

Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum
Minutes of Meeting 46
Monday 13 May 2013
6.00pm Council Chamber, Gordon House, Inverurie

Present: Gordon McKilligan (Chair), Hamish Booth, Ian Cowe, David Culshaw, Drew Elphinstone, Alison Espie, John Hughes, Robin Maitland, Judy Middleton, Jenny Spratt, Adam Wallace, Chris York **Council officers present:** Stephen Archer (Director of Infrastructure Services), Linda Mathieson, Marsaili Aspinall, Matthew Watt. **Observers present:** Mark Bilsby (RAFTS).

	Apologies, Deputising, Welcomes	Action
	<p>Apologies: Ewen Cameron, David Finlay, David Fyffe, Calvin Little. Deputising: (none). The Chair welcomed the Council's new Access Officers, Marsaili Aspinall (South) and Matthew Watt (North). LM explained that these half-time posts follow Kevin Wright's move to a full-time role as Environment Planner, and increase the Access Officer complement from one half-time to two half-time posts. The Chair also welcomed Stephen Archer, Director of Infrastructure Services.</p>	
	<p>SPECIAL MEETING – Change in Operating Principles (see separate Minute)</p>	
1	<p>Minutes of Meeting 45 Approval proposed JH, seconded HB. Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mtgs 43 Item 7, 45 Item 1 Deeside Way:</i> DC expressed disappointment at continued lack of signage between Banchory and Potarch, and from Kincardine o' Neil towards Aboyne; also at inadequate reinstatement of surfacing in Blackhall Forest by Scottish Water. LM to follow up with Council and other parties. <p>Minutes of Closed Session (Meeting 45) Approval proposed AW, seconded AE.</p>	LM
2	<p>Appointment of Chair/Nominations for Vice-Chair? The Chair reported receipt of one nomination, Alison Espie, for Chair. There being no objections, AE accepted the nomination. As the Vice-Chair position will therefore become vacant, LM will issue nomination forms as soon as possible, to be returned by Friday 14th June.</p>	LM/ALL
3	<p>ALOAF Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Councillor rep – update:</i> Appointment not yet confirmed, but hopeful for clarification at next Infrastructure Services Committee Meeting (20/6/13). • <i>ALOAF Membership attendance:</i> The Chair advised that David Finlay wishes to step down from the Forum due to time and travel pressures, but invites continuing ALOAF input to access aspects of the Chapelton of Elsick development (<i>see below, Item 6 (4)</i>). As there is therefore a vacancy for an independent Land Management representative, LM suggested that press 	

	<p>advertising would be necessary to spread the message. It was agreed that the Saturday edition of the “Press and Journal” would be the best option, with the possibility that an article might appear as well as an advertisement. MA to coordinate. The Chair noted the value of good attendance by Land Management representatives in the light of ALOAF’s involvement in advising on access issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scotways rep/Circulation of minutes:</i> LM reported a request from Scotways for inclusion in the circulation of ALOAF Minutes. There was no one closely involved with Scotways on the Forum at present. AE said that providing the Minutes to a specific organisation would set a difficult precedent. She recommended referring Scotways to the Council website where the Minutes are available. It was agreed to advise accordingly, and to say that Scotways could send an observer to ALOAF meetings if they so wish. • <i>ALOAF logo:</i> A recent request in connection with a 3rd-party leaflet had highlighted a need for an ALOAF logo. JH therefore agreed to coordinate ideas from ALOAF members, with a view to presenting possible drafts to the June ALOAF Meeting, aiming for a finished product in time for the Turriff Show. 	<p>MA</p> <p>LM</p> <p>JH</p>
4	<p>ALOAF Newsletter 2012/2013</p> <p>The meeting noted that the 2009-2011 Newsletter was now out of date, but production of a comparable new issue would take time, with Spring 2014 seen as a realistic publication date. It was therefore agreed to produce a simple flyer (2 sides A4) for the Turriff Show, including recent ALOAF activities, e.g. casework (generalised), Field Margins leaflet, events [Turriff Show, Wildlife Crime event, community workshops]. LM encouraged ALOAF members to write material for this. LM to send e-mail seeking draft contributions for June ALOAF meeting. Resulting material could subsequently be expanded for the proposed Newsletter, plus, e.g., responsible access messages (e.g. dogs), account of Chapelton of Elsick liaison as example of positive role in integration of access with development.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>LM</p>
5	<p>Upholding Access Rights Cases – Garioch</p> <p>Discussion of casework – closed session for confidentiality reasons. <i>[Minuted separately as a confidential paper for ALOAF members].</i></p>	
6	<p>ALOAF Activities</p> <p>(1) Turriff Show – ratification of tent purchase: The Forum ratified the purchase of a tent for use at the Turriff Show etc. At Turriff there will be spare space outwith the tent. ALOAF members’ suggestions are welcome as to how this may be used (e.g. an “access”-themed trail, etc). LM asked IC to advise how the ALOAF stand could link with the FCS stand, as the two will be opposite each other.</p> <p>(2) Liaison Wildlife Crime Officer/ALOAF presentation: LM reported that the Wildlife Crime Unit event at Thainstone in March was poorly attended due to very adverse weather. Adam Wallace attended, along with Council officers LM, MA and MW. The proposed WCO presentation, scheduled for the June ALOAF meeting, has been deferred to October due to staff changes at the Unit, with Michael</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>IC</p>

	<p>Whyte being newly appointed.</p> <p>(3) Liaison with Aberdeen Outdoor Access Forum (AbOAF) Fulfilling a long-standing arrangement, GMcK and LM attended the 7/5/13 AbOAF meeting. AbOAF suffers from poor attendance, and has no Land Management rep at present. Focus is on hearing what the City Council is doing. AbOAF has not had complaints about access issues to deal with. Chair, Alison Mitchell, is keen for a regional LAF get-together (Angus, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray), but LM wary of the organisational workload which might well fall on Aberdeenshire, especially now that Paths For All has reduced its practical support for LAFs. Her view was that Aberdeenshire does not currently have the capacity to handle this. In response to an idea from IC, in the context of picking up ideas to boost AbOAF, LM said that she would be happy for Alistair Watson (City access officer) to attend ALOAF meetings if he so wished.</p> <p>(4) Letter -- Chapelton of Elsick Underpass: LM reported that David Finlay had expressed cooperation with proposed access insofar as land under his management was concerned, but this included only a part of the land required. It would be up to the Council to liaise with the other land interests. JM noted that the underpass had for a time been used for public vehicular access to the northbound A90. On other, related matters, David Finlay had said he would be happy for ALOAF to be represented on one or other of the two anticipated liaison groups to be set up regarding the Chapelton of Elsick development. These are (a) a local communities liaison group, and (b) a professional advisory group.</p>	LM
7	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Update</p> <p>(1) Core Paths update: LM reported that the Core Paths Plan has been adopted by the Council. Staff are currently checking the mapping of the routes before releasing an interactive map on-line. She encouraged ALOAF feedback on what other formats might be desirable, e.g. paper maps in libraries.</p> <p>(2) Path Survey and assessment: LM reported that staff are continuing to assess the potential costs of implementing the Core Paths Plan, firstly, with regard to publicly owned land, and secondly, on privately owned land. They are also looking at how to present information on routes in the Plan currently shown as generalised or aspirational. It is hoped to have some costs available for reporting at the June ALOAF Meeting, and information for the public in 2-3 months' time. The overall picture is that for the Council to maintain the whole proposed Core Paths network would be prohibitively expensive. However, while the Council is legally required to develop a Core Paths Plan, there is no legal requirement actually to implement it and no new resources have materialised. In the light of LM's report, the Chair suggested that it would be appropriate to wait until after the summer before holding another community workshop. LM suggested the possibility of a brainstorming session for ALOAF in October/November 2013.</p>	ALL
8	<p>Access Consultations, Issues etc <i>Bridge of Dee STAG Study:</i> LM reported that there is a public</p>	

	<p>consultation pending from late summer 2013, but comments are invited prior to that. She put it to ALOAF to consider whether they would wish to respond. JM has been attending meetings, but would be happy if anyone else chose to go instead. The Chair invited ideas to be brought to the June ALOAF Meeting.</p> <p><i>Meldrum Meg Way:</i> JH reported that Chris York, of Walking the Talk, had been appointed as consultant. Of the 15-16 landowners, 1-2 are uncertain but the general response has not been unfavourable. Following a report to be delivered in due course, it will be time to meet again with landowners, thereafter with the public at both ends of the route. Specific issues then arising will probably need lengthy iterative discussions, better suited to community input rather than consultancy. SA asked how the route relates to the former railway line. JH replied that although this had been the original idea, there were good reasons why, in some places, it was not feasible. However, the railway line did in principle offer advantages, namely level gradient, protection from river flooding, separation from road traffic, attractive countryside, and generally low land values compared with adjacent land. He emphasised its potential as a commuting route.</p>	ALL
9	<p>Events, Training, Information</p> <p>(1) <i>National Access Forum Papers:</i> (a) Commercial access paper -- LM noted that NAF was seeking comments on commercial access by 31/7/13. She asked if members could read the paper supplied, and would welcome a volunteer to coordinate comments prior to discussion at the June ALOAF Meeting. Also drawn to members' attention were (b) Core Plans status paper. (c) Revised draft guidance on temporary closures of core paths.</p> <p>(2) <i>Energetica Walking Festival Launch 24/5/13:</i> Invitation received. LM asked anyone wishing to attend to contact MA by Wednesday 15/5/13 at the latest.</p>	ALL ALL
10	<p>AOB Bervie Braes, Stonehaven: In response to a question from DC it was confirmed that the reopened route would remain open for cyclists and pedestrians through the winter. LM to investigate whether National Cycle Route status will be restored.</p>	LM
11	<p>Items for next meeting's agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeside Way. • Councillor and Land Management Representatives. • Logo (ideas to JH please). • Access issues. • Core Paths costs. • Bridge of Dee STAG Study. • Response to NAF Commercial Access paper. • Nominations for Vice-Chair. • Newsletter/Flyer contents. 	
	<p>Thanking SA and the Access Officers for their attendance at the meeting, the Chair noted that the next meeting would be his final one as Chair, with the role transferring to Alison Espie.</p>	
12	<p>Dates for 2013 meetings: 24 June (now confirmed), 7 Oct, 25 Nov.</p>	