

ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held at Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Forfar on Monday 9 December 2019

Present: Antony Gifford (Chair), John Hamilton, Nick Hamilton, Irene McGugan, Cathy Stephenson, Barbara Thompson.

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

Apologies: James Gray-Cheape, Meg Mearns, John Rymer, Mairi Simms, Fiona Waddell, Euan Walker-Munro, Alan Hunter.

1. Welcome and introductions

AG welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

NH highlighted that reference to Brighty Wood had been omitted. The minutes were otherwise approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

Pitnappie cutting – no update

Buskhead bridge – no update

Edzell riverside path – PC understood that a member of the Community Council was obtaining alternative costs for repairing the path on its current alignment. The Community Council had approached PC regarding the fact that the path was believed to be a public right of way, and whether the landowner was therefore obliged to facilitate deviation of the route onto adjacent ground. PC was giving this consideration. There was discussion over the availability of further advice from Scotways.

Valgreen, Murroes – NH advised that the flag had now been removed. A line of bunting had been erected. This was not deterring horse riders from using the path.

Membership and recruitment – JGC had confirmed his intention to step down after the September 2020 meeting.

4. Feedback from National Access Workshop

IM and JH has attended this meeting, for user representatives, on 28th September. IH had circulated a note of the meeting. It was noted that there was much variation across the country in how LAFs were performing and how well supported they were by local authorities. Angus LAF was thought to be more active than many. PC highlighted that draft updated government guidance to access authorities highlighted the importance of maintaining and supporting active LAFs.

5. Access issues update

Former Kinpurnie Estate – PC had recently met with the local access group, who were in the process of becoming constituted, which would enable them to apply for funding. PC had discussed a number of locations with the group, where access was thought to be unreasonably restricted. He would be approaching landowners to seek improvements, including unlocking of gates and re-instatement of gates that had been removed.

Inverkeillor Core Path – PC was awaiting agreement from the landowner before proceeding with installing self-closing gates.

South Lodge, Fotheringham Estate – PC had been contacted by the landowner's agent, who confirmed that there was an issue with fly tipping. He had given advice on arrangements that would be acceptable in terms of public access, and was awaiting feedback. NH advised that the situation remained unchanged, and that the broken fence which allowed limited access was hidden behind shrubs. This access had not been self-evident when JH visited the location.

Courthill, Lunan – PC had met the landowner. Various gates, including the access at Couthill, were now unlocked. The landowner had however advised that various grass field margins, which were currently available as access routes, would be removed because of a problem with fungal disease affecting grain crops.

Core Path 004, Glen Esk – no update.

Brighty Wood – PC understood that the pedestrian access had been widened, but there was an ongoing complaint that it remained narrower than the recommended width for mobility vehicles and difficult for dog walkers to use. He had not yet re-visited the site to check the width. There was no update on the road safety concerns. JH and NH had both visited the site. Neither had thought that the pedestrian access was overly narrow. JH has prepared a sketch map of the access points and signage. NH observed that the road along the southern edge of the wood was busy, and that it would not be safe for horse riders. It was also noted that the eastern entrance to the horse path was close to a junction, with restricted visibility, and that the road to Gagie was quite well trafficked.

White Hill, Glen Clova – The Council had received an enquiry about deer fencing at this location, with no apparent crossing points. Most of the fence, which appeared to follow an ownership boundary, was within Cairngorms National Park, but the specific location was within Angus Council's remit. The fence was in a relatively well visited location between Loch Brandy and Ben Tirran. PC was liaising with the national park authority and seeking information from the landowner.

Glen Quiech area – The Council had received an enquiry about two locked gates on deer fences. This had not yet been investigated.

Airlie – The Council had received an enquiry about an allegedly aggressive cow, which was enclosed on a section of core path with no warning signage or alternative route available. This had not yet been investigated.

6. Core path signage and improvements update

AG had been pleased to note that Angus Council still had some budget available for works to core paths, and asked PC to give a brief update. PC advised that this was budget for signposting and minor improvements such as gates, which had been committed some time

ago. No new budget was available. Work was currently underway on installing a number of self-closing gates on core paths in the Sidlaws. PC was currently consulting on proposals for core path around Airlie and Kirriemuir, and westwards towards Glen Ogil. The intention was that these works would be carried out during 2020.

7. 2020 meeting dates

The proposed schedule of meeting dates for 2020 was approved.

6. A.O.C.B.

PC made the Forum aware of work that was currently underway to develop proposals for improving the coastal path between Monifieth and Broughty Ferry as a dedicated off-road active travel route. This was a partnership between Dundee and Angus Councils, with funding from Sustrans. Public engagement was underway, and feedback could be given on the project website.

7. Date of next meeting: Monday 9th March.