

National Access Forum Update – Sept 2016

Summary of main topics - National Access Forum meeting 28th Sept 2016

Election of next Convenor

The meeting elected David Henderson Howat to be the next Forum Convenor, and will take over from John Thomson at the new year. David was nominated by Forestry Commission Scotland, and was welcomed to attend throughout this final meeting chaired by John Thomson to get to know members.

Mapping Core Paths

The meeting discussed a range of topics around the mapping of core paths, and the potential for core paths being shown on OS maps. There was an update on the recently-launched shared mapping in the Local Government 'Spatial Hub', bringing together and publishing a number of additional national geographic data-sets <http://www.spatialhub.scot> which will include core paths mapping. There was discussion of various outputs from the meeting in July of a Forum sub-group on such mapping, including a draft paper setting out the business case for showing core paths on OS maps, and a letter recently sent to the OS by the Chief Executive of VisitScotland. It was agreed that the sub-group will have a further meeting in December to progress this topic.

Core paths in calculating GAE allocations

Scottish Government presented a paper for comments over whether, in principle, the length of adopted core paths in each local authority area may be an appropriate measure to utilise within their calculation of the land access element of the annual Grant Aided Expenditure allocations to councils, now that all areas have their core paths plan. Various comments and suggestions were raised, with particular suggestions that a core paths measure might be used in combination with other available measures of path length, and possibly also reflect other access authority duties and activities.

Land Registration in Scotland

A paper from Martin Tyson of the Registers of Scotland (RoS) explained aspects of how the Land Register of Scotland operates in registering who owns land and property in Scotland, and current activity to complete the Land Register and make it more transparent and efficient. This includes preparation of a new online information service for data and mapping called ScotLIS. This item arose from discussion at the previous meeting on the recording of 'off-register' rights. The paper noted that only specifically authorised information can be attached to titles, so information on path orders and any rights of ways can be noted as off-register rights, while other rights like access rights and core paths cannot be included, although it is planned for the RoS website to note and provide a link about core paths.

Lyme Disease

A presentation from the University of the Highlands and Islands described recent research and planned campaigns on raising awareness and reducing risks of ticks and Lyme disease in the Highlands - without dissuading people from using outdoor spaces. This will use advisory information and community engagement on how to check for ticks and what to do,

including risk maps and smartphone apps. There was some discussion on why this problem seems to be increasing, and on possible complementary working by doctors and vets in relation to humans and dogs. (If you would like a copy of the powerpoint please contact me as below).

National Woodlands Inventory

The Forestry Commission has published its latest version of the National Woodlands Inventory including data on recreational use, which is available as open data at - http://data.forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/bf3cc6cf3a0642c388cb019d4a090b6e_0

Snowsport Touring Code of Conduct

Mountaineering Scotland presented the draft code they have been preparing about snowsports touring activity in and near managed ski areas, to help both users and managers understand and act responsibly. This code aims to provide guidance where access rights do and do not apply generally, and how different situations should be managed, and has seen good co-operation among the Association of Scottish Ski Areas and the Ski Touring Advisory Group and their members in its preparation.

Communications: Shared Communication Calendar –

The group page can be found on <https://khub.net/home> and registration to join in is free if new to it. The calendar can also be used to post forthcoming events, contribute to discussions on the forum, write a blog or upload documents. (If you have any queries please contact Theresa.Kewell@snh.gov.uk in the first instance).

Other topics –

Topics raised during the meeting included concerns over the loss of certain parking areas by the Spey, and proceedings this week in the Scottish Sheriff Appeal Court over the section 14 appeal case in the Trossachs, touching on locked gates, signs, etc. The meeting closed with warm thanks and appreciation to John Thomson for his four years in the convenorship.

Annual Joint NAF – LAFs meeting -

Although usually held in November previously, the next joint NAF-LAFs meeting will be held on March 17th 2017, so please note the date.

Future NAF meetings –

The next Forum meeting will take place at Battleby on Wednesday **25th January 2017**,
The Annual Joint NAF – LAFs meeting will take place on **Friday 17th March 2017**.
The following Forum meeting will be on Wed **17th May 2017**..

For more information or comment on any of the above topics, please contact the NAF Secretary - Rob Garner (robgarner.NAFsec@snh.gov.uk ; 0131 316 2682). Further information can be found on the National Access Forum pages at http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum/ .
