

North Ayrshire Outdoor Access Forum

Note of Statutory Forum Meeting

Wednesday 28 November 2007 - Saltcoats Town Hall, Countess Street, Saltcoats

Present: Luke Borwick, Jean Highet, Councillor Jean Highgate, Rob Loney, Sandy Millar, Jimmy Muir, Kate Sampson, Dick Sim

Attending: Margaret Ferrier, Louise Kirk (both NAC) and Charles Woodward (CMRP)

Apologies: Annique Armstrong, Kenny Burns, Gordon Clark (NAC), David Clegg, Bruce Davidson, Louise Dickson, Janice Gray (PfAP), PC Frazer Mitchell and Gerard Tattersfield

Welcome

Luke Borwick (LB) welcomed the group to the meeting and enquired if there were any matters to be raised in relation to the Note of the June meeting. No issues were raised.

Progress update

• Annual General Meeting

The AO highlighted that there was a good turn out at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and that a wide range of organisations participated and provided information stands. LB thanked the speakers for their input and advised that copies of the presentations are available on request from the AO. The AO advised that the AGM participants included a wide range of the general public and local organisations such as the Cunninghame Ramblers and Sustrans Volunteer Rangers.

The AO informed the group that the participants welcomed the launch of the Interim Draft Core Paths Plan (IDCPP) and no specific issues were raised on the day in relation to the Plan. The issues raised at the meeting related to the implementation of the Plan, resources for access, educational programmes and addressing irresponsible behaviour.

• Access and Code issues

The AO advised that:

- As a result of the meeting Arran Estates agreed to the replacement of the gate on the Kilmory Square Path and the AAT will organise their replacement as discussed at the June meeting. The group agreed that this was an appropriate solution to the issue.
- The landowner at Seamill Mill has constructed the seaward section of the fence along the route therefore preventing access along this stretch of the route. The Planning Committee agreed on 2007 that further action would be taken if this happened. A letter was issued to the landowner requesting the removal of this section of fence within 7 days. This request was not complied with and a Notice has been issued under Section 14(2) of the Act requiring the removal of the obstruction. The group requested that they were kept up to date in relation to this issue and agreed that this was the most appropriate course of action and inline with their previous recommendations.
- The complainant in the Kelburn Avenue, Fairlie issue has advised the Council that they are dissatisfied with the outcome achieved and may pursue it through the formal complaints procedure. The route is being monitored on an informal and basis by the AO and the Enforcement Officer. To date the gate has been found to be open on inspection therefore no further action is proposed. The group highlighted that they continue to support the Council's position and are in agreement with the actions taken to date.

- An issue has been raised in relation to sea canoeing, landing on the Holy Island and wild camping. The complainant has advised that a couple of Island residents requested that they leave and advised that the land was outwith the access rights. The AO has contacted the Holy Island organisation but there is a change over in management at present and the AO is in the process of contacting the new Manager. The group requested that the AO keep them informed of any progress.
- A number of small issues have been raised in relation to land ownership, signage and a number of issues of anti-social behaviour on Council owned routes. These have been addressed on a case-by-case basis by the AO.

Issues in relation to the recent outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) were discussed. SM highlighted that it would be beneficial if users had an understanding of the impacts of the disease. LB advised that a wealth of information is provided to landowners/managers and that it would be useful if this could be disseminated to access users. It was agreed that methods of doing so should be investigated by the AO.

A query was also raised as to whether or not there is a right of way across Western Gables Golf Club in Irvine. The AO agreed to investigate this for the next meeting. MF highlighted that the Council welcomes the Forum's input and strength of involvement in all of these matters.

• **Projects 2007-08**

The group were provided with an update on the Arran Access Trust's Paths and Tracks Action Plan proposal raised at the April meeting to aid discussion on the disbursement of the remaining approximately £7,000 of the Revenue Budget. Discussion arose on the costs and benefits of using consultants and the importance of involving landowners/managers from the early stages of the Plan's development. CW highlighted that the preparation of Plans and Feasibility Studies are tried and tested methods of securing funding packages for works.

The group advised that they were agreeable to the remaining funds being used for this provided that the remainder of the funding package was secured by the Trust. It was agreed that the AO would report back on this at the next appropriate meeting.

The AO advised that funding has been secured for the following training sessions:

- Effective Fundraising – £1800 has been secured from the Community Planning Partnership's Community Engagement Support Fund to provide free training to local community and voluntary groups. This aims to provide these groups with the knowledge and skills to prepare funding applications. It is envisaged that this training will be in March 2008. SNH and the Community Recycling Network have agreed to participate in the event. Flyers will be circulated before Christmas and early in the New Year.
- Golf Course Management and Outdoor Access – SNH have offered £400 funding to support this partnership project with East and South Ayrshire Councils. Bogside Golf Course has agreed to host the event. Vyv Wood-Gee will provide the training with input from SNH and the three Councils. The AO highlighted that the SGU has advised that in principle they are agreeable to assisting with the event. Two volunteers from the Forum were sought to assist with the event – LB agreed to Chair the session and RL volunteered to assist.

The AO advised that works for the upgrade of NCN 7/73 have been agreed with Sustrans and an Engineer has been appointed. Level surveys are currently being commissioned. Sustrans and Transportation and Roads Service may be able to provide additional funds for this project enabling additional improvements to be undertaken. It was agreed that confirmation of this funding and further information on the upgrade would be provided by the AO at the next appropriate meeting.

LB requested that the group consider any suggestions they would like to make for projects in 2008/09 and advise the AO accordingly for the next meeting.

Forum development

- **Outcome of Committee Report**

The AO advised that the Planning Committee approved the appointments to the Forum on 20 June 2007 and the Full Council subsequently ratified this on 27 June 2007. New representatives have been advised of their appointment in writing. It was agreed that an updated mailing list would be provided at the next appropriate meeting.

The AO enquired as to whether the group felt there were any additional training needs or information needs e.g. copies of plan, policies or other documents that should be addressed. It was agreed that any suggestions should be fed back to the AO by the next meeting. The AO advised that Ardrossan Civic Centre will re-open in March 2008 and the group agreed that it would be advantageous to return there for future meetings where practical. It was agreed that the AO would identify provisional dates for 2008 prior to the next meeting.

- **Forum Leaflet**

The group discussed the appropriateness of producing a Forum leaflet similar to that produced by Fife Access Forum. The group agreed that the leaflet would be appropriate and useful and could be included on the Council's website and distributed to local groups. It was agreed that the AO would investigate the issues in relation to Data Protection for providing contact details for the Forum on the leaflet and advise the group accordingly. Volunteers were sought from the group to assist with the development and were asked to let the AO know by the December meeting.

Core Path Planning

- **Consultation responses**

The AO highlighted that a reasonable number of responses have been obtained and that these are still arriving. The AO also advised that a presentation on the IDCPP was provided presentation to the North Ayrshire Access Panel and North Ayrshire branch of the National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFUS). As a result of these presentations and interest in the Interim Draft Plan, a number of site visits have been undertaken with landowners/managers.

The AO provided copies of the most recent People's Panel Survey for the group's reference and requested that they considered whether any amendments should be made to the questions for the next survey. Comments on this were requested by the next meeting (5 December 2007) to enable the AO to feed them back to the Community Planning Partnership.

- **Next Stages**

The group agreed that the next meeting on 5 December 2007 should be dedicated to core paths planning and to examine the feedback from the consultation on the IDCPP in full at that stage. JH tendered her apologies for the meeting. It was agreed that the AO would summarise the responses obtained for consideration and that maps would be produced highlighting any proposed changes to the IDCPP.

The group discussed the potential requirement for site visits to clarify any issues in relation to potential core paths. It was agreed that the AO would organise these as appropriate with the relevant representatives from the Forum.

The AO provided the group with an overview of the PfAP training session on Core Paths Plan Local Inquiries. The presumption is at present that the Inquiries will be considered by written submission except in exceptional circumstances where site visits and hearings will be undertaken. The guidance at

present from Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DEPA) the previously Scottish Executive Inquiry Reporters Unit (SEIRU) is as follows:

- No more than 3 months for the resolution of objections after the 12 week formal consultation
- If objections are not resolved an inquiry will be undertaken (on Ministers recommendation) within 6 months
- Recommend that sufficient effort is made to resolve objections as far as practical

Copies of the Code of Practice for Local Inquiries into CPP were also provided and highlight some changes to the guidance provided within the Guidance to Local Authorities under Section 27 of the Act.

AOCB

The following issues were raised under AOCB:

- Expenses – The group requested that a definite response be obtained from SNH and NAC on the matter of Forum expenses.
- Liaison with Roads – The group requested that a liaison meeting be organised with Roads and Transportation Services including an update on the Local Transport Strategy.
- Arran Access Trust – LB highlighted that he has been invited to speak at the Trust's AGM on 6 December 2007

Close of meeting

LB thanked the group for attending the meeting and reminded them to return any outstanding consultation feedback forms to the AO. Thanks were also given to the group for their support at the AGM and through the consultation process.