

## Summary of 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Access Forum

**Battleby**  
**20th May 2009**

### **Present:**

Richard Cooke	Convenor
Mark Wrightham	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH); Secretary
Dorothy Breckenridge	Activity Scotland (AS)
Jane Campbell-Morrison	Scottish Sports Association (SSA)
Hebe Carus	Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS)
Patricia Cassidy	<b>sportscotland</b> (SS)
Mike Dales	Scottish Canoe Association (SCA)
Roddy Fairley	SNH
Anne Gray	Scottish Rural Property & Business Association (SRPBA)
Alick Hay	Historic Houses Association of Scotland (HHA)
Bridget Jones	Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA)
Helen Jones	Scottish Government (SG) Rural Directorate
Richard Kay	Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor)
Kevin Lafferty	Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS)
Alastair MacIennan	NFU Scotland (NFUS)
George Menzies	Scotways
Dave Morris	Ramblers Association Scotland (RAS)
Simon Pilpel	Local access forum contact
Colin Shedden	British Association for Shooting & Conservation (BASC)
Pat Somerville	British Horse Society Scotland (BHS)

### **Court of Session judgement: Feddanhill Wood**

The Forum discussed the recent appeal judgement from the Court of Session concerning a locked gate preventing horse access to Feddanhill Wood on the Black Isle. Although the implications were not yet entirely clear, it was suggested that the case may not set any general precedent for limitations on access in order to prevent damage and may only be relevant under very limited circumstances – and that effective management and appropriate signage would continue to be the most appropriate ways to address practical access issues on the ground. It was also suggested that it would be unhelpful if, as a result of this case, access authorities became more reluctant to assert access rights through the mechanisms provided by the Act.

### **SNH access campaigns**

SNH provided an update on current access education campaigns, which will continue to focus in particular on campers and dog owners. This will be accompanied by an *Enjoying the Outdoors* campaign, which will contribute to the national target of increasing the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week and will be set in the context of responsible behaviour. Discussion highlighted:

- the need for provision close to communities;
- the importance of engaging with schools;
- the opportunities linked to the Central Scotland Green Network and 2014 Commonwealth Games, and;
- the need for co-ordinated action between all relevant bodies.

## **Rural crime**

The Forum received a presentation from Chief Inspector Kevin Findlater of Central Scotland Police. This emphasised that rural crime is a long standing issue which does not result from access rights and which should be primarily addressed by the police, rather than through the access management framework – and it was suggested that access forums may be diverted from their core roles by an undue focus on antisocial behaviour. However, the importance of education, including the access campaigns undertaken by SNH, was also noted – and this has a key role in changing behaviour on the longer term.

There was also much discussion of Operation Ironworks, a collaborative approach which has been used to address issues related to camping in the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. The benefits of this type of partnership working were noted – and it was suggested that Single Outcome Agreements would provide the focus for any such initiatives in the future.

## **Other items**

- The previous and present Forum Convenors recently met Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Environment. Discussion covered a range of issues including provision for access in Single Outcome Agreements and the development of long distance routes.
- The Forum considered the relationship between Scottish access rights and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, which excludes some types of user from various categories of road which have been designated under this Act. The Forum will discuss this with Transport Scotland.
- The Forum's stalking sub-group has developed guidance on the use of signs to communicate with hillwalkers about stalking activity; this is now available in the Land Managers' section at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com>.
- The Forum will work with the Access for All (Scotland) Forum to develop guidance on the use of motorised vehicles adapted for disabled users. A sub-group of the Forum will also shortly develop guidance on the organisation and management of large outdoor events in the context of Scottish access rights.
- The first review of the Forum's membership will conclude this year with a review of public and 'other' member bodies – and all member organisations in these categories will be invited to express an interest in full membership.

## **Date of next meetings**

- This year's annual joint meeting with local access forums will take place in Inverness in late September–October; further information will follow when the date has been confirmed. This meeting will include an opportunity to discuss liaison between national and local forums, and a discussion paper considering possible approaches will be circulated in due course.
- The next regular NAF meeting will take place at Battleby (nr. Perth) on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November.