component of delivering high quality outdoor access, more emphasis should be given to promoting the Code and promoting access.

Item 7- Core Paths Plan review and its integration with the Local Development Plan

17. BG introduced this paper highlighting that the next Core Paths Plan will form part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the next Local Development Plan. The Guidance on Core Paths Planning did recommend integrating the two but this is challenging as the appeals procedures for both Plans are markedly different. Adopting the CPP as Supplementary Planning Guidance allows the two appeals to run in tandem without each holding the other up.
18. It is anticipated that the formal consultation on the Local Development Plan will commence in the spring of 2013. Prior to that the CNPA will informally consult with the LOAF and key partners to review the current plan and shape the key questions for the formal consultation.

AP2 - BG to present a paper on the review of the Core Paths Plan at the May meeting.

Item 8 - Upholding access rights and other casework

19. Fran Potheary introduced this item highlighting that fencing is increasingly becoming an issue especially in grouse moors where it is employed as part of a tick control programme. She also highlighted that staff time and resources is

been used up on somewhat marginal cases and there is a need to reconsider the protocol to include a decision on when to take a case further i.e. to more formal resolution.

AP3 - FP to present a revised protocol for discussion at the May meeting.

Item 9- National Access Forum updates

20. The Convener introduced this item reporting that the last meeting discussed issues as diverse as dogs and breeding birds, and Core Paths and forestry operations.

Item 10 - Update and forward look

21. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that there had been extensive flooding on the Speyside Way in Aviemore over Christmas. Staff met with the Estate and tenant and action is taking place to deal with the issue.

22. He also said that it was agreed at the last open meeting for Outdoor Access Events to host the meeting annually rather than twice a year as stipulated in the guidance.

23. At the CNPA Board meeting on the 20th January the Board agreed to provide significant funding for Rangers in the National Park. A key part of this was more funding being made available to fund a full-time Aberdeenshire Council Ranger in Deeside and Donside.

24. AQSS also highlighted the work being done by staff with the Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group to develop a template for stalking signs for the main access points to the hills. Promoting the Code and the importance of deer management are the theme of these signs which are being trialled on Invercauld Estate.

25. BG highlighted that the consultation for the next Park Plan went very well and subject to Board approval it is hoped the plan will be adopted in May 2012.

Item 11 - AOCB

26. Ian Cox highlighted that there is a growing concern in Dulnain about safe cycling between Dulnain and Grantown on the A95 trunk road and would be keen to find out when and how a cycle route might be developed.

AP4 - AQSS to give update on the Dulnain Grantown Cycle route.

Item 12 - Date of next meeting

27. **Tuesday 8th May – 18:30 in Kingussie**