



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

## Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Access Forum

12/03/2024

Present.....	1
In Attendance – National Park Authority staff .....	1
Apologies .....	1
Items and Actions.....	2

### Present

Don Milton (DM) Convenor
Chris Smith (CS)
Sue Riches (SR)
David Fettes (DF)
Andrew Clark (AC)
Grant Dolier (GD)
Paul Prescott (PP)
Sheena Foster (SF)

### In Attendance – National Park Authority staff

Sue Hilder (SH)
Guy Keating (GK)
Ayeasha Temple (AT) Minute taker

### Apologies

Falcon Frost
Dave Robinson (DS)

<b>Items and Actions</b>
<p><b>Item 1: Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>DM welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance.</p>
<p><b>Item 2: Introductions and any Declarations</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
<p><b>Item 3: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising</b></p> <p>Minutes approved and actions from previous meeting complete.</p> <p>DM advised that the BHS (British Horse Society) have confirmed LAF members can attend their access training sessions.</p> <p>DM suggested some potential sites for the LAF site visit, he also suggested a training session for members before the site visit takes place.</p>
<p><b>Item 4: Recruitment Update</b></p> <p>SH an email was sent round to all members with information on the recruitment launch; 3 applicants have applied so far. The closing date has been extended to the 20 May.</p> <p>Applications will be shortlisted by SH, 2 members of the Access team and the Governance Manager on Wednesday 22 May, SH will keep members informed on the progress.</p>

## **Item 5: Access Team Update + Q&A**

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

SH advised the due to budget cuts, this year's available budget will be 5k of capital and £5k of revenue, a drop of 97% from the previous year. Therefore case work will be the focus this year.

### National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP)

A project team is continuing to work up plans for the public launch of the NPPP which has now received ministerial approval. However, recent events in the Scottish Government may be a potential delay whilst ministerial portfolios are reallocated.

### Sustainable Travel

At the time of 'going to press' we are as close to achieving a Summer shuttle bus service in the Trossachs as we have ever been. Contracts are drafted and will be signed this week. The Trossachs Explorer will run between Callander and Aberfoyle from 1st July to end of September.

### Glen Dochart – s14 non-compliant signage

Further to a previous update on this case, the non-compliant sign has been removed, the NPA will continue to monitor the site. Enforcement case closed.

### Glen Falloch

Several locked gates and aging items of wooden access infrastructure have been reported by the public. The NPA are working with Glen Falloch Estate to remedy these issues.

### Glenoglehead

Discussions on site design and the management of harvesting with the forest operator are ongoing.

### Strone - Rights of Way

The situation remains unchanged for the time being – residents continue to use two 'through-routes' to access woodland and the informal paths between Strone Shore Rd. and the Back Rd, which is a core path. The investigation into potential right of way status is unresolved as more information is required.

### Arrochar / Succoth transmission line upgrade

SSE have now started work on the Tighness/Arrochar/Glen Loin lattice tower upgrade work. The Tighness diversion is signed and proving effective, and large-scale improvements are taking place in Succoth and Glen Loin including access road/path improvements and the installation of new bridges.

## Forest Planning

The NPA is currently being consulted on several large-scale harvesting/restocking proposals designed to address the spread of phytophthora ramorum in the National Forest Estate's Larch population. This work will affect Loch Eck (east and west), Benmore, and Lochgoilhead/River Goil areas. The NPA's position is to maintain recreational access wherever possible; if paths or core paths need to be closed due to overriding H&S concerns, then public access must be carefully managed by using signed alternatives or short-term diversions.

## Access Infrastructure Projects:

### WHW – The 2 Bridges Project (Kilanden & Gorge of Mar)

The replacement project was completed in March. The WHW through this area has been re-opened and favourable comments have been received by the NPA. The new bridges feature concrete abutments, a zinc-galvanised sub-structure, recycled non-slip decking, treated oak timberwork, stainless steel fixtures and fittings and should serve WHW users for many years to come.

### Killin/Acharn Forest – recreational waymarking

Supported by the NPA, the Killin Sports & Recreation Hub have completed an excellent project to improve recreational waymarking around the town and Acharn Forest. A more detailed update will be included at the next LAF meeting.

DF asked for an update on the damaged bridge on the Rob Roy Way at The Lodge (FLS) near Aberfoyle that has been out of action for some time.

AC advised this has been a long process, the bridge has now been designed and procured, currently working with an external contractor towards an installation date, current signage is under review.

DF, signage around the Rob Roy way has fallen or not be maintained.

The members had a discussion on who is responsible for auditing and maintaining the Rob Roy Way signage. Access Team to comment at next meeting. - ACTION

## East Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

### Upholding Access Rights:

#### Ballimore, Balquhidder

On 7 December 2023 we sent out an informal officer letter to the landowner outlining the ongoing access issues, how they could be resolved and the legal options we have if they are not. We 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.

We have developed advisory signs for either end of the diversion and the landowner has agreed these. We will get them manufactured as soon as possible and the Land Operations Team has agreed to install them with some additional waymark posts to keep people on the route.

#### Loch Voil, Balquhadder

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 locations of the signs are shown by red 'lollipop' markers on the map below. We are in the process of agreeing a new signage regime with the landowners.

#### Lady's Walk, Gartmore House

The two gates and two fingerposts were installed at the end of March and the path is now fully open, Gartmore residents are happy to be able to use the route again.

#### Borland Hill path, Gartmore

We are still waiting for a response from one of the landowners despite attempts to contact him through email, telephone and a visit to the farm with a hard copy of all previous correspondence posted through the letterbox. We have discussed the work required with the Land Operations Team and we believe that installing gates already purchased and in stock at our depot and stores to open up the route is likely to be the best solution.

#### Loch Ard shoreline, Kinlochard

We are working with both our Legal and Planning Teams to deal with and potentially enforce against a breach of a planning condition which has blocked access to a section of the Loch Ard shoreline. We met with the landowner in late January and legal discussions are still ongoing.

#### Access Infrastructure Projects

##### Conic Hill Path

Work started on the second phase of the Conic Hill path repair on 30 October 2023. The current status for the overall project is:

- Remaining stone delivered to stone storage site early April 2024.
- 15 to 22 April stone bagged ready for flying.

- We have instructed the contractors to complete the first 312 metres of pitching and the timber steps within the forest boundary before moving onto the upper path sections.
- October 2024 – path section 5 to be completed.

SH advised members that some damage has been done to the path due to trail bikes, this is an issue we will need to monitor and may need to involve the police if the bikes continue to access the path.

PP – access issue at a cross boundary between NP and Stirling Council, on the route of the old railway line southeast of Callender, the railway line is completely blocked by several boulders, only accessible to walkers if they climb over the boulders, no access for bikes or horses. Maybe withing the Stirling Council area.

### **Item 6: Training Needs**

DM reminded members of material available to read online including the Land Reform Scotland Act 2003, Scottish Outdoor Access Code, Local Access Forums: A Guide to Good Practise and Land Reform Scotland Act 2003 Guidance for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities.

GK advised members of a training opportunity with Euro Park Federation, who send out monthly web forum/training videos.

GK to contact administrator to confirm if members can take part in Euro Park training – ACTION

Trial 15/20 minute training/development discussion at the start of meetings when new members join. Investigate when SOAN access training module will be available for use. - ACTION

**Item 7: Site Visit Planning**

Members discussed the benefits of carrying out site visits and potential options for a visit, including Forest Lodge VC, Lake of Monteith, or a training exercise on the challenges faced by water-based users.

SH to ask DR if Lake of Monteith could be an option for a visit – ACTION

SH asked GD for any examples of challenges faced around Lake of Monteith that could link in with the site visit, also advised SOAN will be running a water-based activities event in autumn in partnership with Scottish Water.

AT to send an email round asking members - ACTION

- Site visit suggestions
- Preferred time, Day or Afternoon time

**Item 8: AOB**

There was no other business.

**Item 9: Date of Next Meeting – Monday 19 August 2024**

Signed

---

Don Milton, Chair