

**Minutes of the meeting of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Local Access Forum
held on 22nd August, 6.30pm at NPA HQ, Balloch.
LAF 03/2019**

Present

Don Milton (C)
Will Huckerby
Paul Prescott

Falcon Frost
Sue Riches

Grant Dolier
Diane Docherty

In attendance

Kenny Auld
Gill Walker

Babs Robertson

Dave Robinson

Apologies

Chris Smith

Guy Keating

Welcome and apologies

Don Milton welcomed all and declared apologies for Chris Smith. This was followed by round table introductions for the benefit of Gill Walker from Forestry and Land Services who attended the meeting to learn more of FLS role on the Access Forum.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in May were approved.

Matters Arising

Don suggested that in light of the resignation of key, long standing members over recent months that the forum should consider ideas for suitable gifts to award at the end of service. All members were keen that any gift should be access related, such as bespoke OS Maps. Suggestions to be shared by email and KA will action.

AOB

Items to be discussed at the end of the meeting:

- WH - Phytophthera
- KA - WHW; Flooding; Bracklinn; Scottish Government

Access Team Update

In relation to the update paper, the following points were raised:

Ballimore –there continues to be issues with access in this area despite previous agreements with regards to management. Concerns will also be discussed with the Deer Management Group, who encourage best practice with members of the group although cannot enforce this. PP also advised of an alternative route that links to the hydro that could be considered.

The access team propose a site visit with the forum to fully consider the current implications and potential solutions.

Action –BR to issue Doodle Poll to secure a suitable date.

Drumlean –Further to access being opened up on the estate, the plans in place for wider estate management are on track and being delivered as per agreement between estate managers and NPA Access Team.

Duke's Weekender –the event's organisers are on track for delivering another successful event in September and have applied for grant funding to support this.

Drymen to Balmaha – as part of the plans for the final stretch into Balmaha, proposals to reroute the road (turning right into the car park and then left to continue to Rowardennan) are being discussed to address better flow of traffic and safety of cyclists.

Infrastructure –with regards to gates purchased by the Access Team to support Community Groups replace stiles/improve access, members are invited to propose suggestions where these could be installed. GK is developing a table to record potential locations.

Bracklinn Bridge –repairs to the bridge are still outstanding since the removal of the copper sheeting from a bungled theft attempt. The agreement between the Callander Development Trust and the National Park Authority states the maintenance of the bridge is the responsibility of the NPA. The CDT are happy that this does not have to necessarily be replaced by copper, but that repairs are required to prevent further damage and protect the integrity of the bridge.

KA to raise with NPA Estates Team and establish plan for repairs.

Loch Earn Railway Path – work is continuing on the railway path and the section at Fortrenn is due to start. The community are in the process of raising £67k funding for the next stage. A community engagement meeting held last week in Lochearnhead was well attended with all in attendance supportive of the project continuing through Lochearnhead. Kenny advised that there have been a few objections from residents, but that consideration would be given to all involved and that working with the community for a resolution is key.

SPEN

This is a multi-million pound programme to mitigate the continuing landscape impact of the electricity power lines through the Trossachs area, following the decision not to underground the lines. The promontory path at Stronachlachar is the first of these measures and progress towards a planning application continues. SPEN and their consultants have provided a draft route for the path but want to retain existing gradients of 1:6 to 1:7 because of the amount of cut and fill required to attain a consistent 1:10 gradient, and also because the access road to the start of the path has a maximum gradient of 1:7. Both ourselves and FLS want the route to be as DDA compliant as possible and are pushing for a 1:10 path gradient.

Updates and Discussion

Terms of Reference and recruitment

Due to the NPA legal team's current workload, we are still awaiting the Terms of Reference paper (which will replace our current Operating Principles). Once this is available it will be shared with current members before being used as part of the planned recruitment drive to replace vacancies within the forum.

Action –BR to circulate ToR by email once available.

Proposed Protection of Livestock (Scotland) Bill Consultation

The NPA response to the consultation was shared with members of the forum. As discussed previously, we are in support of the Bill but have requested that there is a true reflection of baseline data and better research with less emotive language and anecdotal statements.

Core Paths Plan Consultation Update

Letters were issued to objectors providing the Access Authority's stance on their proposals and offering the option to meet with Access Officers to discuss any concerns they may still have. As a result of this stage, 3 objections have been withdrawn and a further 4 have been resolved.

Outdoor Recreation Plan

Kenny shared the work that has been undertaken relating to the priority initiatives and guiding principles associated with each of the themes (A Park for All; Connecting Places; Vibrant and Active Places; Explore Further; Happy and Healthy People; Coasts and Water). Members were split into two groups and each given the opportunity to discuss and comment on the proposals. In general, members agreed that it was a good piece of definitive work with suggestions for:

- Signage –should be consistent with other signage throughout the park, including other partners.
- Opportunity to build on Walk in the Park and extend this to improve health benefits for a wider audience (currently most participants are in recovery from ill health)
- Consideration for speed restrictions on trunk roads where necessary.
- Inclusion of riverside walks in Coasts and Water.
- Introduction of Park Runs throughout the park.
- The inclusion of coffin/historic routes was well received by all members.

There has been input through the form of a pre-consultation questionnaire from various stakeholders which has provided valuable comments and insight to the drafting of the plan. Forum members will be provided with the same questionnaire to enable them to offer further structured comments individually and also the opportunity for agreed points to be collated and as feedback from the Forum as a body.

The final draft plan will be completed and submitted to the NPA Board for discussion on the 24th October and the consultation will be launched during November, running for 6 weeks.

Action – BR to email through blank questionnaires to all members

AOB

WH advised that *Phytophthora sp.* is spreading up through Cowal and will likely spread throughout the park in the next 5-10 years. This strain appear to be more vigorous than the case at Ben Lomond. A drop-in session is being organised at Dunoon to help with awareness raising and advice to try and prevent further contamination, with extensive felling planned at Corlarach forest (just outside Dunoon) to tackle the issue.

KA is currently drafting a paper regarding management of the West Highland Way. This will also be addressing flooding which has had a massive impact recently with the extreme weather conditions. There has been a huge effect on Katrine paths and FLS are currently assessing all routes to establish a schedule of works and address any necessary closures/diversions. Updates will continue to be reported on FLS website.

KA also advised that Scottish Government have issued the draft LRA guidance document – “Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1: Draft Revised Guidance for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities 2019”

ACTION –BR to share via email

DONM

21st November , 6.30pm NPA HQ

DRAFT