

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum

Note of Statutory Forum Meeting

Wednesday 21st February 2007 at Ardrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan

Present: Luke Borwick, Bruce Davidson, Louise Dickson, Jean Highet, Rob Loney, Jim Muir, Dick Sim and Councillor Donald Reid

Attending: Louise Kirk, Margaret Ferrier (both NAC) and Rona Gibb (PfAP)

Apologies: Alex Millar, David Clegg, Frazer Mitchell, Kate Sampson and Gerard Tattersfield,

Welcome

The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting, highlighted that this was the first meeting of 2007 and that it would be appreciated if any remaining completed maps and questionnaires from the Toolkits could be returned to the AO in the near future

Progress update

• Projects 2006-07

The group was advised that all projects were on course and were provided with an update as follows:

- Paws for Thought: Copies of the leaflet were supplied and the AO advised that the posters and packs have also been produced and will be launched in March. The packs will be distributed through a wide range of points including community facilities, vets surgeries, pet shops and Dog Warden patrols and the responsible owner competition will be open until Wednesday 18th March.
- West Kilbride: Path and drainage works within Kirktonhall Glen will commence in the near future and the leaflet and sign are currently being developed.
- Land Reform signage: The wording for the new signage agreed by the Forum has been approved by SNH. The new signs are currently being produced and will be installed as soon as they are available. The AO will monitor the success of these signs and advise the group accordingly.
- Go On – Get Out There!: Copies of the leaflets and the AO advised that the leaflets and reflectors will be distributed to all schools during February and March. The thermoplastic markings will be undertaken before the end of the financial year and it has been agreed with Sustrans that the road safety plays will be undertaken in 2007/08.
- All Abilities Works: The path works are now complete and the thermoplastic signage will be carried alongside the school playground markings.

A project to encourage responsible horse riding is also being developed with the BHS Access Officer. The project will include the production of a leaflet and competition similar to the Paws for Thought initiative. Gibb of Galston have also agreed to sponsor this initiative which will potentially be launched during SNH's Access Festival.

JH highlighted that the Cunninghame Ramblers were planning to produce a booklet of walks around North Ayrshire and potentially to donate the proceeds from this to access related projects. JH advised that similar initiatives had been successful in other areas and that the Ramblers were also interested in adopting paths or sections of longer distance routes for example the New Town Trail. It was agreed that the AO would liaise with JH on these matters and the group will be advised of any progress.

The AO advised the group that the Council's Cleansing section are interested in undertaking a clean up of a section of route or coastline to contribute to the National Spring Clean initiative. JH and RL expressed interest in this project and the AO agreed to develop this with Cleansing and advise the group accordingly.

- **Access and Code issues**

The AO advised that the vast majority of outdoor access issues raised between the December and February meetings were in relation to surfaces and condition of routes. Progress has also been made in relation to the right of way at Seamill Mill. The route has been fenced in accordance with the recommendations made by the Council’s Corporate Services Committee and the majority of users of the route have welcomed this solution. Two new issues have been raised in relation to:

- Loch Lomond Dundonald Golf Course’s policy on access – The AO has met with the Security and Transport Manager to discuss access across the course, at his request. The Manager is aware that there is local interest in crossing the course and has previously produced a policy on access across the course. This policy is not compliant with the Land Reform legislation and the Manager was advised of this by the AO. Confirmation of this has also been received from the Council’s Legal Services. The AO highlighted that the provision of a suitable route across the grounds was suggested to the Manager to enable them to manage access.
The AO advised that a meeting would be arranged with LLDGC to discuss this matter further. LB suggested that it would be advantageous for the Forum to be involved with this issue to demonstrate to LLDGC that golf interests are represented on the Forum and agreed to participate in the next meeting.
- Locked gate and barrier at Kelburn Avenue, Fairlie – This issue relates to the junction between the adopted and unadopted sections of Kelburn Avenue and the barrier that separates the two sections. There is a locked gate across the pavement and road, which currently prevents users from accessing the other section of the route. The barrier had been in existence for a number of years and has recently been replaced with a metal structure. The AO advised that there have been a number of issues to clarify including the ownership of the ground and the legislative position in relation to the curtilage of the houses. Contact has been made with the landowner, who has been provided with a copy of the Code and has agreed to remove the padlock from the gate.

- **Projects 2007-08**

The group was advised that the following allocations/grants have been received and was asked to suggest projects for 2007/08 by 23rd March for discussion at the next Forum meeting:

Source	Amount	Purpose
North Ayrshire Council	£50,000	Capital Allocation
North Ayrshire Council	£37,990	Approximate Revenue Allocation
Sustrans/Scottish Executive Grant	£52,500	Upgrade of NCN Route 73/7 between Irvine & Kilwinning

The group discussed the following potential projects for 07/08 and agreed that the AO should investigate these further with the relevant parties:

- Upgrade of paths in Ardeer Quarry/Recreation area: The paths require significant upgrading and this area may be potentially designated as a new Local Nature Reserve and includes a section of the NCN route 73. The group agreed that Council’s Educational Services and Scottish Natural Heritage could potentially part fund this project.
- Construction of the remaining section of the Brodick Seafront: The group advised that as this would need to be a partnership project due to the proposed cost of £240,000, the Access Budget could only offer gap funding to make any deficit from other funders. The group highlighted that this project would perhaps benefit from an application to the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme or Community Environmental Renewal Scheme (Aggregates Levy scheme).
- Construction of remaining section of the Lynn Glen Path: The group agreed that this would need to be subject to landowner agreement and would require support from the landowner representatives.

- Works at Blair Estate: LB highlighted that there was potential to improve the parking provision at Blair Estate in light of the new equestrian route and the path provision within the community woodlands.

Forum development

The group welcomed the applications for membership of the Forum (Appendix A). The AO advised that a report would be prepared and submitted to the Planning Committee to approve the appointment of the new representatives and substitutes in line with the legislation. The report will be submitted to the 19th March 2007 Committee and if approved will be ratified by the Full Council Committee on 27th March. The group was advised that the Forums AGM would need to be delayed until June due to the Elections and that representative appointments would be highlighted to the wider discussion Forum at that point.

Discussion arose on the future development of the Forum in light of the revised good practice guidance. The issue of the role of Chairperson was raised and LB advised the group that the vast majority of Forums now have an independent Chairperson. The group agreed that it would also be useful to have a Vice Chair who could stand in if the Chair was otherwise engaged. It was agreed that representatives should advise the AO if they wished to be considered for the position of Chairperson or Vice Chair prior to the next meeting. The group was also asked to advise the AO of any potential training needs that they or the new representatives might have in light of the new guidance before the April meeting.

RL raised the issue of resources and whether or not it would be possible to have presentations from other Services within the Council in relation to resources. The AO advised that a number of the projects undertaken to date were partnership projects. The group recognised this but felt that there was potential for access to be integrated further into other Services activities. RL highlighted that there was a need to identify opportunities for linkage with the Community Planning Partnership. It was agreed that the AO should investigate this further and advise the Forum in due course.

The group agreed that a minute of agreement or partnership agreement would be advantageous for the Forum and that a protocol would need to be developed to cover the issue of publicity in relation to the Forum and its activities. The AO agreed to investigate this further with Legal Services.

RG also highlighted that the Disability Equality Duty has implications in relation to the Forum and the disbursement of public money. The general duty requires public authorities to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities. It also aims to encourage participation in public life by requiring public authorities to encourage disabled people to stand for a variety of forums and ensuring the framework is in place for them to successfully participate. The group recognised that approaches have been made to these organisations and there are limited numbers of disability groups on the ground. The group highlighted that it would welcome such involvement and agreed that it would be advantageous to send the Notes of meetings to organisations such as Accessibility, with an invitation for them to attend, as they deemed appropriate.

Core Path Planning

- **Outdoor Access Toolkit update**

The AO provided the group with a summary of the responses (Appendix B) to the access survey questionnaires analysed to date and a break down of the information from the Community Planning Partnership's People's Panel survey (Appendix C). The AO advised that the routes are still being digitised and this exercise should be complete by the end of April.

- **Core Path Selection Criteria**

The AO provided the group with copies of the selection criteria and weightings developed by the core path planning sub-group of the Forum (Appendix D). The group were advised that these were based on

the key aims and priorities identified within the Outdoor Access Strategy. The aim was to tie the criteria back to the Strategy and maintain a logical approach.

The group discussed the criteria and agreed that if a path does not meet one or more of the criteria it would not be considered as a potential core path. Discussion arose on the practicalities of identifying paths meeting the criteria and it was agreed that an additional sub group meeting would be organised to carry out this exercise. The group discussed the best format for the maps to allow them to undertake these scoring sessions and agreed that schools, train stations and local facilities should be highlighted on the maps to assist the process. It was agreed that paths meeting the criteria would then be mapped alongside the other paths and that they would be differentiated by colour.

The group agreed that the criteria:

- Proposed a logical approach which could easily be applied to the Toolkit information
- Would provide an adequate reflection of the public's requirements
- Were robust enough to be defended at Public Inquiry if required

RG advised that SNH, PfAP and partners have developed a Hub at the Scottish Executive's request to address issues in relation to the Core Paths Plans. She highlighted that the issue of sufficiency needs to be addressed within the plan and that it would be advantageous to factor out any issues that may arise during the formal consultation period for example working with neighbouring Authorities on cross boundary routes. It would be beneficial to identify where routes can be used by all users or one or more user types. Furthermore, she advised that aspirational routes need to be well defined within the plan and that there needs to be a desire or commitment to develop the routes in the near future.

MF highlighted the correlation between the Core Paths Plan and the new Development Plan and that there should be strong linkage between the two. The group identified that there needed to be opportunities for flexibility within the plan for example where new paths can be created as a result of developments.

AOCB

RG advised the group of the following issues:

- The Scottish Executive is currently investigating the potential for Cycle Demonstration Towns (CDT) in Scotland. The AO advised that Irvine has been proposed by Sustrans and their CEO is enthusiastic about promoting Irvine as a cycle friendly town.
- For multi-use signage and leaflets the guidance is now to use text rather than the traditional symbols
- SNH and PfAP are currently producing a similar publication to the liability guidance on Access and the Law. Copies will be supplied in the near future.
- A study is currently being undertaken by SNH and Oatridge College on the use of recycled quarry materials
- The Bridges Guide has been published and is available from PfAP at a cost of £40
- Paths to Health are have developed a workplace walking scheme including grants to set up workplace pedometer schemes. More information can be obtained from the website, www.pathsforall.org.uk/pathstohealth
- New guidance for paddlers and anglers is currently being developed and it is anticipated that this will be available around June 2007
- A study on the economic impact of paths is currently being undertaken and it is anticipated that findings will be available around May 2007

Close of meeting

The Chair thanked you the group for their continued involvement and commitment and reiterated the reminder regarding the return of any remaining questionnaires and maps to the AO.

Access Officer, March 2007