

## National Access Forum update – November 2009

### Summary of 17<sup>th</sup> NAF meeting held on 18 November 2009

#### *Commercial access*

The Forum discussed a paper from the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) concerning the interaction between commercial access and other interests on inland water and in other settings. There were varying views about the extent of the issue and the importance of local management was noted. It was agreed that the Forum will develop guidance on responsible access and land management in relation to commercial activities. Preparatory scoping work will begin shortly and this will be taken forward by a sub-group when current work to develop guidance on outdoor events has been completed.

#### *Level crossings*

Further progress with regard to access across ‘authorised user’ level crossings now largely depends on the current UK-wide review of their legal status, which is being led (north of the border) by the Scottish Law Commission. A consultation is anticipated early next year.

#### *Annual joint meeting with local forums*

The recent joint meeting with local forums was reviewed. This had attracted a good attendance from across Scotland and it was suggested that a more interactive format, with greater scope for discussion, would help to make better use of this event next year. Access with dogs had been a prominent issue and will be discussed in more detail at a future NAF meeting.

Communication between forums (in particular between different local forums) had arisen at recent LAF meetings attended by the Convenor. Discussion noted the lead roles of access authorities with regard to LAFs, with varying views on the role of the NAF in supporting such liaison – and the Forum agreed to discuss this with COSLA and the National Park authorities. It was suggested that the Scottish Countryside Access Network (SCAN; see below) or Paths for All Partnership may be able to assist in various ways. Future NAF mailings will be copied directly to all LAF chairs for whom e-mail addresses are available, and these addresses will also be copied to LAF chairs (subject to any data protection concerns) to allow direct communication through an e-mail group.

#### *Review of Forum membership*

The first review of the Forum’s membership concluded this year with a review of public and ‘other’ full member bodies. The review of public bodies has resulted in one change, with Scottish Water opting to become a corresponding member. At this meeting, the Forum agreed that the ‘other body’ full members for the next four years will be:

- Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)
- Activity Scotland
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Canine Consultative Council (SCCC), and;
- Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society (Scotways)

## Other recent and ongoing work

- Following discussion at the Forum, SCAN (with assistance from SNH) has developed an informal framework by which access officers can share experience concerning current access issues and their management. This will involve periodic circulation of a short proforma to gather information, followed by a meeting to provide an opportunity for discussion – and will feed back to the NAF and other interested parties. The first such ‘Access Summit’ took place at Battleby on 13<sup>th</sup> November.
- The Forum’s events sub-group is developing national guidance on the organisation and management of outdoor events in the context of Scottish access rights. The Forum has also contributed to the development of a Code of Practice on Outdoor Fundraising in the UK, which has been led by the Institute of Fundraising. A consultative draft will be circulated shortly and comments will be compiled as a response on behalf of the NAF.
- The Forum’s stalking communication sub-group is advising on a web-based resource to provide information to hillwalkers about stalking activity – to be developed and hosted by SNH. It is intended that a pilot version will be available in time for the 2010 stag stalking season.
- The Forum will work with the Access for All (Scotland) Forum to develop guidance on the use of motorised vehicles adapted for disabled users.
- The relationship between Scottish access rights and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 will be discussed with the Scottish Government Transport Directorate, to address multi-use and signage issues on routes adopted under the roads legislation.
- The Forum’s guidance on managing informal camping, and on the use of signs to communicate with hillwalkers about stalking activity, can be found in the Land Managers’ section of the access website: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com>.
- The Forum’s web pages will shortly be upgraded to create a more attractive, accessible and effective resource.

## Dates of future meetings

- The next regular meetings of the Forum will take place at Battleby on 24 February, 19 May and 17 November 2010. The date and location of next year’s joint meeting with local access forums will be determined at a later stage.

For further information, or to contribute views on any of the above topics, please contact the Forum Secretary - Mark Wraitham ([mark.wraitham@snh.gov.uk](mailto:mark.wraitham@snh.gov.uk); 01463 725316). Further information can also be found on the National Access Forum pages at: <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com>.