

**Minutes of the meeting of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Local Access Forum  
held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 6.30pm at National Park HQ, Balloch.  
LAF 01/2016**

**Present**

Don Milton (C)  
Yvonne Boles  
Iain Wilkinson

Sue Riches  
Will Huckerby  
Paul Prescott

Bob Sparkes  
Kevin Fitzgerald

**In attendance**

Babs Robertson  
Elaine Fortheringham (Sportscotland)

Kenny Auld

Claire Travis

**Apologies**

Chris Smith  
Alasdair Eckersall

Grant Dolier

Bob Ellis

**Welcome and apologies**

Don welcomed Elaine Fotheringham to the meeting. Elaine has replaced Campbell Gerrard as the advisory member from Sportscotland. *Advisory members are there to offer advice to Forum members when additional, external support out-with the NPA may be required.*

Don relayed Peter Baker's resignation from the Forum. Unfortunately Peter's health is impacting on his ability to continue attending. Members all expressed their best wishes to Peter and thanks for his input and contributions to LLTAF over the years.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held in October were approved.

**AOCB**

Items to be raised later under AOCB:

**BS** –Blocked footpath –Inversnaid to Aberfoyle.

**NAFLAF update**

The NAFLAF conference in November was attended by Sue, Don, Kenny and Babs. Both members felt it was interesting with a variety of good speakers. They welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues with other forum members and hear their opinions and methods. It highlighted that LLTAF are 'ahead of the curve' although more definition of the members' purpose is still required. With access touching on more and more activities, this could be incorporated into the remit of the Forum. This could be helped by more early engagement between the NPA and LLTAF on relevant issues.

There may also be potential to work with Cairngorms Access Forum, sharing of information and adopting joint best practice.

Kenny also suggested the formation of a Young People's Access Forum. It is felt that this would be a good way to educate and inform young people of access issues and responsible

behaviour. There is need to establish the best format that would motivate the children to be involved. Suggestions are welcome and should be fed back to Kenny.

### **Drumlean**

CT provided an update of the finding of the Drumlean court case. The judgement was received by the NPA on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 ruling in favour of the estate owners. It was deemed there was no breach of the LRA and that the gates can remain locked and the signage can remain in place. The NPA will be appealing this decision.

These findings have not yet been published on the Scottish Courts website but will be sent via email to members. Members should feedback comments to Don and NPA will provide future updates when relevant.

**Action –BR to send members copy of the Sheriff Decision.**

**Action –CT to check what, if any, background content can be shared.**

### **Mountains and The People**

The Mountains and The People project secured funding to enable a five year project to engage people in protecting and maintaining Scottish peaks and create training opportunities. A video is available to view at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-x0\\_WsqjZQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-x0_WsqjZQ)

The section on Ben A'an will be completed by mid February with felling around the path complete and path construction ready to begin. It is anticipated that the route will be open by Easter.

The Ben Lomond contract has been awarded and the work is due to start in February.

Works at the Cobbler are due this year, although may be later than originally scheduled.

### **Your Park Update**

The NPA are still awaiting a decision from Scottish Government. As soon as this is issued, a meeting will be arranged with LLTAF.

### **NPA Updates**

The Active Travel actions within the ORP are progressing with support and input from partners, communities and Sustrans.

- **Drymen to Balmaha** –now complete.
- **St Fillans to Lochearnhead** –Phase 1 will be completed by the end of March.
- **Balloch to Gartocharn** –funds have been awarded from Sustrans for a feasibility study. A consultant will be awarded in March or April.
- **Balloch as a 'Gateway'** –a decision of funding should be reached on 20<sup>th</sup> January.
- **Drymen Square** –consideration being given to 're-invent' the square.
- **NCN7** –Sustrans have invested £250k (funding awarded to NPA and SC). Work will begin resurfacing the Croftamie section on 25<sup>th</sup> January as part of Phase 1. There will be a submission put forward on Monday for Phase 2 following the Transport Minister's announcement of Community Links Plus. For more info on CLP please see [Community Links Plus brief](#)
- **WHW diversion on lower Ptarmigan path**–now complete.

## **Callander Landscape Partnership**

**Paul Prescott** provided an update on funding that the Callander Landscape Partnership have secured through the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Programme.

After securing Callander as a location as the 'Outdoor Capital of the National Park' and consultation with local community organisations, public, organisations and landowners a team was created (Paul Prescott elected Chair, Neil Cameron as VC) and a bid submitted in May 2015.

By October, they had received an award of £1.55 million which will be spent on around 30 projects covering re-instating built heritage; access; footpaths and bridges amongst others.

This will see the re-establishment of old path networks and the creation of new paths, such as the upgrade of Callander Crags paths and Little Leny Meadows. It will engage the community with features, both natural and man-made such as the 330m chambered cairn and the 85AD Roman Fort. For more information, please read the following article <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/mind-the-gap/menu-id-483.html>

It was proposed that visiting Callander and seeing some of the areas that will benefit from this project would make an interesting and informative site visit for the forum.

**ACTION –BR to book meeting space and catering and to plan in collaboration with PP.**

### **Lix Toll –virtual site visit**

Due to potential impact from winter weather, it was decided to hold a 'virtual' site visit where members would be provide with background information, timeline and photographs to enable an issue to be looked at from the comfort of the meeting.

In this case, we looked at a track that runs along a disused railway line from the road to the village (A85 towards Lix Toll). This route, although not a core path or ROW, is regularly used by pedestrians and cyclists. The path has been blocked by fallen trees, which although they can be climbed over are an obstruction nonetheless. The following timeline was issued to members along with photographs of the trees and map of the route:

#### **Timeline**

**10 October 2015** - NPA notified of blockage by member of public. Guy Keating assigned to investigate issue.

**20 October 2015** - Possible land owner / managed contacted and confirmation received the woodland on site is managed by John Searl Forestry Ltd.

**October 2015** – Site visit by forestry manager.

**9 November 2015** – Confirmation received from manager that site visit had been made and failed to find trees where shown on map provided in email (aerial photo). Acknowledgement of trees over path in slightly different location and encroachment along length of track.

**12 November** – NPA rangers visit site and note 3 large trees have fallen across the path.

**16 November 2015** –Removal of trees and if possible encroachment requested by email to forest manager.

**7 December 2015** – Follow up email to forest manager asking if any action had been taken.

**7 December 2015** – Response from manager stating the trees won't be removed as they don't prevent access by foot and that permission has been granted to a local to cut back the young trees.

**8 December 2015** –Email sent to forest manager setting out timeline of action relating to issue and value of path within the local network. Relevant points from the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provided and statutory responsibility of NPA to uphold access rights explained. Manager asked to clear fallen trees at earliest opportunity.

**9 December 2015** – Forest manager response received stating will not remove the trees.  
**December 2015** – Case and options discussed with Visitor Operations Manager and between Visitor Operations Manager and Head of Visitor Management. Decision made to present to Access Forum and January meeting and ask for advice and possible options for next steps.

Discussions following the 'site visit' related to the questionable reasoning behind the landowners unwillingness to remove the trees. Despite claims it was with regards to safety in relation to the A85, it was agreed that this is not for the landowner to decide. It would appear that it may be to reduce the level of use.

The route appears in several walking guides, and if locals were willing, there could be potential to start the process for Right Of Way recognition. It was not known, by the time of the LLTAF meeting, if the trees were still causing an obstruction and Kevin Fitzgerald agreed to visit the path and confirm. If so, it was suggested that this issue should be shared with the community council and decide on the way forward.

**ACTION –KF to check status of obstruction.**

**ACTION – KF to discuss route with Community Council.**

### **Forum Work Programme for 2016**

#### Templates

Members were shown templates proposed by NP staff for use at (and prior to) future meetings. These templates are:

**Access Team Updates** –to be used to provide a set format of updates from NPA to forum members and be circulated 1 week prior to meetings.

**Access Forum Site Visit Report** - This is intended to be a template used for any reports submitted to the NPA from the Forum to ensure we receive the key information required.

These will be circulated to members after the meeting to consider and feedback on. Once agreed, these will form the standard format of all meetings/site visits.

#### Your Park Camping Development Plan

The plan will be shared with all stakeholders at the final draft.

*Post meeting note: Upon request of sight of the plan at initial draft stage, clarification was sought. All stakeholders, including LLTAF, will receive it at the final draft.*

#### NAFLAF

Members were asked if they would be interested in attending the 2016 NAFLAF event (date to be confirmed, expected October/November). Will Huckerby has expressed an interest and other members who have not previously had the opportunity are encouraged to notify NPA if they would like to attend.

#### Guest Speakers

Members were asked if they would like to invite guest speakers to future meetings and for suggestions. It was agreed there would be interest in hearing from Simon Jones, the new NPA Director for Conservation & Visitor Operations and also Tom Wallace in relation to the Mountains and the People project.

### Outdoor Recreation Events Advice

The NPA are currently revising their website and expect to launch the new site around March/April 2016. There will be a section aimed at organisers of large scale events informing them of best practice when organising and promoting such events.

### Open Water Swimming

Members were invited to provide comments and feedback on best practice in relation to open water swimming events. Draft materials will be circulated to members for comment.

### Core Path Plan Review

The access officers would be grateful for input from LLTAF as to suggestions for methodology with regards to the Core Paths Plan review and ultimately the delivery of the review. It is anticipated that this will be around 2017/18.

### **AOCB**

**BS** raised concern about the blocked route between Inversnaid and Aberfoyle, caused by a landslide. **WH** confirmed that FCS need to get stability advice before deciding on any removal.

### **DONM**

**5<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

FUNVAL