



# Draft Minutes of Meeting held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 11 September 2025, John Muir Suite, Balloch

## Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Access Forum

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### Present

Don Milton (DM) (Convenor)

Chris Smith (CS) (Vice-Convenor) (joined from item 3)

Grant Dolier (GD)

Sue Riches (SR)  
Andrew Clark (AC)  
Sheena Foster (SF) (via Microsoft Teams)  
David Fettes (DF)  
Calum Langdale (CL)  
Rachel Taylor (RT)  
Emma Sandhu (ES)

### **In Attendance**

Sue Hilder (SH)  
Mick Foran (MF)  
Deborah Spratt (DS) (Clerk)

### **Apologies**

Falcon Frost (FF)  
Dave Robinson (DR)  
Paul Prescott (PP)

## **Items and Actions**

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Convenor (DM) welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Access Forum noting that SF would be joining via Microsoft Teams and that she would be unable to attend the whole meeting.

As SF would have to leave before the end of the meeting, DM requested, in relation to Agenda 4, out of turn, that any changes that SF believed necessary to the draft article for NFUS about the LLTAF should be referred to him by the end of October. **ACTION SF (9/25 AP1)**

All other members attended in person.

DM advised of a change in forum membership with recent resignations received from Paul Prescott and Kira Samide. DM informed members that an email was received from PP with regrets that he would be unable to attend this meeting and that he would be tendering his resignation. DM gave his valedictory to PP and a copy of this is included as an appendix to these minutes.

DM then advised that, following a telephone call between SH and Kira Samide, KS advised that she will be leaving the area and felt that it would be better to resign from the Forum. KS had indicated that she would send an email confirmation of her resignation to DM but unfortunately this has not yet

been received. DM therefore requested members agreement that the extended absence and verbal statement received by SH would be sufficient confirmation of the intent to resign. Members agreed and DM requested that DS remove PP and KS from the membership list on the NPA website by the end of October. **ACTION: DS (9/25 AP/2).**

DM reminded members that in the most recent selection and nomination of new members, four individuals were nominated, because of the quality of the applicants, instead of the three originally planned. While one resignation left the Forum at the originally intended number of members, two at this meeting indicated that a recruitment of one individual should be undertaken. DM recommended that this should not be initiated immediately and requested that all members give thought to any knowledge gaps within the group by the date of the next meeting and to advise DM what to look for should a recruitment exercise be undertaken. This was agreed by members following a short discussion. **ACTION: All (9/25 AP/3).**

There were no members of the public attending in person and apologies were received from Falcon Frost, Dave Robinson and Paul Prescott.

## **2. Introductions and Declarations of Interest**

DM introduced DS to members and thanked her for supporting the meeting in the absence of Ayeasha. There were no Declarations of Interest from Forum Members.

## **3. Minutes of previous full meeting held on 27 May 2025 and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2025 were discussed and amendments were agreed as follows:

- Kira's apologies were not received for the meeting and therefore should not be minuted.
- Item 3 – the reference to Sheena's arrival part way through was not for minuting and can be removed.
- Item 5 – fourth bullet – action number is wrong – should be AP/6 and not AP/5 as minuted. Action complete and is noted below.
- Item 7 – action number wrong – should be AP/7 and not AP/6 as noted.

An update was provided on each of the matters arising as follows:

- Action AP/2 (which is now AP/3) - complete.
- Action 5/25 AP/1 – complete.

- Action 5/25 AP/2 – action ongoing - DM advised that RT and CS have volunteered to attend the Visitor Management Advisory Groups and welcomed interest from any other members.
- Action 5/25 AP/3 – complete.
- Action 5/25 AP/4 – complete.
- Action 5/25 AP/5 – action ongoing - SH advised that Charlotte's replacement will be starting on 9<sup>th</sup> October.
- Action 5/25 AP6 – complete.
- Action 5/25 AP7 – DM suggested that this item should now be closed as an action, is a standing requirement and members to advise DM of any new training suggestions, including potential site visits as and when required.

#### 4. Profile and Independence Update

DM advised that an article was included in the bulletin for the NPA website which goes out to communities and businesses. An article will also be going into the next Wild Strathfillan newsletter. A draft article has been forwarded to NFUS and DM and other members hope to be speaking at Visitor Management Advisory Groups later this year.

CS suggested an article in the Parklife magazine which could offer some different readership. CS agreed to make an approach by the end of October and will update back to the Forum. **ACTION: CS (9/25 AP/4)**

DF mentioned having something in the local community newspapers and agreed to get a list of contacts by the end of October.

**ACTION: DF (9/25 AP/5).**

#### 5. Access Team Update + Q&A

SH presented the Access Team update paper and highlighted a mistake with a misplaced photograph in the version issued to Members. This has since been updated and the new version is available on the NPA website.

SH gave an update on team news highlighting that Guy Keating hopes to be back at work soon following a long-awaited knee surgery.

DM requested that best wishes from the Forum are passed on to Guy for a speedy recovery. Members are pleased to have MF continuing to represent the Access Team on the Forum.

Members were pleased to note the second season of the Trossachs Explorer shuttle bus. It was mentioned that having appropriate signage / parking in the Balloch area would be advisable if this is to be a long-term service.

The National Park Mobility Partnership is continuing to build momentum and a Mobility Partnership 'Route Map' will be the key strategic output this year. CL provided an update from the first meeting of the Stakeholder Insights Group which he attended on behalf of the Forum. Members thanked CL for keeping everything joined up.

It was noted that the John Muir Way between Darleith Moor and Ben Bowie/Bannachra, which has been closed due to wind damage for almost two years is due to re-open again at the end of October.

MF advised that there had been a complaint made from a member of the public about locked vehicle gates in deer fencing on the Glen Fruin Haul Road which obstruct access rights to the open hillside. Discussions have taken place with the CEO of Luss Estates who advised that the gates need to be locked for stock management purposes. Members were pleased to note that verbal agreement has been made by Luss Estates to install pedestrian gates although noted that no timeframe has been agreed for this. Members agreed that deer fencing is an issue and a question was asked 'if it is reasonable to ask landowners to do something about this?' Members suggested that perhaps a site visit could be an option. MF agreed to provide RT with a map by end of September. **ACTION: MF (9/25 AP/6).**

AC mentioned that he has been challenged by the Kennel Club about signage on the approach to Conic Hill through FLS land. AC agreed to pick this up with Dave Robinson offline by the end of September. **ACTION: AC (9/25 AP/7).**

DM identified a complaint about a locked gate raised by a horse rider in the Buchanan Castle area which is being actioned by MF and DR. The gate is a Vehicle Inhibitor Step Through that is designed to stop motorised vehicle access but allow horse, and other, passage. DM has confirmed with BHS Scotland staff that the general expectation is that those riding out should be able to step over natural obstacles, such as fallen branches, as well as gates such as these. The BHS may be able to provide coaching to assist the rider as a potential solution to this issue if required.

## **6. Gravelfoyle Update**

All of the new shared-use signs are now out on site although it was thought that signs at two locations could be better sited. Bike Trossachs and FLS will review these. The LAF's written comments were discussed at the last Gravelfoyle Management Group meeting on 18 August. Bike Trossachs has agreed to further review and amend the Gravelfoyle website on the back of these comments.

It is intended to hold an all-user familiarisation day before the start of the next visitor season, ideally before Easter 2026.

AC provided an update and advised that a race is being planned and that a section 11 order would be applied for to cover a short section of the loop noting that the safety of all users is being taken seriously. Will be looking at dog owner / cyclist / horse rider scenario and contact will be made with the British Horse Society and the Kennel Club to look at multi-user trails. Members thanked AC for the update and for his work in this area.

### **7. Forest Road Closures**

DM had contacted FLS as a member of the public expressing concerns about apparent disconnects between signage and forest operations. This has the potential for causing uncertainty and confusion among access users in forests. DM brought this to the attention of the Forum as all references to forest operations (UKFS, SOAC, FCPN 104) promote maximum time and area access to forests apart from when there is a current danger to the public and workers. There was a general discussion where members expressed concerns and RT gave some examples of areas of good practice.

AC provided the Forum with an update on what Forestry and Land Scotland do to provide information to the public and requested that where people see incorrect or out of date signage and FLS website information this should be reported to FLS. Thanks were extended to AC for his provision of information at the meeting and assistance prior to the meeting.

### **8. Training Needs and Site Visit Planning**

There was nothing highlighted from members by way of training needs. As per the Action (5/25 AP/7) in item 2, members to advise DM of any new training suggestions, including site visits, as and when required.

DM suggested the following areas for a potential site visit:

- Forestry site – look at problems faced by FLS
- Loch Ard Area – multi-user trails and paths
- Haul Road – access and deer fencing

## **9. Discussion re content and methodology of future minutes / meeting note**

DM highlighted that members have identified to him that Minutes of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Access Forum now have less detail in them than in years past and was asked if we are duty bound to be producing comprehensive minutes available to the public. DM believed that there was no requirement to make comprehensive minutes written for the public to understand but that it was good practice to produce minutes that would be intelligible for all readers, including the public and those referring back to previous minutes.

It was agreed that the Minutes should not contain any “hidden information” and need to be in a suitable form. It was, however, mentioned that the level of information in the Minutes will depend on the content of the meeting. Members were requested to consider what level of information is required in the minutes and email DM with any comments before the next meeting.

**ACTION: All (9/25 AP/8)**

## **10. Any Other Business**

The following business was discussed:

### Convenor position

DM highlighted that in 12 months time he would have completed the maximum term as Convenor. Any members interested in the position to speak to DM. Impossible to provide guidance on the time requirement of this role, but reasonably significant, depends upon business at the time, and can have peaks of several hours per day.

### Local Access Forum Survey

Since the last meeting, the Access Forum representative on the NAF has circulated a questionnaire to all LAFs requesting information on recruitment, retention, number of Access Authority Access Officers, whether the Access Authority provides meals/tea/coffee and similar. Questionnaire completed and returned.

### Access Cross Party Group

There has been a fairly widespread concern that current MSPs do not have the same level of knowledge, experience and interest in access as their predecessors at the time that the Land Reform Act was being generated. A recent PQ on access funding through Local Authorities was raised by Ariane Burgess. Sir Edward Mountain MSP has also raised access issues within the

Scottish Parliament. While organisations with access interests regularly raise issues with the Scottish Government, there is currently no Cross Party Group (CPG) representing access. CS described the function of CPGs. Members were asked if they would support DM raising this as an issue at the NAF-LAF meeting in October in the expectation that support from other access organisations may be forthcoming and that one, or both, of the MSPs mentioned might be willing to assist. Members supported the proposal and DM agreed to raise the issue at the NAF-LAF meeting on 22 October if LAFs are given an opportunity to propose discussion issues. **ACTION: DM (9/25 AP/9).**

RT agreed to share the Parliamentary question with the Forum and will also raise the subject at the next Scotways Legal and Access Sub-Committee meeting later this month. **ACTION: RT (9/25 AP/10)**

#### Scotways Access Leaflet

RT distributed copies of the Public Access in Scotland – know your rights guide. Members to let RT know if they wish further copies.

#### Great Trossachs Path

DF mentioned that a question had been raised at the Strathard Community Council about who was responsible for the path. SH agreed to follow up directly with DF. **ACTION : SH (9/25 AP/11)**

### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Monday 17 November 2025 and will be held via an online platform. DS will issue the date for the diaries.

2026 dates have yet to be agreed and DS agreed to issue a Doodle poll to members to agree on dates to be confirmed by the end of October. **ACTION: DS (9/25 AP/12).**

SH agreed to provide the Forum with further information on the Livestreaming of the Access Forum meetings. DM agreed to seek views from members by 26 September on whether this was an option that members would wish to use. **ACTION: SH/DM (9/25 AP/13).**

<b>ACTIONS TABLE</b>			
<b>Action number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
<i>Welcome and Apologies</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP1)</b>	DM requested, in relation to Agenda 4, out of turn, that any changes that SF believed necessary to the draft article for NFUS about the LLTAF should be referred to him by the end of October.	SF	<i>End October</i>
<b>(9/25 AP/2)</b>	DM requested that DS remove Paul Prescott and Kira Samide from the membership list on the NPA website by the end of October	DS	<i>End October</i> <b>(complete)</b>
<b>(9/25 AP/3)</b>	DM requested that all members give thought to any knowledge gaps within the group by the date of the next meeting and to advise DM what to look for should a recruitment exercise be undertaken.	All	<i>17 November</i>
<i>Minutes of Previous Full meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May and Matters Arising</i>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kira's apologies were not received for the meeting and therefore should not be minuted.</li> <li>• Item 3 – the reference to Sheena's arrival part way through was not for minuting and can be removed.</li> <li>• Item 5 – fourth bullet – action number is wrong – should be AP/6 and not AP/5 as minuted. Action complete and is noted below.</li> <li>• Item 7 – action number wrong – should be AP/7 and not AP/6 as noted.</li> </ul>	SH/AT	<i>End Sept</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action AP/2 (which is now AP/3) - complete.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP/1 – complete.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP/2 – action ongoing - DM advised that RT and CS have volunteered to attend the Visitor Management Advisory Groups and welcomed interest from any other members.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP/3 – complete.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP/4 – complete.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP/5 – action ongoing - SH advised that Charlotte’s replacement will be starting on 9<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP6 – complete.</li> <li>• Action 5/25 AP7 – DM suggested that this item should now be closed as an action, is a standing requirement and members to advise DM of any new training suggestions, including potential site visits as and when required.</li> </ul>		
<i>Profile and Independence update</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/4)</b>	CS suggested an article in the Parklife magazine which could offer some different readership. CS agreed to make an approach by the end of October and will update back to the Forum	CS	<i>End October</i>
<b>(9/25 AP/5)</b>	DF mentioned having something in the local community newspapers and agreed to get a list of contacts by the end of October.	DF	<i>End October</i>
<i>Access Team Update and Q&amp;A</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/6)</b>	MF agreed to provide RT with a map by end of September.	MF	<i>End Sept</i>

<b>(9/25 AP/7)</b>	AC mentioned that he has been challenged by the Kennel Club about signage on Conic Hill. AC agreed to pick this up with Dave Robinson offline by the end of September.	AC	<i>End Sept</i>
<i>Discussion re content and methodology of future minutes / meeting note</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/8)</b>	Members were requested to consider what level of information is required in the minutes and email DM with any comments before next meeting.	All	
<i>AOB - Access Cross Party Group</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/9)</b>	Members supported the proposal and DM agreed to raise the issue at the NAF-LAF meeting on 22 October if LAFs are given an opportunity to propose discussion issues.	DM	<i>22 October 2025</i>
<b>(9/25 AP/10)</b>	RT agreed to share the Parliamentary question with the Forum and will also raise the subject at the next Scotways Legal and Access Sub-Committee meeting later this month.	RT	<i>End Sept</i>
<i>Great Trossachs Path</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/11)</b>	DF mentioned that a question had been raised at the Strathard Community Council about who was responsible for the path. SH agreed to follow up directly with DF.	SH	<i>End October</i>
<i>Date of Next Meeting</i>			
<b>(9/25 AP/12)</b>	2026 dates have yet to be agreed and DS agreed to issue a doodlepoll to members to agree on dates to be confirmed by the end of October.	DS / AT	<i>End October</i>

<b>(9/25 AP/13)</b>	SH agreed to provide the Forum with further information on the Livestreaming of the Access Forum meetings. DM agreed to seek views from members by 26 <sup>th</sup> September on whether this was an option that members would wish to use.	SH/DM	<i>26 Sept 2025</i>
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## Appendix

DM valedictory to Paul Prescott:

“With deep regret, I have to inform the LLTAF that the email also included Paul tendering his resignation. For a number of reasons, he feels that he is unable to devote the time that he believes is necessary to be an active and fully engaged member of the Forum and, very honourably, has decided that he should leave to open a membership position to an individual who has the necessary time available. This is despite the fact that he has thoroughly enjoyed membership and participating in the support of access rights and responsibilities for everyone.

Paul has been one of our longest serving, stalwart and committed members. He will be sorely missed for his access knowledge and experience, his wise counsel and ability to assess issues that have arisen with common sense and astute observation derived from a long and successful professional career.

He particularly remembers the Forum being asked to provide advice and views on an access dispute in St Fillans where there were very strong feelings on each side. An afternoon site visit was followed by Forum discussions and then a meeting in the local hall. Over 40 local residents attended. While one side was disappointed by the conclusions, both sides at the end of the meeting thanked the Forum for its courtesy, adherence to the requirements of the Land Reform Act and logical analysis of the facts. Paul believed that this was the epitome of how the LLTAF should perform.

Personally, and on behalf of the Forum, I have thanked Paul for his exemplary support of the Convenor and the whole Forum for such an extended period.”