

## ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

### NOTE OF EIGHTH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006 AT THE BARN AND BUSHEL, THAINSTONE CENTRE, INVERURIE

#### **Present:**

Ken Thomson (Chair)  
Councillor Jim Anderson (Item 5 onwards)  
Molly Atkinson  
Kelley Birnie  
John Brownlee  
Peter Dawes  
Bill Dow  
Cameron Ewen  
David Fyffe  
Alan Harper  
Brian Martin  
Tom Stewart  
Iain Taylor  
Owen Vaughan

#### **Council officers also present:-**

Keith Jones, Head of Law & Administration (North)  
Linda Mathieson, Environment Planner (Strategic)  
Colin Miller, Countryside Access Officer

#### **Visitor**

Adam Streeter-Smith

#### **1. Apologies and Introductions**

Apologies were noted from Councillor Jenny Watson, Pauline Jewett and Ron MacDonald. The Chair welcomed Kelley Birnie of SNH to her first meeting of the Forum and also welcomed, as a visitor, Adam Streeter-Smith of Paths for All Partnership (PFAP). The Chair noted that Daniella Mayes had been absent from the last few meetings and in terms of the Constitution he would be writing her to ascertain whether she still intended to remain a member of the Forum.

#### **2. Minutes of Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2005**

The Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> November 2005 were approved.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

With regard to Item 8, Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, Kelley Birnie advised that the meeting proposed to be held by SNH had been postponed as the route now proposed by the Scottish Executive differed from that originally favoured and was still very much a line on a map. In due course there would be a stakeholder meeting; at present some sensitive issues were being looked at.

It was reported that the Forum had been represented at the inaugural meeting of the Aberdeen City Access Forum which had appointed representatives to various groups on the

night itself. It was envisaged that there would be considerable interaction between the two Forums.

#### **4. Communications**

Linda Mathieson advised as to current progress in developing the website. It still had to be populated with details of the Forum. The Chair emphasised the need for the website to be operational as soon as possible as it was the Forum's public face. As a start it needed to show the names of membership of the Forum and a central E-mail address for interested parties to contact.

Linda advised that not all members had yet provided details for the register of members' skills and interests.

With regard to other matters relating to communications, Peter Dawes indicated that he had been invited to speak about the Forum at the Ramblers' AGM. The Chair commented that this was the type of invitation members should expect and respond to positively.

#### **5. Core Paths Plan**

Linda advised that further progress had been made with regard to the programme of public consultation which would take place at 18 venues throughout the Council's area. Display material would include blank maps and information relating to previous projects that had been undertaken. There was further discussion about the need for adequate public awareness of the events which would take place during the period April to July. There was further discussion as to the need to target User Groups and local organisations. With regard to the questionnaire which would be completed as part of the consultation process, the Chair agreed to draft appropriate questionnaires for completion by different User Groups.

With regard to discussion of the CPP at the Annual Gathering, Colin advised as to the extent of the preparation and adoption process from formal consultation to potential public inquiry. If a public inquiry were necessary, the Reporter would look at issues on a needs basis and it was not expected that the public inquiry would be adversarial. The current Scottish Executive consultation on the procedures was due to close on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

There was also submitted a paper from the Scottish Executive making available the results from the first round of monitoring. This divided into sections relating to general questions about access functions, the use of statutory powers and target dates for progressing Core Path Plans. It compared progress relating to implementation of the access strategy.

#### **6. Nortrail Update**

Colin advised that although Gordon Mackie, the Council Officer responsible for Nortrail matters, was unavailable to attend this meeting, he was happy to make a presentation to the Annual Gathering. 75% of the Nortrail route within Aberdeenshire was already in place, although there were a number of significant gaps, sometimes because cliff top paths in a particular location were dangerous; in other cases negotiations required to be completed with land managers. The progress was noted and further discussion deferred to the following item.

#### **7. Annual Gathering**

There was circulated a provisional programme with regard to the Annual Gathering to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006. This envisaged displays for various organisations being accessible before and after the formal presentations. There would be presentations with regard to the Core Path Planning Process in Aberdeenshire (Linda Mathieson); Nave Nortrail Project (Gordon Mackie) and a local group presentation on access issues around Tarland. This would be followed by a discussion session and final remarks, following which members would be encouraged to visit the display stands and discuss issues with representatives who would be available to listen to points being put forward. Considerable discussion followed on the start time, the possible

combination of presentations and in particular the need to encourage those attending to participate in the breakout sessions, including consultation on the CPP with representatives of the Forum. It was agreed that the previously formed Working Group, along with Colin and Linda, should finalise arrangements taking on board suggestions made and the need to maximise attendance and interest at the event.

**8. Access Issue: Kinneskie Fishings, Banchory**

The Chair reported that a panel had been appointed to offer assistance in this dispute. There had not been sufficient time to progress the matter and there would be a further report to the Forum in due course.

**9. Access Issue: Near Dyce**

The Chair reported on an issue regarding prevention of access on the riverbank near Dyce, by a third party, which had been raised by the Secretary, Aberdeen and District Angling Association. For the Council, Colin Miller briefly explained the background. Although access rights in terms of the legislation do not apply to the "curtilage" of commercial premises, it was agreed, after discussion, that the Forum should look at the issue, that the Chair should write to the owners seeking their agreement for the Forum to advise the parties to the dispute, and that, if such agreement was forthcoming, he should appoint a panel of three to take the matter forward.

**10. Events, Training, Information**

(a) **SCAN Access Fair**

Peter Dawes had attended the SCAN Access Fair which he had found useful. The next Fair would be in Spring 2008 and papers with regard to the 2005 event had been circulated with the papers for this meeting.

(b) **SNH Education Programme**

Nothing was immediately proposed. There would be a land managers' event in Spring 2006.

(c) **SNH Update 27**

This newsletter covered a number of areas. Kelley Birnie reported on proposed television advertising re. the Access Code. Adam Streeter-Smith commented on the "Paths to Health" issues and the legalities of erecting signs stating whether paths were suitable/unsuitable for particular groups.

**11. AOB**

Colin reminded members that any feedback with regard to future reporting arrangements between the National Access Forum and Area Forums was required to be submitted by the end of January. It was agreed that the National Access Forum should raise with Local Forums items thought to be of interest. Likewise local groups should be able to raise issues with the National Forum.

It was agreed that the minutes from the November meeting, having been approved tonight, should now be available publicly.

**12. Agenda Suggestions for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Forum to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006 would consider the following:-

- (a) "Post mortem" on Annual Gathering.
- (b) Dispute reporting.
- (c) Core Path Planning, including dates of local events.

(d) The usual routine items such as Communications.

Adam Streeter-Smith advised that a report by his organisation on Shared Use Path Planning, which had been timetabled to appear in late March, would now be delayed until the summer. He would be in a position to report on progress to date at a future meeting.