

ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING 32, Monday 15th March 2010

Barn & Bushel, Thainstone Centre, Inverurie

Present: Bill Ashcroft, Hamish Booth, Neil Buchanan, David Culshaw, Cllr Isobel Davidson, Bill Dow, Drew Elphinstone, Alison Espie, Gordon McKilligan (Chair), Robin Maitland, Brian Martin, Judy Middleton, Alison Mitchell (deputising for Molly Atkinson).

Advisers present: Linda Mathieson (Aberdeenshire Council), Colin Miller (Aberdeenshire Council).

1. **Apologies:** Molly Atkinson, David Finlay, Paul Timms.

2. **Minutes of Meeting 31:** Approved.

3. **Matters arising: *Item 5(1) Scottish Canoeing Association*** – CM reported that Judy Middleton had agreed to be the contact person between ALOAF and SCA.

Item 10(1) AWPR – Re whether access would be obstructed during construction, CM said he had not yet checked whether any undertakings had been given or considered.

4. **ALOAF Administration:**

(1) *Work Programme* – final changes proposed in the paper submitted by CM were approved. **Action: CM to update the document accordingly.**

(2) *Annual Report* – CM reported that it had not been possible to arrange an ALOAF group photograph as the Council Photographer could not attend the meeting. The meeting made the following recommendations: include attendance record; give a basic breakdown of the overall ALOAF costs by category of expense (not by member); limit size to 4 sides of A4; use 2 column format; include central contact details on front page; trim membership biographies; use relevant text from previous report; add possible new articles – e.g. equestrian access work; site visit(s). LM asked if any Members might wish to write material. **Action: CM to draft report.**

(3) *ALOAF leaflet* – Agreed actions as follows: amend existing leaflet with stick-on label listing current Access User Reps – **Action: CM**; add canoeing photo – **Action: LM**; add ALOAF e-mail address – **Action: CM or LM.**

(4) *Other: ALOAF web pages* – CM distributed existing ALOAF pages for reference. Council access staff are reviewing the access pages and will be happy to receive comments. JM drew attention to the outdated reference (“2008”) to the Core Paths Plan. **Action: ALL to send any comments to CM by mid-April.**

5 – **Aberdeenshire Council Update:**

(1) *Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan:* CM gave an update.

(2) *Open Space Strategy* – CM observed that the OSS is indeed relevant to the Country Parks (contrary to his earlier statement). He emphasised that the

topic was relevant to a number of the national benefits in common with access. After discussion about the possibility of setting up a subgroup to review the document, it was decided that CM would send a weblink [**Action: CM**] so that any comments could be sent back to CM – **Action: ALL**. NB asked if the Council was adopting the Designing Streets hierarchy, which was a radical change of mindset. ID said that it is being adopted within housing estates. LM agreed to advise NB whether the final Designing Streets document has been published yet – **Action: LM**.

(3) Upholding access rights list – discussion whether further site detail can be included in the light of Data Protection limitations. RM asked whether the number of cases showed a trend. LM said that case numbers peaked in 2005/06 and has since diminished to 3-4 cases in each of Aberdeenshire's Areas per year. LM to do a graph for the next review, at ALOAF's 29/11/2010 meeting – **Action: LM**. JM asked if the number of cases each year could be included in the ALOAF Annual Report. It was agreed that the relevant figure to include would be the number of cases dealt with by ALOAF.

(4) Access Strategy Review – may be put on hold meantime, as the Natural Heritage Strategy is more urgent. Management to decide. **Action: LM to supply confirmation for ALOAF's 14/6/10 meeting.**

(5) Other: Access Officer (South) – Kevin Wright has been appointed with effect from 15th March, based at Gordon House. [*Note: his phone number is 01467 628396, not 628002 as stated at the meetingCM*].

6 – Core Paths Plan:

(1) Proposed process for dealing with objections The Forum did not disagree with the Council's proposed process for handling CPP objections. LM clarified that if an objection is not considered to be valid, the Council will write to the objector accordingly. Examples might include where a path is already created due to a planning condition, or where the path concerned is part of the "wider paths network" and not a proposed core path. LM will revise text accordingly – **Action: LM**. RM asked about notification of parties who might be affected by a change to an alternative route. LM replied that, if the change involved additional parties, there would be re-consultation locally and it would be for the Reporter to say what was acceptable. GMcK asked whether the removal of a route would require wider consultation, e.g. in local press. LM felt that this could be problematic at a time when the public consultation on the CPP had closed. However, there could be individual consultation with specific parties. The Forum found this acceptable. JM asked about the Ellon route which was subject to flooding. LM said that this had been included on the basis of information which had turned out to be inaccurate. Objections had been received and a recent site visit had confirmed its unsuitability. RM asked if other Councils had received more objections. LM replied that Perth and Kinross had received 800-1000, which had since been reduced to 600. Their CPP had been extensive, but had relied on community groundwork which had proved less than thorough. Aberdeenshire's objections were not especially tricky, although the Waters of Philorth issue did not offer a prospect of easy resolution, but this had not been a CPP issue as such. Scottish Government Reporters thus far had been generally supportive of

CPP proposals. JM concluded that the Aberdeenshire CPP was going well.

- (2) **Advice on specific objections** -- Two routes subject to objection would justify ALOAF site visits. LM to e-mail the CPP subgroup [*G McKilligan, Bill Ashcroft, Judy Middleton, Hamish Booth, Alison Mitchell, Drew Elphinstone, Alison Espie*] to arrange a suitable date. Need a minimum of 1 ALOAF person from each of the non-public-agency sectors. D Culshaw also offered his assistance if numbers short. **Action: LM.**

7 – ALOAF Annual Gathering: Agreed date to be 29th May. Subgroup to plan the event (Alison Mitchell, Cllr Davidson, Brian Martin). **Action: Subgroup and CM to arrange meeting as soon as possible.**

8 – ALOAF site visit arrangements: For site visit to compare a “well-provided” settlement with a poorly-provided one, agreed date to be evening of 12th July, comparing Inch and Alford.

9 – Access consultations, Issues etc:

(1) **AWPR** – DC was concerned about increasing numbers using the Deeside Way in relation to the proposed layout where it would cross the AWPR and the Milltimber-Maryculter Road. At the latter point, users would have to cross on the carriageway itself. Likewise the F&BW at Parkhill, but here CM advised that there would be dedicated grade-separated crossing for the path.

(2) **Banffshire Way** – No meeting has happened yet. **Action: GMcK to check with Cllr Cox.**

(3) **Haddo Country Park** – update to be obtained from Keith Newton. **Action: Bill Dow.**

(4) **Menie Estate [APP 0423]** – Ken Thomson to be asked if he would be willing to draft a response for approval by ALOAF. **Action: CM to approach KT.**

(5) **Unauthorised vehicular access (FCS)** Letter received from FCS asking if Forum could write to the Police urging them to address the issues. JM commented that she had encountered unauthorised vehicular use and found it to be intimidating; also that ASBO action in recent sand dune campaign had been successful. It was agreed that ALOAF should write to Police. Authority granted to Chair to respond for ALOAF. **Action: CM (draft); Chair (signature).**

10 – Events, Training, Information

(1) **Equestrian leaflet (national)** – CM had been contacted by David Finlay with comments on parts of the national draft text. Having discussed this with DF, who was unable to attend the meeting, DE agreed with DF that equestrians should avoid fields with cattle. Cattle and horses are scared of each other. DC said that there had been expensive damage to the Deeside Way by horses when the frost was coming out of the ground. The question was how to ensure responsible use. RM said that proof of damage was the issue in the Tuley case. DE and AE did not agree with the mention of riding round field margins. However, DE said that the majority of equestrians stayed within the law. **Action: national and local texts to be compared -- LM/CM.**

(2) SOAC Communications Programme – The Forum’s attention was drawn to the SNH paper on progress to date. This prompted discussion on dog bins.
(3) Other -- Forthcoming SCAN conference.

11 – AOB

- DE asked about progress on the F&BW Brucklay section. LM replied that there was to be a site meeting with the landowners on 18th March to resolve practical issues.

12 – Items for next meeting’s Agenda:

- 12th July site visit.
- CPP: Consult with ALOAF on Council’s responses to specific objections.
- Review 2010 Annual Gathering.

[To discuss ALDP at 4/10/10 Forum meeting]

13 – Date of next meetings: 14/6/10.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.