

## Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

### MINUTES OF THE TWENTY NINTH MEETING Atholl Arms Hotel, Blair Atholl

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

#### Summary of Action points arising from meeting

**API – AQSS to write and thank Polly Freeman for her time.**

**AP2- AQSS to find out from CBP what issues had emerged that had constrained support for a viable payback scheme.**

**AP3 – AQSS to invite Graeme McLean to come and speak at another suitable meeting.**

**AP4- FP to establish if existing forestry grant can be withheld if grant conditions vis-a-vis public access are not being met.**

**AP5- AQSS to present a paper on the next National Park Plan for the Forum meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November.**

#### Forum members in attendance

Paul Corrigan (Convener)	Dave Craig
Thomas MacDonell	Rachel Bromby
Jeremy Usher Smith	Hebe Carus
Peter Holden	Andrew Dunn
Robbie Nicol	Nigel Williams
Paul Webster	Nick Cole

<b>Others in attendance:</b>	
Fran Potheary, CNPA	Katrina Brown, James Hutton Institute
Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA	Pete Crane, CNPA
Gordon Riddler, CNPA Board	Ian Cox, AoCC

#### Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Convener thanked everyone for coming and especially welcomed Nick Cole as a new member. He went on to thank the caterers and introduced Katrina Brown and Ian Cox. He passed on apologies from Graeme McLean of Scottish Cycling who was unable to attend.
2. The Convenor thanked Polly Freeman the Atholl Estate Ranger for such an informative and enjoyable site visit up Glen Tilt.

**API – AQSS to write and thank Polly Freeman for her time.**

3. The Convener highlighted that since the last meeting, the LOAF Biennial Report had been published; the Park Authority E-bulletin had reported on the new

LOAF members and that the Paths for All Partnership had written to key partners highlighting a change in direction as a result of policy and funding constraints.

4. Looking forward the Convener also highlighted COAT's Annual General Meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September and that he'd been invited to the Cairngorms National Park Plan consultation meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

## **Item 2 - Apologies**

Malcolm Macintyre	Juliet Allam
Debbie Greene	Ian Hill
Bob Kinnaird	Catriona Rowan
Graeme McLean	Richard Gledson
Richard Wallace	

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

5. The minutes were agreed with minor grammatical additions.

### **Action points arising from the last meeting**

**API- Discharged.**

**AP2- Discharged.**

**AP3 - Discharged.**

**AP4- Discharged.**

## **Item 4 – Developing Mountain Biking**

6. Pete Crane (PC) introduced this discussion by highlighting that two years ago SportScotland, Scottish Enterprise and Forestry Commission Scotland recognised that mountain biking is becoming a strong product but that the provision and promotion of mountain biking was being done in a very ad-hoc way. An opportunity was seen to develop mountain biking in a coordinated way. Based upon extensive consultation the “Sustainable Development of Mountain Biking in Scotland – A National Strategic Framework” was developed. It has identified three main areas of work:
  - Increased participation;
  - Economic development and ;
  - Sporting achievement.
7. The model to take these areas of work forward is to support the development of geographical “clusters” each of which will develop a Local Action Plan. One cluster in Fife and Tayside is already under way and a second for the Highland area is being developed. Within the Highland Cluster, there will be two sub-clusters Lochaber and the Cairngorms National Park. In the Park the Cairngorms

Business Partnership and Glenmore Lodge are very supportive of development of a Local Action Plan. The development of such a plan will also help deliver both Outdoor Access Strategy and Sustainable Tourism Strategy policies.

8. In the discussion that followed Forum members were keen to establish where significant growth in the sector might be. Discussion turned to the concerns of many landowners that increased use on certain paths would mean either more maintenance or path improvements. Questions were raised as to whether or not some form of visitor payback scheme could be developed as part for the Local Action Plan to invest in some of the infrastructure. PC highlighted that such a scheme had been considered in the past and that it had met with some resistance.

**AP2- AQSS to find out from CBP what issues had emerged that had constrained support for a viable payback scheme.**

9. There was a feeling that mountain biking is where hill walking was twenty years ago in that many of the arguments about impacts are being recycled. PC highlighted that responsible riding would dictate that you ride on the tracks rather than off them and that this needs to be acknowledged in visitor management plans. Individual experience in the Forum highlighted that the bulk of riding in more sensitive habitats, such as the uplands, was very much a means to access the hills rather than to ride on them. There are some exceptions because some areas have extensive hill tracks which offer riding opportunities in themselves.
10. The concern raised by land managers was that in upland settings the emphasis on track and path management is one of managing the environment, not one of meeting the public's needs.
11. Education will play a key role in the delivery of the Local Action Plan and that promoting skills such as technical riding will help tackle erosion of tracks and paths. A view was expressed that the mountain biking specific sub-Code should be refreshed.
12. The Core Paths Plan was seen as the best way to delivery many aspects of the Local Action Plan and its connectivity is one of its key strengths.
13. In summary the Forum supports the development of the Local Action Plan for mountain biking, but there are challenges that need to be considered and addressed such as funding and issues around mountain biking on sensitive sites.

**AP3 – AQSS to invite Graeme McLean to come and speak at another suitable meeting.**

**Item 5- Election of Convener and Vice Convener**

14. Adam Streeter-Smith (AQSS) introduced this item highlighting that the election of the Convener and Vice Convener will take place at the start of the November meeting. Those considering themselves for election will need to be proposed and seconded by two other Forum members. They will need to notify the CNPA by

the 28<sup>th</sup> of October if they wish to stand for election. The November meeting will be chaired by the CNPA until the election is complete and then it will be chaired by the new Convener.

15. AQSS highlighted that the Convener does play a role in a number of other meetings and in the shaping of the meeting agendas.
16. The Convener indicated that he would be willing to stand again for election but would also be very happy to see others put themselves forward for the role.

### **Item 6- Dogs in the Outdoors: Programme of works 2011-12**

17. Fran Potheary (FP) introduced this paper as an update and forward look on the work being done with regards to dogs in the countryside. She reminded members that the main issue in the Park centred on dogs and natural heritage issues. Unlike other areas in Scotland there are not many farming related issues.
18. Work is being taken forward with National Nature Reserve managers to implement actions from the Stephen Jenkinson report. Green Dog Walker schemes are still being supported.
19. Forum members supported the work to date and the future actions. Education and engagement with the public through other businesses was seen as an important step.

### **Item 7- Upholding access rights and other casework**

20. FP introduced this item highlighting that sixteen cases had been closed in the last quarter and that ten new cases had been logged.
21. FP went on to highlight progress on a number of cases. AQSS updated the Forum on a recent case in Killiecrankie that may require more formal advice if negotiations remain unresolved.
22. Members expressed concerns that if land managers were in receipt of public funding, for example Woodland Grant Scheme, they should be made to deal with access compliance as part of existing grant conditions.

**AP4- FP to establish if existing forestry grant can be withheld if grant conditions vis-a-vis public access are not being met.**

### **Item 8- National Access Forum updates**

23. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that at the last meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June the following items were discussed:
  - Access and the Scottish Rural Development Plan;
  - Non-compliant signage;
  - Scottish Natural Heritage role in outdoor access.

### **Item 9- Update and Forward look**

24. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that the Signage Project was under way and that tenders had been issued. AQSS also highlighted that the Carr Bridge Community path leaflet has been published and will be followed shortly by Tomintoul. Initial discussions had taken place on developing leaflets for Dulnain and Strathdon.
25. AQSS also highlighted that the consultation on the next National Park Plan commences on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September and runs through until the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. He encouraged members to take part in the process.

**AP5- AQSS to present a paper on the next National Park Plan for the Forum meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November.**

### **Item 10 –Ideas for future meetings**

26. AQSS highlighted that COAT will be giving a presentation on the Mountain Heritage Paths Project at the November meeting so, depending on weather, there will be an opportunity for a short site visit in the afternoon if the meeting is held at Cairngorm Mountain.

### **Item 11- AOCB**

27. AQSS drew attention to the proposed dates and locations for the Forum meetings in 2012 which were accepted.
28. Members of the Forum raised a concern that there is a lot of funding spent on publications promoting access and questioned how sustainable this is in the long term. It was felt more effort should be spent considering how this information can be distributed electronically. AQSS highlighted that the Community Path Leaflets would be available to download of the National Park website.

### **Item 12 Date of next meeting**

29. **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of November, Cairngorm Mountain, Glenmore at 16:30.**