

ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

NOTE OF 20th MEETING: Monday 14 JANUARY 2008 BARN & BUSHEL, THAINSTONE CENTRE, INVERURIE

Present: Ken Thomson (Chair), Neil Buchanan, Peter Dawes, Bill Dow, Cameron Ewen, David Fyffe, Alan Harper, Tom Johnston, Brian Martin, Kelley Miller, Cllr. Debra Storr, Iain Taylor, Owen Vaughan.

Also in attendance:

David Finlay, Gordon McKilligan, Alison Mitchell, Cllr Michael Watt.

Council officers present:

Linda Mathieson
Colin Miller

1 – Apologies, Introductions, Deputisings

2 – Minutes of Meeting 19.

Approved, with note that Tom Johnston was also present.

3 – Matters arising

None.

4 – Membership Rotation

The Chair reported that John Brownlee has resigned from ALOAF. The two vacancies in the Community sector had attracted 11 applicants, and the two in the Land Management sector had attracted 5. Dr Bill Ashcroft and Gordon McKilligan were elected to the Community sector; Alison Espie and David Finlay were elected to the Land Management sector. CM to write to all concerned.

Vice Chair replacement and Reserves issues to be resolved at March meeting.

5 – ALOAF Internal review

- *Operating Principles:* KT will have a longer look at them. A revised version to be produced for March meeting.
- *Internal Review -- Phase 2 (Agencies):* Sub-group (TJ, OV) to bring forward proposals at March meeting. G McK agreed to join the subgroup. Results could be aired at Annual Gathering if appropriate.

6 – Aberdeenshire Council Update

- **Core Paths Plan (CPP):**

The Forum considered the revised CPP schedule. Council is working on the list of paths for circulation to NFUS and SRPBA members. Not feasible to identify non-members (?30-40% of land managers) but can respond to any relevant non-members made known to Council. Council can broaden

the reach via e.g. poster at Thainstone. Purpose is to facilitate 1:1 liaison with land managers on candidate paths in advance of the next public consultation. List will be organised by Council Area and Settlement. Information for general public will be at a later stage. TJ emphasised importance of getting the information to NFUS & SRPBA membership as soon as possible, to allow time for responding. Purpose of 4/2/08 ALOAF Special Meeting on CPP is to determine whether ALOAF can endorse the overall methodology and “sufficiency” of the CPP. Council will provide complete (draft) maps at March ALOAF meeting (not feasible for 4/2/08). The Forum requested the Council to make it clear where a proposed route is “long-term aspirational”, i.e. beyond the scope of the present edition of the CPP; also, the CPP document should state the framework for reviewing core paths and the CPP.

- **Other**

Council is looking into finding a Minutes Secretary for ALOAF.

7 – Annual Gathering

Proposal is to have a drop-in CPP display from 2 to 9pm, with an ALOAF presentation at 7pm. KT and CM to bring detailed proposals and draft mailing documents to March meeting.

8 – Access funding

- **Scottish Government (SG)**

SG has accepted Council’s delayed CPP schedule. SG’s response on funding is non-committal. LM went through the access funding spreadsheet. Kelley Miller reported that SNH is to cease funding local authorities after the 2008/09 financial year. Future access funding will come direct from SG as part of the overall Council block grant, the access component being based on 50% on population and 50% on “length of paths”, with a basic minimum being guaranteed for each access authority. The Forum discussed the implications of this in relation to how the money would be redistributed within the Council. It was agreed that ALOAF should write to the new Chair of ISC in mid-February as soon as the appointment has been made, seeking to maintain or enhance existing funding, and to enhance the 2009/10 budget in the light of CPP demands for improvement and maintenance of paths. It should be borne in mind that Ranger funding will be subject to the same new process. D Fyffe noted that the Rural Development Programme will be another funding channel, which may be more effective. The Forum agreed that there should be 2 letters to ISC: one in mid-February as noted above, and a second letter in September 2008 in anticipation of budget discussions for 2009/10. Internal Council papers would be submitted at about the same time.

9 – Access Consultations, Issues etc

(1) Menie Estate:

Concerns about the adequacy of the access proposals for the wider public and for prospective residents of the development were aired. The Forum accepted that continued monitoring is necessary.

(2) AWPR:

SNH is meeting with Jacobs next week to review finalised revisions. SNH will not expect CPPs to show the AWPR route. LM suggested that Aberdeenshire could consider marking the route indicatively.

(3) Stock Mounth

Gate problem still exists. KT to report back to BHS and Scotways.

(4) Haddo Country Park

Subgroup (KT, BD, and ...), plus an assessor for the visually impaired, did an access assessment. Council to put this on the website and supply copies to ALOAF.

(5) ?Other

None.

10 – Events, Training, Information

- **28/11/07: N Regional LAF Networking event:**

KT's note of the event had been distributed to ALOAF.

11 – AOB & Items for next meeting's agenda

AOB: KT thanked the retiring members of the Forum for their service.

Next meeting;s agenda: Annual Gathering; Report on 4/2/08 ALOAF Special Meeting (CPP); appointment of Vice Chair; J Risby's briefing on WIAT; revised O/Ps.

12 – Date of next Meeting: .

Monday 17 March 2008.

Further 2008 dates: 19 May, 21 July, 15 September, 17 November.