

ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held at online on Monday 21 June 2021

Present: Nick Hamilton (Chair), Irene McGugan (Vice Chair), Euan Walker-Munro, Jonathan Dymock, John Hamilton, Barbara Thompson, Andrew Matthews,

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

Apologies: John Rymer

1. Welcome and introductions

NH welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

The minutes were approved subject to correction of NH's initial in item 1.

3. Matters Arising

EWM had spoken to the owner of Kinpurnie House, who advised that the issues experienced last year had settled down, and that they had cleared rides to improve access in some areas. A meeting with Forum members wasn't necessary.

JH raised the question of Buskhead Bridge, which had previously been a standing agenda item. This was prompted by a Scotways article on bridges. PC was unaware of any progress with proposals for replacement, which Inveresk Community Council had been investigating. NH agreed to ask the community council whether there was any update.

PC had been made aware that the Denmill core path had been ploughed again, and a crop of peas sown. NH had visited and found it impassable. PC had raised the matter with the owner. There was discussion over options available to the Council. Concerns were expressed that allowing the path to remain obstructed could set a precedent for paths elsewhere. JH pointed out that the route is also listed by Scotways as a public right of way.

PC advised that he was awaiting legal advice on the access dispute at Ferry Road, Monifieth, and that it was likely to be the subject of a report to committee in due course. He also advised that access issue at Guthrie had been resolved, following installation of gates by the landowner.

PC advised that the appointment of JD and AM had been approved by committee. Elected members had asked whether it was possible to attend Forum meetings as an observer. After discussion, there was agreement that requests from individual Councillors would be considered, but that it was not appropriate to offer an open invitations to every meeting. Members had also asked for more information on the Forum's work, which was likely to be the subject of a further committee report.

4. Section 11 exemption Order – AIG Women's Open

The Forum had been consulted on the proposed Order, as a statutory consultee. The Order would exempt land at Carnoustie Golf Links from access rights for 10 days during the golfing event. After brief discussion there was agreement that the Forum had no

objection to the Order. There was agreement that this should be minuted, but that a reply to the consultation letter was not necessary.

5. NAF/LAF joint meeting

IM and AM had attended the online meeting on 26 March. Both had found it useful and informative. IM found it useful to hear from other LAFS, and noted a few practices from other Forums, including circulating minutes to community councils, inviting guest speakers, and group site visits. AM mentioned discussion of drones which, although not within access rights, were an increasing nuisance in some areas.

6. Correspondence received.

The Forum had received an e-mail, asking whether it would have an opinion on the proposed Berryhill Solar Farm and its affects on a core path that passes through the site. EWM declared an interest, as he personally knew a member of the team that was developing the proposal. He had taken the liberty of obtaining a proposals map, which he shared on screen. He understood that the path would remain unfenced and accessible. PC also understood that this would be the case. The proposal had not yet been submitted for planning permission, but PC expected to be consulted by development management colleagues when it was. There was agreement that, whilst the development may make the surrounding of the path less attractive to people who used it, this was not a matter for the Forum to comment on. PC would draft a reply for approval by NH.

7. E-bikes

NH thought it was worth discussing e-bikes as they were an emerging issue that had featured at the NAF/LAF meeting. It was noted that the NAF was awaiting the report from a joint research group. There was general discussion of the topic. Those who had used e-bikes recognised the appeal and benefits of them, but there were concerns over the potential damage they could cause. Issues included the fact that enabled larger numbers of people to get to remote areas they would not otherwise reach, and the impact of heavier bikes with high torque on paths that were previously used predominantly by walkers. Restricting use to certain locations may be necessary, but the practicalities would be difficult. The working group report was awaited with interest.

8. Regional land use partnerships

NH thought the topic warranted discussion, as it had been previously mentioned by EWM, and he was also aware of the proposed Cairngorms Land Use Partnership. PC confirmed that Angus Council had no information on progress with the Cairngorm Land Use Partnership. There was general discussion of the topic. EWM believed there may be opportunities for funding access through land use partnerships, but their role was not yet clear. There was some apprehension in the landowning community, and concerns about unintended consequences if differing priorities resulted in some areas being disadvantaged. JD hoped the position would be clearer once the structure, remit and governance of the partnerships was confirmed. There would be concerns if they controlled all aspects of land management. There was agreement that this would potentially be an issue for Forum involvement in future.

9. Access issues update

PC had provided updates on on-going issues under matters arising. The Council had received a number of new enquiries which had not yet been fully investigated. There was agreement that he should provide updates on these to future meetings where appropriate.

6. A.O.C.B.

BT intimated her intention to step down from the Forum, having been a member for many years, as she was finding it difficult to attend meetings. NH thanked her for her

commitment and input to the Forum and wished her well. There was some further discussion on Forum membership and attendance.

NH asked when Council offices would be re-opening, as online meeting were not ideal. PC did not know when Council meeting rooms would be available again. Council staff were still working from home in line with government guidance.

7. Date of next meeting : Monday 13 September 2021