

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum

Note of Statutory Forum Meeting

Thursday 8 May 2008 – Ardrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan

Present: Kenny Burns, Louise Dickson, Councillor Jean Highgate (Vice Chair), Alex Millar and Gerard Tattersfield

Attending: Louise Kirk and Margaret Ferrier (both NAC)

Apologies: Annique Armstrong, Luke Borwick (Chair), David Clegg, Bruce Davidson, PC Donna Harrison, Jean Highet, Rob Loney, Kate Sampson and Dick Sim

Welcome and introduction

Councillor Highgate (CH) welcomed the group to the meeting and advised that she would be acting as Chair for the meeting in Luke Borwick's absence. No issues were raised in relation to the Note of the June meeting.

CH advised the group that Jimmy Muir had unfortunately passed away in February and said a few words in memory of him and his input to the Forum and the wide range of other local groups that he was involved with. The group agreed that Jimmy would be sadly missed and had been a valuable contributor to the group.

The group were advised that there is a new Wildlife Crime Officer, PC Donna Harrison and she will be attending Forum meetings instead of PC Frazer Mitchell. PC Mitchell has taken up a new post on the Isle of Arran and will hopefully continue working with the group through the development of the Wildlife and Outdoor Access leaflet.

Progress update

• Access and Code issues

The AO advised that group of the following issues:

- Kelburn Avenue, Fairlie – A complaint has been received from the residents regarding an increase in anti-social behaviour, which they believe to be associated with the route being open. This has been discussed with the Police. A proposal has also been put to Educational Services for the installation of a Multi Use Games Arena (MUGA) at the back of Keppernburn Avenue as the Police feel that this may provide diversionary activities for local youths and reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour. The group agreed that the AO should continue to monitor the situation and advise the group as appropriate.
- Maulside House, Beith - A complaint has been received in relation to access at Maulside House. The complainant advised the AO that they were approached by the landowner and asked not to use the route which runs from the beside the Auchengree Bridge near Longbar, past Maulside Mains to the Lodge at the end of Maulside House's driveway. The landowner subsequently contacted the AO to enquire as to whether or not the land is within the access rights. The AO undertook a site visit and is of the opinion that the land is within the access rights. The Legal Services Manager has also indicated that he is in agreement with this position. The group examined and discussed the situation and advised that it was their opinion that the route was within the access rights. It was agreed that the AO should advise the landowners and complainant accordingly, monitor the situation and update the group as appropriate.
- Seamill Mill, Seamill – The fence has now been removed in line with the Notice issued by the Council. There is an on going issue regarding ownership boundaries, which is in the process of being resolved by the two landowners and a complaint has been received that the new fence line affects the access rights. It was agreed that the AO should continue to investigate this issue with the landowners and advise the group as appropriate.
- Dundonald Links Golf Course – A further issue at regarding signage on the land adjacent to the course but not within Loch Lomond Golf Club's ownership has arisen. Efforts are still being made to contact the landowners as the company appears to have been dissolved. It was agreed that the AO should continue to investigate this situation and advise the group as appropriate.

CH advised the group that there is an issue regarding the signage on the Davies O' the Mill right of way near Beith, particularly in relation to the area near the Loanhead Quarry. It was agreed that the AO would investigate the issue and advise CH and the group accordingly.

SM highlighted the issues previously raised in relation to roads verges and drainage. SM requested a presentation from Roads and Transportation Services on issues in relation to minor roads, which will be arranged for the next appropriate meeting.

The AO provided an update on the Mr and Mrs Snowie versus Stirling Council and the Ramblers Association case. The action arose as a result of an appeal to the Sheriff Court against a Notice under section 14 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 served on Mr and Mrs Snowie by Stirling Council, which required them to open at least one pedestrian gate for access to the Estate. Mr and Mrs Snowie also applied for a declarator under section 28 of the Act that the land in question was excluded from the exercise of access rights. The Ramblers Association joined the action as an interested party, as second defenders.

The Sheriff's ruling was that only 12.5 acres of land around Boquhan House is to be classified as the privacy zone and therefore not within the responsible access rights under the Act. The AO advised that the full transcript of the case is available from <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/opinions/snowie.html> and Scotway's summary is available from <http://www.scotways.com/news/detail.php?newsid=121>

- **Projects 2008/09**

The AO advised that the budget for 2008/09 has been confirmed as £37,790 Revenue and £50,000 Capital and provided a summary of the existing commitments as follows:

Item	Amount
Community Outdoor Access Grant Scheme (COAGS)	£2,500
Go On Get Out There! Grant Scheme (GOGOT)	£1,500 (TBC)
Scotways and Arran Access Trust subscriptions	£300
Production of the Access and Biodiversity and Access and Cultural Heritage leaflets	£1,300
Production of the Adopted Core Paths Plan and associated materials (dependant the on outcome of the formal consultation).	£10,000 (TBC)
Total	£15,600

The AO advised that if these commitments were all to be met that this would leave £22,190 available for Revenue projects. The AO reminded the group that an element of the Revenue budget might be required to implement the Core Paths Plan if it is approved in the current financial year. The group agreed that the most appropriate method of disbursement of these funds would be decided once the outcome of the public consultation was known.

It was agreed that suggestions for projects should be made to the AO by mid June for discussion at the next meeting. The potential upgrade of NCN Route 73 through Ardeer Quarry at Stevenston to an all abilities standard was discussed and it was agreed that the potential for funding from Educational Services, Grounds Maintenance and Scottish Natural Heritage should be investigated by the AO.

The AO provided a summary of the Scottish Government's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places grant scheme, which aims to increase the use of sustainable transport and to promote healthier communities. Expression of interest applications were submitted in partnership with Roads and Transportation Services and local community groups for the:

- Construction of the remaining 440m of the Brodick Seafront Path from the Ferry Terminal to the public slip on the Isle of Arran
- Implementation of Sustrans' Report on Safer Routes to Kilwinning Station including the construction of a bridge, identification of safer routes to the station, improvement of signage throughout the town and additional cycle storage provision.
- Implementation of the Garnock Valley Active Travel Project including the creation of on and off road routes between the communities and railway stations, improvement of signage and production of active travel directions.
- Implementation of the Three Towns Active Travel Project including the development of an on-road cycle route along the former A78, creation of linkages between the route and the National Cycle Network Route 73, improvement of signage and addition of path information to the Ayrshire Paths website.

The group was advised that copies of the applications are available from the AO on request. The AO advised that the outcome of these applications should be known by mid May 2008. If successful more detailed applications will be required by early July 2008. It was agreed that the AO would advise the group accordingly once the outcome was known.

The AO advised the group that the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) has agreed to provide an update on its grant schemes to the Forum in the near future. It was agreed that an update on the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) schemes as a whole would be useful and that the AO should investigate this and advise the group accordingly.

Forum development

• Meetings for 2008

The AO advised that the dates and venues for the 2008 meetings had provisionally been set as follows and that all meeting times would be 3pm to 5.30pm:

- 27 June 2008 in Ardrossan Civic Centre
- 29 July 2008 in Ardrossan Civic Centre
- 29 September 2008 in Ardrossan Civic Centre
- 11 December 2008 in Ardrossan Civic Centre

These dates will be confirmed at the June meeting and representatives were requested to advise the AO of any dates that are unsuitable by mid June.

• Forum leaflet

As agreed at the November Meeting, the group were supplied with a copy of Fife Forum's leaflet. Discussion arose on the information that should be included in the North Ayrshire leaflet. The group agreed that they would like to use the leaflet to showcase responsible behaviour and include photographs demonstrating best practice. It was agreed that the AO would prepare the draft leaflet based on the Good Practice Guidance including a summary of:

- The function of the Forum
- Its history and composition
- The types of activities that the Forum is involved with and can offer assistance on
- Contact details for the AO as Secretary

It was agreed that the draft leaflet would be circulated to the group for discussion at the next meeting. The group agreed that the final leaflet should be available electronically and in paper form.

Core Path Planning

The AO advised that approximately 200 copies of the Plan have now been sent out of the Draft Core Paths Plan and 75 copies of the Environmental Report. The AO highlighted that additional copies were available for the group and to pass on to any potentially interested parties.

• Draft Core Paths Plan Formal Consultation

The AO advised that a number of responses had been received and no formal objections had been received to date. The AO highlighted that the aim was to resolve objections wherever possible prior to the end of the consultation. The group were reminded of the drop in sessions after the Forum meeting and the following day on Arran between 2pm and 6.30pm. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum might need to be extended or perhaps dedicated to examining the outcome of the consultation. Furthermore it was agreed that the July meeting should be dedicated to the core path planning process as well if a number of objections are received.

• Next stages

The AO advised that the next stages of the core path planning process would be dependant on the outcome of the consultation and that further information would be available at the next meeting. Volunteers were sought from the group to assist the AO if necessary with negotiations with objectors and to survey Council owned routes in the first instance. Anyone wishing to assist was requested to contact the AO by 20 June 2008. The AO advised that assistance has also been sought from the Council's Countryside Ranger Service and the Sustrans' Volunteer Rangers.

The group discussed the most appropriate types of signage for the core paths. It was agreed that it would be advantageous to have a logo for North Ayrshire Core Paths to enable users to differentiate between core paths and the wider path network on the ground. It was decided that the AO would investigate the potential to organise a

schools competition to design a logo for the Core Paths and advise the group accordingly at the next meeting. It was suggested that it might be best to organise a secondary schools competition but that guidance would be taken from Educational Services. The AO agreed to investigate potential sources of prizes for the competition including the opportunity for the winner to assist a graphic designer to convert their design into an electronic format.

AOCB

The following issue was raised under AOCB:

- **Dalry Walks Leaflet** – SM requested that a small section on responsible dog walking be incorporated in the Dalry Walks Leaflet when it is reprinted. It was agreed that the same information should be added to the Ayrshire Paths website and that this would be undertaken when the necessary resources were available.

Close of meeting

CH thanked the group for participating in the meeting and reiterated that the consultation is open until 16 June 2008. Representatives wishing to participate in or assist with the drop in session were invited to stay on after the meeting or to assist with the Arran Session on Friday.