

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

Wednesday 7 March 2018
St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall

Present:

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Emma Neave-Webb, Ann Marwick, Alan Leitch, Liz Dennison, Roddy Mackay, Sian Evans.

2. Adoption of the minutes from 6 December 2017

After the sentence that incorrectly stated that Orkney would be the first to review their Core Paths Plan under the new legislation was deleted the minutes were adopted, being proposed by Steve Sankey and seconded by Anne Gascoigne.

3. Matters Arising

- Orkney Native Wildlife Project
Steve reported that the trial trapping that began in December was almost complete and 34 stoats had been caught. There is definitely a stoat on Hoy as it has been caught on camera but unfortunately has evaded trapping. The public consultation is complete, and the report is being compiled. Once the report has been submitted, a stage 2 bid will be prepared for June. A question over how many traps had been placed in the three areas for the trial was raised, and Steve endeavoured to find this out.

Action: Steve to find out how many traps were placed for the trial

4. NAF/LAF Joint Meeting 2018

Anne is willing to represent the forum at the event this year and all were happy with this proposal. The theme this time is the Scottish Government's Year of Young People and it will be interesting to find out what other LAF's are doing to engage young people. The Glaitness and St Andrew's primary school campaign against single-use plastics was mentioned, and the resulting Short Life Working Group that has been set up in the council to consider this matter further.

Action: Barbara to submit booking form to NAF

5. Outdoor Access Strategy Workplan/Core Path Plan Review

Informal consultation was carried out last year, and the formal 12-week consultation period will now run from Thursday 12 March to Thursday 7 June. The amended plan will be available to view on the Council website as well as in the libraries, library vans and customer services at the Council

Offices. In addition to writing to all landowners, notices have been erected on land to notify them, and occupiers of the land, of the consultation and of any proposed changes to core paths on those areas of land.

Any challenges or objections to the proposed changes will be dealt with prior to submission of a report and updated plan to the September meeting of the Development and Infrastructure Committee, the subsequent General Meeting of the Council, and then submission to the Scottish Government, who will have the final say on the adoption of the plan.

Landowners can object to new paths and changes to existing core paths, and even to an existing path with no changes proposed. Community Councils are being contacted as they were during the informal consultation, and Ross has offered to attend their meetings. Ross confirmed that all landowners have been identified and those contacted about proposed changes total around 20. Officers are trying to mitigate an issue with the PDF map (in that when zooming in it blurs) by uploading an A3 size PDF map.

There was desire amongst those present to ensure promotion of the completed plan to locals and tourists although funding will be a consideration in this.

Action: *All representatives to promote the consultation within their organisations and wider where possible*

6. Maintenance update

- Standing Stones of Stenness car park
A contractor is being sought and the target completion date for resurfacing is 2 May 2018. Ross will update the group with any further news.
- Bridge over burn at Bu, Orphir
Funding for replacement has been found from within Development and Infrastructure service budgets, but the Operations team were unable to carry out the work due to various issues and Ian has asked them to instead source a sub-contractor to deal with this. It is hoped that the bridge will be in place by the end of April. A further observation was made that part of the coastal path has fallen away on that route, leaving a large drop.

7. OLAF Access event and AGM 2018

There was an idea to roll together the AGM with a publicised event, looking at access legislation etc, with an update from the RSPB/Orkney Native Wildlife Project, and being held at the Cottisgarth Hide. A barrier to this is the limited access for people with disabilities, and it was agreed that while this was a lovely idea, it did not fit well with promoting access and that any event or meeting that OLAF holds should be in a fully-accessible facility.

It was agreed to park the idea of an event at this time and hold the AGM and committee meeting on 31 May at 7.30pm, with the usual walk preceding the meetings starting at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed but will try the Birsay Hall in the first instance.

8. AOCB

- Press reports about an increase in funding for active travel
A query was raised about reports in the press in relation to additional funding, and it was explained that there was indeed money for active travel, but it was travel deemed to be for a purpose (such as travelling to work or school) rather than for recreation. The Muddisdale cycle path and Pierowall path were held up as schemes that had received funding from Sustrans.
- Snow clearing/path gritting in Kirkwall
The issue of the council not clearing snow and applying grit to pavements was raised as it was noted that even the main areas of Albert and Victoria Street had not been treated in the recent spell of low temperatures.

9. Date of next meeting

To include the AGM and be held on Thursday 31 May at 7.30pm in the foyer of the Birsay Hall.