

# Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Access Forum 23.10.23

## Note of Meeting

Attending: Don Milton, Zain Sehgal, Paul Prescott, Grant Dolier, Chris Smith + NPA staff (Sue Hilder, Guy Keating, Dave Robinson)

1. Welcome and apologies
  - Apologies were received from Sue Riches, Sheena Foster, Falcon Frost and Ayeasha Temple. (In Ayeasha's absence, a brief note of the meeting was taken by the NPA team.)
  - Don noted that he had sent condolences on behalf of the LLTAF to Sue R who had recently lost her father. He asked NPA colleagues to pass on the Forum's wishes for a speedy recovery to Ayeasha who has Covid.  
**Action SH**
2. Any introductions (and any declarations of interest)
  - There were no declarations of interest.
  - Don asked those present to introduce themselves for Andrew's benefit as a new member of the Forum. Andrew is acting as the forestry representative until Sue Morris' FLS replacement is in post.
3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
  - These were accepted a true record. Any matters arising were covered by agenda items.
4. Recruitment and Terms of Reference update
  - Sue H noted that the Summary Terms of Reference document had been updated with all comments and amendments previously provided by Don and Chris addressed. There was a remaining admin task to update the draft Full Terms of Reference to ensure consistency.  
**Action SH/AT**
  - Forum members agreed that they were content that they'd had enough opportunities to comment on the drafts. This being the case, Don proposed that the updated Terms of Reference be approved by the Forum, subject to 'tidying up' and this was supported by the membership.
  - A discussion took place concerning terms of office. It was agreed that the terms of office of all current Forum members would be dated from the time of agreeing the new terms of reference – thus 23.10.23.
  - It was noted that recruitment is outstanding to fill the two remaining places on the Forum. **Action SH**
5. Training needs
  - A discussion about training needs ensued, touching on both the needs of newer Forum members and the desirability for ongoing opportunities for all Forum members to broaden and deepen their understanding of access issues. It was noted that this need could be met, at least in part, by site visits which would be discussed later in the agenda.
  - Sue H mentioned a forthcoming online workshop covering an introduction to the access rights created by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. This would be delivered by FLS in partnership with SOAN (the Scottish Outdoor Access Network) and was free to SOAN members. Sue agreed to send details of the course and SOAN membership to Zain and Sheena.  
**Action SH**
  - Don reminded attendees of the upcoming workshop about Local Access Forums offered by Helen Todd of Ramblers Scotland which was to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> November. Zain expressed an interest and Sue or Don would re-send the information.  
**Action SH/DM**
6. Access team update + Q&A
  - NPA staff expanded on highlights of their October Update which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
  - In response to an item on sustainable transport, Paul P raised the subject of the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing car mileage by 20% by 2030. He wished to make the point that at a recent community meeting in Calendar, there had been unanimous disagreement with this target which was felt to be unrealistic in the National Park. Chris S supported Paul's statement.
  - With reference to the core paths budget, Don asked if there was a set of criteria in place to ensure the budget was used effectively and gave the example of the very considerable costs associated with the Conic Hill path project. Sue H explained that the team was developing a criteria matrix to enable effective

prioritisation of capital projects and offered to share the matrix with the Forum at a future meeting.

**Action SH**

- Additionally, Dave R noted that the Conic Hill work was a 'stand-alone' project and therefore under an entirely separate budget line from the core paths budget.
- In covering the Loch Lomond, Breadalbane and Cowal section of the report, Guy K provided details on current capital projects that were underway or being procured, specifically a path upgrade at Succoth, and the replacement of two dilapidated bridges on the West Highland Way. He also updated the Forum on significant damage caused by flooding associated with Storm Babet to the Lochgoilhead paths network.
- The Forum welcomed news that legal action was being considered to address an ongoing non-compliant signage issue at Loch Dochart.
- In covering the East Loch Lomond and the Trossachs update, Dave R specifically highlighted ongoing access casework at Glen Ogle, Loch Voil and at the Lake of Menteith.
- Dave also provided an update on the next phase of stone pitching on the Conic Hill path which would now be delayed by approximately 3 weeks due to unscheduled helicopter maintenance. However, the contractor will instead start work on replacing the wooden steps through the forestry land above Balmaha, thus keeping the overall contract on track. The bulk of the stone-pitching will now take place in the New Year and will run on through the summer months.

7. Site visit planning

- Chris S expressed concern about the lack of Forum site visits in recent years, and in particular questioned why the Forum had not been brought in to provide advice about individual access issues as it had been in the past. The NPA team explained that the majority of current cases were of longstanding and had been reported consistently in the Forum updates.
- Don suggested that the long-running case at Ballimore Farm would be an excellent subject for a site visit. It was agreed that NPA staff would aim to arrange this in Spring/Summer 2024, subject to agreement with the landowner, with the intention of coinciding with better weather and avoiding the deer staking season. It was noted that parking may be an issue at this site. **Action Dave R**
- It was noted that new Forum members would be unfamiliar with the site visit protocol. Sue H agreed to recirculate it. **Action SH**
- Forum members were also keen to have a site visit before Christmas in the current year, with the main objective of allowing new and current members to get to know each other. Andrew C kindly agreed to host the Forum at FLS' The Lodge, Aberfoyle (previously known as David Marshall Lodge) if a suitable date could be found. The majority of Forum members present stated that an afternoon visit would be feasible for them (given the dark evenings were now upon us). Grant D noted that it would be difficult for him to be absent from work during a weekday afternoon, however. Sue H and Andrew C would liaise over dates and arrangements for the proposed visit. **Action SH/AC**

8. Any Other Business

- It was noted that all items had been covered elsewhere.

9. Future meetings – proposed dates:

**Monday 12th February 2024**

**Monday 13th May 2024**

**Monday 19th August 2024**

**Monday 25th November 2024**

- It was noted that the February or May meetings might lend themselves to being combined with a site visit.
- There being no further business, Don closed the meeting with thanks to all attendees.

<b>LLTAF Actions from 23/10/23</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Status</b>
NPA colleagues to pass on the Forum's wishes for a speedy recovery to Ayeasha who has Covid	SH	Done

Update the draft Full Terms of Reference to ensure consistency with the shorter version.	SH/AT	Ongoing
Recruitment of two new members - a) Updating of recruitment information and design of application questionnaire. b) Comms and advertising. c) Sift, follow-up, appointment.	SH/AT	Expected: a) Dec/Jan b) Late January c) Mid-February
Send details of the FLS/SOAN access legislation workshop to Zain and Sheena.	SH	Done
Re-send the invitation to the Rambler's Scotland workshop for LAF members to Zain.	SH/DM	Done
Once completed, share criteria matrix for project prioritisation with the Forum at a future meeting.	SH/AT	Noted for future meeting agenda
Arrange site visit to Ballimore Farm in Spring/Summer 2024	DR	Ongoing
Send site visit protocol to newer Forum members – NB protocol may need to be updated first.	SH	To be sent before site visit
Arrange site visit to The Lodge, Aberfoyle with FLS before Christmas.	SH/AC	Unable to find a date which suited more than 4 Forum members. Re-consider in New Year.