

# ANGUS LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Note of the Meeting of the Angus Local Access Forum held 13 March 2023

**Present:** Nicholas Hamilton, Irene McGugan, John Hamilton, Euan Walker-Munro, Mairi Simms, Norma Lyall, Jonathan Dymock

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

**Apologies:** Andrew Matthews, Michelle Spink

## 1. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the previous meeting was approved as a true record.

## 2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

## 3. Forestry consultations

- Glen Clova woodland creation – The agent had provided a response to question regarding the specification of public access gates, and whether or not vehicle gates would be unlocked. Public access gates would be self-closing bridle gates, and vehicle gates would be unlocked unless there were problems with them being left open. PC had had separate communication with the agent and understood that it would also be their intention to install dog gates at locations where there were stiles. The consensus was that the proposal included a reasonable number of access gates, and that the Forum did not have any further comment on specifics.
- Harran Plantation forest plan – Harran Plantation was adjacent to Milldewan Hill, a location that had previously been discussed in relation to an adjacent area of new woodland creation. The Forum had been consulted on the draft forest plan. Due to consultation timescales, individual members had submitted comment, which PC had summarised in his response. The main concerns related to ensuring that adequate accommodation for public access along the Milldewan Hill ridge was maintained. The agent had subsequently sent a map of existing crossing points to PC, which had been circulated with the agenda. There were a large number gates, some of which were at locations which may not be necessary for public access, but members were uncertain over the quality of two key gates on the Milldewan Hill ridge. There was agreement that these two gates should be easy for members of the public to open and close, and that it would be helpful to have a gate or stile at an additional location that the agent had suggested part way along the ridge.
- NL mentioned an upcoming consultation regarding possible improvements to the visitor experience on Scottish Forest and Land properties at Glen Doll, Glen Prosen and Glen Isla.

## 4. Access issues update

- Ferry Road, Monifieth – PC advised that owner's planning application had not yet been determined. Planning officers were currently awaiting further information from the owner's architects, but there had previously been a delay on the Council's part in progressing the application. Officers were chasing up the necessary information. PC would pursue the access issue further if this was not forthcoming in the near future. NH expressed dissatisfaction at the time it was taking to resolve the matter.

- Buskhead – JH had been in touch with the Glen Esk resident who had been looking into the matter, but there had been no further progress. JH understood that the bridge was primarily the responsibility of Millden Estate. JD pointed out that maintenance liabilities for any new bridge would be a legitimate concern for the landowner. PC re-iterated that the Council did not have any obligation to replace the bridge, and that doing so was not currently a Council priority. There was agreement that the matter should be removed from the agenda unless there were any significant updates.
- Mill of Murroes – PC had written to all interested parties advising that there was not currently sufficient evidence of use to support the existence of a public right of way, but that the matter may be reviewed if further substantive evidence were to come to light.
- Duchray Hill – NH had visited the location. He confirmed that the self-closing gate was now in place and that, although wet at the south end, the route via the gate was preferable to the alternative route via the stile. PC had passed his observations to Walkhighland, who had reverted their walk description to the original route on the basis of his comments.
- Auchmithie Harbour – PC advised that there had been some damage to the track and steps following flooding in December. The Council had made some improvements to drainage, which it was hoped would reduce the possibility of flood damage in future.
- Newbigging Tealing – There had been no progress with the issue. PC advised that the route was currently accessible as the field was still in stubble. He would review the matter if it was ploughed again. There had been no response to letters to the owner. EWM asked whether the track had previously been made up with hardcore, or if it was an unmade earth track. If farmers were expected to retain temporary unmade earth tracks indefinitely, it could result in a significant loss of productive land. PC understood that it had been a constructed track and that it had been there for a considerable number of years.
- North Lodge, Kinnaird Park – JD advised that, as there was little evidence of demand to use the location, the landowner was reluctant to go to the expense of replacing the existing gates.
- Fergus, Glen Isla – NH had visited the location and found that there was a signposted bypass route around two sides of the Fergus, one of which necessitated use of a makeshift bridge over the burn. There was agreement that the track that passed the buildings probably led through land that would be excluded from access rights due to curtilage or privacy.
- Coastal path, Auchmithie – PC had received enquiries about fencing had been erected to replace old rabbit fencing alongside part of the coastal path. Concerns related to the top barbed wire being a possible snag hazard, and restricting access to Gaylet Pot, a natural feature. The landowner was supportive of access to the coastal path, and had also made improvements to it, but had concerns over safety relating to people accessing Gaylet Pot and busier parts of the farm. PC had offered advice on safety signage and access takers responsibilities when accessing obvious natural hazards. The landowner had confirmed that the older lower fence would be left in place elsewhere. People could step over this to access Gaylet Pot when fields were not in crop, if they wished. They were also taking steps to ensure that the barbed wire was not a snag hazard to path users. IM was familiar with the fencing and thought this was a reasonable approach.
- Core path 212, Auchterhouse – NH raised concerns about a core path that had been deeply rutted by vehicles, making it difficult to use. PC was aware of the issue, which was believed to be caused by forestry vehicles. He intended to arrange a site meeting with the landowner.

## **5. Membership and recruitment**

PC advised that a committee report, seeking approval for the appointment of NL and MS would be put to the April meeting of the Council's Communities Committee. The report would highlight the need to recruit further members with a primary interest in land management.

It was agreed that appointment of a new Chair should be discussed at the June meeting.

## **6. LAF/NAF joint meeting**

The date for the joint meeting, which would be held online, had been announced. AM, NL and IM had expressed an interest in attending. Attendance would be confirmed once further details were available.

## **7. AOCB**

IM attended the Parliamentary Reception organised by Ramblers Scotland to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the land reform legislation. Ramblers had highlighted the need for resources to properly manage access.

## **8. Date of next meeting : Monday 12 June 2023**