

Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum

MINUTES OF THE FORTY FIFTH MEETING BOAT OF GARTEN COMMUNITY HALL, BOAT OF GARTEN

Tuesday 17th November 2015

Item 1 – Welcome

1. EB welcomed everyone to the meeting including Joanna Dick of the Dee Catchment Partnership, Janette McLeod from Cairngorms LEADER and Lynda Dodd who as a prospective member was observing the meeting

Forum members in attendance:

Eric Baird (Convenor)	Paul Webster
Peter Mackay	Vicky Hilton
Anne-Marie Nuttall	Fiona Murdoch
Nigel Williams	
Alasdair Johnston	

Others in attendance:

Lynda Dodd, Public Observer	Joanna Dick, Dee Catchment Partnership
Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA	Janette McLeod, Cairngorms LEADER

Item 2 - Apologies

Richard Gledson	Nick Cole

Item 3 – Minutes of the Last Meeting.

2. The minutes of the last meeting were approved subject to EB and the CNPA actioning the task AP6

Matters Arising

3. Peter Mackay raised the matter of gradients on the Speyside Way Extension citing that at the previous meeting members had expressed concern about certain sections. He asked that CNPA consider providing some form of advanced notice.

Item 4 – LEADER Programme

4. Janette McLeod gave a brief update highlighting that LEADER comes under SRDP and is managed by a Local Action Group of 13 members who are responsible for all funding decisions. The Local Development Strategy identifies areas for support with 6 themes within the Park. The priority themes are:-

- a) Grow economy of the Park;
 - b) Protect and enhance landscape and heritage.
5. LEADER has £3 million to invest by the end of 2019 but of that £3 million 10% is allocated to co-operation funds, 10% to enterprise, 10% to farm diversification and 25% to animation and administration. LEADER can't fund other SRDP programmes i.e. Access or deliver statutory functions.
6. For this round of funding LEADER is looking to fund big ambitious projects.

Item 5 – River Dee Catchment Partnership

7. Joanna Dick introduced this item highlighting that her role as Project Officer has 3 main areas – education, improving recreation and access and raising awareness. This is delivered through the following projects:
- a) Intro Dee – a programme that takes schools and education groups out on the river;
 - b) Events – raise awareness;
 - c) Promoting responsible access - for example hotspot patrols, developing guidance and integration and presentations.
8. Current access functions are focused on developing interpretation at key hotspot sites as well as developing management plans for each site.
9. Currently writing a management plan for Cambus' O May to help manage the impact of visitors and activities such as anti-social camping. Part of developing this plan involved on site surveys that threw up some interesting facts:
- a) 29% of visitors had not heard of SOAC;
 - b) Of those that had 42% didn't know what it contained.
10. Recently the Dee Catchment Partnership published angler and paddler guidance and is about to publish an "enjoying the Dee" leaflet.
11. Members were interested in the SOAC awareness issue and how that differed nationally.

API – CNPA to feedback on SPANS data relating to the code.

AP2 – CNPA to update the LOAF on work done to promote the code

12. Members also raised the issue of locked gate on the Cambus 'O May

AP3 – CNPA to update LOAF on bridge issue.

Item 6 – Ranger Services in the National Park

13. Adam Streeter-Smith introduced this item highlighting that the CNPA had undertaken a review of Ranger Services because:
- a) Residents and visitor figures are increasing year on year;
 - b) There are new strategies such as Active Cairngorms to deliver and;
 - c) The funding for Ranger Services needs to be on a more sustainable footing.

14. By way of background he highlighted that there are 14 Services across the Park all doing a fantastic job. That said he highlighted that the current distribution of rangers superseded the designation of the Park and that it was critical to find out if this model suited the Parks needs going forward.
15. The key findings of the review are that Ranger Service coverage in Badenoch and Strathspey isn't sufficient, especially with the risk of budget cuts in the Council Services. Estate based services seem to work well and continue to be a very cost effective model and that Ranger Service provision could be better targeted in Deeside.
16. In taking forward these findings AQSS highlighted that one of the mechanisms for delivery in addition to more Rangers could be the setting up of a Volunteer Ranger Service. This service would very much support the existing Rangers in delivering visitor welcome and practical work.
17. The question was asked "Does the LOAF agree that there is a need for better Ranger Service provision in Badenoch and Strathspey and are there any other mechanisms for delivery that should be considered.
18. In the discussion that followed members were keen to point out that better targeting in the existing work plans should be considered if too much time was spent on lower priority matters.
19. The value of volunteers was recognised but there are challenges with recruiting and retaining volunteers and a limit to what they could do. Some members felt that volunteers are often not the best group for engaging with visitors. Members also recognised that volunteering was also a good opportunity for skills development and for individuals to get into paid work.
20. In terms of Rangers wider role members were keen to express the importance of reaching out to excluded and hard to reach groups

Item 7 – LRA Section 13 Duty

21. AQSS updated the Forum on the current live and closed cases. Members were keen to establish if the Glenavon Estate issue could be closed. Related to that issue members queried if the guidance to land managers on electric fencing had been adopted by the National Access Forum.

AP4 – Doug to report back on Glenavon Estate.

AP5 – CNPA to confirm if guidance on Electric fencing produced by the moorland Forum has been adopted by the NAF.

Item 8 – Activities update and forward look

22. AQSS introduced this paper and highlighted the funding success including funding for a schools Nordic walking programme targeted at girls.
23. Nigel Williams highlighted Glenmore Lodges keenness to support this programme and would happily offer free map reading training. NW highlighted that the way map reading is and was taught can be a real put off for prospective hill walkers and mountaineers.

Item 9 – AOCB

24. Members highlighted key areas of work they are involved in namely:-

- a) Introducing students to the code;
- b) Supporting new health walk groups;
- c) Geocaching projects.

25. Members also highlighted interest in a joint meeting between Moray LOAF and Cairngorms NP LOAF.

Item 10 – Date of Next Meeting

26. No date was agreed.

AP6- Doug to circulate 2016 dates and venues.