

## Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum

### Minutes of Meeting 36

**9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 - Council Chambers, Gordon House, Inverurie**

**Present:** Gordon McKilligan (Chair), Alison Espie (Vice Chair), Douglas Williamson, Chris York, Cllr. Isobel Davidson, Dan Cadle, David Culshaw, John Hughes, Hamish Booth, Judy Middleton, Robin Maitland

**Council officers present:** Linda Mathieson, Kevin Wright

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies, introductions, deputisings</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Alison Mitchell, Bill Ashcroft, David Finlay, Fiona McInally, Geordie Burnett-Stuart, Drew Elphinstone, Andrew Robertson, Alistair Watson, Calvin Little	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting 36 and matters arising</b>	
	Minutes from Meeting 35 were approved by HB and 2 <sup>nd</sup> by JM  An amendment to the minutes of meeting 35 was noted by LM; Point 6.1 Budget Implications noted no change to the Access capital budget which stood at £105k, this budget has since been reduced to £50k.	
<b>3</b>	<b>ALOAF administration</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Minute secretary</b>	
	Colin Millar has kindly accepted to be minute secretary for ALOAF and will begin this role as of the June meeting.  G McK thanked LM and KW for their assistance in covering this role.	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Future agency representation - SNH</b>	
	Alastair Watson (SNH) has been appointed to liaise with all local access fora in the SNH 'Tayside and Grampian Unit' area.  Alastair has worked previously as an Outdoor Access Officer with Aberdeenshire Council in 2008. Unfortunately due to workload commitments Alastair's input to the forum will likely be written submissions to specific questions and/or the occasional attendance to meetings when possible and as required.  Discussion took place regarding the consideration of other	

	agency's being contacted to join the forum; NHS to be re-contacted to establish if they intend to attend forum meetings and NTS to be contacted to see if they are interested in being represented on the forum.	LM
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Web pages</b>  The ALOAF web pages have been updated, however there is scope for improvement and additional information to be added; any ideas or requests for inclusion of information can be directed to KW and/or raised at future meetings.  There is a facility available to monitor the number of hits the ALOAF pages receive. In the period 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2010 to 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2011, the following hits were recorded. Due to the pages being updated and changes to the layout the figures below indicate the minimum number of hits, actual hits are presumed to be much higher.  Landing Page 238 Welcome Page 365 Members List 222 Meetings page 0  Unfortunately it is not possible to monitor the type of user accessing the web pages i.e. business or private.	
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Chris York request – coastal path</b>  CY from 'Walking the Talk' made a request to the Forum for input into a study he is undertaking regarding the section of coastal path located in the Energetica corridor.  This matter was discussed prior to CY arriving. The scope of the study is to asses the current condition of the coastal route and to identify areas of improvement. CY's request was for any information regarding the current state of the route and any issues which the Forum is aware of.  JH and ID volunteered to input; CY to contact to arrange future discussions/establish subgroup  AE expressed concerns over ALOAF being represented by individual members and queried if JH and ID would undertake this role as ALOAF representatives or private individuals. It was considered this would be undertaken as ALOAF representatives and JH and ID would feedback any information submitted to CY to ALOAF at the next meeting.	JH, ID
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Letter of thanks</b>  It was proposed that a letter of thanks to Molly, Brian, and Bill who recently stepped down at last meeting.	GMcK/LM

<b>4</b>	<b>ALOAF review workshop – feedback/discussion</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan – checklist idea</b>	
	<p>The checklist is proposed to be an aid to individual forum members attending Master Planning events to ensure individuals represent the interest of ALOAF in a similar fashion. It is also proposed that the checklist could be made available to other interest groups and community council.</p> <p>G McK has completed a draft checklist which has been circulated; all members to consider the draft and submit comments and ideas to G McK</p> <p>A subgroup was established to finalise draft; GMcK, RM and HB.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>GMcK</p> <p>GMcK/RM/HB</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Core paths development – community support options</b>	
	<p>LM gave an overview and requested comments from the Forum on how to take this forward.</p> <p>Discussion took place over path monitoring and concerns over future maintenance of open space regarding the requirement for developers to provide 40% open space within new developments.</p> <p>Event to be held for community groups and interested parties in Autumn – see point 7 Annual Gathering.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council update</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Budget implications – capital fund reduction</b>	
	<p>The access capital budget has been reduced from £105k to £50k</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Upholding access rights summary/lessons learnt</b>	
	<p>Two papers were presented to the Forum detailing access cases and their status.</p> <p>14 cases have been carried forward from prior to March 2010, since March 2011 there has been 51 new cases as recorded on the second paper + 6 recent cases which have not yet been recorded on the database.</p> <p>The colour coding on the data base refers to the status of the case;</p> <p>Grey – Resolved or Dormant  Red – New case no investigation started  Yellow – Investigation started and ongoing  Green - Majority of investigation complete with agreed actions outstanding which once complete will lead to the</p>	

	<p>resolution of the case.</p> <p>A number of outstanding cases were briefly discussed; including Rothienorman, the Forum was advised of the evening meeting with the community which was to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> May, and a brief outline of the Counsel opinion for Auchenblae was given.</p> <p>RM questioned if the information gained via Counsel opinion was shared amongst other LOAF's. This is undertaken with the Cairngorm National Park Cross Service Officer meetings and at a wider scale at access networking events, for example the Scottish Countryside Access Network (SCAN) meetings/events one of which is coming up on 25<sup>th</sup> May.</p>	
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Core Paths</b>	
	<p>LM reported there has been little progress on the Core Paths. The SEA has received internal comment and requires adapting to accommodate these comments once complete the SEA will go out for public consultation. It is hoped to be completed by the end of July.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>ALOAF newsletter/annual review</b>	
	<p>GMcK thanked everyone who had submitted articles and requested any comments.</p> <p>AE – still to submit article</p> <p>The newsletter will be sent to the Council Graphics Team to brand and layout</p> <p>Information pertaining to the Autumn Annual gathering Event should be included within the newsletter.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Annual gathering 2011- ideas/suggestions</b>	
	<p>It is proposed to hold an event in Autumn highlighting the completion of the Core Paths Plan. The event will highlight the difficulties faced with delivering the Plan and will concentrate on encouraging community involvement so they can assist with delivering the plan in their area.</p> <p>Numerous ideas were suggested regarding the contents of the event, such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identifying funding opportunities</li> <li>- new volunteer/path groups being established</li> <li>- presentations from successful path/community groups</li> <li>- opportunity to identify what communities need to be able to engage</li> </ul>	

	<p>The event was also seen as an opportunity to promote the Forum and the work they do and to launch the development checklist to a wider public audience.</p> <p>AE suggested it would be helpful to identify which geographical areas require the most input regarding the implementation of the core paths that way those communities could be specifically targeted.</p> <p>CY noted a new publication which is soon to be launched as an online resource by Paths for All - Local people local paths</p> <p>There is a need to identify the numbers of people interested so a suitable venue can be submitted. Information and contact details for specific groups which the forum members think may be interested can be submitted to KW.</p> <p>A separate discussion took place regarding the Royal Northern Countryside Initiative event which is to be held at Dunecht and open to the public on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2011.</p> <p>It is anticipated that between 3000 – 5000 people will attend. Enquiries have established that the Forum would be welcome to have a stall at the event.</p> <p>It was established that the Forum would focus on promoting responsible countryside access.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ALOAF promotional banner to be created LM</li> <li>- Materials ordered from SNH KW</li> <li>- Identification badges LM</li> <li>- Aberdeen City Forum to be contacted to see if they wish to take part. LM</li> <li>- Forum members to note their interest to LM in participating at the event. ALL</li> <li>- Need to establish if there is space in the Marquee, if not contact leisure lend. LM, KW</li> </ul>	ALL
<b>8</b>	<b>Access consultations, issues etc</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Dogs and livestock</b>	
	<p>GMcK gave brief overview and the topic was debated</p> <p>Although there was a mixed response to the actions proposed by the Scottish NFU regarding changes to the clause within the Land Reform 2003 Act pertaining to dog fouling on agricultural land the Forum established that they have a responsibility to promote the issue.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that the RNCI event would be an appropriate opportunity to highlight the concerns to the general public.</p>	
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Control of Dogs Act</b>	
	Briefly discussed	
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Use of field margins/conservation headlands/buffer strips</b>	
	<p>Aberdeenshire Council have recently experienced numerous Upholding Access Rights cases which have related to accessing field margins. There would appear to be a discrepancy in the legislation regarding access over field margins and concerns over breaching cross compliance.</p> <p>As such a meeting has been proposed with the relevant local bodies to discuss this issue and identify a common approach.</p> <p>It is hoped the meeting will take place prior to the RNCI event as local guidance could then be promoted at the event. Feedback will be given to the Forum once the meeting has taken place.</p>	LM/KW
<b>9</b>	<b>Events, training, information</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Feedback bridge crossing River Dee 29<sup>th</sup> November/11<sup>th</sup> January workshop</b>	
	This is covered in the article submitted for the annual report. JM commented that it would appear the construction of the bridge is dependent on the AWPR going ahead as the works are reliant on funding which would be released due to the AWPR development.	
<b>9.2</b>	<b>National access forum papers</b>	
	<b>NAF future work programme</b> A summary of the NAFS ongoing work programme was attached within the meeting papers	
<b>9.3</b>	<b>Perth and Kinross event 10<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	JM to attend and feedback at the next meeting	
<b>9.4</b>	<b>Paths for All event 19<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
	There was interest from a number of Forum members who would like to attend this event. Those who are interested are to let LM know by 16 <sup>th</sup> May via email DC already confirmed as attending.	
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Royal Northern Countryside Initiative (RNCI) 12/13<sup>th</sup> June</b>	
	Covered above under point 7 Annual Gathering	

<b>10</b>	<b>A.O.B.</b>  None stated  GMcK Thanked the new forum members for attending their first meeting	
<b>11</b>	<b>Items for next meetings agenda</b>  Autumn meeting – annual gathering Feedback on checklist Update on field margins Feedback on RNCI Coastal feedback	
<b>12</b>	<b>Date of next meetings – Suggested dates for 2011</b>  27 <sup>th</sup> June (Douglas, John, Robin - apologies) 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 28 <sup>th</sup> November	