

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

Wednesday 24 August 2016 at 8.15pm
Holm Community Centre

Present:

Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Scottish Land and Estates
Anne Gascoigne	Orkney Field Club, Vice Chair
Victor Muir	National Farmers Union
Ross Irvine	Orkney Islands Council
Ian Wilkins	Orkney Islands Council
Cllr Leslie Manson	Elected Member of Orkney Islands Council, Chair
Simon Treasure	Orkney Tourism Group
Alan Leitch	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Barbara Scollay	Secretary

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Brenda Blunn, Ken Lawson, Roddy Mackay, Liz Dennison, Kate Townsend, Rob Crichton, James Green, Emma Neave-Webb, Christine Skene and Barbara Foulkes.

2. **Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 May 2016**

The minutes were adopted, being proposed by Victor Muir and seconded by Ian Wilkins.

3. **Matters Arising**

Access issue at Banks, South Ronaldsay

This matter is now resolved.

Update on car park at Standing Stones of Stenness

No further information at present. **Action:** Ross to ask Roddy for an update

Hoxa Head

Unfortunately, the landowner reneged on the commitment made earlier and the Council have served notice on the landowner which expires on 26 August 2016. If the work has not been completed by this date then the Council will arrange to go on to the land, carry out the works to install a stile and invoice the landowner for all costs involved. **Action:** Ross will attempt to get an update on the matter

Students

The students were here for 10 weeks on a study strip and worked mostly in the North Isles surveying core paths and applying a path grading system to them. Their work has been extremely beneficial and officers will be in discussion with the university to see if collaboratively such a study trip can be undertaken in future years.

Funding Application

The application for £20,000 of funding for a feasibility study was successful and the tendering process is underway.

St Magnus Way

This project is progressing with the intended route having been walked and surveyed. Ross is giving the group advice on liaising with landowners and noted that the route incorporates a mixture of right of way, core path, elements of both and areas where it is neither. The group are at the point of forming a committee and it was suggested that a member of the group be asked to come and discuss the project with OLAF members. **Action:** Ross to enquire if David McNeish could attend the next OLAF meeting.

Access issue in Deerness

Questionnaires were issued and returned and the results have been reviewed. Officers have now asked the Council's Legal Services team to carry out some investigation and provide advice. There is some confusion over whether the path is a right of way, and if there is servitude. Ross explained the current status and affirmed the intention to resolve the issue.

4. Review of Draft OIC Access Strategy

The original document was produced around 10 years ago and is now due for review. Information that is no longer relevant has been identified and removed, and new information added. Ross explained that he wishes to discuss the strategy with OLAF members, take their comments into consideration when amending the document and present it to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee next month.

After conversation on the ways in which to do this, it was agreed that the secretary would circulate the draft strategy again with a request for comments of a strategic nature (rather than typos, grammar matters etc) to be returned to her by 5pm on Wednesday 31 August. The secretary would then compile and circulate the comments for information, and a small group of OLAF representatives would meet with Ross to discuss the comments and what amendments to make to the draft strategy. A fresh draft would then be circulated for information after the aforementioned meeting.

The volunteers to meet with Ross are Leslie Manson, Simon Treasure and Victor Muir and they agreed to meet Ross on Thursday 1 September at 2pm in the Council Offices.

Action: Barbara to circulate draft, compile comments and recirculate; Leslie, Simon and Victor to meet with Ross to amend draft; Barbara to circulate fresh draft being presented to committee

5. AOCB

- Ness Battery to Stromness Cemetery Walk
Quad and trail bikes have been witnessed using this path on what appears to be a fairly regular basis; none of the activity was related to farming. The matter is of concern as the path would appear unsuitable for this type of use. **Action:** Ross to look into the status of the path.
- Access Strategy
It was particularly noted that the access strategy will become a standing agenda item and the action plan will be monitored at the meetings.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15 November at 7pm in the St Magnus Centre.