

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

Tuesday 9 February 2016 at 7pm  
St Magnus Centre

## Present:

Anne Gascoigne	Orkney Field Club, Vice Chair
Victor Muir	National Farmers Union
Roddy Mackay	Orkney Islands Council
Ross Irvine	Orkney Islands Council
Ian Wilkins	Orkney Islands Council
Brenda Blunn	Orkney Ramblers Association
Cllr Leslie Manson	Elected Member of Orkney Islands Council, Chair
Simon Treasure	Orkney Tourism Group
Ken Lawson	Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
Emma Webb	Sanday Ranger
Sian Evans	Historic Environment Scotland
Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Scottish Land and Estates
Alan Leitch	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Barbara Scollay	Secretary

*Leslie Manson declared an interest in the item on Denwick, Deerness as a landowner involved is well-known to him and advised of his intention to leave the meeting prior to the discussion taking place. This item was therefore moved to the end of the agenda.*

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Townsend, Christine Skene, Stephen Jenkinson, James Green.

## **2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2015**

The EGM minutes were found to be accurate and the committee minutes, after the insertion of 'highly accessible, including potential access for wheelchair users' into the second sentence of paragraph 5 of the section on Core Path Maintenance, were adopted.

## **3. Matters Arising**

It was noted that the recruitment of an Access Officer was complete and that the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme funding application was successful and the Council are in the process of recruiting a Development Officer to the project.

## **4. Welcome to the new Access Officer**

A formal welcome was made to Ross Irvine, Access Officer for OIC who has been in post for just a few weeks but has already been able to bring two matters to this meeting for the opinions of OLAF members. Ross is working full time and is in post for a year. Leslie noted that the funding for the post was met from underspend and hoped that in subsequent years that there would again be sufficient underspend to continue to fund the post. The Secretary will add his contact details to the OLAF website and circulate them via email to members for information.

## **5. Consultation on access issues – Banks, South Ronaldsay**

This item was discussed in confidence and minuted separately.

## **6. Update on other access issues/work**

Requests for updates in relation to access at Hoxa were made separately to both Leslie Manson and Anne Gascoigne after previous media coverage. OIC Councillors had received correspondence and Leslie explained that as Chair of OLAF he had received details of correspondence between OIC officers and a local tour operator. One of the WWII gun emplacements collapsed and due to concerns about the maintenance and safety of the buildings on their land and personal liability, the landowner closed off the land to members of the public and in doing so closed off part of a core path. The matter was acknowledged as an important access issue and Ross Irvine, Access Officer, will bring a report to the next meeting.

Anne explained that she had raised with Historic Environment Scotland the issue of replacing the kissing gate at the Standing Stones of Stenness with a self-closing one and Sian Evans offered to look into the matter.

Roddy Mackay noted that the matter of the ownership of the land on which the car park is situated at the Standing Stones of Stenness may be close to being resolved.

## **7. Review of OLAF constitution**

Discussion on this matter was deferred until the next meeting.

## **8. AOCB**

- Signatories for the bank account  
Anne Gascoigne and Leslie Manson were willing to be added as signatories to the OLAF and CC bank account and the Secretary will make arrangements for this change.
- Funding of OLAF  
Roddy Mackay raised the issue of the funding of OLAF from the OIC budget. He noted that OLAF had a healthy balance of around £2,000 and with outgoings of around £1,200 per annum he asked that in light of tightening of budgets at OIC whether members of OLAF would be in agreement that the annual grant of £2,000 from OIC to OLAF for running costs be put on hold.

Members of OLAF did not agree with this approach and asked that funding be retaining for this year (2015/16) at its current level as the new full time access officer may generate more work, and more meetings. Agreement was reached by Members that the issue of the funding level could be reconsidered next year.

- Regular updates  
A suggestion was made by the Chair that regular updates be made via email to OLAF members from the Secretary in co-ordination with information received from the Chair and OIC Officers. Members welcomed this and looked forward to the sharing of information more frequently.
- Draft minutes  
A request to receive the draft minutes of the meetings at an earlier stage was made and the Secretary will undertake to fulfil this going forward.

*Leslie Manson and Anne Gascoigne left the meeting at this point and Hugh Halcro-Johnston was asked to chair the remainder of the meeting.*

## **9. Consultation on access issues – Denwick, Deerness**

This item was discussed in confidence and minuted separately.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 10 May 2016 at 7pm in the St Magnus Centre