

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

Wednesday 24 August 2016 at 7.30pm  
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 June 2015**

The minutes were adopted on the proposal of Simon Treasure, seconded by Anne Gascoigne.

## **3. Chair's Report**

Leslie explained that he had enjoyed his relatively short tenure thus far and had gained an appreciation of the compromises that had to be reached between landowners and users. He was aware of a feeling towards the group that it had made limited progress in the past on issues and the phrase "talking-shop" had been used to describe the meetings. Leslie felt that progress had been and is being made; firstly, as there is an obvious desire amongst representatives of the various organisations to take and see action on matters; and secondly, the good decision of the Council to employ an Access Officer who has already made an impact and who we look forward to continuing to work alongside. It is hoped that the post will continue to be funded and Leslie expressed his desire for OLAF to do everything that it can to ensure that the post remains in place.

As well as proactively improving access throughout Orkney there is an exciting project taking shape in the North Isles; the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme; which will be a welcome boost both to tourism and in encouraging local people to get out and visit different areas of their county, and will complement the good work undertaken under the Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Leslie noted that with the often thorny issue of Right of Way has made him, and indeed no doubt us all, aware of the difficulties that can arise. He was pleased that the disputes raised and brought to the Council and OLAF's attention in recent times have largely avoided getting deep into a complicated tangle of issues but instead have seen appropriate measures and action being taken.

## **4. Treasurer's Report**

Copy statement attached to the minutes.

Barbara noted the healthy balance in the bank account thanks to the retention of the £2,000 grant from the Council last year, and the group's minimal outgoings. The need to go out and utilise some

of these funds was agreed and one way in which this could be used would be to subsidise a member travelling to attend the National Access Forum's annual joint meeting (to which all Local Access Forums are invited) in Battleby.

Barbara left the room while the honorarium for the secretary was discussed and on return noted that in relation to the secretary's honorarium the members determined what action to take and delegated the task to the Chair.

## **5. Election of Office Bearers**

Hugh Halcro-Johnston moved that the current officer bearers continue in their roles and the other members agreed with this proposal.

Chair – Leslie Manson

Vice Chair – Anne Gascoigne

## **6. AOCB**

Forum members echoed Leslie's earlier sentiments about the importance and value of the Council's Access Officer and how critical that role is in supporting the access forum, which is a statutory function of the Council.

It was agreed that the future of the access officer post should be discussed at the next meeting of OLAF.