Angus Local Access Forum

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held at Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar on Monday 7 December 2015 at 7.00pm.

Present: Gavin Dobson (Chair) Cathy Stephenson
          John Hamilton Patricia Harrow
          Gill Lawrie Kirsty Macari
          Barbara Thompson

In attendance Paul Clark, Countryside Access Officer, Angus Council

Apologies: Lesley Anderson Alban Houghton

1. Welcome and introductions
GD thanked everyone for attending.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting
The minutes were approved by those present as a true record.

3. Matters Arising
GL had been unsuccessful in contacting a potential equestrian contact. JH advised that he had identified someone else who was interested in representing horse riders.

BT asked about Millgate, Friockheim. PC had looked at the path. The Council may be able to do some limited maintenance, but legal advice on the owners responsibilities under a planning agreement was being sought.

4. Annual Event 2015
There was general agreement that the event had been successful, with a good mix of people attending, and that the format worked well. Possible locations for the next public event were discussed, with Montrose and Craigo suggested as possibilities. It was agreed that these would be discussed further at a future meeting. PC stated that staff resources and time for organising these events were a consideration. It was agreed that an 18 month cycle might be appropriate, with the next event to be held in spring 2017.

5. Access Issues Update

East Keillor – PC had received feedback from the community that indicated that the route was well used by people from Newtyle. People were aware of the alternative route that was available when approaching from Newtyle. PC had written to the owners seeking removal of obstructions, he had received verbal clarification of the ownership and was awaiting a response.

Strathmore Estate – The estate had advised that they were unwilling to provide an alternative gate. Discussion of the area which the estate regarded as excluded from access rights was ongoing.

Tannadice – The Council had received a further complaint following the harvest. There was some shallow rutting and earth deposited on the path, but the surface was generally
acceptable. PC proposed to contact the owner and ask him to level the surface in the spring when the ground was drier. GL asked whether the field had been ploughed. PC advised that it had not.

Lunanhead – PC circulated location maps and photographs of the obstructions. PC had discussed the matter with the owner, who had advised that the obstruction had been put up to prevent persistent problems with antisocial behaviour such as littering, dog fouling and dogs not under control. The owner was not willing to open the route. PC would be pursuing this further and offering signage to encourage responsible behaviour. There was further discussion in which members expressed the view that the section of railway in question was a locally significant access route.

Level Crossings – PC had discussed the Elliot level crossing with one of the Council’s solicitors. He was awaiting written advice, but there were concerns over the Council’s liability if members of the public were given access over the locked vehicle crossing.

Millgate, Friockheim – BT raise an issue with a millpond and path at Friockheim. The area was in a poor state of repair and the path was overgrown. The community would like to look after the area but permission from the owner has not been forthcoming. She asked whether there was anything the Forum could do to assist. PC advised that the path was a core path and that he would consider whether the Council could do anything to keep it clear.

Kirkinch – The Council had received enquiries about a number of obstructions to tracks. PC circulated photographs for information. The obstructions were understood to have been legitimately installed to stop unauthorised vehicles and associated unlawful activity. They did not prevent pedestrian access but they did make the routes unsafe or impassable for horses. The Council would be seeking modification or removal of the obstructions.

6. Membership and recruitment
One application for a user representative had been received, from Peter Fiabane. Forum members thought he would be a suitable candidate and recommended that he be appointed. PC would advise him of this and invite him to the next meeting.

After discussion it was agreed that GD would send application details to two prospective landowner representatives, and that JH would send them to the prospective equestrian representative. The Council would await these potential applications before seeking committee approval to formally appoint members to the Forum.

7. Meeting dates 2016
The draft schedule or meeting dates was approved.

7. A.O.C.B.
PC referred to the active travel strategy consultation that had been circulated. PH would attend the workshop on behalf of the Forum.

GL advised that the Rural Parliament would be held in Brechin from 6 – 8 October 2016. This was a very worthwhile event, with delegates from all rural areas in Scotland. There was an opportunity to highlight any access issues for inclusion on the agenda.

8. Date of next meeting: Monday 14th March 2016