

**CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM**  
**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March from 6.30pm – 8.00pm**  
**CNPA Lifesize meeting room**

<https://call.lifesizecloud.com/988805>.

Who	Representing
Adam Streeter-Smith	CNPA
Alisa Villegas	LOAF
Carolyn Robertson	CNPA
Doug Stewart	CNPA
Edward Humphrey	Dinnet & Kinord Estate - Landowner
Eilidh Scobbie	LOAF
Eleanor Mackintosh	CNPA Board
Gavin Clark	NatureScot
Huw Oliver	Badenoch & Strathspey Trail Association
Jenny Allen	CNPA (minutes)
John Grierson	LOAF – Chair
Jonathan Kitchinger	Scottish Canoe Association
Mark Johnston	Crown Estate Scotland
Neil Wilson	LOAF
Pete Crane	CNPA
Pete Wright	LOAF
Trevor Thornley	LOAF
Vicky Hilton	CNPA

Item	Action
<p><b>Welcome and Minutes of last meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b></p> <p>JG welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising from Minutes</b></p> <p>Meeting note agreed. JA noted two corrections to the organisations represented.</p> <p><b>Previous Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>JG will submit a report to say that LOAF is supportive of the National Park plan. Complete</b></li> <li>• <b>GC will report back about the Loch Kinord plan to next meeting. Later in Agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>JG will write to Network Rail and Transport Scotland about the Dalwhinnie Rail Crossing, copying in CNPA, Kate Forbes and Highland Council. Completed, JG noted that there had not been a reply. AS-S reported on a further meeting with Network Rail (NR) &amp; various other parties. NR is adamant that the crossing can't be opened, and are looking at additional security fencing. There is continued pressure on NR and AS-S hopes to report further at the next LOAF meeting.</b></li> </ul>	<p>AS-S will chase up for a response</p>

Item	Action
<p><b>Loch Kinord Access Plan</b></p> <p>GC - In June 2021 the public were asked not to go on the water to the end of breeding season. In November this was reviewed and stakeholders were consulted. 28 individuals/organisations were approached, 19 responses were received and 20 people attended a follow up meeting. After taking on board the views NatureScot have decided to operate with same guidelines as last year. Outwith breeding season there have been signs up asking water users to stay away from sensitive shorelines.</p> <p>EH outlined his position as the Landowner. He broadly welcomes approach, and noted that he has supported the new car parking so the estate is actively welcoming visitors.</p> <p>Treating swimmers as a separate group from other water users was discussed. Swimmers can have a good experience in a much smaller area that other water users would find restrictive. However it was also felt that for messaging the simpler the better, and other water users might see the swimmers and not realise the distinction.</p> <p>The zones in which wild swimmers were asked to stay was also discussed. The suggested areas need further consultation; Castle Island is currently a scheduled site and a bird breeding ground, but swimmers currently go there. Scottish Swimming were included in the discussions in November but they haven't seen the suggested zones.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion about permits but these would require the introduction of local bylaws.</p> <p>JK said the Scottish Canoe Association was disappointed in outcome but also that they understand the thinking behind the proposals.</p> <p>TT raised the lack of data around the effect of wild swimmers on breeding birds. GC said the intention was for staff on the ground to observe number of swimmers and signs of disturbance to gather information for future decisions.</p> <p>It was agreed to take an approach where swimming is not discouraged, and also noted that national guidance will be coming out which will impact how to take this issue forward.</p> <p>JG asked GC come back at the end of the year with an update.</p> <p><i>GC, EH &amp; JK left meeting</i></p>	
<p><b>Mountain Biking Recreation Management Plan for Badenoch and Strathspey</b></p> <p>CR gave some background. The Capercaillie Project was set up to work with communities in the National Park, including the mountain bike community.</p>	

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<p>About 20 mountain bike riders came together and agreed to work to reduce trail erosion and disturbance to wildlife. The group set out actions including the Mountain Biking Recreation Management Plan. An intern mapped all the bike trails, compared it to the Capercaillie data, and identified areas of conflict. The plan aims to promote responsible riding, but not to restrict access.</p> <p>HO is a member of the group. He noted that the Management Plan reflects many things that riders want to do any way, and the support of CNPA and Biking Scotland have allowed them to happen more strategically and sustainably. This will benefit the riding community.</p> <p>There was discussion about how other user groups would be impacted – would there be more trails with multiple different users on them. It was generally felt that different users already used the trails without conflict, but it could be an opportunity to educate general members of public as well, and to highlight the need to be mindful of other users. If conflict were to happen it would be in a particular area and could be managed within a site specific management plan.</p> <p>The discussion also covered how to get the messaging passed from mountain bikers to other user groups (eg dog walkers, runners). The fact that many riders did other activities would be a way to spread the message, and that passing the message and influencing other users in this way would be more effective than a ‘top down’ approach.</p> <p>AV offered the Green Health network – particularly when reaching out to new users – as an opportunity to share messaging through these groups.</p> <p><i>HO left meeting</i></p>	
<p><b>Managing for Visitors in 2022</b></p> <p>AS-S gave an outline. The plan is trying to consolidate the learning from the last 2 years into one document about how to manage areas for visitors. Going forward it will feed into the Access Strategy and the Comms messaging. There have been challenges around monitoring and evaluation, so the paper sets out how this will happen to be more consistent.</p> <p>PC gave an update. Initially the Scottish Government had reduced funding for rangers, but this has been amended. The CNPA is now appointing 11 rangers, RSPB and NTS are also be recruiting. ‘Tread Lightly’ has been in use for more than a decade; Visit Scotland is using from this year. There have been a lot of improvement in visitor infrastructure over recent months.</p> <p><i>CR left meeting</i></p>	

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<p><b>Update on casework volumes and types over 2019-2021 calendar years.</b></p> <p>DS introduced the paper. It follows on from previous updates, and shows the continuing upward trend in casework since 2019; this increase squeezes other work that can be done. Some of the increase might be due to Covid, so a clearer picture will emerge as data is collected over the next few years.</p> <p>DS commented that it was encouraging that most cases are not significantly difficult, but outlined two recent notable cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case 660 occurred when FLS closed core paths for forestry harvesting, but the local community were not made aware. The situation turned into a formal complaint to FLS; the mistake was accepted and lessons learnt.</li> <li>• Case 732 was over cattle in Glen Banchor obstructing access to a footpath. Advice was given to farmer to improve signage and better methodology. However the cattle then moved to where they were blocking a public road and the case was passed Highland Council under the Roads Scotland Act.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Review of Forum membership and Standing Orders</b></p> <p>AS-S had raised the issue at the previous meeting. The paper recognises the circumstances of last 2 years, acknowledges the need to support continuity in the LOAF, and also the need to increase membership. A significant piece of work is coming up in reviewing Active Cairngorms strategy</p> <p>The members agreed that two online meetings and one face to face meeting was a good structure: it was beneficial to not ask people to travel on winter evenings, and there was a hope that that might increase the number of representatives from the south side of the NP. It was suggested that the face to face meeting might involve a meal and a site visit to allow for networking.</p> <p>AV asked if there was a plan on how to reach out to new members. AS-S will send an email to the current members to map their interests and backgrounds, and identify gaps in experience, skills and representation. He will then ask members to suggest avenues of people to approach.</p> <p>JG checked that members were happy with plan, and there was general agreement.</p>	AS-S
<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>JG noted that PC was retiring, and thanked him for his positive attitude, guidance and dedication in his work. On behalf of the LOAF he wished PC a happy and healthy retirement.</p>	

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>JG thanked everyone who came.</b>	
<b>Next Meeting</b>	