



4	<p><b>ALOAF activities, events, training, information</b></p> <p><b>1) Information materials</b> Recognising that existing materials are out of date, the Chair called for a sub-group to develop new information. Mark Andrew and CY have some preliminary ideas and will continue on the S/G, along with AW; with A/C assistance from BF, and Ranger Service (R/S) officers FB and David Brown (DB). S/G needs to start work as soon as possible, as R/S can only help until mid-March due to other work commitments thereafter. It was suggested that the S/G could meet on a Monday evening. Space to be created on Knowledge Hub to develop materials. BF to send FB a link to the Hub. R/S and SNH are potential sources of existing material.</p> <p><b>2) Countryside Live</b> Westerton, Sun. 31 May – Mon. 1 June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Preparations</i> Members supported CY's suggestion that physical and mental health could be added to the core focus on responsible access. The gist of the message would be "enjoy and do it this way". FB said the event would tie in with Mental Health Week. LP will send information re her link with the NHS. Emphasising the need for interactive activities, FB noted that school groups of up to 30 pupils could be expected. The site has scope for an access trail. GMcK stressed the importance of users knowing what to expect on a trail (e.g. terrain; land use). CY said that this could be linked with the Paths For All path grading system. R/S can assess the site. ALOAF and R/S can co-brand their presence at the event, which can be included in the 2020 R/S events leaflet. ALOAF tent will be used. R/S has an open-sided shelter for use if required. Agreed to book a 10x10m space.</li> <li><i>Sub-group</i> [See above]</li> <li><i>Volunteers</i> AW will transport materials from and to Mintlaw. At event: FB (Mon.), HB (1 day); possible – GMcK, SR, HW. Call for more volunteers nearer the time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Turriff Show</b> Sunday 2 - Monday 3 August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Preparations</i> The theme and materials for Countryside Live can also serve at Turriff. Banners, etc. will need to be made more secure against the weather. BF to email Show Secretary regarding relocation as desired by the Forum [see minute of Meeting 76].</li> <li><i>Sub-group</i> [See above]</li> <li><i>Volunteers</i> [to be confirmed]</li> </ul> <p><b>3) NAFLAF Joint Meeting</b> Battleby, 20 March 2020 JK will be there, representing several organisations. For ALOAF, AW advised that he will attend along with 1 or 2 other ALOAF members and BF for A/C. JK has a draft agenda available.</p>	<p>S/G</p> <p>A/O BF</p> <p>LP</p> <p>R/S</p> <p>A/O</p> <p>AW S/G Chair</p> <p>S/G BF</p>
5	<p><b>ALOAF Website, FaceBook etc</b> RE advised that volunteers are sought to share the work of moderating the online presence, which had been managed commendably by Marina Piper. RE can provide training and administrator access. There being no response to the</p>	

	Chair's enquiry for volunteers, <b>this item will be brought forward to the agenda for the next meeting.</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Aberdeenshire Council update</b> BF has returned from maternity leave. Katherine Low, as Environment Planner, has responsibility for the FBW and a paths maintenance portfolio. GMcK emphasised the need for continuing A/C support for its Access Officers and for ALOAF (whose work CY noted was largely voluntary). FB noted the benefit of partnership working (e.g. at events such as Countryside Live), as this encourages A/C resourcing of R/S involvement. It was agreed that <b>A/C's new Head of Planning and Environment, Paul Macari, should be invited to meet ALOAF,</b> preferably at Countryside Live or the Turriff Show, these being the best way of enabling him to meet members and see what the Forum does.	<b>Chair</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Core paths and landowner liabilities</b> The Forum considered a paper on a core path at Aboyne, in which Richard Elliott requested ALOAF's view on liability, status, signage, and maintenance (by local paths group). This would assist A/C in determining whether to remove core path status from the route. JK, (also on the local paths group) explained that riverbank erosion threatens the path, causing concern over safety and liability. The path is included in a leaflet which is nearly ready to go to print. The proposal is to move the path 1-2 metres further away from the river bank. In discussion there was a general view that closure was not an option. The pros and cons of constructing bank defences attracted a broadly equal weight of views for and against, but it was noted that such defences would be highly unlikely to be approved (although willow trees were recognised as a beneficial option). Members then considered a number of specific questions on which RE sought the Forum's advice, namely: 1 – <i>Is there a natural and obvious danger?</i> Yes. 2 – <i>Are warning signs required?</i> Not at the site but, as the path is to be promoted, there should be informational signs at termini, with photo of eroded section. Users can then decide for themselves before setting off on the path. The wording could also provide a link to an online update on the condition of the path. 3 – <i>What should the wording read on any such sign?</i> [See above]. 4 – <i>Are such warning signs compatible with core path status?</i> Noted that core path designation does not oblige provision of signage. 5 – <i>Should A/C remove core path status temporarily while a solution/diversion/alternative is sought?</i> No. 6 -- <i>Should A/C seek to remove core path status permanently?</i> No. 7 – <i>Does the Forum have a view on the proposal by the local paths group to carry out minor works to encourage walkers to move away from the edge of the bank and closer to the fence?</i> In favour. 8 – <i>Is there a desire for a site visit by ALOAF?</i> No. <b>The Forum asked for an update from RE at the next ALOAF meeting.</b>	<b>RE</b>

8	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ythan Estuary – Access at Newburgh</b> CY reported an award of a Coastal Communities Fund grant of £100,000 from A/C to the Community Council, to improve visitor access at Newburgh. The existing car park will be leased from the owner and upgraded. An all-ability path will provide a view of the estuary and potentially the seals. CY asked if ALOAF would be willing to provide a letter of support for an application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for funding which would support responsible access at the Ythan Estuary. Being satisfied with the rationale and potential benefits of the project, the Forum agreed to this request. JK observed that the car park would also facilitate access to the water. <b>Action: CY to provide contact details for Chair to write letter.</b></li> <li>• <b>David Culshaw</b> In advising the group of his retirement from the Forum, DC expressed thanks for the opportunity to serve ALOAF. He had gained much knowledge and had been able to spread this to other groups as well. He would be contactable if he could help in some way in the future, and offered his best wishes to ALOAF going forward. The Chair reciprocated with good wishes from ALOAF, and special thanks for DC's help at the Turriff Show.</li> <li>• <b>Forestry representation</b> BF noted the continuing absence of the forestry sector from the Forum and asked if members wished to follow this up. The most recent contact person was Tim Gordon-Roberts. The Forum agreed that <b>the Chair should write to Scottish Forestry, and to Forestry and Land Scotland, regarding the matter.</b></li> <li>• <b>Meeting room layout</b> It was requested and agreed that for future ALOAF meetings <b>the tables be arranged in a square, to assist in communication.</b></li> </ul>	<p>CY Chair</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>A/O</p>
9	<p><b>CLOSED SESSION</b> <i>[Minuted separately]</i></p> <p>Items for discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sub-group / working group update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Seals (SNH)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Case work update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New Deer, (b) Keith Hall, (c) River Dee – Aboyne</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
10	<p><b>Dates of next meetings -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALOAF Meeting - Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April</li> <li>• Countryside Live – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June</li> <li>• ALOAF Meeting - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July</li> <li>• Turriff Show – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August</li> <li>• ALOAF Meeting - Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Oct</li> </ul>	