

# Minutes of the meeting of Orkney Local Access Forum and Countryside Committee

Wednesday 11 February 2015 at 7pm  
St Magnus Centre

## Present:

Stephen Jenkinson	Scottish Kennel Club/Chair
Anne Gascoigne	Orkney Field Club/Vice Chair
Roddy Mackay	Orkney Islands Council
Ian Wilkins	Orkney Islands Council
Alan Muir	Orkney Islands Council
James Green	Orkney Islands Council
Simon Treasure	Orkney Tourism Group
Ken Lawson	Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
Victor Muir	National Farmers Union
Roderick Thorne	Sanday Ranger
Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Scottish Land and Estates
Brenda Blunn	Orkney Ramblers Association
Alan Leitch	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
David Brown	Orkney Islands Council (for items 1 to 4)
Barbara Scollay	Secretary

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Rob Crichton, Elaine Clarke and Liz Dennison.

## **2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 October 2014**

Subject to correction of the organisation that Hugh represents (Scottish Land and Estates), the minutes were adopted on the proposal of Hugh Halcro-Johnston, seconded by Ken Lawson.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### NAF Update

Steve advised the members that he was not able to attend that last NAF meeting on 28 January 2015 but had attended the NAF/LAF joint meeting on 4 November 2014 at Gleneagles Equestrian Centre. The joint meeting had an equestrian theme and featured workshops on providing better information at the start of paths and health promotion. Steve would like to see other members of OLAF attending the joint meeting in the future and asked members to consider their willingness to do so as it presents a good networking event. Assistance with travel costs may be possible from OLAF funds. The Secretary will circulate the minutes from the joint meeting.

*A slight tweak to the order of the agenda was made, with Items 4 and 5 swapped around.*

## **4. Dog Fouling Campaign**

Steve welcomed David Brown, Environmental Health Manager to the meeting and invited him to tell the members about the Council's approach to the subject of dog fouling. David explained that the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 made dog fouling an offence and allowed fixed penalty notices to be issued to those caught allowing their dogs to foul in public places. Exemptions to the Act include working dogs, assistance dogs and agricultural land.

The service receives around 56 complaints on average per annum about dog fouling, and has had 14 complaints to date in 2015. Complaints mainly stem from built-up areas and are more prevalent in the winter. A problem is that the Act is difficult to enforce, as it is hard to catch and recognise culprits. Regular campaigns have been run on local radio and in the press, and warning signs have been erected in problem areas. The service has received positive feedback on the signs but there is a core group that are hard to change.

Members commented on their experiences and Steve explained that the NFU and Kennel Club were working together to educate people not to allow their dogs to foul agricultural land because of the health risks to animals and disease. David noted that the Environmental Health team is in ongoing discussions with local vets and they are concerned that some passing of disease could be caused by farmers' own dogs and access to fallen livestock.

OIC are continuing to promote the picking up of dog mess via the 'bag it, bin it' slogan but are conscious of the need to be careful of the wording of any advice given out. David handed out some leaflets as an example of the information given out on dog fouling and Steve thanked him for attending the meeting and speaking about an issue that was important to the group. Steve and Victor are to discuss a possible campaign led by OLAF advising people to pick up dog mess wherever they are, and to use whatever type of bin available or take it home with them.

## **5. North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme**

Alan took the group through the presentation, copies of which had already been circulated, and also distributed a hand out; Secretary to circulate this document. The presentation gave details on the progress so far and the objectives of the scheme. A first round bid will be made in May to the Heritage Lottery Fund and their decision will be made in October 2015. The second round bid will be submitted by August 2017 with a decision made in December 2017 therefore it will be 2018 before the project could start, if the bid for funding was successful. £3m is the maximum grant available and 10% of the funding must come from OIC budget

There was some useful discussion on the topic and comments were made by members on sustainability concerns, transport issues, lessons learnt from the SFLPS, wording of the project, where web pages should sit, the renewables industry, employment and funding shortages for projects already underway.

OIC officers commented that the NILPS is fundamentally a heritage project that hopefully will have some economic benefits; the secondary function being to increase tourism. Elected Members will want more than just preservation of existing buildings – they will be looking for sustainability within the projects. The next application stage will narrow the focus and overall it is hoped the scheme will be a catalyst for change.

Overall members agreed that, in principle, they supported the overall aim of the scheme and were happy for a letter of support to be submitted by the Chair. The Secretary will forward notes of the specific comments made and Steve will draft a letter with Anne's assistance. Progress updates will be very welcome at future OLAF meetings.

## **6. and 7. Core Path Plan Review Update and Review of the Orkney Outdoor Access Strategy**

James described the steps that had been taken to get to the current stage where a report to Development and Infrastructure Committee in March will seek instruction to review the Outdoor Access Strategy. The Core Paths Plan review cannot deal with strategic issues and it is hoped that by reviewing the Outdoor Access Strategy this will enable officers to take a more strategic view to access provision.

James would like to develop a workshop for OLAF, Elected Members and other partners to review and reinvigorate the Outdoor Access Strategy and at the next meeting of OLAF there will be an agenda item on planning the approach of the workshop. Copies of the current Orkney Outdoor Access Strategy (created in 2006) were available and further hard copies will be made available, as many OLAF members at the meeting had not seen the document before. James also circulated a list of several questions to be discussed at the next meeting (copy attached to the minutes) James will liaise with Steve on considering who the key partners are and on how to address specific questions prior to the next meeting. Once a fresh strategy has been formed it can be taken forward into an action plan, key objectives identified, drawn down into operational work and funding/costings undertaken.

## **8. Review of OLAF Constitution and Operation**

Steve tabled a proposed joint work programme between OLAF and OIC up to end March 2016 (copy attached to the minutes) and gave brief details on each of the 5 items. Item 1: proposal to review the membership of OLAF to a core 12 to 20 of those who will attend; possible dove-tailing with Outdoor Orkney committee meetings. Item 2: work is ongoing on the review of the Outdoor Access Strategy and OLAF will have big role to play in this. Item 3: OLAF will issue a press release on dog fouling and Steve will coordinate this with Victor and Anne; to tie in with safety of dogs around livestock and get message across that defecating in fields that animals graze upon is good for neither the livestock nor the humans consuming them. Item 4: may be useful to invite other OIC officers and/or increase awareness of who does what, as our regular attendees from OIC may not be in the specific roles dealing with particular issues. Item 5: would be good to get another member of OLAF and an OIC officers at the NAF annual forum for LAFs as it is a good opportunity to see what's happening elsewhere.

Steve asked that members feed back any thoughts and comments on the programme to him.

## **9. AOCB**

None

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 15 April 2015 at 7pm

Subsequent dates: Tuesday 9 June and Wednesday 23 September

Thanking everyone for their attendance the Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm.