

NOTE OF STIRLING AREA LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MEETING HELD IN VIEWFORTH, STIRLING, on THURSDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2007 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Cheryl Campbell,
John Campbell,
Paul Davison
Simon Hart
John Pitt
Roderick Ross, (Chair)
Graham Taylor
Robert Sparkes.

Officers:-

Donald Balsille, Manager, Environment Services
Richard Barron, Senior Access Officer, Environment Services
Ann Dromgoole, Committee Officer, Corporate Services

Also Present

Stuart Davies, Scottish Natural Heritage
Ali Hibbert, The Paths for All Partnership

Apologies for absences were received from Niall Bowser, David Dowling, Councillor Tony Ffinch, Mike Gray, Linda Howson and Duncan McEwan.

34 NOTE OF MEETING – 6 DECEMBER 2006

Decision

To approve the Note of Meeting of 6 December 2006 as a correct record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising - Prior to the main business the Forum discussed the format of how the Hearing at the last meeting had been conducted and unanimously agreed that it had been well conducted and that full discussion and been permitted with all the issues debated. The consensus was that at any future Hearings there needs to be a formal structure with written submissions for circulation in advance to Members to enable a rational decision to be reached. The conflict between the Access Act and Access Code was highlighted as was the importance of site visits connected to Hearings.

It was confirmed that the Council had addressed the issue of delegation of power to the Senior Access Officer, which had been raised at the December 2006 meeting. On 15 March 2007 the Council was likely to agree to amend its Scheme of Delegation to introduce revised methods for dealing with contentious issues relating to Access using the Planning Schedule and the Regulatory Functions Panel. This would involve recommendations on Access issues being published in the Planning Schedule and if no Councillor objected then the recommendation adopted as a decision. If a Councillor objected

then the issue would be referred to the Regulatory Functions Panel for a decision.

Information on any issues could be accessed via the web.

Decision

The Forum noted the position and agreed that the Senior Access Officer provide Members with a Summary of the new procedures in due course.

35 LOCKED GATE AT OLD SAUCHIE – HEARING

The Forum was advised that consideration of the new procedures described above would not affect the recommendation agreed in December 2006 to hold a roundtable discussion with the interested Parties on the Locked Gate at Old Sauchie. A letter from the Estate Manager dated 2 February 2007 was referred to. The Forum was advised that the Trustees had now reached a decision for the sale of the Estate. However whilst the Missives for sale of the Main Estate and the Divisions Field – Lot 5 had yet to be concluded the Estate Manager was happy for the Forum to write directly to the various parties involved with a view to arranging a site visit meeting. However since the Buyers might not be in a position to take a final decision it was explained that the Estate representative had confirmed that he would be willing to attend the meeting at the same time as a representative of the Estate.

It was also confirmed that the representatives of the “Concerned Residents” and “Old Sauchie Resident’s Association” had now advised of their representatives.

Decision

The Forum noted the position and agreed that the meeting be held.

Action – Clerk and Senior Access Officer.

- 36 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR** – The Senior Access Officer reported (a) that the Scottish Countryside Access Network were hosting a Workshop for Access Staff; (b) a Sub-Group of the National Access Forum would be looking at the issues around Wild Camping and (c) a Training Event based around wild camping would be hosted on 25 April 2007.

37 ACCESS ISSUES

The Senior Access Officer provided an update on the access issues within Stirling Council area under investigation in the following locations i.e. Dunblane; Doune and Sheriffmuir. He also advised that the Council had issued 2 Section 14 Notices in connection with Boquhan Estate, which concerned separate issues. It was noted that the Ramblers Association wished to make representations when the case concerning the request for 70 acres of land to be excluded from Access Rights was considered.

Given the timeline for hearing the Court cases it was possible that the Boquhan case could be the first in Scotland to receive a ruling from the Sheriff Court. However a Sheriff's decision did not create a precedent in law.

Decision

The Forum noted the position.

38 THE DRAFT STIRLING COUNCIL CORE PATHS PLAN

An overview was tabled on the Consultation process on the Core Paths Plan as at 15 February 2007. The purple routes illustrated on the maps displayed at the meeting highlighted the routes suggested by Officers, the green routes indicated the routes suggested by the public and the orange routes were those which had been suggested but which Members of the public thought should be modified.

During discussion the following points were made:-

Core paths can be deleted or modified;

The need to recognise routes where windmills have been installed;

Reference to the response to the Questionnaire, which indicated that 75% of those responding wanted circular paths (this would involve including links to public roads);

"Wanderweg" – Was the joining up of routes between Villages a possibility?

Intention of Core Paths was not to tell people where to walk but to extend the opportunity for them to go different ways;

The budget will prioritise the Core Paths – there is a public perception that Core Paths will be sign posted – there is also an expectation on the part of the Executive for Councils to provide sign posts;

All comments on the Core Paths were available on the web;

The Council cannot use the argument that it cannot maintain Core Paths as a reason for not providing them; there is no legal requirement to maintain Core Paths;

Reference to Land Management Contract grants to improve Core Paths and the need to encourage Maintenance Volunteers and work up Schemes.

Decision

The Forum agreed:-

- 1 that at the August 2007 meeting the Forum scrutinises the general principles of the Council's Core Path Plans (except those for the National Park, Cambusbarron and Carron Valley areas since the information would not be available on them at this time);
- 2 that the Senior Access Officer provide to the December 2007 Forum meeting updates on the Core Path Plans for the National Park, Cambusbarron and Carron Valley areas;
- 3 to request that when it became available the Council's Access Strategy be submitted to the Forum for information.

39 SALAF WORKPLAN

It was suggested that at the next meeting time be set aside to enable the Forum to consider scenarios concerning specific affecting the countryside the purpose being to enable Members to ascertain the perspective of Members in relation to their specific interest and the interests of the organisations which they represented.

Decision

The Forum agreed:-

- 1 to accept Paul Davison's invitation to provide to the next meeting a perspective on off-road cycling;
- 2 that Niall Brower be invited to speak to the December 2007 meeting on concerns over access from the perspective of a Land Manager;
- 3 that Sue Hilder, NFU Access Officer be invited to speak to a future meeting of the Forum.

40 NEW PUBLICATIONS – VERBAL UPDATE

It was reported that the National Farmer's Union had produced a publication entitled Access to Farmland – Guidance to Farmers. Copies of the publication were unavailable at this time.

Decision

The Forum noted that copies of the publication would be circulated to Members in due course.

41 NEXT MEETING –

The Forum was reminded that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 24 May 2007 at 7.00 p.m.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.