

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY EIGHTH MEETING Albert Hall, Ballater

Tuesday 10th May, 2011

Summary of Action points arising from meeting

- API- PC to write to Joyce Lyle thanking her for her time and efforts.**
AP2- CNPA to invite SRPBA and SNH back to the February/May 2012 meeting to update the Forum on the second pilot of the HFTSH website.
AP4 - Convener to write to the First Minister reminding him of his promise instruct Transport Scotland to investigate further an underpass and to consult all users on the best option.
AP5 - CNPA to present a paper on Convener and Vice Convener elections at the August meeting.

Forum members in attendance

Paul Corrigan (Convener)	Richard Wallace
Thomas MacDonell	Catriona Rowan
Richard Gledson	Rachel Bromby
Peter Holden	Hebe Carus
Robbie Nicol	Malcolm MacIntrye
Paul Webster	Nigel Williams

Others in attendance:	
Bob Grant, CNPA	Murray Ferguson, CNPA
Fran Potheary, CNPA	Katrina Brown, James Hutton Institute
Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA	Anne Grey, SRPBA

Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Convener thanked everyone for coming and especially welcomed the new members. He went on to thank the caterers and introduced the two guests. As this was the first meeting for new members there was a round table introduction by all present.
2. The Convener noted that the skills and experience of the new members will compliment those of the existing members.
3. The Convener highlighted that there had been some other changes notably that Ian Cox has now replaced Joyce Lyle as the observer from the Association of Cairngorms Communities. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has also regrettably given up their seat and the Convener expressed his and the CNPA's concern about this. Both he and the CNPA had written to SNH to reconsider but it is

likely that in future they will only attend if specifically invited to talk about a topic.

API - PC to write to Joyce Lyle thanking her for her time and efforts.

Item 2 - Apologies

Dave Craig	Andrew Dunn
Debbie Greene	Nick Cole
Bob Kinnaird	Fiona McInally
Jeremy Usher Smith	Ian Cox

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

4. The minutes were agreed with the addition of an action point for the Forum to write to Transport Scotland regarding the Crubenmore issue.

Action points arising from the last meeting

API- Discharged.

AP2- Discharged.

AP3 - Discharged.

AP4- Discharged.

AP5- Carried to the November meeting

Item 4 – Heading for the Scottish Hills web pilot update

5. Anne Gray (AG) of the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association thanked the Forum for inviting her back to update all on the 2010 pilot. She underlined that the purpose of the website was to bring together the old Heading for the Scottish Hill book and the Hillphones service. The main purpose is to provide the public with deer and land management information, contact details and other useful information to encourage responsible access.
6. Twenty estates took part in the pilot, comprising a mixture of existing Hillphones members and some new estates, covering areas within the Park and the Blackmount Deer Management Group. A further 9 estates hoped to take part but couldn't due to technical difficulties
7. Feedback from the estates was that they are committed to the concept but that the registration and updating process needed to be simpler. Most used the standard message but one did provide regular updates.
8. From the recreational users point of view 149 responses were received to the online questionnaire and the main feedback was that the service needed to be expanded into other areas.

9. Turning to 2011 SNH have agreed to expand the pilot for another year and will be making improvements to the registration process for estates. The messages will be developed further to allow greater flexibility. It is hoped that within the Park coverage will be expanded and negotiations are underway with the deer management groups to facilitate this.
10. Prompted by questions about promotion of the site AG stated that like Hillphones the site would be promoted through posters in outdoor equipment shops and links off other websites.
11. Forum members questioned that given the site was free would it not engage land managers more if there was a subscription? In response it was stated that the site at present is not worth charging for but that SNH may consider making the site more commercial to subsidise the service.

AP2 - CNPA to invite SRPBA and SNH back to the February/May 2012 meeting to update the Forum on the second pilot.

Item 5 - The Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum a study by the James Hutton Institute

12. The Paper had been withdrawn for this item due to delays in peer review.
13. Katrina Brown (KB) took the opportunity to introduce the new members to the study. The James Hutton Institute (JHI) (formally the Macaulay Institute) has been following the work of the Forum for 4 years studying how the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has been working in practice.
14. The next piece of work that the JHI will be undertaking is to look at how behaviour developed in urban settings is transposed to rural locations in National Parks. The main theme will be dog ownership.

Item 6 - Managing informal camping update

15. AQSS introduced this paper by firstly reminding all members that the definition of informal camping used in the paper related to camping by the side of roads. Whilst within access rights often as not those engaging the activity act irresponsibly by leaving litter, drive their vehicles off road and in some cases cause criminal damage.
16. AQSS highlighted to the Forum that:
 - Both the Forum and the CNPA Board agreed in 2010 that roadside informal camping is increasing for a couple of land owners and becoming an issue. The principle sites are the beach at Loch Morlich and Clunieside near Braemar.
 - The LOAF and the Board agreed that the land managers should be supported in tackling this issue based on a broad set of a principles as

highlighted in para 3 of the paper, one of which is to improve the quality of the information and benchmark data;

- In 2010 the CNPA took forward in partnership with the land owners the 3 principles as highlighted in the paper.
17. In 2010 season the weather appeared to play a significant part in keeping numbers to a more manageable level at both sites. Whilst there had been issues of litter and fires both estates felt that the management in place had been able to deal with the issue.
 18. Consultants have nearly completed a study into the commercial viability of an alternative site in Braemar but early indications are that commercial viability would be difficult to achieve.
 19. Murray Ferguson reiterate that the CNPA is keen to support both estates in developing management plans that identify when management measures are not working and next steps in those cases.
 20. In the discussion that followed members queried if campers had been asked what their needs are as any solution needs to take this into account. Most felt that the issue was not one of access rights, as most campers probably had little knowledge of the Act or Code, but one of education and facilities.
 21. Other estates are experiencing informal camping issues - for example at Mar Lodge. Ranger presence was the only method working at present to influence behaviour. Staff are considering facilities but these are unlikely to impact on the issue at Clunieside.
 22. Members asked where campers would go if they are to be moved on in and around Loch Morlich? AQSS responded by stating that the issue wasn't a lack of formal pitches but is more a desire to camp in a certain location or to have a party. Some members felt that the estates shouldn't be attracting visitors if they can't respond to visitor needs. The relative expense of the site at Loch Morlich was noted.
 23. Monitoring in Glenmore had shown that camper vans in the car parks were an issue. Forum members highlighted that campervan hire companies had increased 4 fold and that plans are being drawn up to develop a membership organisation. This governing body could be targeted for messages on responsible parking etc.

Item 7- Developing access in the Perthshire part of the Park

24. Bob Grant introduced this item reminding all that since October 2010 the boundary had been extended to include Highland Perthshire. At that time duties under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 were transferred to the CNPA:
 - Upholding access rights - all new access cases will be dealt with by CNPA staff;
 - LOAF - the Forums remit now extends to this area of the Park – this is reflected in the new membership;

- Promotion of the code - will now fall to the CNPA;
25. This has been a straight forward transaction with the exception of Core Paths Planning. Perth and Kinross Council have yet to adopt their plan which still needs to go through a public inquiry. As we are now the Access Authority in Highland Perthshire they can't take forward this section of their draft plan. It is our intention to treat the candidate core paths in Highland Perthshire as core paths until we undertake a review of the CNP Core Paths Plan and at that time we will adopt them into the CNP Plan.
 26. Currently the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust deliver access related projects in Highland Perthshire and it is intended that this continues. COAT will deliver upland path projects in the future.

Item 8- Outdoor Access Casework

27. Fran Potheary introduced this paper highlighting that a significant number of cases had been closed in the last reporting year, April to March, and that 27 cases have been carried over. Trends would appear to follow the predictions that there are more case in the bigger communities; the main probelms reported is obstructons and that most cases come forward for recreational users. FP clarified some of the headings on the spreadsheet for new members.
28. FP highlighted that a number of cases had been closed due to CNPA support for installing new gates. One member of the Forum questioned if this was appropriate given that the land managers had a legal obligation towards access. BG responded by stating that in most instances these gates maintained by the estates were installed a part of a trial and it is hoped that leading by example will encourage other estates to follow suit.
29. FP went on to highlight progress on a number of other cases. Members sought an update on the Crubenmore case. BG highlighted that Crubenmore had generated a lot of political interest and that First Minister Alex Salmond had publically stated his support for further work on a possible solution.

AP4 - Convener to write to the First Minister reminding him of his promise instruct Transport Scotland to investigate an underpass and to consult all users on the best option.

Item 9- Upholding access rights and other casework

30. FP introduced this item as a reminder to existing members and as background to new members that improving opportunities for outdoor access isn't just restricted to path development and upholding access rights,. The CNPA uses many other opportunities to secure access such as planning casework, forestry consultations and estate management plans.
31. She also highlighted that at previous meeting concerns had been raised that the protocols for dealing with access cases needed to be reviewed an tightened up if necessary. Protocols had been amended to reflect the need to regularly update complainants on progress.

Item 10- National Access Forum updates

32. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that:

- The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday the 1st of June but the agenda has not been published yet;
- SNH will be bringing a paper to the meeting on their role in the delivery of outdoor access;
- SNH will be developing a paper on future access provision through the Scottish Rural Development Plan for discussion at next meeting.

33. Members asked if the national guidance on Outdoor Access Events had been published. It was confirmed that it had been agreed and is available on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code website.

Item 11- Update and forward look

34. AQSS introduced this item highlighting that the CNPA has completed the path signs projects in Carr Bridge, Boat and Nethybridge with only a few outstanding snagging items. Feedback so far has been very positive. Work will commence on developing similar projects in other communities once the funding issues have been ironed out. The next project will focus on those communities with no signage which are Strathdon, Dulnain Bridge and Dalwhinnie.

Item 12- Ideas for future meetings

35. Two items for future meetings were raised by members – firstly, mountain biking and looking at the impacts in various settings; and secondly the World Orienteering Championships in 2015 which subject to a successful bid, will need advice on planning the event around sensitive areas.

Item 13- Any other competent business

36. AQSS highlighted that at present the Forum doesn't have a Vice Convener and that the current Conveners tenure ends in November. He proposed that elections for both positions take place at the November meeting. A short paper will be presented at the August Meeting outlining the process.

AP5 - CNPA to present a paper on Convener and Vice Convener elections at the August meeting.

37. In the event of the Convener being unable to attend the August meeting the CNPA will chair the meeting or find a suitable independent chair.

38. A number of members also raised the issue of wildfires and the current high fire risk and wanted to know the CNPA's views on the matter. BG highlighted that the CNPA had already supported a number of estates with press releases and advice on signage. He highlighted that the CNPA takes the matter very seriously and intends to support more coordination with the estate fire groups, who are

working to develop a standard approach to evaluating fire risk which then instigates a cascade of messages through a variety of media to educate the public on the risk.

39. Members supported such an approach and suggested that local radio and popular websites such as Mountain Weather Information Service should be included in the media list.

Item 14- Date of next meeting

40. **Tuesday 9th of August, Blair Atholl at 18:30**