



# **Draft Minutes of Meeting Held at 18:30pm on 27 May 2025 in HQ and Virtual**

## **Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Access Forum**

**27/05/2025**

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

<b>Present</b>
Don Milton (DM) Convenor
Chris Smith (CS) Vice-Convenor
Paul Prescott (PP)
Andrew Clark (AC)
Falcon Frost (FF)
Rachel Taylor (RT)
Calum Langdale (CL)
Emma Sandhu (ES)
David Fettes (DF)
<b>In Attendance – National Park Authority staff</b>
Sue Hilder (SH)
Dave Robinson (DR)
Mick Foran (MF)
Ayeasha Temple (AT)
<b>Apologies</b>
Grant Dolier (GD)
Sheena Foster (SF)
Sue Riches (SR)
Kira Samide (KS)*

## Items and Actions

### Item 1: Welcome and apologies

DM welcomed all and thanked everyone for their attendance.

DM Introduced MF new member of the Access Team to the forum, MF gave the group a brief description on his background and there were introductions round the table.

### Item 2: Introductions and any Declarations

There were no declarations of interest relating to the meeting agenda.

### Item 3: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising/actions

Apologies and Sheena's arrival part way through the last meeting to be recorded in the minutes, actions updated.

DM/SH – to prepare a few paragraphs and send to SF – **ACTION AP/2** (now AP/3) **Action Ongoing**

The Forum had an in-depth discussion on the safety of horse riders and cyclists using gravel tracks. DM had fully reviewed the Gravelfoyle website and remains concerned that insufficient information relating to the safety of cyclists and other users is included.

DM to prepare a note detailing his concerns to Dave Robinson/Bike Trossachs (tbc) – **ACTION DM 5/25AP/1**

Minutes approved.

#### Item 4: Profile and independence update

SH gave an update on the response to LLTLAF regarding its concerns about profile and perceived independence; discussion followed on the below points:

- Board member appointment; is to improve the visibility of the Forum and its work to the Board, but **not to represent** the Board on the Forum
- Member Recruitment – agreed may be beneficial to involve a member of the Forum in future recruitment interviews.
- SH has sent an enquiry to Visitor Operations colleagues to see if there might be an opportunity for someone from the Forum to attend and give a short presentation to each of the VMAG groups (Visitor Management Advisory Groups) on the role of the LLTAF- SH to follow up with a timetable with DM, he is happy to attend groups and invited other members to volunteer as well – **ACTION SH 525/AP/2**
- Terms of Reference: SH will add a Board Member role profile to provide clarity in TORs and share with new Forum Members – **ACTION SH 525/AP/3**
- DM will prepare a short article to include in the July NPA bulletin which goes out to communities and businesses to highlight the Forum's independent role in providing advice. – **ACTION DM 525/AP/4**
- NP unable to support an independent forum website at this time
- NP website updates: the Forum happy to wait till the new NP website is in place. Comms to provide an opportunity for the Forum to input at development stage. SH to pick up with Charlotte Ryder's replacement and DM/SH to advise AT on setting up a small subgroup for this – **ACTION SH/DM 525/AP/5**
- LLTLAF own email address - SH discussed this with Head of IT and it is not possible to provide an alternative convention.

## Item 5: Access team update

The Access Team introduced this item referring to the previously circulated update paper.

- SH updated the forum on the progress of the Local Development Plan.
- PP and CL happy to get involved with the LDP website consultation.
- DR updated on Core Path budget
- ES advised an oak tree branch was down on the WHW- ES to send info to MF to have a look. – **ACTION ES/MF 525/AP/5**
- Triggered by a mention in the update of the clearance of obstructions on a Core Path by “persons unknown”, there was a discussion of what rights members of the public have to undertake maintenance work on Core Paths and Rights of Way. As the meeting ended without agreement on the rights of the public maintaining Rights of Way, post-meeting research has confirmed that the position is as below.

**Post meeting note:** *In Scotland, the public has the right to **maintain, but not to improve, rights of way**, without needing the landowner's or access authority's permission. "Maintenance" involves keeping the path in its proper condition and includes actions such as pruning back vegetation encroaching on the path. "Improvements", which aren't allowed without the landowner's permission, involve changing the nature of the path, such as turning a grassy track into a gravel one. Any maintenance work must be carried out safely, following all relevant health and safety requirements, and should not block other users from using the path. Although the public has a right to maintain rights of way without asking permission, because of the complex nature of rights of way determination it is sensible to engage with the landowner, if known, and/or the access authority, to establish the exact status of the route being considered. In many cases, it is also appropriate to inform the access authority and/or the landowner of one's plans, especially in cases of more-extensive maintenance works. This right does not cover the use of power tools or enable someone to drive a vehicle without permission onto land where that wouldn't otherwise be allowed, and it only applies to paths that meet the requirements to be classified as rights of way. The landowner's property must not be damaged or encroached upon during the repairs. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 is statutory law, which is enacted and codified by legislative bodies and can be clearly referenced in a specific written document. The right to maintain rights of way, however, comes from common law and so isn't written down the same way. Common law is judicial law, also known as case law, which means law that stems from precedent set by court cases. Therefore, there isn't a specific written law that can be referred to.*

Sources:

- The ScotWays law guides, which have been published since at least as far back as 1951 and are written by lawyers expert in the field. The latest edition of this book was written by Malcolm M. Combe and was published in 2018.
- Servitudes and Rights of Way, by Roderick R.M. Paisley and Douglas J. Cusine, pub. 1998.
- <https://scotways.com/ken/who-maintains-paths/>

Item 6: Uncontrolled dogs issue, Conic Hill – for discussion

The Forum had a discussion on the following

- Ongoing issues with sheep worrying and disturbance on Conic Hill. Number of users that has continued to grow during this season – 60,000 visitors since April
- Reports of farmers having to keep sheep inside
- NP already have numerous permanent signs requesting walkers to always keep dogs on leads.
- Balmaha Visitor Centre Rangers have livestock worrying messaging prominently displayed in their 'high-profile campaign area' from Feb to May each year.
- DR shared photos and wording of signage in place
- Police Scotland had suggested the introduction of a bylaw to address the issue of uncontrolled dogs, through experience of managing other bylaws the NPA feels a bylaw would not be effective in this case.
- A working group (sub-group of NPARC) has been set up to develop potential solutions.

Item 7: Training needs and site visit planning

- Site Visit taking place on 12 June at Conic Hill
- Any training needs to be passed to SH/DM as they arise – **ACTION AII 525/AP/6**

Item 8: Any Other Business and date of next meeting

- CL noted he will attend the National Park Mobility Partnership 'Stakeholders' Insights Group' meeting scheduled for the end of May.
- Reports of adders in the Falls of Falloch area.
- Next meeting 11 September 2025 tbc

Signed

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Dom Milton, Chair

<b>ACTIONS TABLE</b>			
<b>Action number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
From previous meeting <b>ACTION AP/2</b> (now AP/3)	DM/SH to prepare a few paragraphs and send to SF.	DM/SH	<i>Done</i>
<b>5/25AP/1</b>	DM to prepare a note detailing his concerns to Dave Robinson/Bike Trossachs (tbc).	DM	<i>Done</i>
<b>525/AP/2</b>	SH to follow up with a timetable.	SH	<i>September</i>
<b>525/AP/3</b>	Terms of Reference: SH will add a Board Member role profile to provide clarity in TORs and share with new Forum Member.	SH	<i>September</i>
<b>525/AP/4</b>	DM will prepare a short article to include in the July NPA bulletin which goes out to communities and businesses to highlight the Forum's independent role in providing advice.	DM	<i>Done</i>
<b>525/AP/5</b>	SH to pick up with Charlotte Ryder's replacement and DM/SH to advise AT on setting up a small subgroup for this.	SH/DM	<i>September</i>
<b>525/AP/6</b>	Any training needs to be passed to SH/DM as they arise.	All	<i>Ongoing</i>