

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

Wednesday 6 September 2017
St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall

Present:

Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Scottish Land and Estates
Anne Gascoigne	Orkney Field Club, Vice Chair
Ken Lawson	Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
Jan Blatchford	Orkney Archaeology Society
Iain Talbot	Orkney Ramblers
Ross Irvine	Orkney Islands Council
Victor Muir	National Farmers Union
Ian Wilkins	Orkney Islands Council
Cllr Steve Sankey	Elected Member of Orkney Islands Council, Chair
Barbara Scollay	Secretary

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Alan Leitch, Liz Dennison, Sian Evans, Simon Treasure and Jessica Jones.

2. Adoption of the minutes from 13 June 2017

The minutes were adopted, being proposed by Ken Lawson and seconded by Anne Gascoigne.

3. Matters Arising

Hunda issue

It was confirmed that a sign directing visitors an alternative route, not through the farmyard, is in place.

Standing Stones of Stenness Car Park

All were delighted to hear that the car park will be surfaced over this winter.

4. Outdoor Access Strategy Workplan

Ross explained that around 30 representations were made and now officers are reviewing these and providing formal responses. The general tone was mostly positive and constructive, and there was a common thread around maintenance of the network itself. There is roughly 350 miles of core paths in Orkney, which is the highest per capita in Scotland not including the national parks. The outcome of the review will be to consolidate routes.

The team behind the St Magnus Way would seek to include as much as, if not all, of the walk into the core path network. Some of the St Magnus Way is already utilising core paths. The Council would not be responsible for the maintenance of the furniture and/or items installed or placed by the St Magnus Way team.

The next stages will involve reviewing the submissions, amending the plan and presenting this to a future meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee, to gain approval to go to formal consultation. The formal consultation period will run for around 12 weeks and once complete, submissions will again be reviewed, any potential amendments considered, and the plan will be presented to Committee for adoption, followed by being sent to the Scottish Government for adoption.

5. AOCB

National Access Forum Notes of May 2017

The May meeting of the NAF included: discussion on the Scottish Outdoor Health code, in particular ticks and lyme disease; inclusion of core paths on Ordnance Survey maps (the NAF seems keen to progress); occupiers' liability and insurance, in relation to signage being issued by national insurance companies stating 'no access without permission' that are not legal in Scotland. Next year's joint National and Local Access Forums meeting will have the theme of 'Year of Young People', and will again be held in March in Battleby.

Stoats

A question was raised on whether OLAF has or should have a position on stoats. Steve agreed to ask Sarah Sankey of RSPB to attend the next OLAF meeting and Ross will provide feedback from the SNH meeting occurring w/b 11 September. Steve also offered to pass on a copy of an article he had written about stoats.

Action: Steve to ask Sarah Sankey to attend next meeting

Action: Ross to provide feedback from SNH meeting

Action: Steve to provide copy/link to article written on subject

Maintenance

Ian reported that the bridge at The Bu, Orphir is not safe to use after the recent flooding across Orkney but it is possible for pedestrians to cross the burn further down at the shore. Works will be carried out to reinstate in due course, but an assessment will be needed before this can begin.

OLAF Event

There is interest in holding an event to promote OLAF, current access and land legislation, and public awareness of responsible access; it may tie in with an anniversary – key dates are to be reviewed. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

Action: Barbara add OLAF Event to next agenda

6. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 6 December at 7pm in the St Magnus Centre.