

CONFIRMED MINUTES

National Access Forum – 40th meeting

Battleby
28th Sept 2016

Present:

		Organisation
1.	John Thomson	Convenor National Access Forum NAF
2.	Rob Garner	Secretary National Access Forum NAF
	David Henderson-Howat	Convenor Elect
3.	Jake Swindells	British Association for Shooting & Conservation (BASC)
4.	Kevin Lafferty	Forestry Commission Scotland FCS
5.	Paul Timms	Cycling UK
6.	Lois Bayne-Jardine	Historic Houses Association Scotland (HHAS)
7.	Stephen Jenkinson	Kennel Club / Scottish Kennel Club
8.	Angus Duncan	Local Authorities contact
9.	Andrea Partridge	Mountaineering Scotland (MS)
10.	David Clyne	National Park Authorities (CNPA)
11.	Duncan Orr-Ewing	RSPB Scotland (RSPB)
12.	Rona Gibb	Paths for All (PfA)
13.	Helen Todd	Ramblers Scotland (RS)
14.	Eddie Palmer, Mary Conacher	Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)
15.	Ellen Huis	Scottish Government (SG) Rural & Environment Directorate
16.	Anne Gray, Karen Ramoo	Scottish Land & Estates
17.	Eileen Stuart (pm)	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
18.	Roger Scrutton	Scottish Sports Association (SSA)
19.	George Menzies	Scotways
20.		

Item 1 – Welcome – the Convenor opened the meeting with a welcome to all attending, and to David Henderson-Howat who has been elected to take over as Convenor from the new year.

Apologies: Richard Cooke - Assoc of Deer Management Groups (ADMG); Riddell Graham - VisitScotland; Helene Mauchlen British Horse Society Scotland (BHSS); Simon Pilpel Local Access Forums (LAF) contact; Jamie Smart NFU Scotland (NFUS); Dave Horrocks -Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE); Gillian Kyle- sportscotland; Gillian Brymer - Wild Scotland

Item 2 – Minutes, action points and Matters Arising from previous meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting (18th May 2016) were approved without any amendments.

2. Action points –

Action Point 39/1- please contact the convenor on any outstanding issues for his attention. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/2 – members are invited to join in with the online calendar and to add their own communications activity to the shared planner. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/3 - David Clyne will circulate information on the CNPA animation, and on signage supply. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/4 – Secretary to circulate copy of the SNH report on the spring 2016 campaign to raise awareness of livestock-worrying. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/5 – Secretary to further re-edit and finalise the ‘Managing Informal Camping Guidance’ to address points raised in discussion, selection of photos, etc and to put finalised version onto the website. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/6 – SPARC via the Secretary to supply details of wildlife officers to Mountaineering Scotland. *Discharged*

Action Point 39/7 – all to look out for opportunities to spread information on SPARC activity and objectives, and on combatting rural crime. *Discharged*

Action point 39/8 – Secretary to contact the Registers for Scotland, and to bring a report to next meeting. *Discharged*

Action point 39/9 – Secretary to arrange a small group meeting to consider next steps over core paths mapping and OS, and any members wishing to take part to contact the Secretary in the next week. *Discharged*

Action point 39/10 - Full and Corresponding member organisations are invited to consider and submit any nomination for the next Convenor on the forms provided to the Secretary, by or on Friday 19th August. *Discharged*

Item 3 - Reports from Convenor and Secretary

3. The Convenor had nothing to report apart from the core paths mapping working group which will be covered later.

4. The Secretary reported on three items:

a) He went to the A9 Dualling consultative meeting held in Perth on 27th May, which was a well-attended meeting with many interest groups represented. An access strategy for non-motorised users had been published on the day of the meeting on the Transport Scotland website and is available to view there. Although there is not to be a full length non-motorised route there is a substantial proposed provision for non-motorised users, on which detailed comments and suggestions for improvements were made through workshops during the day. Overall there appears to be a reasonable strategic approach and full involvement from local interests, including the relevant local access forums, so it was recommended that further detailed involvement from the NAF is not required, and that was agreed.

b) There had been correspondence and discussion with Eddie Palmer (SCA) about the problems arising for canoeists from the removal or blocking of parking areas near the River Spey in the Ballindalloch and Carron Bridge areas. The removal of laybys has arisen for various reasons, including new forestry near the river, and in another case for dealing with HGV traffic near a distillery, and has been carried out in different cases by private owners and also by roads authority in the latter case, but in combination is having significant cumulative impact on local canoe access. In discussion, several members recognised the important implications of parking provisions, and highlighted the degree to which the introduction of new fencing for forestry or deer management purposes, and indeed other roadside changes, could restrict parking opportunities and thereby effectively inhibit access. Andrea Partridge noted that Mountaineering Scotland receives more queries over parking than over walking. It was welcomed that the Moray Local Access Forum had been consulted

on these issues, although with some debate on the comments given, and clear that issues can arise from displacement of parking to other locations as well as removal of parking sites. The Convenor concluded that the close relationship between parking provision and access opportunities that exists in many circumstances must be recognised, although the national forum is not in a position to advise on the handling of any problems to which this relationship may give rise in specific locations.

c) He noted that a legal appeal case, the Drumlean case in the LLTNP, is currently being heard at the Scottish Sheriff Appeal Court, so its judgements will have national-level relevance. The case is currently in progress, but there are indications that its findings in due course may include topics of locked gates, pre- or post-Act timings, referencing of the Outdoor Access Code, and considerations on the purpose of obstructions.

Item 4 – National aspects of core paths mapping

4(a) – Core paths on the Spatial Hub data mapping system – further to the update at the last meeting (39/item 9b), this paper noted that ‘Spatial Hub’ shared geographic data system was subsequently launched in July in a limited version. The twelve datasets include one on ‘Paths and core paths’, and the progress table showed that twenty access authority’s core paths are currently loaded, with 12 still awaited.

4(b) Mapping sub-group meeting 26th July - further to that same item at the last meeting, a sub-group met on 26th July to review and discuss the position over core paths being shown on OS maps. The subgroup updated on the current position further to the NAF paper from Scottish Government, on the letter received by NAF from OS, the recent launch of the Spatial Hub, the updated position with Registers of Scotland (see below) and recent correspondence. The working group agreed actions for Helen Todd to draft a business case paper (see below), and for the Convenor to contact VisitScotland (see below).

4(c) – Core paths and the Ordnance Survey: the business case – this paper has been prepared following the sub-group meeting and was presented by Helen Todd, including the economic value of outdoor recreation to Scotland, the value to recreation users of having core paths shown on maps, and illustrations of an example showing an OS extract with and without core paths shown.

4(d) – VisitScotland - Following the Convenor’s contact after the working group meeting, the chief Executive of VisitScotland Malcolm Roughead OBE had written a letter to Nigel Clifford, Chief Exec of Ordnance Survey. The paper provided a copy of that emailed letter, and the meeting agreed that it represented a very helpful intervention.

4(e) - In discussion on next steps over these topics, there was a welcome for these developments, and questions on some aspects. David Clyne was supportive overall, but questioned the degree to which the OS would need to ground survey path conditions, as they had for some mapping in the national park. Paul Timms and Andrea Partridge noted that full ground surveying would probably be unlikely and, as with rights of way, they could use a standard disclaimer on path condition. The position over ‘aspirational’ core paths was raised, with discussion noting that they are usually shown on a separate data layer so can be separated out, but there might be some discussion with access authority to clarify. George Menzies stressed that the Ordnance Survey should be showing rights of way in Scotland, which they do not at the moment, and that showing vindicated rights of way at the least would be desirable and should be part of the request that we put to OS. Anne Gray noted that the mapping of each local/access authority’s core paths plan was a local map rather than part of a national system, but agreed with Helen’s paper that it is important for users, with some concern for land managers if any paths were not walkable. Eileen Stuart considered that many of these aspects had been aired previously and moved forward with,

and that SNH is clear that core paths on OS mapping will help core paths to fulfil their intended purposes. Kevin Lafferty recognised the continuing limitations on investment for paths, and issues on recreational use of forestry haulage routes.

The Convenor summarised discussions that the Forum's collective view remained that core paths should be shown on OS maps, subject to some checking with access authorities, and that there was a good case to show at least some rights of way, and essentially we want to encourage people to get outdoors on good routes, so action points should be –

AP 40/1 - any further comments on the Ramblers Scotland paper to be sent to Helen within two weeks.

AP 40/2 – consider in due course any response from OS received by VisitScotland

AP 40/3 – a further meeting of the subgroup to be arranged, probably in December, to include Scotways

AP 40/4 – further contact to be maintained with the Ordnance Survey meanwhile, to help in addressing any issues and practicalities in progressing matters.

4(f) – Land Registers of Scotland and core paths – Martin Tyson was unfortunately unable to attend to present his paper, but the Secretary introduced it briefly, noting the meeting he'd had with RoS on 25th July. The paper explains the statutory framework within which the RoS operates, including the requirements and restrictions on what information relating to encumbrances and off-register rights can be included in registered deeds. The RoS will update its website in relation to core paths and path orders, as has been discussed with them.

Duncan Orr-Ewing noted that RSPB is going through this land registration process, including servitudes, but it can be costly in legal fees, with variable levels of certainty and potentially insurance needs.

AP 40/5 Secretary to respond further to Land Registers of Scotland on the updating of their website information.

4(g) - Government Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) allocations to local authorities – Ellen Huis spoke to her paper on the GAE calculations used by government to allocate the annual access-related funding sum of £8.1m among local authorities. It was emphasised that this is not about budgets or spending targets, but simply an allocation methodology in distributing the overall levels of resources to be made available. To date the GAE calculation has utilised each area's population size and its off-road path length using the Scottish Paths Record. However, the methodology is required to use the 'latest data available' and it is recognised that the SPR is based on data from before 2006, and so is not as current as the core paths data, now that all areas have their core paths plans adopted. This paper provided an opportunity for discussion on whether that is an appropriate measure, to inform these considerations in principle.

The Convenor noted that this funding supports a range of access activities by local authorities, not simply path work, so a broader base may be appropriate. Rona Gibb suggested combining the SPR data and the core paths data, rather than using either individually, and possibly also using data from the access authority monitoring data which the department gathers annually. Steve Jenkinson suggested it would be useful to monitor the effects of different methods, to aim at using the measure which best encourages the proactive authorities to do more. Paul Timms cautioned that increased data tends to increase complexity without necessarily increasing accuracy. In conclusion, the Convenor recognised that since comments are needed within a week we can for now usefully suggest that a combined measure as discussed is recommended. In the longer term, it should be recognised that the funding concerned is in part a replacement for that which SNH used to provide to local authorities for access-related work, and so deeper assessment would be

recommended to find measures which effectively encourage activity as well as policy and strategy driven working in this sector.

AP40/6 - Secretary to email views expressed in discussion for a combined measure to the Scottish government.

Item 5 – Lyme disease mapping and national woodland inventory

Kevin Lafferty and Sarah Morton of the University of the Highlands and Islands spoke to a powerpoint presentation on recent research and community engagement initiatives on tackling Lyme disease, which is a widespread problem especially in the Highlands. There are differing symptoms and responses, but it is important that people know what to look out for as it can be serious if not treated. A range of partnership approaches are being trialled, with handy information check cards, use of games and activities, and a website at www.checkforticks.org.uk. A smartphone app has also been developed with advice and interactive maps, but its availability will depend on finding funding. FCS and Forest Research are planning a pilot campaign in Spring 2017 to raise awareness, and outlets like the Communications Calendar on Knowledge Hub will be used to ensure collaborative promotions.

In discussion, Lois Bayne-Jardine enquired about the reasons behind the recent increases, in the incidence of the disease. In response it was suggested that it may result from a combination of factors: climate change creating a longer breeding season, possibly less use of chemicals in sheep-dip and reduction in burning management, possibly better reporting, and perhaps reduced grazing leaving ranker vegetation. Steve Jenkinson wondered whether there was any correlation with vets reporting of incidence in dogs, where treatment tends to be different, and although some research had done at University of Bristol, more information and cross-reporting on this would be useful. Duncan Orr Ewing hoped these messages will reach the target groups involved, and the Visitor Safety in the Countryside network may be of assistance. Sarah Morton confirmed that research shows the most at risk groups are the under-5s, young males and males over 60, but there is no vaccine available at present. Kevin Lafferty also explained that latest edition of the 'National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees' is now available through FCS publications, with data on 9,000 sq. mile blocks including recreational use data, so do access if interested.

AP 40/7 – Kevin Lafferty will share/circulate further details on Lyme disease research, target audiences and advice.

Item 6 – Communications update: shared comms calendar on Knowledge Hub

Theresa Kewell SNH provided an update, noting that 25 members are using the facility at present, and encouraging others to join, even if not entering data, to receive the information. The latest responsible camping campaign works through the 'Young Scot Rewards' scheme, which reaches over 45,000 young users through social media. It included an email to more than that number on 28th July, flipcards on Facebook which generate rewards points for reading, a competition with camping gear prizes gaining 620 entries, and a camping video shot in the LLTNP watched by over 10,000 people.

AP 40/8 – Theresa Kewell to issue further invitations to join the Comms Calendar.

Item 7 – Uplands: Scoping an Uplands Vision –

Eileen Stuart spoke to the SNH paper, emphasising that the current process is not developing the vision at this stage, but rather considering what it would need to address, how it could develop, and who should be involved. A set of key questions are raised, and Eileen confirmed that there will be plenty of scope for further comments. The immediate task stems from the Land Use Strategy, and this scoping is a preliminary task without any

commitment over next stages. Several members will be involved as individual organisations, but this is an opportunity for all to be aware, with an open invitation for views.

In discussion, George Menzies recalled involvement in 2010-11 early stages of the Land Use Strategy under Richard Lochhead, but the 2016 version appears to be shrinking down from that big vision, when what it actually needs is a broad landscape perspective especially over the recent spread of windfarms, and fresh understanding of why people go to the uplands. Duncan Orr Ewing said that RSPB will be commenting itself, but have recently produced research over conflicts in upland land management where some aspects like forestry have strategies while others like moorland do not, so a vision is needed. Anne Gray agreed with that, and emphasised the importance of the uplands. Helen Todd mentioned upland paths works, which are much needed and require improved funding and support. Eileen Stuart said SNH will note these comments on the upland landscapes, the importance of recreational use and access, and the key importance of such landscape.

Item 8 – New draft Code for Snow-sport Tourers

Andrea Partridge (Mountaineering Scotland) spoke to her paper explaining there are two main audiences for this Code: the ski tourers themselves, and the piste and ski centre operators in order to better understand the relevant access rights and activities. All these parties had been very positive towards the idea of a code and helpful in preparing it. Once finalised, it will be circulated widely.

Helen Todd welcomed the draft as a good idea, but suggested it needs to explain access rights clearly and simply, and David Clyne and Rona Gibb suggested that infographics could help in that, and possibly a small credit-card size folded layout. Some particular drafting suggestions were made over dog control, status of the FIS code and insurance issues, and the draft code was broadly welcomed.

Item 9 - Any Other Business –

- Kevin Lafferty would like to bring a paper on Enduro mountain biking to the next meeting, as numbers of events are increasing and creating a variety of issues. He also noted the government's current consultation on the Future of Forestry in Scotland, which might generate comments on where the access remit should lie in future.
- Helen Todd highlighted that Ramblers Scotland's new Pathwatch app will be launched on 8th October
- Rona Gibb noted good Herald newspaper coverage yesterday reporting that 69% of people are walking regularly for recreation, up 5% on previous figure, especially marked in the over 75's; the PfA Step-Count Challenge is now on, and PfA is now 20 years old.

Item 10 – Next NAF Convenor –

On behalf of Eileen Stuart, the Secretary spoke to the paper and explained the nomination and selection process undertaken. The result of that process is that David Henderson Howat is the candidate for election.

David gave a brief talk on how the past 40 years had seen lots of changes in the use of the outdoors, with changes for instance in car travel, outdoor equipment and activities, and not least in legal rights which have created a very different experience, already clearly evident if you cross the border and undertake similar kinds of activity in England. Even just in the course of today's meeting we see the important topics and issues that are being tackled by the Forum, from core paths, sheriff court cases, parking issues and implications, health and

well-being, big landscapes, and its economic importance as in Helen's paper, so there is much to be taken care of.

After a short discussion, the full members present approved and agreed that David be elected to the convenorship, to take effect from Jan 1st 2017.

AP 40/9 – David Henderson Howat is elected Convenor, to take over from 1st Jan 2017.

Finally, John Thomson was given a card and presentation, and Kevin Lafferty expressed all the Forum's thanks to John for his diplomacy, patience, enthusiasm – and long commuting – over the years, with warm thanks and very best wishes.

Date of Next Meetings -

The next Forum meeting will take place on - **Wed 25th January 2017**

The subsequent meetings will be - NAF/LAFs meeting - **Fri 17th March 2017**

NAF meeting - **Wed 17th May 2017**

Close - The Convenor thanked all those attending, and closed the meeting.

Summary action points:

AP 40/1 - any further comments on the Ramblers Scotland paper to be sent to Helen within two weeks.

AP 40/2 – consider in due course any response from OS received by Visitscotland

AP 40/3 – a further meeting of the subgroup to be arranged, probably in December, to include Scotways

AP 40/4 – further contact to be maintained with the Ordnance Survey meanwhile, to help in addressing any issues and practicalities in progressing matters.

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