

**MORAY LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM
TENTH MEETING**

MINUTES

Tuesday 19th Feb. 2008, Elgin Library Gallery, 4pm

PRESENT

Ian Douglas (Moray Council – Moray Access Manager)

Members Present:

Simon Jacyna – MEAG (Outdoor Access User) – Vice Convener (Chair)

Fiona Murdoch – Moray Councillor (Public Agencies)

Jenny Gate – Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association (Community Groups)

Rita Marks – Moray Tourism Forum (Outdoor Access User)

John Fleming – MALT (Community Groups)

Toby Metcalfe – Smiths Gore (Landowner)

Jean Oliver – Speyside Paths Network Group (Community Groups)

Philip Whitfield – Forestry Commission Scotland (Public Agencies)

Duncan McConnell – Dyke and Landward Community Council (Community Groups)

Annette MacLeod – NHS Grampian (Public Agencies)

John Maclean – Westfield Farms (Landowner)

Watson Bell – (Outdoor Access User)

Janet Trythall (Outdoor Access User)

Kelley Miller – SNH (Public Agencies)

Apologies

Peter Graham – SRPBA (Landowner) – Convener, Iain Stephen – Moray Access

Panel, Iain Greene – NFUS (Landowner), Cath Clark – (Paths for All Partnership)

Alasdair Laing – Logie Estate (Landowner)), Ian Bruce – (Moray Council – Environmental Protection Manager)

Non Attendees

Franziska Smith – HIE Moray (Public Agencies), Ray Brumby – Speyside Paths Network Group (Community Groups)

Item		Action
1.0	Welcome The meeting was chaired by Vice Convener, Simon Jacyna.	
2.0	Accuracy of Previous Minutes	
2.1	It was noted that previous minutes should have included apologies for both Kelley Miller (SNH) and Duncan McConnell (Community Groups)	
2.2	The previous meeting minutes were agreed as being true and accurate.	
3.0	Matters Arising	
3.1	<u>Item 3.3</u> Ann Dunn was introduced as the new Minute Secretary for the Forum, provided by Moray Council.	

	<p><u>Item 4</u> Matter to be carried forward, no action to date.</p> <p><u>Item 6</u> Consultation launch meetings were held on 14th December and 7th February. Consultation Exercise & Publicity: a high profile publicity campaign included a radio interview with Ian Douglas on MFR</p> <p><u>Item 8 B</u> Wind farm Proposal Aultmore Forest/Scout Hill still ongoing item.</p> <p><u>Item 8 E</u> GM55 – Duffus. The farmer has resolved the problem.</p> <p><u>Item 8 F</u> Good Access Certificate. Matter to be carried forward, no action to date</p>	<p>I Douglas T Metcalfe</p> <p>I Douglas</p> <p>I Douglas</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>A</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Implementing the Core Paths Plan</p> <p>The Chair introduced Reni Millburn from Environmental Services of Moray Council to give advice to the Forum.</p> <p>Ian Douglas outlined the proposed “Missing Links” Paths Project, as detailed in the discussion paper. The project would be both development and promotional and would involve forming an umbrella organisation which would be a partnership with the Forum, SNH, 23 local access groups and local community councils.</p> <p>Janet Trythall voiced concerns over representation for the Moray Coast Trail. The Coastal Path route goes through areas which are covered by several groups. It may be possible to set up a dedicated Moray Coast Trail group.</p> <p>Renee Millburn explained that £700, 000 investment had been made for paths networks by previous funders. The current situation is that European Funding has been reduced by 50% and there is much more competitive bidding. LEADER funding will have an environmental focus and Moray Council is currently preparing a bid which local community groups could bid into, up to £50,000. Funding will be finalised at the end of 2008/ beginning of 2009.</p> <p>Scottish Rural Development Fund is not finalised and the picture will become clearer by the end of March/ beginning of April. Less money is available and the bidding will be very competitive.</p> <p>Moray has made a good case in the past because of the strong partnerships with local community groups. If the Forum were to set up as a charitable organisation e.g. a Trust, many more funding opportunities would be available as there are a wide number of funding sources which are not available to</p>	

C	<p>public bodies. The funding scenarios are changing fast and Reni will be happy to return if the Trust status is considered.</p> <p>The proposal to form a charitable trust was then discussed at length.</p> <p>Duncan McConnell stated that the Forum should be wary over the sustainability issue, maintenance costs in particular. Phil Whitfield stated that maintenance issues need to be resolved before looking to create new paths.</p> <p>Ian Douglas agreed that there is a difficulty in obtaining funding for ongoing and routine maintenance. Funders are not prepared to fund revenue costs and Councils do not have a statutory obligation to maintain paths.</p> <p>John Fleming questioned why the Forum should do this. The Council should be approached first to clarify their position regarding maintenance issues.</p> <p>Simon Jacyna said that it would be a shame to deny funding for new paths because we have not resolved the maintenance issue.</p> <p>Phil Whitfield questioned the role of the Forum, saying that it was set up as an advisory body to the Council, not to manage paths. More research was needed before we could progress, such as quantifying the maintenance issues such as safety inspections, repairs, routine maintenance and seasonal work. There was also the issue of trying to get all the groups to work together. This had failed in the past.</p> <p>In response to questions about long term commitment to path maintenance Councillor Murdoch stated that Moray Council budgets are at present set for only one year ahead, although this will be moving to three years shortly. No funds from the Scottish Government are ring-fenced any longer and there is no requirement for path maintenance to be included in budgets.</p> <p>Kelley Miller (SNH) was asked to explain the position of SNH and also what other local authorities were doing about these issues. She explained that SNH funding has been changed. Funding from Scottish Government is going to be allocated directly to local authorities for such things as Ranger services and Access projects, not through SNH. SNH will still have funding to allocate to charitable groups.</p> <p>Moray is not unique; many other local authorities throughout Scotland have the same issues over funding maintenance of</p>	
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	<p>paths. In Grampian, Aberdeen City is using funding from Sustrans and in Aberdeenshire the Roads Department are dealing with maintenance. SNH will be lobbying at a national level.</p> <p>Phil Whitfield outlined the worse case scenario, that we had an aspirational plan with no funding to implement it. Instead of looking to form a large umbrella organisation, it would be better to break the project down into local areas to be taken forward by the local access groups working on their own projects. Also, if Roads Departments have funding for urban paths, we should concentrate on those.</p> <p>There was a proposal from the Chair to form a Working Group to investigate the main issues and stumbling blocks, to put before the Council to seek a formal and considered response. If the response is not favourable, the National LOAF will be approached to ask Scottish Government to ring fence money for paths. This was agreed.</p> <p>The working party will consist of: Rita Marks, Simon Jacyna and Annette MacLeod. Janet Trythall also agreed when it was explained that there would only be the need for 1 meeting.</p> <p>The working group will determine issues particularly regards Core Paths Management requiring to be addressed in a formal written response from Moray Council.</p>	
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Training</p> <p>Thursday 1st May meeting at Knockando will include a 1 hour site visit prior to the meeting in a local venue, to be confirmed.</p> <p>Tuesday 5th August, water issues including rafting and paddlesports to be addressed. David Craig / representative from Scottish Canoe Association to be approached to attend the meeting in the Lounge, Elgin Town Hall.</p> <p>13th November, the Gallery, Elgin Library. Kelley Miller (SNH) will deliver a talk on S.R.P.B, as she is attending training on this matter.</p>	<p>I Douglas</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Core Paths Planning – Consultative Draft:</p> <p><u>Consultation responses</u></p> <p>280 comments have been received and collated. There is a strength of feeling that the plan is not sufficient and more paths are required, better integrated and including more circular, loop routes.</p> <p>Initial central guidance on writing the Core Paths Plan was vague and not robust. It has since been revised to be more</p>	

B	<p>prescriptive and we have to react to this and the results of the public consultation.</p> <p>Ian Douglas recommends that the following be included as Core Paths as per the Sub Group recommendations on general changes to the Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some loop routes round settlements • Linking together core paths round settlements • More urban paths such as Safe routes to schools, active travelways etc <p>The final decision on sufficiency is the responsibility of Moray Council, advised by SNH. The Plan then has to be approved by the Scottish Government. There is a need to show development of new paths for it to be accepted and the ability to maintain paths is not part of the equation.</p>	
C	<p><u>Sub Group Recommendations – General Changes to the Draft Plan</u></p> <p>All recommendations in the sub group report were agreed except regarding aspirational Core Paths. Watson Bell questioned whether the aspirational paths should be included, as landowners hadn't been formally approached.</p> <p>Phil Whitfield disagreed, saying that without the aspirational routes the plan was incomplete and the public would be disappointed as many were hoping for a long term vision of something new and more path developments. There should however be consultation with the landowners before going public.</p> <p>Ian agreed that there would have to be detailed and specific wording about the aspirational routes so as not to alarm landowners, but felt that it was vital to include them in the plan.</p>	
D	<p>There followed a vote on whether the aspirational routes should be included or kept off the plan.</p> <p>Against aspirational routes being included – 6</p> <p>For aspirational routes being included - 4</p> <p>Abstentions - 4</p>	
E	<p><u>Timetable for the final draft of the Core Paths Plan</u></p> <p>The presented timetable was agreed. May 1st – Set of maps prepared showing the routes in different colours with a summary of the landowners responses.</p> <p><u>Landowners Sub Group</u></p> <p>Group to convene another meeting to discuss the maps.</p>	I Douglas

	<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment for Core Paths Plan</p> <p>A budget has been made available for a scoping report by August and an Environmental Statement by the end of 2008. The Environmental Statement will flag up any changes to be made to the Core Paths Plan to make it more sensitive to environmental issues.</p>	
7	<p>Issues to be raised with the National Access Forum</p> <p>It was agreed that the following issues be raised with the National Access Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of paths • Responsibility for implementing plans • Future local authority funding as there is no clear picture due to lack of ring fencing funds. 	S Jacyna
8	<p>Publicity</p> <p>It was decided that there was no requirement for further publicity at present until there was more clarity about the role of the Forum.</p>	
9	<p>Access Issues</p> <p>A Shempston Land owner has requested that the Forum write to Gordonstoun School re anti social access by Gordonstoun pupils. It was agreed that this was a school discipline issue and that action by the Forum would be inappropriate. It was decided that Ian Douglas should write as Access Manager of the Council.</p> <p>B Glenfiddich Estate contains many rights of way and long distance routes. Inappropriate and non compliant signage has appeared on the Estate, saying "Danger shooting in progress, keep out". All of these signs are placed at points of access to rights of way. It was agreed that Ian Douglas should attempt to negotiate with the landowner in the first instance, making available appropriate guidance on signage. Advice on the Hill Tracks scheme and making use of appropriate websites would be appropriate.</p>	I Douglas I Douglas
10	<p>A O C B</p> <p>The Council to be contacted regarding increasing mileage allowance for Access Forum Members.</p>	S Jacyna
11	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 1st May, at 3.00pm Training Knockando Old Station 4.00pm Meeting Car Park Knockando Distillery Visitor Centre Knockando</p>	I Douglas

Distribution: All Members and Substitute Members
I D Bruce – Moray Council
G Morrison – Moray Council
Cath Clark – Paths for All Partnership