



## Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum Held online on 12 November 2025

Present:	Adam Streeter-Smith (AQSS)	Park Authority
	Ben Oliver Jones (BOJ)	LOAF
	Carol MacKintosh (CM)	FLS
	Colin Cadden (CC)	LOAF
	Colin Simpson (CS)	Park Authority
	Douglas Carchrie (DC)	LOAF
	John Grierson (JG)	LOAF (Chair)
	Kenneth Gibson (KG)	LOAF
	Lauren McCallum (LM)	LOAF
	Mark Johnston (MJ)	LOAF
	Pete Wright (PW)	LOAF
	Sara Denner	Park Authority (notes)
	Vicky Hilton (VH)	Park Authority

Apologies: Patsy Richards  
Ben Dolphin

### 1. Welcome & introductions

#### Discussed

#### Action

- JG- Welcomed group and asked group to introduce themselves.

### 2. Minutes of last meeting – approval and matters arising not otherwise appearing on agenda.

#### Discussed

#### Action

- JG- Discussed Minutes of last meeting.
- CC- Queried if LOAF meeting notes from 5 March 2025 have been edited as he requested, to reflect Capercaillie behaviour at Ryvoan, as it appears that they haven't.
- CS- Meeting notes on server show edited version, SD to ensure correct version is on website.
- VH-Advised group that previous issue of locked gate In Deshar Woods has been resolved.
- MJ-Queried if there had been any update on drone guidance.
- AQSS- Advised that a discussion paper has been taken to National Access Forum in September and discussed. Also had feedback from National Trust Scotland heritage department with their concerns regarding potential damage to buildings and health and safety risks

SD



to public and staff, so have met Civil Aviation Authority to discuss. Some complexities as there are various international statutes that govern airspace. NatureScot have agreed to produce national guidance in reference to the Land Reform Act in particular.

### 3. Paper 1 – Informal Review of the Core Paths Plan – discussion session

#### Discussed

#### Action

- VH- Introduced report on the informal consultation of the core paths plan. Asked group not to share as not public yet. Asked group for feedback. None was given.
- CC- Disappointed at number of responses (208) but aware that people can't be forced to respond.
- VH- Advised that around previous reviews received around 30 responses so this was considered a good response, and there will be another chance to respond at the formal consultation stage.
- VH gave presentation - reminded group of what content was put on website and online map in presentation. Highlighted to LOAF the key matters that had arisen from the informal consultation:
  - Advised that Dulnain Bridge to Carrbridge path is currently impassable so will look at maintenance.
  - Working with RSPB on Speyside Way from Kingussie to Ruthven.
  - The Carrbridge-Aviemore NMU has not been chosen as a core path for now as the A9 dualling timeline is likely to be lengthy.
  - Laggan community keen to keep core paths on main roads.
  - Met with Scotrail to discuss private level crossings and two have been removed.

VH asked for feedback on three issues: Nethybridge to Tulloch, Glenmore to Allt Mor and Newtonmore to Allt Laraidh gorge. Reminded group of ambitions and criteria of a core path.

**1. Nethy bridge Tulloch moor path.** Described the existing conditions and infrastructure of the track and the varied feedback received. Owner of existing road and builder of boardwalk currently unknown.

Discussion points:



- CC- Has observed that the road has sunk over last 10-12 years and presumes that any work carried out on tarmac road wouldn't last long.
- BOJ- Confirmed that there are black grouse in area.
- CC-Opined that it would be an ideal addition to core path network and doesn't think many walkers will use it as no car parking facilities so shouldn't become overly busy.
- BOJ-Outlined community concerns that he had received. From an RSPB perspective he felt that it's a balancing act and feels neutral. Concerned that if it was designated as core path, that the RSPB be obliged to maintain it.
- VH- Advised that no one currently knows who owns the road. If it became a core path, CNPA may be able to offer money towards maintenance.
- AQSS- Advised that core path status doesn't confer more access rights than under Land Reform Act, landowners have occupiers' liability and a duty of care to public.
- CS-Wondered if there was any evidence to back up concern that if something gets designated it will get more used.
- VH- Uncertain of what could be done to gather this evidence accurately.
- AQSS- Core path designation has not previously been used as an advertising tool.
- PW- Queried if land ownership needs to be established before core path can be designated.
- VH- Confirmed that landowners do need to be notified, so if one cannot be established, a planning style notice at each end of the path is displayed for 12 weeks.
- DC- Generally support as core path. Sympathises with locals. If boardwalk could be updated it would be beneficial.
- KG- Thinks increased use would be more likely to be attributed to improved signage rather than core path designation.
- AQSS-Need to consider if network of paths offer reasonable access to areas. B970 road is part of national road cycle network. Gets sense from group that consensus that the route is important, but



the question is long term sustainability, also recognising that local concerns should be relatively easy to satisfy.

- CS- Agrees that this is general feeling. Asked group if happy for this to go Board and formal consultation phase. Group agreed.

**2. Allt Mor path-** used to run to Cairngorm Mountain car park and is currently closed. Propose de-designating upper path from Utsi's bridge to car park due to landslide. FLS would support this, and other suggestions have been put forward to repair it or find alternative route. No changes proposed for lower sections but still received comments.

Discussion points:

- AQSS- Recently met with Cairngorm Mountain as part of Cairngorm strategy. Should consider if it should be kept for now or acknowledge that something will be done in future.
- KG- Felt would be beneficial to have path to link two areas the whole length.
- CM- Advised that path has been repaired before and then there was another landslip. Don't have endless supply of money and mindful of climate change. Have been advised by engineer that bridge from car park has lifespan of approximately 5 -10 years and would be minimum of £70k to replace. Next year's budget cut by 10-15% so don't have resources. Signage currently up to indicate path closed but suspects some people still use it.
- CC- Feels that route is very important as only off-road route between Glenmore and Cairngorms.
- VH- Agrees that this is a key route.
- DC- Sympathises with both sides and questioned what implications would be if removed as core path.
- VH- Advised that nothing will change on ground. Less obligation for landowner.
- AQSS- Need to consider long term FLS or Cairngorms plans, land management plans, long term felling etc. Is there a sustainable option? Recognise the need for non-motorised link between the two areas. Should we look at alternative or keep what we've got and let Board decide?
- DC- Currently uses middle section between road and Utsi's bridge for guiding cyclists. Community happy to help with maintenance.



Wary of signage being suggested as removing all liability as it doesn't.

- CM- Aware of signage limitations. any help greatly appreciated.
- LM- Echoes what's been said. Concerned about removal and inconsistency of signage and wary about not having another alternative to offer people.
- CS- Sympathises with FLS. Wonders what precedent this would set if core paths were de-designated due to lack of resources, worried other landowners will follow suit. Thinks needs to be given more consideration out with this group.
- AQSS- In summary need to maintain core path between two areas, opportunity for further discussion with FLS on other options. Take to Board acknowledging it might take a while to deliver and will need investment. Asked group if in agreement which was confirmed.
- CS- Potentially an option to treat two sections separately.

**3. Newtonmore-wildcat trail-** VH explained route is re-routed than originally due to landslip and proposed de-designating it. Newtonmore Association have checked and agreed that it is unfeasible to fix. Shared community feedback. Considering keeping upper path.

- AQSS- Constrained as cattle are in field above gorge.
- KG/VH- Discussed signage to waterfall.
- VH- Thanked group for feedback
- AQSS- Will take strategic questions forward.

#### 4. Paper 2 – LOAF Membership and election of convener

##### Discussed

- JG- Advised group that stepping down after February meeting and asked for suggestions on how to recruit more members.
- AQSS- Thanked the new members that have joined recently. Advised which geographical areas need more representation.
- PW- Suggested social media or reframing what members do.
- AQSS- Suggested using social media and Cairn magazine, group agreed. Explained process of election of Convener. JG will chair February meeting to include election at end of agenda.

##### Action



- VH- Helpful to put something out to describe duties of Convener.

VH/AQSS

## 5. Paper 3 - Update and forward look

### Discussed

- AQSS-Will bring paper on annual casework to next meeting.
- AQSS-Previously brought paper to LOAF on outdoor access events, this is still in progress reflecting on challenges on large scale events. National Access Forum are looking at updating National Guidance on events so holding back for now in order to have united messaging and hopes to have this published in early Spring 2026.
- AQSS-Scottish Government have approved fire byelaw, and CNPA are now in midst of planning for April 2026, developing resources on effective messaging and resources and procedural matters behind the scenes.
- AQSS-Contractors are working on Speyside Way between Inveruglas and Insh, due to be finished by end of December. Carr road footbridge now open.
- AQSS-Intern has been working with Badenoch & Strathspey access panel to promote accessibility, also worked with partners on toolkit for accessible paths and dementia friendly paths. Looking at dementia friendly infrastructure at Badaguish.

### Action

### Discussion points:

- CC- Queried if Carrbridge path to school from new development have lighting.
- AQSS- No, as not promoted as a safe route to school.
- CC- Queried what training the Rangers have done to carry out path grading training.
- VH- Advised that FLS, Walking Scotland and NatureScot have worked on standardising path descriptions 10 years ago. Will share in minutes. All path leaflets except for Tomintoul have path grading but this is being worked on.

VH

Path Grading standard can be downloaded here - [The Path Managers Guide to Grading – Walking Scotland](#)

- CC- Works with Scotways on leaflets, would be helpful to use.
- KG- Queried if any changes were reported for the Ballater paths.



- VH- No change at present.

6. AOCB

**Discussed**

**Action**

- JG-Advised that as part of his Convener role, he was asked to attend National Access Forum meeting as an observer. He learnt that other access forums are struggling for support, and some local authorities don't have any Access Officers. Felt that the Cairngorm National Park are in an advantageous position in comparison.

7. Date of next meeting

**Discussed**

**Action**

- AQSS- No date as yet, will circulate at later date, will be two online meetings, and one in person meeting.
- CS- Suggested meeting should be held prior to going to Board in March
- AQSS- Agreed and it will likely to be late February/early March.

Meeting ended 20:32