



# Minutes of Meeting Held at 18:30pm on 12 March 2024 on MS Teams

## Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Access Forum

12/03/2024

Present.....	2
In Attendance – National Park Authority staff.....	2
Apologies .....	2
Items and Actions.....	3

<b>Present</b>
Don Milton (DM) Chair
Chris Smith (CS)
Sue Riches (SR)
David Fettes (DF)
Andrew Clark (AC)
Grant Dolier (GD)
<b>In Attendance – National Park Authority staff</b>
Sue Hilder (SH)
Kenny Auld (KA)
Dave Robinson (DS)
Ayeasha Temple (AT) Minute taker
<b>Apologies</b>
Falcon Frost
Sheena Foster
Paul Prescot
Guy Keating

<b>Items and Actions</b>
Item 1: Welcome and apologies DM welcomed all and thanked them for their attendance.
Item 2: Introductions and any Declarations Round table introductions with a brief description of each person's background. DM welcomed DF who is the newly appointed Board Representative to join the Forum. DF introduced himself to members and gave a description of his background. There were no declarations of interest.
Item 3: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising Minutes approved and actions from previous meeting complete.

#### Item 4: LLTAF Member Concerns

DM introduced the report and gave a brief overview of the concerns members have including:

- Membership numbers
- Terms of Reference
- Meetings

DM stated that the Forum wishes only to be given the means to provide a very high-quality service to the NPA and all access users, as used to be the case. While the remaining members of the LLTAF are experienced and able to support any reasonable request from the NPA, there is no doubt that restoring the LLTAF to full complement would have multiple benefits.

It is requested that this statement of concern is conveyed to senior Park management and the Board.

DM asked KA what changed around 2018/19, was there anything the Forum should be aware of i.e.. Policy changes and where do you see the Forum going in the future.

KA thanked DM and the Forum for the statement, and said it was well balanced and understands the concerns from members.

KA said that in terms of escalation, he would add the statement to AOB at the next Executive team on Thursday 14, to discuss the concerns and points raised in the statement. KA advised that DF as the Board Representative can also add any items he wishes to discuss with the Board to the next meeting agenda.

KA due to competing priorities and resources over all areas in the NP, the team have not been able to get all tasks completed, KA advised the Forum does hold value with the Executive team.

Moving forward KA advised the team has set allocated time aside in the diaries to set milestones.

SH thanked the Forum for raising their concerns and apologised for not being able to get things moving more quickly.

DM understands the pressures on the NP and the statement is a gathering together of what has been happening over the last 5/6 years. DM is concerned that again there has been a delay in the recruitment process being initiated.

The first updated draft of the Terms of Reference was previously rejected by all Forum members, this took another 2 years before any further progress.

KA assured members he is working alongside the Legal team and new Governance Manager to move this along quickly.

SH advised she recently attended a neighbouring local access forum and gave a brief overview of the meeting which demonstrated the value of the LLTAF's independence by comparison.

SR summarised, that the Forum lost focus along the way, initially the group had some important access issues that the Forum was dealing with and site visits to live cases; she felt we need to refocus on the core access issues again.

SR said the Forum members are motivated and want to help the NP going forward, stressing the importance of resolving the recruitment issues and getting some core access cases to look at along with site visits to keep members interested and motivated.

KA discussed with members other areas of work the Forum have influenced previously and will do in the future, including transport and the upcoming camping bye law review.

The group had a brief discussion on the importance of recruitment.

#### Item 5: Recruitment update

SH advised that after talking with KA, time has been blocked out in the diaries to set up the milestones needed to move along the recruitment process.

Discussions have taken place with the Governance Manager and the Comms Team, who have recently had a recruitment drive for the Youth Committee and have shared information and documents we can use.

KA, person specification is ready in draft format waiting for a final check from the Governance Manager, so we have a clear transparent way of scoring.

In terms of milestones, we would want to see them in place before the next meeting, after talks with Comms it would be an 8-week turnaround from the advert going out to recruiting, this would include 2 weeks to allow the team to prepare the relevant documents.

Members were reminded that, based on previous discussions, the specific gaps in representation that would be sought through the recruitment process, in order to retain the balance of interests were:

- Cyclists
- An understanding of disabilities/protected characteristics
- Nature and Wildlife
- Local Businesses and Communities

DM asked for confirmation on the recruitment timeline.

SH noted this would likely take 10-12 weeks, including preparing the advert and questionnaire. KA/SH waiting on confirmation of this timeline from Governance Manager. Training for Forum members could be picked up late summer-autumn to allow members to agree what the training needs are and the team to fit this into their work programmes.

DF asked if Trust in the Park has had much involvement in the Forum?

SH explained there is no direct link between the Trust and the Forum, although the Access team meet with the Active Travel Officer on a periodic basis.

DM advised that there is a NAF interest in identifying training courses available to LAF personnel, also a number of organisations offering access training that could be used to get a better understanding and background.

DR asked if there is an organisational reason why we need to wait on Governance, can the recruitment not be done by the team and the LAF members?

SH advised that Governance is need more for help and guidance due to capacity issues.

KA confirmed that it is the authority's responsibility to recruit members to the Forum, with DR, SH and GK scoring the applicants.

DM asked for confirmation that new member will be in place by the end of summer.

SH yes.

**KA share timeline and milestones in the next few weeks – Action**

Item 6: Training needs

DM asked members if they have any requirements for refresher or up to date training.

DF asked how we work with neighbouring LAF's and Access officers.

SH, the team liaise with other Access officers regularly where they exist, this can be included in the training on how other LAF and Access officers work across Scotland.

DM not a huge amount of interaction between the areas, NAF LAF meeting coming up, to allow members to engage with each other and raise national issues, **DM to arrange for DF to attend the virtual meeting – Action**

DM action to investigate the work being looked at in the NAF on how LAF members can be developed.

Action all members to let SH and CS know of any training refresher/ top up needed.

SH noted that SOAN (Scottish Outdoor Access Network, of which she is a Co-Convenor) provide training. SH to share with the Forum when they are advertising training.

The group had a brief discussion on different training courses available and their benefit.

## Item 7: Access team update + Q&A

In relation to the update paper, the following highlights were discussed:

### Ballimore, Balquhiddar

DR gave a brief overview of the background on this case; the NPA had requested that either the padlocks were removed from the relevant gates, or the diversion route agreed in 2016-17 opened up by replacing a broken gate and providing access in a deer fence. The landowner contacted us on 14 January 2024 to say he had opened the diversion route, and a site visit on 1 February confirmed this.

NP have advised they will install some directional signs and way markers to be monitored on a trial basis for 12 months, still wanting to hear back from the landowner.

In terms of a site this would be a good case to look at and get the Forum's opinion on the diversion route.

### Loch Voil, Balquhiddar

This is a long-standing issue of 'no access' and 'no camping' signs between Craighuie and Monachyle Mhor which pre-date camping management byelaws and are linked to wider visitor management issues.

The NPA met and discussed these issues with all landowners, explained to them why these signs are non-compliant and have offered other advisory signage to influence behaviour. We have discussed broader issues with the NPA's camping management team about permit areas, and with Stirling Council as roads authority for traffic issues, and have proposed the following:

- The Craighuie layby/ passing place - this is the passing place immediately after Craighuie where parking and camping outwith the camping permit area takes place. Stirling Council has agreed to erect a passing place sign in this layby and hopefully this will deter people from parking here. They are hoping to install it before Easter.
- Camping Management Zone (CMZ) signs and 'no access' signs - one of the landowner criticisms of the camping management byelaws is that after the large 'You are now entering a Camping Management Zone' sign at the entrance to the Glen there are insufficient repeater signs in the Glen to reinforce this message. The next sign is before Dhanakosa, and there are three others but these are all beyond Craighuie. We are prepared to install three additional CMZ signs to remedy this but on the basis that the various non-compliant signs stating private, no access or no camping are removed. These signs will be between Dhanakosa and Rhuveag.
- We will also provide access advisory signs if required. These are smaller with messages tailored for specific locations and issues.

The members discussed the anti-social and car parking issues in the Glen.



### Ardchullarie

This is adjacent to the A84 at Loch Lubnaig. The landowner has fenced off the lochshore area with a new deer fence. One gate has been removed and another padlocked, so the area is now obstructed. The NPA has spoken to landowner's agent and he agreed to remove the padlock off the remaining gate but it was still locked on a site visit of 1 February so we have contacted the agent again. DR to get back in touch with the landowner's agent.

### Lady's Walk, Gartmore House

This was the proposed core path at the centre of the judicial review into the Authority's core path plan review in 2019-20. With all the statutory procedures relating to the Core Paths Plan now complete, the NPA wrote to Gartmore House in January this year outlining our intentions and work schedule to re-open Lady's Walk. The fallen trees and encroaching vegetation have been cleared and two gates and two fingerposts are to be installed later this month. Hopefully the route will be fully open by Easter.

### Borland Hill path, Gartmore

This is also a new core path but has been blocked at either end for some time now. We have approached both landowners requesting that gates are unlocked and that one gate (previously obstructed but since removed and replaced by a fence) is reinstated. We have met on site with one landowner to discuss access arrangements but are still waiting for a response from the other.

DR advised that due to the approval of a planning application, the core path may have to be moved slightly. DR has met with the relevant landowner and they are happy to accommodate the move but not to pay for the gate to be reinstated. More work required with both landowners.

### Conic Hill

DR updated the Forum on work that has taken place, he also suggested this would be another good site visit for the Forum members.

### Item 8: Site visit planning

**DM hoping to have a site visit arranged for June, prior to the Scottish school holidays. Members to email suggestions. ACTION.**

Item 9: Any Other Business

SH gave members an update on the progress on the West Highland Way (WHW) SCIO.

Members discussed funding opportunities for the WHW.

GD advised Richard Miller at Scottish Canals would be a good person to contact regarding information on a SCIO.

SH/WHW colleagues could look into how the Santiago route is funded.

DM raised an issue in Sheena's absence on livestock worrying as coming into the lambing season; staff advised guidance is available to dog owners online and through the Ranger team, plus there is a programme of communications from our Comms Team throughout the spring, including on social media, as well as site-based signage and information on responsible behaviour and livestock.

AC suggested ground-nesting birds should be considered in a similar manner.

Item 10: Future meetings:

- Monday 13 May 2024
- Monday 19 August 2024
- Monday 25 November 2024

DM suggested one face to face meeting and the others on teams

Signed

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Dom Milton, Chair