

**ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM
NOTE OF 13TH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2006 AT
THE BARN AND BUSHEL, THAINSTONE CENTRE, INVERURIE**

Present

Ken Thomson (Chair)
Molly Atkinson
John Brownlee
Peter Dawes
Bill Dow
Cameron Ewen
David Fyffe
Alan Harper
Tom Johnston
Gordon McKilligan
Robin Maitland
Brian Martin
Owen Vaughan

Cath Clark (Paths For All Partnership)

Council officers also present

Jamie Hunter (Legal Trainee)
Linda Mathieson (Environment Planner)
Colin Miller (Countryside Access Officer)

1 Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Jim Anderson and Jenny Watson. The Chair introduced Gordon McKilligan as a Reserve for the Community sector, deputising for Iain Taylor.

During discussion on Reserves, Gordon McKilligan commented that it is hard for reserves to stay in touch with discussions as they do not routinely attend the meetings except when asked to deputise. The Chair noted that whilst there exist rules covering the non-attendance of Representatives no such provision exists in relation to Reserves. Colin Miller noted that there was nothing to prevent Reserves from attending any meeting as members of the public. It was agreed that the issue would be subject to ongoing review.

2 Minute of Meeting of 18th September 2006

Bill Dow's name had been incorrectly omitted from the list of attendees.

3 Matters Arising

No matters arising.

4 Communications

No progress had been made on the production of badges and leaflets.

The Chair circulated a list of contact details in order that members could check that details were up to date.

Comment was made that communications were vital if the Forum's public profile was to be maintained.

5 NAF/ LAF Meeting, Peebles, 20/09/06

Peter Dawes reported to the group on his and the Chair's attendance. Copies of the materials from the meeting were distributed to ALOAF members and covered most of the issues that were discussed. Peter expressed a general disappointment with the organisation of the event, citing poor parking arrangements, time management and lack of member participation. In future, he suggested that fewer items be raised on the agenda to leave more time for discussion of the issues raised. Despite this, the presentation by Borders Local Outdoor Access Forum had been excellent.

Owen Vaughan suggested that this event would be a good opportunity for the Forum to learn of the activities of other Outdoor Access Forums. For example, how did other groups respond to requests for advice? The Chair suggested that it would be useful to have an idea of the top three main issues affecting all groups across Scotland.

Linda Mathieson suggested that Cath Clark might be able to advise the Forum, at a future meeting, on how other LAFs in her area are getting on.

6 LAF/Blue Book

The chair observed that few of his comments on the May/June draft of this new edition seemed to have been taken into account. He believed that ALOAF was complying with most of the guidance but still needed more non-member involvement. Cath Clark pointed out that the book was guidance and should not be taken as a dictation of procedure.

7 Nature Conservation Issues

Linda Mathieson explained that the training session that had been anticipated had been postponed due to other work commitments. However, after discussion amongst the members, it was agreed that the training would take place on 15 January 2007, 4pm-6pm, prior to the normal Forum meeting.

8 Annual Gathering

The Chair distributed a preliminary draft agenda to give members an idea of the type of structure they might wish to follow. Owen Vaughan and Peter Dawes suggested that there should be some discussion of the Core Path Plan and how it is put together. Robin Maitland suggested that issues from the past year as well as other matters of interest should be raised. The Chair suggested input from the Forestry Commission. Alan Harper agreed that examples of access issues as they relate to the Commission could be used. The Chair concluded that there appeared to be

general agreement that a 'case-study' approach was desired, covering both access and conservation, and that around twenty minutes should be allowed for questions and answers. Action: Colin Miller to confirm booking of venue and to address heating and layout concerns raised from the 2006 Gathering.

9 Core Paths Plan

Linda Mathieson talked through the database list of organisations and requested that members check to confirm that no groups are missing. Any omissions should be notified to her. The criteria for the 'First Sift' of the CPP had been expanded to take into account the workshop and questionnaire information. Linda then asked whether a small working group of ALOAF should be convened to involve itself with the CPP once the process has been clarified. It was noted that the Moray LAF has such a group. The Chair endorsed the idea of a working group to enable more immediate feedback and this was supported by the Forum. The working group will consist of the Chair, Robin Maitland and (proposed in absentia) Iain Taylor subject to his agreement.

David Fyffe requested that the Council issue a public invitation to those land managers not already on the mailing list to submit their contact details so that they can be kept informed.

10 Access Advice

(1) Access Issue near Dyce (considered in private session):

As Convenor of the Working Group, Brian Martin reported on this issue. A draft Statement of Advice had been prepared. It was agreed that the Chair and the Convenor of the working group would finalise the Statement and then send it to the Aberdeen and District Angling Association, thus concluding the process.

(2) Privacy Issues

Linda Mathieson reported that she had received some positive feedback on the privacy scoring system and that it had already been trialled by one Forum member. It still needed more work but, in response to a question from Cath Clark, Linda was confident that it could be rolled out across Scotland once it had been finalised. Action: Linda to circulate the document at the next Forum meeting.

(3) Haddo Country Park

There had been no further development in this regard.

(4) Mains of Inverebrie

There had been no further development in this regard.

11 Events

- BHS LAF Training Day - no comments were offered.
- Stirling multi-agency LAF training day - no attendees from ALOAF.
- SCAN - have to be aware of the various issues affecting farmers.

- CNPA CPP meeting, Ballater - Chair to attend meeting with users and other organisations.
- Outdoor Access Festival, spring 2007 - Colin Miller distributed information.

12 AOB

The group congratulated Aberdeenshire Council for its work on Nortrail, following complimentary comments from a path user on the maintenance of the Sandend-Cullen coastal path, reported by Cameron Ewen.

Peter Dawes informed the group that there had been no further correspondence as regards AWPR.

The Chair raised concern over Council resourcing for upholding access rights. Linda Mathieson confirmed that officers were dealing only with the most pressing cases during the current phase of the CPP process..

13 Agenda suggestions for next meeting

- Core Paths Planning
- Council's Access Strategy: Capital Projects List 2007/08
- Annual Gathering 2007
- Major Planning Applications and the Planning Bill
- Feedback on 15/1/07 ALOAF Access and Conservation Training

14 Dates of Next Meetings

Next meeting 15th January 2007.

In addition to the meetings arranged for 19 March and 21 May 2007, the following further dates were scheduled for 2007:

23 July
17 September
19 November.