

ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held at Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar on Monday 11 June 2018

Present: Cathy Stephenson (Chair), Gill Lawrie, Fiona Waddell, Peter Fiabane, John Hamilton, James Gray-Cheape, Antony Gifford, Angus Grey, Nick Hamilton

In attendance Paul Clark, Countryside Access Officer, Angus Council

Apologies: Lesley Anderson, Jill Paterson

1. Welcome and introductions

CS welcome everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

The minutes of 16 April 2018 were approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

Pitnappie cutting – PC was trying to arrange a discussion with the landowner.

Buskhead bridge – PC was not aware of any progress.

Edzell riverside path – Discussions with the neighbouring landowner were ongoing.

Glasterlaw core path – PC had inspected the path. The original path line was overgrown and impassable, but access was available along the field edge. Angus Council would look at clearing the original path as part of the programme of works to core paths.

4. Access issues update

Valgreen, Murroes – PC had been in contact with the individuals who had raised the matter and was awaiting a discussion with the owner of a local livery, after which he would have further discussion with the owner of the track. He had recently received a further report of obstructive behaviour. In response to a query from NH, PC confirmed that the Council had clearly stated to the owner on several occasions that access rights apply and should not be obstructed. There was discussion over the options available to the Council, including enforcement notices and legal action, if requests to leave the track unobstructed were not complied with.

Turfbeg, Fofar – The housing development on the site was now underway and horses were no longer in the field.

Pitairlie Plantation – PC had discussed the matter with the two landowners, and understood that the wire had been removed. There were allegations of dogs persistently not under control and disruptive behaviour towards management of the shoot which takes place on the land. The location is on a march fence and is not somewhere that the Council would seek provision of a crossing if there were good land management reasons for a

fence. Fencing should not however be installed for the purpose of obstructing access rights.

Burnside Estate – PC had discussed the signs with the landowner and was seeking their removal.

Panmure Golf Club – PC made the Forum aware of discussions he had with Panmure Golf Club, following closure of a pedestrian gate onto the course. The club had been attempting to secure boundaries with an adjacent residential caravan site due to alleged issues with multiple informal access points being created onto the course and irresponsible behaviour from some dog walkers. The land reform legislation only gives people a right to cross a golf course, not to use it for recreation. As a result of the discussion, the club would be leaving an access point to enable people to cross the course to get to Barry. They would also retain an access onto a raised bund area which people could use to exercise dogs. They intended to communicate this to residents and highlight responsible behaviour using a leaflet.

Gagie House – PC had received a report that a new gate had been installed, blocking access over the section of driveway which passes close to the house. This was regarded as a public right of way. The alternative route remained available and in regular use by horseriders, but the surface was muddy and not ideal for walkers during wet weather. PC had advised, giving consideration to the standard of the original route, that upgrading of the alternative route would be appropriate if the right of way was to be permanently diverted. There was some discussions on reasonable expectations for paths in locations such as this one. It was noted that many paths in other locations are in similar or worse condition and that walkers would normally expect to wear suitable footwear for the conditions.

Piperdam – PC advised that a track between Piperdam and Muirloch farm had been blocked by temporary secure fencing associated with an adjacent biomass processing facility. The fencing had been installed following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive and requirement to secure the site. An extension to the site had recently been granted planning permission and there was a requirement for the applicant to submit details of permanent fencing proposals. The Council would be seeking retention of public access over the track, but may consider proposals for alternative access nearby. The fence had recently been moved leaving a narrow route suitable for temporary pedestrian access. PC did not think the width would be suitable for equestrian access or as a permanent route. There was some discussion over suitable widths for horse riders. FW stated that narrow fenced corridors were difficult for riders to use.

5. Membership and recruitment

Pat Harrow, Alban Haughton and Gavin Dobson had all agreed to step down with immediate effect^[C1], being the longest standing members in their respective interest groups. PC advised that following change of management responsibilities within the Council's Planning service, it was proposed that Alan Hunter would replace Jill Paterson as the Council's representative. There would be a report to the Council's Communities Committee in August to confirm the appointment of Alan Hunter as the Angus Council representative, Nick Hamilton as a user representative, and Angus Grey as Forestry Commission representative.

There was discussion over recruitment to fill the vacant positions for land manager and community representatives. PC would arrange for it to be publicised on Council social

media, and make members aware of when this happened so that they could share it with their contacts. GL suggested approaching NFUS directly to ask if any members would be interested in joining. There were suggestions of approaching Angus Access Panel and the NHS volunteer health walks manager regarding potential community representatives.

6. A.O.C.B.

Appointment of Chair/Vice Chair – after discussion it was agreed that CS would step down as Chair at the September meeting, and that AG would take over. Nominations for the new Vice Chair would be sought at the next meeting – members were asked to give this consideration.

Future public events/publicity – There was agreement that the stand at Forfar Farmers Market in 2017 was a success and that Forum should do a similar thing in 2019. There was discussion of alternative venues including other farmers markets, food events, and the Kirriemuir Show. This would be discussed further at the next meeting.

PC reminded members of his e-mail regarding use of personal data for Forum business.

PC had been made aware of a business called Pony Axe S, which was currently based in Angus and offered wheelchair users the opportunity to visit beaches and other rough terrain which was otherwise inaccessible. GL suggested that they may wish to explore Leader funding, and also suggested a number of venue and events that may be of interest.

NH asked about the status of signs he had seen on moorland in Glen Esk which required dogs to be on a lead at all times. There was discussion of situations including breeding locations for ground nesting birds, and areas with young livestock, where it was appropriate to ask for dogs to be on a lead, but consensus that permanent signage to this effect was usually not compliant with the Code. PC advised that he would investigate if advised of the signage locations.

JH referred to old water board signage on a core path in the Glen Ogil area which deterred access. He agreed to pass details to PC for investigation.

7. Date of next meeting : Monday 10 September 2018