

ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING 30, Monday 2nd November 2009 BARN & BUSHEL, THAINSTONE CENTRE, INVERURIE

Present: Gordon McKilligan (Chair), Molly Atkinson, Peter Dawes, Ken Thomson, Alison Mitchell, Dan Cadle, Paul Timms, Neil Buchanan, Bill Ashcroft, Bill Dow, Alison Espie, David Finlay, Andrew Robertson

Council Officers Present: Linda Mathieson

Access User Candidates Present: John Hughes, Judy Middleton, Hamish Booth, Roger Davis, David Culshaw

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Isobel Davidson (*e-mail to CM*), Brian Martin, Drew Elphinstone (Andrew Robertson deputising), Robin Maitland, David Fyffe, Colin Miller, Fiona McNally.

Introductions

Gordon asked all present to introduce themselves for the Access User candidates that were present at this meeting.

2. **Minutes of Meeting 29**

Approved (Dan Cadle and Bill Dow).

3. **Matters Arising**

Most action points have been dealt with and where relevant, papers are in the meeting papers.

Item 10(4) – Colin still to supply Gordon with link to Cycling Action Plan Scotland (CAPS).

Item 11(4) – SCAN Conference is aimed at Local Authority Access Officers so no further information to distribute.

Item 12 – both the tick and dog issues were raised at the NAF/LAF meeting 28.10.09. by Gordon.

4. **ALOAF Administration**

(1) Selection of Vice-Chair

Nomination of Alison Espie was proposed by Gordon McKilligan and seconded by Ken Thomson. As there were no other nominations or objections, Alison was approved as Vice Chair.

(2) Access User Representatives

Total of 8 applications but 2 withdrew. Gladys Wallace withdrew after papers had been prepared – reason was due to illness and plenty of other applicants – phone call to Chair. Charlie Langan did not appear at the meeting (*but had e-mailed CM in advance intimating withdrawal due to commitments elsewhere*). Each of the other 5 candidates gave a short presentation to the ALOAF.

- John Hughes.
- Judy Middleton.
- Hamish Booth.
- Roger Davis.
- David Culshaw.

Following the presentations – voting papers were circulated to voting members, collected and counted by Linda Mathieson/Gordon McKilligan and the following representatives selected – Judy Middleton, Hamish Booth, David Culshaw.

Peter Dawes raised a concern about the process which related to the 8th nominee who had withdrawn prior to circulation of meeting papers. It was understood that he had been told that if he was not going to be present at the meeting, then he could not be considered as a candidate.

Peter asked for clarification on this issue as it does not state anywhere in the Operating Principles that a candidate has to be present at the meeting.

Linda Mathieson explained that this is correct and that she believes there was a misunderstanding between the proposed candidate and the Access Officer (Colin Miller). What was being suggested was that it was preferable for candidates to be able to present themselves at the meeting to enable ALOAF members more opportunity to get to know the candidates.

The candidate had also latterly confirmed their withdrawal on the basis that another CTC representative was standing for election.

(3) Other Membership Administration

Gordon McKilligan asked Dan Cadle if the Forestry Commission had identified a reserve for Dan following the departure of John Risby. Dan Cadle explained not yet but was planning to discuss with new Forestry Commission Manager.

(4) NAF/LAF Meeting – 28th October 2009

Paul Timms gave a brief overview at the meeting that was attended by Gordon McKilligan and himself.

Highlights – Presentation by Chief Inspector Kevin Findlater of Central Scotland Police on rural anti-social behaviour. He suggested that most anti-social behaviour issues are a result of lack of respect and unless this inappropriate behaviour is modified early, it is exacerbated. The presentation also highlighted examples of how 'mis-behaviour' can be down to perception or confusion where different organisations/ authorities take different approach, eg. local authorities in central belt - one collects polybags of rubbish from fisherman after a recreational weekend/trip whereas the neighbouring local authority does not. How do the fisherman know who is/is not collecting rubbish?

A number of other Local Access Forums gave presentations in the afternoon (see paper 9 in meeting pack). Many working similarly to ALOAF but others taking a focused approach, eg. Ross and Cromarty LAF looking at all abilities access. Skye and Lochalsh LAF highlighted the issues that can be associated with crofting land and additional fencing.

Gordon McKilligan highlighted the dogs issue under general discussion item but no real conclusion was reached other than it is unlikely that the SOAC will be changed in the near future as it could cause more problems than it would resolve. Andrew Robertson highlighted the fact that it was the Health & Safety Executive Fact Sheet that is causing the problem. It is dogs on a lead that can cause the greatest danger to members of the public and their Fact Sheet suggests dogs should be kept on a lead.

Ken Thomson asked if there was much discussion on NAF/LAF liaison. Paul Timms explained that there was brief discussion by the NAF Chair about the possibility of forming an Association of Local Access Fora, which was not well supported. There was also discussion about centrally held meetings, eg. Perth but also not ideal for some LAFs. However, it was also clear that no-one was happy with current situation.

Linda Mathieson indicated that now Fiona McInally was in post for 'Path for All' in North area that it was likely that the regional meetings of LAFs will be reinstated.

(5) Aberdeen City LOAF Meeting 10th November 2009

Alison Mitchell outlined the programme for the evening to be held in the Town House. Entrance off Broad Street starting at 6.30 pm. Looking to get good numbers attending and hopefully to attract new members to the City Forum.

Copy of the programme in paper 10 of the meeting papers. Interested parties to let Linda Mathieson/Alison Mitchell know by 4th November if possible.

5 Aberdeenshire Council Update

(1) Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

Copy of ALOAF response to the Main Issues Report is paper 11. Thanks to Ken Thomson & co for pulling this together.

Linda Mathieson indicated that there have been over 20,000 issues raised in response to the LDP Main Issues document (300+ responses).

The Local Plan team are hoping to report to Infrastructure Services Committee in December but the volume of issues may result in this slipping into the new year.

(2) Access Strategy Framework

Linda Mathieson explained that this will be deferred to January meeting.

(3) Walking and Cycling Strategy – copies of the Action Plan available to anyone interested.

6. Core Paths Plan

(1) ALOAF response is paper 12. Thanks to Ken Thomson, Peter Dawes and Gordon McKilligan for this.

(2) Summary of responses – paper 13 is the spreadsheet from the website with the issues that may require involvement of Scottish Government Reporter's Unit. Linda Mathieson explained that none of the objectors have been contacted since the close of the consultation as the Council is still clarifying what the approach should be in relation to dealing with responses/objections. Perth and Kinross Council legal department have recently reviewed the Access legislation regarding removal of proposed paths to resolve objections, but it appears that this can only be done through the endorsement of the Reporter's Unit. Aberdeenshire staff are hoping for clarification of issues such as this at the SCAN meeting on 13th November and will then begin to contact objectors to the Aberdeenshire Core Paths Plan once armed with the appropriate information re the process.

(3) Arrangements for ALOAF advice on specific issues. Gordon McKilligan outlined the suggestion of having a panel of 6 representatives from the Forum (2 each from community, user

and land representatives) and asked for nominations. These are as follows;

Community – Gordon McKilligan and Bill Ashcroft.

User – Judy Middleton, Hamish Booth and Alison Mitchell

Land manager – Drew Elphinstone and Alison Espie

Following the SCAN meeting, Council Officer will begin dealing with the Core Paths Plan objections and will contact the representatives whenever advice or guidance is required for any of the issues. It may also be possible that objectors may wish to have a ALOAF member present at any meeting. Contact will be made as and when required.

7. Access Consultations, Issues etc

- (1) Menie – not much to report on the access front. Environment Planner representative in relation to the application is Eleanor Munro based in the Town House, Banff.

Ken Thomson questioned what was happening about the local advisory group – access, but Paul Timms confirmed that he did not think there is a specific advisory group for access but it is an Environmental Advisory Group made up of representatives from the key agencies.

Ken Thomson also expressed a concern about how access issues within the Inquiry were addressed by the Reporter.

- (2) AWPR – no new information.
- (3) Privacy signage – Linda Mathieson circulated a new paper outlining 2 options for endorsement – one using ALOAF and the other the ‘Aberdeenshire supported’ by logo. All agreed to use the ‘Aberdeenshire supported’ by logo.

Gordon McKilligan highlighted the copy of Paths for All Signage Guidance – ALOAF copy.

- (4) Other
- Huntly – river obstacle on Deveron – removed by Planning Enforcement Officer.
 - Beechhill Croft – now in hands of Council. No action since passed on by ALOAF but Linda Mathieson hoping to put out letter to complainants to identify what routes they use/used.
 - Polston Road, Maryculter. Colin Miller has provided complainant with information re their access rights and all has gone quiet – assume resolved.

8. Events, Training Information

(1) Equestrian Leaflet

Colin Miller has contacted Anne Gray (SRPBA) hopes that the leaflet will still be ready for end of year even though Pat Somerville the BHS Access representative has been made redundant and so this will slow things down slightly.

(2) SG Monitoring Sheet – paper 15.

Some discussion about the accuracy and comparability of the figures but at least a guide to what is happening across Scotland.

(3) NAF papers – papers 16/17

Ken Thomson wondered why Aberdeenshire ALOAF was not mentioned in paper 17 as we have also put comments to the NAF.

(4) Events

- i) User representatives workshop – 7th November 2009 in Stirling. Alison Mitchell is attending. Anyone else interested let Alison Mitchell/Linda Mathieson know.
- ii) Scottish Equestrian Access Conference 14th November 2009, Oatridge College. Molly Atkinson attending. Any other interest let Linda Mathieson know.

9. Any Other Business

New representatives – could they stay behind after meeting to get set of papers/leaflets that are relevant to ALOAF activities.

10. Items for Next Meeting(s)

Suggested at ALOAF pre-meeting that we have at least one indoor and one outdoor practical session next year.

Gordon McKilligan suggested inviting someone from the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative (RNCI). He would be happy to speak to Martin Birse who is the current Chairman. Agreed by ALOAF. Web page – www.rnci.org.uk.

Ken Thomson suggested that for the outdoor meeting we choose an issue from the Core Paths Plan objections or a 'hot spots' issue and get local input from a local member or community councillor. Agreed by ALOAF.

Suggestions for January meeting;

- Core Paths Plan update.
- Access Strategy Framework.
- ALOAF – work programme.
- Open Space Audit/Strategy.
- 2010 annual gathering.

11. Date of 2010 Meetings

Monday 18 January 2010 (apologies Judy Middleton).

Monday 15 March 2010.

Monday 14 June 2010.

Monday 4 October 2010.

Monday 29 November 2010.

All agreed.

Gordon McKilligan thanked Ken Thomson and Peter Dawes for all their efforts over the last 4½ years and wished them well. Endorsed by all.