

**Minutes of the meeting of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Local Access Forum  
held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 6.30pm at Bridgend, Callander.  
LAF 02/2016**

**Present**

Don Milton (C)	Alasdair Eckersall	Bob Sparkes
Yvonne Boles	Will Huckerby	Kevin Fitzgerald
Iain Wilkinson	Paul Prescott	Grant Dolier

**In attendance**

Babs Robertson	Kenny Auld	Claire Travis
Elaine Fotheringham (SportsScotland)		

**Apologies**

Chris Smith	Sue Riches	Bob Ellis
-------------	------------	-----------

**Welcome and apologies**

Simon Jones, who has recently taken on the role Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience with the NPA attended the meeting to meet members and introduce himself.

Simon provided a brief intro of his past ventures and work history and also of some of the current projects and challenges faced by the NPA: Budget reductions; development of the 2017-22 NP Partnership Plan; The Mountains and the People; Wild Park 2020; Your Park and the associated workstreams to ensure systems are in place, camping development is progressed and ranger deployment.

SJ invited the forum to contribute to the delivery of the Health Agenda. DM requested that as per previous projects and contributions that the forum would appreciate early input to projects and plans. BS suggested guided cycling and walks to encourage people to get out and about. CT highlighted the NPA promotional work on sharing this information and referred to the improvements that are being made to the website and the route cards that have been developed. KA highlighted that the NPA Tourism team are also working with others to develop similar route cards for other activities, such as kayaking. EF stated that SportsScotland would be happy to support any sport and recreational promotion.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held in January were approved.

**Site visit discussion**

Don Milton extended thanks to Paul Prescott for leading the site visits prior to the meeting. These visits allowed members to see some of the projects that will be fulfilled as part of the successful Heritage Lottery Funding bid that will enable the 'Mind the Gap' project being undertaken by the Callander Landscape Partnership. The next stage is to provide a detailed, costed Action Plan by August 2017. This will be overseen by the Project Manager, due to start in May 2016.

Members also had the opportunity to view some aspirational projects that may be funded through the Callander Hydro scheme. The community are keen to take on responsibility for car parks, toilets and woodland under the Community Empowerment Act.

Issues were highlighted with regards to concerns with Stirling Council and barriers to recreation as a result of responsibilities that lie with them not being addressed.

**ACTION DM** to draft a letter from the forum and circulate for comments, which can be submitted if required.

**ACTION KA** to follow up re fallen tree (Callander Crags).

### **General discussion**

AE spoke about the long term aspirations for road capacity for cyclists in the east loch Lomond area. KA believes that SC are considering using the dotted line method for Milton of Buchanan and Balmaha area. CT explained that the link between Tarbet and Crianlarich will be a separate path parallel to the road and that the Countryside Trust are considering the Crianlarich to Tyndrum section, with the A83 further down the line.

Discussions about the surfacing of cycle paths led to suggestions of potential site visits, allowing members to look at varying surfaces and understand the reasoning for them and ongoing maintenance concerns.

### **Officer Report –Q&A**

As previously agreed, the NPA update was provided as a paper in advance of the meeting to allow members to keep up to date with the work of the access team and raise any questions relating to the items at the meeting. For the purpose of the minute, this update is below:

#### **1.0 Upholding Access Rights**

##### **1.1 Section 13 Access Issues**

Locked gate - Glen Auchreoch, Crianlarich.

In January, the NPA wrote to the landowner with an informal request to discuss this long-standing situation. To date, the NPA has not received a response and will investigate further via the land agent.

Beinglas gate – positive discussions with Beinglas campsite around earlier opening and improved signage. Additional signage has been put up on site, the gate is open from 6.30am and a signage proposal covering alternative routes has been discussed and is being drafted.

Drumlean – the Authority is appealing the decision.

##### **1.2 Section 11 Exemption Orders**

None issued and no applications received.

#### **2.0 Outdoor Recreation Plan delivery**

##### **2.1 Priority projects 2015/16**

Arrochar / Tarbet Community Link

Work to improve the active travel connectivity between settlements is on-going with the local community, Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland.

3LW / Tighness path link

Following installation of final upper conduit by NPA Rangers, work on this important link is now complete. The path has bedded-in and is performing well - reports indicate the path is popular with 3LW walkers and also with local residents as part of a circular walk via the Pipe Track and Arrochar woods.

West Loch Lomond Cycle Path

Following a complaint from a member of the public about the lack of promotion and clear signage for the alternative non-roadside section of this route agreements have been reached with Luss Estates, the Carrick golf club and the owners of Inchmurrin to support use of the path from the main A82 access points and through the course area. Improvements include new signage, way marking and the management of public car parking.

### Cowal Way

Access infrastructure at a key point in Lochgoilhead has been improved in partnership with FCS - the work will facilitate access to an extensive path / track network for a variety of recreational groups including the less abled bodied and horse riders by installing a new field gate and adjacent self-closing gate.

### St Fillans to Lochearnhead

Works are progressing apace and St Fillans west to Tynreoch will be complete by May 2016 at full cost of £540,000. Bid into funders for 2016/17 for St Fillans to Glentarken.

### Drymen to Balmaha

Landowner discussions are continuing. Stirling Council are considering traffic calming measures for Balmaha and Milton of Buchanan.

### Balloch to Gartocharn

Consultants have met with the Kilmarnock community and expect to have completed a Feasibility and Design Report by May 2016.

## **2.2 Priority projects 2016/17**

Following Board approval of the Park Authority budget and annual operational plan for 2016/17 work is underway assigning budget and lead officers to the ORP priority projects for the coming year. These will include continued support for the Active Travel community led path development projects between Drymen and Croftamie and St Fillans and Lochearnhead, extension of the Park Mobility Project to an additional location, continued support for the Loch Lomond & Trossachs Countryside Trust Walk in The Park Project.

## **3.0 Other access projects**

### **3.1 NPF3 – Cross Scotland 3 Saints Way**

SNH and Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust (PKCT) are hosting a meeting of partners to discuss how to improve overall coordination of the delivery and future management of the Three Saints Way (Killin to St Andrews) at the end of April. Prior to this the NPA will be meeting with SNH and Sustrans.

### **3.2 The Mountains and The People**

Work has completed on Ben A'an. A helicopter lift of stone onto the Ben Lomond place took place at the end of March and the diversion route for the path during the works has been agreed. Light touch works are underway on The Cobbler return and are due to start on Stob Binnein (if clear of snow) soon – all the necessary permissions from SNH have been received.

Trainee recruitment took place w/b 7<sup>th</sup> of March and 8 trainees will start this month. The Education & Volunteering project officer has been recruited and joins the team based at the Old Station in Balloch.

### **3.3 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust**

A new Lomond Co-ordinator has been appointed to the Walk in The Park project, which continues to grow from strength to strength, with both walks and strength and balance sessions taking place and being well attended. The Park Authority will continue to help fund this project in 2016/17.

## **4.0 National steering groups and forums**

### **4.1 National Walking Strategy**

The National Walking Strategy action plan, which is co-ordinated by Paths for All, was launched on 3 March. This 'soft launch' saw the publication of a new infographic on the benefits of walking, a new website <http://www.stepchangescot.scot> a new twitter account

@stepchange and a hashtag #stepchangescot. The Park Authority attended the NWS Delivery Forum last month, where the plans implementation and monitoring was discussed, more specific detail on actions for the National Park to follow.

#### **4.2 Green Exercise and Natural Health Service**

The Park Authority has been contributing to the development of a national action plan, led by SNH in partnership, focusing on mainstreaming the use of the outdoor environment, such as parks, green spaces and paths, as a means to tackle public health issues. The Park Authority will explore options to progress a pilot project in the National Park, building on the work of the Walk in the Park project and linking directly to government priorities to get Scotland active, walking and healthy both in terms of physical and mental health.

#### **4.3 Central Scotland Mountain Biking cluster**

No update at this time.

#### **5.0 Work with local partners**

##### **5.1 Argyll & Bute**

Nothing to report at this time.

##### **5.2 Stirling**

The Rec & Access Team have worked with SC to successfully resurface NCN7 at Croftamie and north of Kilmahog. We have also submitted a joint bid to Sustrans for funding to investigate measures which will improve Callander as a walking and cycling friendly town.

##### **5.3 West Dunbartonshire**

The NPA are working with WDC on the Balloch Charrette and have had discussions regarding a contribution to planned improvements to the Haldane link path.

##### **5.4 Perth & Kinross**

P&K Countryside Trust is a partner within the 3 Saints Way Project.

##### **5.5 FCS**

Quarterly meetings are on-going and NPA sit on the FCS Hill Paths group which has come out of the Mountains & The People Project.

#### **6.0 National Access Forum /SOAN update**

SOAN

A well-attended training session focussing on managing conflict around horse riding access took place at Oatridge College recently. Attendees heard presentations and case studies from BHS, Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland and Access Officers.

#### **7.0 Specialist advice provision**

##### **7.1 NPA planning function**

Specialist comments provided to 4 planning applications and 2 FDP's.

##### **7.2 Other**

Balloch Charrette

The team have been involved throughout this project to provide advice on recreation and access proposals and considerations.

#### **8.0 NPA plans and strategies development**

Work has started on the production of the next National Park Partnership Plan with the intention to submit to Ministers late summer / early autumn 2017. As with the previous plan there will be a consultation period.

### **Drumlean Appeal**

The NPA have been advised by the legal team that the QC is now involved elsewhere which means a change in counsel. A decision will be made as to whether to take case to Sherriff Appeal Court or Court of Session. This will be decided in the next week or two.

### **Duke of Buccleuch**

It has appeared in various news articles, the introduction of a charge for access to Dalkeith Country Park. The Duke, who is one of the largest private landowners in the UK, has implemented the annual charge (£10 for adults, £20 for dog walkers and £20 for a family pass) in order to restrict anti-social behaviour within the park. The charge would allow access via a 'swipe pass' system between the hours of 7pm and 7am, when the gates will be locked. You can read the full article here: <http://www.scotsman.com/news/pay-10-to-get-into-dalkeith-country-park-at-night-says-millionaire-duke-1-4054881>

### **Virtual Site Visit**

Members were asked to submit comments on the Site Visit Report Template.

**ACTION –resend template**

### **Open Water Swimming –best practice advice**

Open water swimming is becoming one of the fastest growing outdoor activities, with more events taking place with various size of groups, from small locally formed groups up to the grander Great Scottish Swim.

The NPA has multiple roles to play as land managers, byelaw enforcers and the through the provision of SOAC advice. As part of these roles, advisory guidance will be featured on the website and a pocket size leaflet with key advice will be produced. The Loch Lomond Association have also agreed that they would be keen to promote this.

Discussions will be held with Tri-Scotland and other involved public bodies to open dialogue to ensure that necessary processes are being undertaken. Discussions will also be held with local authorities licensing section to establish if such events should require a licence. **WH** advised that the Local Authority should be involved from the outset as it would be their responsibility to assess any incident that may occur and the event organisers should be made aware of this.

**GD** suggested the Head of Water Safety at the Royal Lifesaving Society, Cliff Nelson as a contact.

### **AOCB**

**KF** raised concerns about increased signs of gralloching. **BR** also agreed there have been more calls from the public over recent months. Advised to keep an eye out and inform PC Paul Barr of any future incidents.

**KA/IW** advised of plans for a workshop date to be set to invite discussion on sheep worrying and similar problems.

**AE** raised concerns about signage at Killin re camping and dog control. **ACTION –pass to Guy for further investigation.**

**KF** also raised concerns about stalking signage displayed by Drummond Estates.

**DONM -5<sup>th</sup> July**