

## ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

### NOTE OF SEVENTH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2005 AT THE BARN AND BUSHEL, THAINSTONE CENTRE, INVERURIE

#### **Present:**

Councillor Jim Anderson  
Tom Johnston  
Bill Dow  
Alan Harper  
Cameron Ewen  
Pauline Jewett  
Ken Thomson  
John Brownlee  
Ian Dunlop  
Ron MacDonald  
Neil McLean  
Brian Martin  
Peter Dawes  
Robin Maitland  
Owen Vaughan  
Iain W. Taylor (from Item 7C onwards)

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

Keith Jones, Head of Law & Administration (North)  
Linda Mathieson, Environment Planner (Strategic) – from Item 7C onwards  
Colin Miller, Countryside Access Officer  
Alastair Fullwood, Access Officer  
Helen Young, Access Ranger

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

Apologies were noted from Councillor Jenny Watson and Molly Atkinson. The meeting welcomed Ian Dunlop, of Visit Scotland, to his first meeting of the Forum, representing Tourism interests.

#### **2. Minutes of Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005**

The Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005 were approved.

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

With regard to Item 5 of the Minute, the position with regard to guidance on countryside access given to schools and their pupils was raised. Ron MacDonald, of SNH, indicated that an event would be held in early course to look at issues surrounding young persons' responsible behaviour on countryside visits.

#### **4. Events, Training and Information**

The Chair drew attention to letter, which had been circulated, from Aberdeen City Council regarding a meeting to be held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2005 in the Town and County Hall, Aberdeen with regard to the establishment of an Outdoor Access Forum for the City. He advised that he was to be attending but if any other members wished to be present, they should advise Colin.. He understood there was to be no limitation on numbers.

Attention was also drawn to the agenda for the National Access Forum meeting to take place on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005 at Perth.

## **5. Scottish Executive Monitoring Response**

The first monitoring return under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act was circulated for members' information and was noted.

## **6. Communications**

### **(a) Website**

The Chairman reported on progress with the website. The 3 members, including himself, tasked with its preparation has made progress but not as fast as had been hoped. An issue had arisen with Aberdeenshire ICT Service due to the use of the word "Access" which had a number of links already on the website, relating to different topics.

### **(b) Liaison with National Access Forum**

There was submitted a consultation paper prepared by Mark Wrytham, Secretary to the National Access Forum, on possible liaison arrangements between the National Access Forum and the Local Forums. Owen Vaughan commented on the need for feedback between the National Forum and Local Forums where issues had been identified of relevance to a number of Forum areas. After some discussion it was considered that occasional get-togethers between the National Forum and members of Local Forums would be appropriate. Discussion at National level on issues of mutual interest was felt to be useful in many cases, provided the information was then disseminated to the Local Forums. KT suggested that the National Access Forums should contact Local Access Forums once or twice a year to identify issues of mutual concern. Other issues could be dealt with by way of networking as between Local Access Forum officers.

### **(c) Annual Gathering – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006 – Thainstone Mart**

There were various suggestions as to how best to attract participants to the Gathering, the aim being to provide those attending with something that would be of interest. Presentation on the development of a coastal path, the Core Paths Plan, and workshops and information stalls set up by interest groups could be considered. It was concluded that the Gathering should last about 2 hours, including workshop, coffee break and presentation. The website could be used for feedback. It was suggested that it be held at the Thainstone Centre, Ring 2. It would be necessary to circulate invitations early in January and Colin Miller confirmed that he would draft an invitation for mailing to the access mailing list. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Peter Dawes and Brian Martin would form a Working Group to further consider arrangements for the meeting, and for publicity.

### **(d) Members' Skills Register**

Those members who had not already done so were reminded as to the need to complete this and return to Linda Mathieson within the next few days.

### **(e) ALOAF Promotional Work**

There was circulated a list prepared by the Chairman of promotional work undertaken to date.

## **7. Core Paths Plan**

There was circulated for information paper prepared by the Chairman with regard to Local Access Forums and Core Path Planning. There was also circulated for information the feedback from discussions at the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005. Both of these were noted. There was also circulated paper setting out the proposed locations for the consultations next year on the Core Path Planning process. Alastair Fullwood advised that the locations currently envisaged were Banff, Fraserburgh, Turriff, Mintlaw, Peterhead, Huntly, Fyvie, Ellon, Inverurie, Alford, Balmedie, Westhill, Aberdeen, Portlethen, Aboyne, Banchory, Stonehaven and Laurencekirk. Venues had still to be fixed, the consultation sessions being 11.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m. in each case. In response to comments that the finishing time of 7.00 p.m. would constrain public access, he explained the staffing issues mitigating against extending the finishing time. It was likely that the consultation period would run from April to July. The Ranger Service would be involved, User Groups would be targeted, including organisations, clubs, land management groups and possibly functional users such as schools, playgroups, pensioner associations, etc. It was hoped that members of ALOAF would also be available at the local consultation session. There would be no formal presentation as such. Council staff, however, would be available at each location to meet the public, explain what was involved and seek views. In addition, those unable to attend their local consultation group would be able to comment by letter or by completing a questionnaire. It was agreed to support the proposals, providing that every potential User Group could be targeted by mail shot or other publicity. With regard to the questionnaire, the Chair suggested separate questionnaires for individuals and for groups.

## **8. Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route**

Colin advised that there would be a consultation period in respect of the proposed Aberdeen Bypass. A map would be available at Gordon House as from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005 showing proposals. Consultation had been delayed as it appeared that there were issues with regard to the routing of the proposed road in the Murtle area which the Executive still had to resolve. In respect of the Forum, however, there were implications, whatever route was eventually chosen. The route was envisaged as for motorised users only, with no pedestrians or cyclists permitted. This was seen as a particular issue with regard to the new crossings of the rivers Dee and Don which would be ideally placed, if open to non-motorised users (NMUs), to permit new recreational opportunities. The exclusion of NMUs from any part of the new road corridor and the possible severance of existing tracks and roads were seen as detrimental to the interest of access users and it was agreed that the Forum should take a strong view on the matter. Ron MacDonald indicated that SNH had particular concerns and would be convening a meeting in December 2005 at which interested parties could be represented. He would welcome attendance of one or two members from the Forum. It was agreed that the Forum should closely involve itself in monitoring proposals and object at an early stage if necessary. Liaison with other interested groups, including the City and SNH, was considered essential. It was agreed that the matter be remitted back to the Forum agenda on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

## **9. Any Other Business**

### **(a) Scottish Executive Consultation on LRSA S.22 Path Orders**

There was submitted a letter of consultation from the Scottish Executive regarding Section 22 Path Orders. This related to regulations as to how the Act should be implemented and prescribed the form of order. The proposals did, however, appear reasonable.

### **(b) Access Issue: Kinneskie Fishings, Banchory**

Linda Mathieson brought to the attention of the Forum a potential dispute between the Community Council and the owners of fishings at Banchory regarding access to the river bank. This had been a long-standing matter. It was agreed that, provided the Chairman and Officers were of the view that the Forum could properly offer its assistance in resolving the dispute, then the matter could be progressed accordingly in terms of the Forum's agreed procedures.

**c) Ridinghill – proposed equestrian trails**

Cameron Ewen reported that there was a proposal to buy woodland at Ridinghill, near Crimond, with a view to providing equestrian access and to charge for this.

**10. Agenda Suggestions for Next Meeting**

The next meeting is due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and items discussed at today's meeting, which would be reported back, would include –

- the Core Path Consultation Process,
- dispute resolution at KinneskieBanchory,
- Western Peripheral Route,
- the Annual Gathering
- National Forum.

**11. Dates and Frequency of Meetings**

It was agreed that meetings for 2006 would be –

16<sup>th</sup> January  
6<sup>th</sup> March (Annual Gathering)  
20<sup>th</sup> March  
22<sup>nd</sup> May  
24<sup>th</sup> July  
18<sup>th</sup> September  
20<sup>th</sup> November

Officers should also investigate the possibility of a presentation by an external speaker on a particular topic at Forum meetings.