

Nomination and Election of Convenor of the National Access Forum, 2017-18

Purpose

1. To report on the process for selecting the Convenor of the Forum for 2017-2018, and to approve the proposed candidate.

Action

2. Members are invited to:

- **note the terms of the Operating Principles regarding the Convenorship arrangements**
- **note the valid receipt of two nominations, and the subsequent withdrawal of one nominee**
- **to approve the election of the proposed nominee as the next Convenor of the Forum 2017-18**

Background

3. Operating Principles

The Operating Principles state:

B4. The Forum will be chaired by an independent Convenor. The Secretary will invite nominations for this role from all full and corresponding members, accompanied by a short summary of the candidate's background and confirmation of their willingness to stand. The Convenor will be elected by the full members of the Forum using the Alternative Vote (AV) system.

B6. The Convenor's term will run for two years, subject to review, with the possibility of extension for a further two years.

4. John Thomson has served as the Convenor to the Forum 2013-2016, since his election in November 2012, including an extension period during 2015-16, and is due to conclude at the end of calendar year 2016. The May 2016 meeting of the Forum agreed that the next convenor will be elected at the final NAF meeting of 2016 (28th September 2016), with the post commencing from Jan 2017, and approved the invitation of nominations from full and corresponding member bodies.

Report

5. Nominations for the position were invited from all full and corresponding member organisations and nomination forms were circulated, with nominations to be submitted to the Secretary by Friday August 19th 2016.

6. Two valid nominations were submitted and duly received by that deadline, one proposed by the Forestry Commission Scotland, and the other proposed by the Scottish Outdoor Access Network. However, subsequently the SOAN nominee wrote to confirm that with regret she had to withdraw her candidacy, due to other commitments that had emerged.

7. The remaining nomination is for David Henderson-Howat, and his nomination papers are attached, comprising a summary of relevant skills and experience, the statement in support of the nomination by the proposer, and a statement from the nominee.

8. The full members are asked to approve the proposed candidate to be elected (unopposed) to the convenorship.

R Garner, Secretary

ANNEX - Nomination form duly submitted :

Nomination for the role of Convenor, National Access Forum

Nominating body and proposer

This must either be a full or corresponding member of the forum

Forestry Commission Scotland

Proposer: Kevin Lafferty

Name of nominee

David Henderson-Howat

Summary of the skills and experience of the nominee

Please relate this to the job description and do not exceed 400 words

During my 33 year career with the Forestry Commission I was heavily engaged in issues relating to **outdoor access at both the practical and policy level**. For instance, as Forest District Manager in the Trossachs and Loch Lomond area, I sought to encourage a wide range of recreational activities - but frequently had to find creative and practical ways to resolve potential conflicts, both with other work such as timber harvesting and between different types of recreational use. Later, at the policy level, I was - for example - closely involved in developing the first *Scottish Forestry Strategy*, which identified priorities that included woodland recreation near towns (leading to the *Woods in Around Towns* programme) and greater community involvement in forestry. I was also a member of the Land Reform Group whose 1999 Report paved the way for provisions in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 that created statutory rights of access.

I have considerable experience of **chairing groups of stakeholders with different interests in the land**. For example, as Chief Conservator of Forests in Scotland, I convened the Scottish Forestry Forum, which brought together bodies representing economic, environmental, recreational and community interests; and, while on secondment to the Scottish Government as Head of the Agriculture and Rural Development Division, I chaired the multi-stakeholder group - including representatives of farmers, crofters and Environment Link - that advised on farm support to less favoured areas. In addition, I spent a year at the United Nations, working in a multi-cultural environment where the emphasis was very much on consensual decision-making.

Since retiring from the Forestry Commission in 2013, I have continued to play a **leadership role** as President of the Institute of Chartered Foresters and as Chair of the Forestry Commission's Regional Forestry Forum for Central Scotland. I am also a member of the Woodland Trust's Advisory Committee for Scotland and a member of my local Community Council (where an emerging issue is the disbursement of community funds from a wind farm).

I continue to work, as an **independent consultant** for the United Nations and for the Food & Agriculture Organisation, where a recent task was to develop the text for *State of the World's Forest 2016* - a publication that addresses the challenge of reducing global deforestation without compromising the UN Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger and achieving food security.

Statement in support of the nomination by proposer

This can be provided by either the nominating body or the proposer. Please do not exceed 400 words.

I have known David Hederson-Howat in a professional capacity for 10 years he is an eminent environment professional who is highly respected by his colleagues and associates. David is a gentleman and I believe his knowledge, experience and personable demeanour make him an ideal candidate for Convenor of the National Access Forum.

He has exceptional leadership and negotiation skills developed and fine-tuned over a successful 33 year career with the Forestry Commission. David lead Forestry Commission Scotland for several years overseeing and directing forest policy and practice, dealing with a wide range of land management and access issues on a day-to-day basis.

David was a member of the original Land Reform Group whose 1999 Report paved the way for provisions in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 that lead to the creation of statutory rights of access in Scotland. He was directly involved in a lot of the early discussion and debate on Land Reform that fed into the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. He is proud of Scotland's outdoor access rights and would adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach as Convenor.

He has plenty of experience chairing groups of multi-disciplinary stakeholders at both a UK and international level. He has worked closely with landowners and managers, access authorities and recreation bodies in Scotland.

During his career David was seconded to Scottish Government and subsequently understands how government departments work, how legislation is drafted and reviewed. This knowledge and in-sight would benefit the National Access Forum.

When David was leading Forestry Commission Scotland he regularly briefed and advised environment and climate change Ministers and Scottish Government officials dealing with ministerial correspondence.

In summary David would be an asset for the National Access Forum he is a safe and experienced pair of hands with all the relevant skills required for the position. He would be adept at keeping discussion on a level playing field and guiding forum members towards consensus on a wide range of access and land management issues.

I endorse David's nomination and recommend my fellow NAF members support his appointment.

Name Kevin Lafferty



Signed....

20th July 2016

Statement from the nominee*Please do not exceed 400 words.*

If elected as Convenor of NAF, I would see my role as:

- Promoting constructive discussion at Forum meetings, allowing all voices to be heard;
- Seeking, wherever possible, to find areas of common ground in order to reach decisions by consensus;
- Helping members to look ahead and identify emerging issues of importance for future discussion by the Forum;
- Maintaining effective links with Local Access Forums (LAF) and other key partners.

In my personal capacity, I have had a lifelong interest in, and commitment to, outdoor access. With family and friends, I have done a lot of hill walking and cycling throughout Scotland; I also enjoy sailing and I am an occasional fisherman, skier and kayaker. I am a long-standing member of a number of bodies that encourage outdoor access, including NTS, JMT and the Borders Forest Trust.

I believe strongly in the Scottish approach to outdoor access, with the balance between rights and responsibilities that is enshrined in the principles that underlie the Code. This view is reinforced whenever I walk south of the border, or in other parts of the world where recreational access to land is heavily constrained!

To my mind, the success of the Scottish approach relies upon mutual respect, with people recognising the legitimate needs and interests of others, including those who live and/or work in rural Scotland, as well as those who enjoy the outdoors for its natural and historic heritage value and for its recreational opportunities.

Therefore, as Convenor of the NAF, my aim would be for the Forum to work with LAFs and others to ensure the continued success of Scottish Outdoor Access Code as an effective framework for responsible access. I would also be keen for the Forum to explore ways in which to enhance the social, economic and environmental value of outdoor access, for example through using the opportunities it offers to improve people's health and well-being; to bring income to local rural economies; and to widen understanding and appreciation of our natural and historic landscapes.

I agree to be nominated for the role of Convenor of the National Access Forum

Print name David Henderson-Howat

Signed.....



Date 14 July 2016