

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

Tuesday 31 May 2018  
Birsay Hall

## Present:

Cllr Steve Sankey	Elected Member of Orkney Islands Council, Chair
Anne Gascoigne	Orkney Field Club, Vice Chair
Hugh Halcro-Johnston	Scottish Land and Estates
Ken Lawson	Scottish Government's Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
Jan Blatchford	Orkney Archaeology Society
Ross Irvine	Orkney Islands Council
Ian Wilkins	Orkney Islands Council
Simon Treasure	Orkney Tourism Group
Mary Connolly	Scottish Women's Institute
Iain Talbot	Orkney Ramblers
Carolyn Griffiths	Orkney Access Panel
Barbara Scollay	Secretary
Michael Harvey	Orkney Islands Council, for item 2

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

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

## **2. Kirkwall Urban Design Framework and Active Travel**

Michael Harvey attended the meeting to explain, give a presentation on and have a conversation about Active Travel, which has connections to the Kirkwall Urban Design Framework but is a separate project. The Scottish Government have increased the Active Travel budget available and both the public and third sectors can apply but must be able to demonstrate the benefits to the community and that they can deliver and maintain projects. Funding is available for 100% of costs in relation to the design stages, and for 50% of costs at the construction stages.

Michael explained that the Council is preparing by looking at cost neutrality through match funding, and there is a cross-service officer team in place linking in with The Orkney Partnership's Strong Communities group, with a 3-year work plan in place. If the Council approves the reports prepared for the September committee cycle, the Your Kirkwall project could take forward a number of feasibility studies.

The group then reviewed and discussed several proposed projects under this scheme in a bit more detail. A question was asked about whether websites and marketing would be covered by funding, and Michael confirmed that it was; the need to consult and promote changes to infrastructure to ensure its success is key to the proposed projects.

Michael will provide electronic copies of the documents/presentations to circulate, and his contact details as he is happy to assist groups with applications and highlighted the Paths for All funding available. Carolyn offered assistance with accessibility audits. Steve thanked Michael for taking the time to attend the meeting, and for the interesting information he had conveyed to the group.

**Action:** Barbara to circulate presentation and information provided by Michael

## **3. Adoption of the minutes from 7 March 2018**

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted, being proposed by Steve Sankey and seconded by Anne Gascoigne.

#### 4. Matters Arising

- Orkney Native Wildlife Project

Steve provided an update on this as part of his Chair's report at the AGM. A request was made that Stoat Eradication be a standing agenda item was made and noted.

**Action** – Barbara to ensure Stoat Eradication is on future agendas

#### 5. NAF/LAF Joint Meeting 2018 follow-up

Anne gave a thorough report from the event that was circulated via email earlier. There was very little representation from access forums at the meeting with most of the representation from professionals, and a heavy slant on urban viewpoints. The John Muir awards were featured, and encourage a love and enjoyment of nature through development of practical skills including path maintenance, building a style, litter picking in the country etc.

The question of getting young people involved and engaged, and encouraging their peers likewise was a feature of the event. Thoughts on this were put forward - in order to get the message to young people, there is a need to go to them. Walking for Health groups need to be made attractive to young people, and at suitable times for them. In Orkney, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers can be called upon to support activities and the formal channel of contact is through PC Murray at Kirkwall Police Station; an activity done with this group was in the form of a scavenger hunt – really a walk but done in a fun way. Young people being the land managers of the future should be considered and engagement through Young Farmers would be beneficial.

#### 6. Outdoor Access Strategy Workplan/Core Path Plan Review

We are a week from the end of the formal consultation, the feedback thus far has been useful, and there is still time to comment. The recommendations arising from the review and consultation will be presented to the Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2018, with ratification due, if elected members are content with the recommendations, at the General Meeting of the Council in October 2018.

#### 7. Core Path Inspection Plan 2016 to 2020

The document circulated with the agenda for the meeting is for information and is to be read prior to the next meeting so that a detailed discussion can take place. Ian explained that he is happy to take questions before then, and a query about accessibility was raised; Ross explained that he wishes to meet with access panel representatives to progress an accessibility policy and guidance on whether or not paths are accessible. Ian is happy for reports of damage to continue to be reported to him, and increased community involvement in this would be beneficial. Iain noted that the Orkney Ramblers would be keen to assist with this work.

#### 8. Maintenance update

- Standing Stones of Stenness car park

The matter of ownership and resurfacing is ongoing but in hand with officers in Development and Infrastructure and the council's Legal Services team.

- Bridge over burn at Bu, Orphir

A site visit and discussion has been had with the contractor, D S Nicolson, and they are programming it into their work schedule. Once on site they estimate it will take 2 weeks to repair, and the existing material will be re-used.

Repair needed to the handrail on the Brough of Birsay was reported, as those taking in the pre-AGM walk had noticed a damaged section.

## 9. AOCB

- Big Fit Walk

A Big Fit Walk being promoted by Paths for All was published in The Orcadian today, with people encouraged to organise their own Big Fit Walk in the county.

- St Magnus Way

The route has been tweaked and the website updated, and it was noted that several way markers have disappeared from the same spot.

- Other LA's in Isles

There is interest in talking to other LA's in Shetland and the Western Isles to find out what they do and how they function as a local access forum.

## 10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19 September at 7.30pm in the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall.