

# ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held online on Monday 14 December 2020

**Present:** Nick Hamilton (Chair), Antony Gifford, Irene McGugan, John Hamilton, James Gray-Cheape, Euan Walker-Munro, John Rymer.

**In attendance:** Paul Clark, Countryside Access Officer, Angus Council, Jonathan Dymock, prospective member.

**Apologies:** Barbara Thompson, Fiona Waddell, Alan Hunter

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

NH welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

The minutes of 14 September 2020 were approved, with a correction to the spelling of John Rymer's name and an amendment to the number of access points on White Hill.

## **3. Matters Arising**

Edzell River Path – PC advised that repairs had been carried out by the adjacent landowner in lieu of a planning obligation relating to a nearby development. It was suggested that the Chair should write to the community council to ask whether they were satisfied with the outcome.

White Hill, Glen Clova – JH reported that stiles are in place at all three access points on the fenceline.

Kinpurnie House – PC advised that the offer of a meeting had not been taken up by the landowner, as the issues had settled down. It was suggested that this should be followed up again in the spring.

## **4. Membership and recruitment**

Jonathan Dymock spoke briefly to the meeting. There was agreement that he should be recommended to the Council as a suitable land management representative. PC confirmed that approval would be sought from the council's Communities Committee in due course.

Another application for membership had subsequently been withdrawn.

There was discussion of the need for further recruitment, and it was suggested that community groups including youth groups such as young farmers could be contacted. PC would investigate this, and members were asked to provide contact details of any groups they were aware of.

## **5. Appointment of Vice Chair**

NH proposed that IM be appointed as Vice Chair. There were no other nominations and IM was appointed.

## **6. Access issue, Denmill, Kirriemuir**

The Forum sub-group had attended a site meeting with the landowner and prepared a report for consideration by the Forum. After discussion there was agreement that the recommendations of the report should be submitted to the Council, with one change of wording.

The Forum's advice was; that the path is of sufficient importance to justify the Council taking action to ensure that it remains unobstructed, and; that signposting of the path should be carried out as previously proposed by the Council.

NH would inform the landowner of the Forum's recommendations to the Council. PC confirmed that he would write to the landowner to confirm the Council's position following the Forum's advice.

## **7. Access issues update**

Former Kinpurnie Estate – PC advised that an alternative gate to one of the requested locations had been provided, but that the location wasn't currently considered suitable for equestrian access. Correspondence was on-going.

South Lodge, Fotheringham Estate – PC had visited the location and noted that the option of climbing a broken fence, which NH had mentioned, was neither obvious nor easy.

Benscravie – JH had no new information on the situation.

Ferry Road, Monifieth – There was ongoing correspondence between the Council and the owner's solicitors. PC was sending questionnaires to members of the public to gain a better understanding of levels of use, and other information that may be relevant to the possible existence of a public right of way.

Glamis – PC advised that the Council had received enquiries about access to the Glamis Castle policies, as gates had been locked since lockdown. The estate regarded the area as land that was outwith access rights and considered it necessary to lock gates for security reasons whilst the castle grounds were closed to the paying public. EWM noted that conflict with mountain bikers had been highlighted by the estate at various community council meetings.

Kirkton of Airlie – PC had visited the location where there had previously been a report of a core path being obstructed due to a cow being enclosed on it. The cow had been there when he visited. He had not found it aggressive, as reported, but the situation was not ideal as there was no way to bypass the area. He hoped that the matter could be resolved through proposed provision of gates on the core path.

PC was also looking into reports of obstruction to access at Backmuir of Liff, and at Renumure, near Rossie Moor.

There were no updates on access issues at Mill of Murroes, Red Castle, Brighty Woods and Inverkeillor.

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

NH thanked AG and JGC for their service on the Forum.

NH had received communication from an Angus resident who was unhappy with use of the name Tullibardine on destination signage on core path 288, as they believed the name was incorrect. PC had advised that the name was taken from current Ordnance Survey mapping. The wording could be re-considered as and when the signage was replaced. There was agreement that the matter did not warrant further discussion by the Forum.

IMG highlighted a survey that had been conducted by Ramblers on behalf of Scottish Outdoor Access Network. The survey had found that access officer numbers in Scotland had dropped from 60 to 36.5 in recent years, and that half of local authorities did not directly employ countryside rangers.

EWM highlighted the emergence of regional land use partnerships. There was agreement that this should be a future topic for discussion.

EWM highlighted the fact that there would soon be a consultation on changes to single farm payments and that this would be an opportunity to encourage support for access through the payments scheme. There was agreement that the Forum should consider responding to any future consultation.

## **7. 2021 meeting dates**

The proposed meeting dates were agreed. Date of next meeting Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.