

National Access Forum Update – May 2017

Summary of main topics - National Access Forum meeting 17th May 2017

Mountain Biking –

There had been a useful site study visit in March to look at issues at Glentress and Innerleithan mountain biking centres. The Forum meeting agreed to establish a sub-group to look into issues and approaches in greater depth, including lessons from other sports such as skiing, the role of online and other communication channels, and what guidance and advice can best assist in developing partnership approaches and good practice.

Mapping Core Paths on OS –

The Forum's sub-group on Core paths and OS mapping met again in February. The Improvement Service mapping has now successfully completed the task of loading all 34 core paths plans onto the Spatial Hub mapping, as one co-ordinated data-set. Ramblers Scotland reported receiving over 1300 responses on their website campaign, overwhelmingly in favour of seeing core paths on OS maps. The sub-group's members are contacting some authorities in England to compare experience there, and have run a trial mapping assessment using South Lanarkshire as an example, to be taken further at the sub-group's next meeting arranged for early June.

Scottish Land Commission –

The chair of the recently-established Scottish Land Commission, Andrew Thin, attended the Forum meeting to describe how the SLC was set up under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, as a non-departmental public body at arms-length from government, and is now working to produce a Strategic Plan of its priorities and approaches, for presentation to Ministers in September 2017. There was a wide-ranging discussion on topics such as possible ideas on land ownership and taxation, relationships with other national strategies, and with the Ministers' 'rights and responsibilities statement' stemming from the same Act. The SLC strategic plan is not expected to feature much on access issues, but it is useful to establish contacts at this early stage.

Occupiers Liability – Update on case law judgements –

This paper was welcomed in providing an update on some of the key court cases in Britain over the past decade relating to land occupiers' liabilities, providing further case law on topics including fencing, signage, real experience on risk assessment and inspections, and important recent judgements on injuries sustained by path users. It is planned that SNH will insert this updated information into its 'Brief Guide', available at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=390>

Drumlean - Sheriff Appeal Court case –

This paper highlighted the main issues for access interests in the recent Sheriff Appeal Court judgment, [http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/sheriff-appeal-court-\(civil\)/2017-sac-\(civ\)-011.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/sheriff-appeal-court-(civil)/2017-sac-(civ)-011.pdf?sfvrsn=2). It appears that the case may now move on to a further appeal at the Court of Session.

Revised 'Guidance for Local Authorities' document and consultation –

The draft of the revised and updated version of this government guidance has now been prepared, and will shortly be published for a 12-week consultation period, which will be widely notified.

Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Bill (as introduced) –

The Convenor noted that Ministers have now published draft legislation for forestry functions in Scotland, and for the management of forestry land and other land. Three information sheets - summarising the contents of the Bill as introduced, the organisational arrangements, and the legislative process - can be found in links on the right-hand side of this internet page: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Forestry/devolution/forestrylandmanagementbill>

SRDP Improving Public Access grants scheme -

IPA is open to applications until 31st May 2017, and details are available at <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/agri-environment-climate-scheme-full-guidance-menu/agri-environment-climate-scheme-how-to-apply/how-to-apply-for-improving-public-access/>

Communications: Shared Communication Calendar –

There was discussion of members' current and forthcoming communications output, which includes continuing work on dog control, recent activity by BHSS to act against some irresponsible horse-riders, a planned responsible behaviour campaign to be launched by Scottish Land and Estates and partners at the Royal Highland Show in June, the current National Walking Month, and the 'Big Fit Walk' going live throughout June. Everyone is reminded that the shared calendar page can be directly updated by members on <https://khub.net/home> and new registrations to join in are free and welcome. The calendar can also be used to post forthcoming events, contribute to discussions on the forum, write a blog or upload documents. (If you have any queries please contact Theresa.Kewell@snh.gov.uk in the first instance).

National Access Forum Forward Programme 2017-18 -

The Convenor outlined topics for the next Forum meeting, including items on the positive benefits of access and recreation, feedback from the Mountain Biking sub-group, a look into issues around vehicle parking which have been raised at this meeting, and an update on the National Cycling and Walking Network (NWCN) <http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/where-to-go/routes-to-explore/walking-and-cycling-network/> .

Forum Secretary –

Janice Winning (Operations Manager in SNH Forth Area) attended the meeting, and Janice will be taking over as the Forum Secretary after I retire from SNH and NAF next month. I was given a warm and generous send-off and card, and I thank you all for your tolerance and assistance with the Forum's wide-ranging activities over these recent years. Rob G.

Future NAF meetings –

The next Forum meeting will take place at Battleby on Wednesday **27th September 2017**

The following Forum meeting will take place at Battleby on Wed **7th Feb 2018**

For more information or comment on any of the above topics, please contact the NAF Secretary - (NAFsec@snh.gov.uk ; 0131 316 2682). Further information can be found on the National Access Forum pages at http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum/ .
--