

# ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held in the Boardroom at Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar on Monday 14 March 2016

**Present:** Alban Houghton, Cathy Stephenson, John Hamilton, Kirsty Macari, Lesley Anderson, Peter Fiabane.

**In attendance** Paul Clark, Countryside Access Officer, Angus Council

**Apologies:** Gill Lawrie, Patricia Harrow, Gavin Dobson, Barbara Thompson

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

In the absence of GD, it was agreed that KM would chair the meeting. KM thanked everyone for attending. There were round the table introductions for the benefit of PF.

## **2. Minute of Previous Meeting**

The minutes were approved by those present as a true record.

## **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **4. Proposed exemption from access rights – The Senior Open, Carnoustie**

ALAF had been formally consulted by Angus Council regarding a proposed exemption from access rights. The consultation letter had been circulated with the agenda. PC explained that there was a statutory requirement to consult the Forum regarding proposed exemptions lasting 6 or more days. The exemption was to enable an entry charge to be made during the event, and for safety reasons. The whole links area and the coastal cycle path would be closed for seven days. A diversion for the path would be available. Three smaller areas would be closed for a longer period. Similar exemptions had been made for previous major golfing events.

No comments were noted.

## **5. Access Issues Update**

Strathmore Estates – PC recapped the background to the issues for the benefit of PF. Discussions with the estate were ongoing.

Tannadice – No further update. It may be necessary to revisit this when the field is ploughed in the spring.

Lunanhead – PC had further discussions with the owner following removal of a section of fence by persons unknown. The owner continued to cite anti-social behaviour including

dog fouling and littering as reasons for preventing access. An additional caller had advised that large numbers of dog walkers had been parking on adjacent road verges to access the area. PC intended to formally raise the issue with the owner, and offer signage to help address the issues. It is not a core path and not recorded as a public right of way. There is an alternative route, but the option of a circular route is eliminated. LA questioned whether the issue related to commercial dog walkers. There was discussion regarding the availability of guidance for commercial dog walkers. CS asked how many complaints had been received. PC advised that there had been three. CS noted that it was about finding a balance where management of antisocial behaviour was involved. The possibility of involving community wardens was raised, and PC agreed that this was worth pursuing. Existing signage at Kinnaber was cited as a good example.

Glen Prosen – PC reminded the forum of previous discussion regarding lack of a self closing gate at a key location. A combination of a stile and vertically hanging hinged flap had been provided. The original complainant had been happy with this. A further enquiry had been received, suggesting that this crossing facility was not safe. PC had inspected it and agreed that it was quite difficult to use, particularly for a lone walker. He circulated photographs. There was discussion over the possibility of a full height kissing gate, but this was unlikely to be suitable from a rabbit control perspective. It was agreed that a full height stile would be a reasonable solution in this location. PC intended to write to the landowner requesting this. PC also circulated photographs of self-closing gates elsewhere on the plantation. There was general discussion over the suitability and siting of gates on forestry fencing. It was agreed that there would be benefit in liaison with the Forestry Commission over this.

Fairy Steps – BT had asked PC to raise the issue of the Fairy Steps public right of way, as there was a community group interested in reinstating the route. JH noted that only a very short section of the route had been ploughed. PC was willing to work with a community group if there was sufficient interest.

Edzell – PF queried a path near the Panmure Arms in Edzell. Signage indicated that it would be closed for 6 months. PC advised that there was a planning condition requiring the path to be kept open during development, but the developer had requested a closure for health and safety reasons during construction of the access road. A short term closure might be acceptable but nothing had been authorised by the planning authority. LE advised that the community council was aware of the matter.

Shakkin Brig, Edzell – LA raised the issue of flood damage to this bridge and its current unsafe condition. People were breaking down barrier tape to use the bridge. She suggested that improved barriers, and signage at the opposite end of the path, were needed. PC understood that the bridge was jointly maintained by Aberdeenshire Council and Angus Council and agreed to enquire about the situation.

PF referred to a track with a locked gate at Blairfeddon. PC advised that the track had been considered as a core path, but rejected at the local inquiry.

AH asked whether there was an update on the Balmashanner case. PC advised that he was still awaiting legal opinion.

## **6. Core path improvements – update**

PC provided an update on signposting and other minor works which were due to take place shortly, and the revised programme for rolling out improvements in other areas.

LA referred to a core path at Inchbare that was potentially under threat, and agreed to make enquiries.

There was also discussion of the cycle path at Montrose Airfield and diversions that are in place.

## **7. Membership and recruitment**

PC advised that report to the Council's Communities Committee will be required to formally appoint PF and any other new members to the Forum. There had been no contact from either of the potential equestrian representatives. It was noted that IL had difficulty in attending meetings, as they often clashed with community council meeting. The possibility of changing meeting dates was discussed.

## **8. A.O.C.B.**

PC raised various protocols and procedures that had been put in place in the early years of the Forum. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile revisiting and reviewing these documents. PC also suggested that thought should be given to a retention policy for older Forum documents and correspondence.

**9. Date of next meeting** : Monday 13 June 2016, Angus House, Forfar.