

**Minutes of the meeting of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Local Access Forum
held on 17th May 2017, 6.30pm at The Lodge, Aberfoyle.
LAF 02/2017**

Present

Don Milton (C)	Sue Riches
Yvonne Boles	Bob Sparkes
Paul Prescott	Chris Smith

In attendance

Kenny Auld	Bridget Jones
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Apologies

Bob Ellis (VC)	Iain Wilkinson	Grant Dolier
Alasdair Eckersall	Will Huckerby	

Welcome and apologies

DM thanked everyone who had attended the site visit and those involved in organising.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in January were approved.

Matters Arising

Covered within agenda

Any other business items

LLA Magazine
Parkswatch Scotland website

Site visit discussion

Ben A'an new path works as part of The Mountains and The People project – BS commented that path was previously very awkward but now is more accessible, particularly for children. CS commented on the residual FCS signage regarding deer management (old signage with no dates) and the scale of the deer management/ATV tracks. Discussions continued around the scale and high specification of the deer management tracks and whether this was a new management approach and possibly excessive. BJ confirmed that further discussion with FCS and Will Huckerby about the gate and path arrangements was needed to help clarify plans for the management of public access. BJ also explained the forest design process.

DM asked whether a circular route would now exist from the public road to the gate and what access for horse riders and associated parking. It was noted that the people counter data was high with 2600 passes since 5th of May. CS and SR suggested that there is a really good opportunity, with such high visitor numbers on one path, for interpretation around explaining forest operations, reasons for brush and what the forest could look like in the future post clearance work.

ACTION –WH to confirm location and purpose of deer tracks and any plans for access management or development (including signage).

Forum membership

Land management representation – BJ confirmed that she has contacted NFUS, SLE and Park Authority land management team contacts and is delighted to confirm that Lisa Roberts of NFUS has been proposed as one of the reps, subject to formal appointment. One further space is vacant which will hopefully be filled shortly.

ACTION –DM to contact Janet Beveridge about remaining space on the Forum.

Papers

Access Team update, Q&A

The main points highlighted were: S14 successes, Parkmobility press coverage and IPA fund popularity. BJ updated on the LDR Forum and that the Cowal way has progressed well and now recognised as a SGT. BJ also confirmed that the Park Authority is reviewing WHW management arrangements.

DM noted that in initial core path planning process LAF asked for more strategic paths and now many have been developed from both “top down” and “bottom up”. It was confirmed that these would be considered in the next CPP review. It was also highlighted that England has a multi-level approach to longer distance routes with different standards and promotion; and that Scotland does top tier well but not the lower tier of routes. PP declared an interest through his involvement in the Mary Queen of Scots Way which is a low key self led route with no signage but seems well used. PP commented that the Access Team update paper is excellent and very useful for sharing information. SR concurred. All agreed that the short bulleted format of paper was working well.

Core Paths Plan review

BJ presented the paper and concluded by requesting that the next Forum meeting could be a “single issue meeting” run as a workshop on core paths planning, including reviewing the selection criteria and mapping. All agreed. The NPA will also refresh the ORP in conjunction with the core paths plan and involve stakeholders who have an interest in both processes, as well as those specific to ORP.

Action: BJ to arrange Core Paths Planning workshop

Updates & Discussion

Drumlean s.14 appeal hearing judgement

KA gave an update on the process so far and confirmed that Drumlean Estate have been given leave to appeal to the Court of Session. This could mean that a decision could now be 12 to 18 months away.

National Park Partnership Plan consultation

BJ confirmed that the NPPP is currently out to consultation and encouraged members to respond either individually or as a group, closing date is 3rdⁿ July.

ACTION –DM to co-ordinate a LAF response

ACTION –Individual members to consider separate responses

National Park paths promotion: Google trekker trial

BJ updated that the Park Authority are trying out the Google trekker camera equipment, which records and presents paths in the same way as Google streetview. Volunteers supported by park staff are undertaking the filming over 4 weeks in May/June, focusing on a variety of routes. Further discussions are underway regarding its use for recording upland paths.

ACTION –BJ and SR to see if there are any views from Mountaineering Scotland.

Your Park

BJ confirmed that Your Park, camping management byelaws went live on 1st March. The booking system, developed by Campstead, is working well. Most bookings are made online, with most telephone bookings being taken in-situ as rangers engage with campers while on patrol. Loch Chon site has had some initial problems but is now operating well and receiving a lot of positive feedback from visitors. The site is greening up and it would be good for the Forum to revisit the site.

Tweaks to the permit areas are ongoing and Ranger engagement patrols are working well. No significant issues thus far, but a report is going to the Procurator Fiscal this week for non-compliance by campers refusing to observe the byelaws. Partnership working with Police Scotland continues with Operation Ironworks providing additional police support over the season.

YB stated that RSPB might be seeing some camping related displacement at Inversnaid and BJ asked that the site manager record any issues and pass on to the Park Authority who are under-taking monitoring. PP stated that there was some displacement of caravans/vans from Loch Earn to Coilhallan FCS car park, which BJ was aware of. FCS and Police Scotland are working actively to resolve the issue.

DM had attended the Your Park Stakeholders Forum and will share facts and figures presented. The quality of some permit areas was discussed, including not enough motorhome provision. BJ confirmed that motorhome booking and numbers have been surprisingly high, which is partly attributed to new confidence around where they can park legally over-night. CS commented that this is an emerging market that doesn't cause issues but can bring economic benefits. SR raised a point about long-term motorhome settlements on A82 and BJ confirmed that legalities are complex and discussions ongoing with Transport Scotland to clarify exact legal position.

ACTION - YB to request Inversnaid manager passes camping displacement info to NPA.

ACTION –DM to share Your Park Stakeholder Forum facts and figures

Car Park charging

SR explained that she has received complaints and queries around what the National Park policy and justification was for car park charges. BJ confirmed that the Park Authority currently charges in 3 car parks; Inveruglas, Loch Lubnaig and Lubnaig Beag. The justification is based on the need to generate revenue to help with the provision of services during a period of financial constraints. The Park Authority also charges for commercial use of its piers and pontoons and has rent paying tenants in shared visitor facilities such as Inveruglas and Tarbet. The Park Authority is currently looking at rolling out further car park charging and is reviewing the best mechanism. (PP suggested that low tech is best and avoid expensive ANPR that is easily vandalised or breaks) CS pointed out that Yorkshire Dales has online permits for residents. BJ confirmed that any charges would take into account users' needs such as education groups in mini-buses, tour buses and for hill walkers on multi-day hill trips. SR mentioned the COAT experiences of charging at Loch Muick, where the interpretation is good and explains the reasoning behind the charge. CS pointed out that displacement can occur and BJ confirmed that strategies need to consider turnover of vehicles and types of use.

Discussions continued around what is a “reasonable price?” SR stated that MCoS want to avoid inconsistency in pricing structures. All agreed that a National Park wide approach would be great when technology allows.

ACTION –WH to share FCS parking policy

ACTION –BJ to share developing policy as it evolves

ACTION –BJ to share LAF views with Emma Yendell, Park Authority, Estates Manager

AOCB

BS shared the Loch Lomond Association magazine and the specific article which proposes that the Forum is absent. Forum members will consider if there are any valid points and decide whether a response is required.

ACTION –BR to forward article.

ACTION - DM/members to decide if a response is required, and if so to respond.

PP informed members of a website called Parkswatch Scotland which includes content on a number of National Park related matters including access. PP believes the articles appear on the whole reasonable and asked specifically about one relating to public access at Loch Venachar house owned by Linda McKay, former Park Authority Board member and Convenor. BJ confirmed that the Park Authority was dealing with an access complaint and would be responding in due course.

DONM

BR to issue Doodle Poll for the next meeting date, including core paths plan workshop. 30th August or 6th September, afternoon and/or evening.

APPROVED