

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum

Note of Statutory Forum Meeting

Friday 27 June 2008 – Ardrossan Civic Centre, Glasgow Street, Ardrossan

Present: Luke Borwick (Chair), Bruce Davidson, Louise Dickson, Rob Loney, Sandy Millar and Kate Sampson

Attending: Janice Gray (PfAP) and Louise Kirk (NAC)

Apologies: Annique Armstrong, Kenny Burns, David Clegg, Margaret Ferrier (NAC), PC Donna Harrison, Councillor Jean Highgate (Vice Chair), Jean Highet, Dick Sim and Gerard Tattersfield.

Welcome and introduction

Luke Borwick welcomed the group to the meeting. The group were reminded that the formal consultation on the Draft Core Paths Plan and Environmental Report had closed on 16 June 2008.

Progress update

- **Access and Code issues**

The AO advised the group of the following issues:

- Kelburn Avenue, Fairlie – A further complaint was received claiming that the residents had tightened the slip bolt making it difficult to open/close the gate. Furthermore it was claimed that the residents had been actively discouraging people from using the route. No further complaints to this effect have been received and the issue was discussed with the Community Police. The AO has also checked the gate, which was unlocked and easily opened/closed. The AO has written to the complainant advising them accordingly. The group agreed that the AO should continue to monitor the route on an ad hoc basis and that no further action was necessary.
- Easter Highfield, Dalry – A complaint has been received that a gate is blocking of a right of way between the A737 and the unclassified road between Highfield and Marshalland Bridge. The landowner claims that the gate is for the safety of their children and that they do not wish people to walk along the path for the same reason. There is a planning application adjacent to the site which includes the access track and it already serves two properties therefore it is unlikely that it would be within the privacy zone of the properties. The AO has submitted comments on the Planning Application regarding the route. The group advised that they would wish the RoW to be protected or and agreed alternative to be provided prior to the development.

RL highlighted that the gate at Hunterston Peninsula on proposed core path (NC61) makes it difficult for people to walk or cycle through. It was agreed that the AO would investigate this with British Energy and advise the group accordingly.

- **Projects 2008/09**

The AO advised that the works on National Cycle Network (NCN) routes 7 and 73 between Bogside and Bartonholm Civic Amenity Site at Irvine were now complete. Photographs were provided for the group's information. The group agreed that the project had been successful and would improve the overall accessibility of the routes.

The AO advised that Sustrans had confirmed the grant offer of £12,500 towards the feasibility study for the off-road replacement to the NCN Route 7 between Kilwinning and Kilbirnie. Roads and Transportation Services have confirmed that they will provide £6,250 towards the project, which would leave a balance of £6,250. The group agreed that this was a worthwhile exercise and to the Council funding it at this level from the Outdoor Access Budget. The group agreed that the AO should progress this project and advise the group accordingly at subsequent meetings

The AO highlighted that no additional projects had been raised for consideration at this meeting. The group agreed that it would be more appropriate to leave the agreement of projects until the next meeting, as there may be a better indication of the likelihood of adopting the CPP in the current financial year at that point.

RL highlighted that it would be beneficial to examine any gaps in the network and consider these for future projects. LB advised that it would be useful to examine the availability of parking particularly for equestrian users in relation to more remote routes. SM highlighted that it would be advantageous to identify potential loops off the NCN for short walks/cycles and health routes. It was agreed that these issues would be investigated at the next appropriate meeting.

Forum development

LB provided the group with a brief update on the Networking Session organised by the Paths for All Partnership (PfAP). The day provided a useful networking opportunity and consisted of a number of workshop sessions on a range of subjects relevant to Forums including: challenging anti-social behaviour, community action on paths and providing sound advice on privacy issues. LB highlighted that there had been significant discussion in relation to privacy zones and curtilage issues. It was agreed that the notes from the Networking Session would be circulated to the group when they become available.

• 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:

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

The group agreed that the July meeting would only be held if there were any difficulties with the negotiations in relation to the formal objections to the Draft Core Paths Plan or if the objections were resolved. It was agreed that the AO would advise the group accordingly in due course.

Discussion arose on the requirement for training or other activities. It was agreed that there were no specific needs at present but that this should be considered for next year's meetings and the potential to incorporate site visits into appropriate meetings should also be investigated.

The AO advised that group that the Local Access Forum and National Access Forum (NAF) Joint Meeting is to be held in Ayr on 17 September 2008. The NAF is seeking a volunteer from the Forum to provide a presentation on the North Ayrshire perspective at the meeting. KS agreed to provide the presentation and discussion arose on suitable topics. The group agreed that this would provide a valuable opportunity to convey messages to the NAF and obtain a strategic viewpoint.

The AO advised that at present there are only two guaranteed places for North Ayrshire but they hope to be able to make more available closer to the time when numbers are known. It was agreed that the AO and KS should attend and another place should be requested if possible. The AO agreed to advise interested parties from the group if additional places become available.

• Forum leaflet

The group discussed the draft leaflet issued with the Note of the May meeting. The target audience for the leaflet was discussed and it was agreed that this version of the leaflet would be suitable for those interested in joining the Forum. It was agreed that this version would be retained for circulation to potential Forum representatives. The need for a more concise and simplified version for general circulation was identified. The issue of reading ages and plain English was discussed and the group agreed that it would be advantageous to target the general leaflet in line with the national recommendations for these. LD volunteered to redraft the leaflet prior to the next meeting. It was agreed that this version would be examined in full at the next meeting.

Core Path Planning

The AO provided a summary of the responses received and the total number of comments and objections. A total of 31 responses were received on the Draft Core Paths Plan and Environmental Report. This was comprised of 26 completed Feedback Forms and 5 written submissions. The AO highlighted that a number of these responses were submitted on behalf of an agency or organisation and therefore represented the opinions of a number of individuals.

- **Draft Core Paths Plan Formal Consultation**

The group examined the comments and objections and it was agreed that these would remain confidential to ensure that any negotiations required were not prejudiced. The group agreed the responses to be included in the Consultation Report and that these would be made available on adoption of the Plan. Advice was also provided on potential resolutions for the objections received and volunteers were identified to aid the AO with the negotiations where necessary.

- **Next stages**

Volunteers were sought from the group to survey routes for the final Core Paths Plan. Volunteers were requested to advise the AO of the routes they wished to survey prior to the next meeting. The AO advised that assistance had been also sought from the North Ayrshire Countryside Ranger Service and Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Countryside Ranger Service. The AO requested that any comments on the survey form provided with the Note of the May meeting be submitted prior to the next meeting to allow the necessary changes to be made. It was agreed that maps and survey forms would be provided to volunteers at the next Forum meeting.

The group advised that they wished to congratulate the Council and in particular the AO for the progress made to date in relation to the Core Paths Plan. The AO advised that this success would not have been possible without the involvement and support of the Forum and that it truly had been a partnership effort.

AOCB

- **Funding Opportunities:** Discussion arose on funding opportunities available through the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). These include Rural Development Contracts and Leader. LB highlighted that there is only a Leader allocation available for the Isle of Arran and the Isle of Cumbrae however a bid is expected for Ayrshire in the near future. The AO advised that the Forestry Commission Scotland intended to organist information sessions for interested parties in the near future and agreed to advise the group accordingly. The group agreed that applications to these schemes should be investigated at the next appropriate meeting.
- **Single Outcome Agreements (SOA):** Discussion arose on SOA, which are agreements between the Scottish Government and each council setting out how each will work in the future towards improving national outcomes for the local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities. JG advised the group that SOA had come about as a result of the concordat between the Government and the Consortium of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). These put national priorities into a local context and provide a framework for future Council activities including the apportionment of resource. The group agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a presentation on the SOA from the Community Planning Partnership. It was agreed that the AO would arrange this for the next appropriate meeting.

Close of meeting

LB thanked the group for participating in the meeting. The group were reminded them that the next meeting is scheduled for 29 July 2008 and confirmation of this will be provided in the near future.