

Note of meeting of Caithness Local Access Forum (CLAF)
held in the Station Building, Thrumster.
on Thursday, 11th June 2015

Present

Chris Hobson (CH), Chair – Land Manager
David Glass (DG) – Community Group
Ben McGregor (BM) – Access Taker/User
Islay Macleod (IM) – Land Manager
Carol Graham (CG) – Access Taker/User
Elena Koponen-Baikie (EK-B) – Community Group

In attendance

Matt Dent (MD) – Access Officer, Highland Council (HC)
Marina Swanson (MS) – Caithness East Ranger, HC
Alex Macmanus (AM) – Ward Manager's Office, HC (clerk)

Site Visit

Those above met at the Yarrows Heritage Trail (YHT) car park at 6.30pm and enjoyed a 90 minute visit to the broch and the long cairn. Boggy pathway to the long broch with ground poaching. Path to long broch was dry but poached ground at exit onto car park.

CH thanked IM for leading the site visit and for the use of the Station Building to host the CLAF meeting.

1. Apologies

Roger Saxon
Willie Mackay
William Bruce

2. Notes from last meeting of 3rd March

Amend 3. Ormlie Moors – MD has spoken to Should read MD has spoken to Highland Council Housing Officer at Ormlie.

Agreed by DG and IM.

3. Action points from 2 above not covered in agenda

Halkirk to Sibster path – CH will speak to local Community Council. Forum agreed to give their support to this proposed project. Land owners would need to give their

agreement. MD would give any group advice. Forestry Commission could be contacted as well via Hazel Maclean. **ACTION** – CH to speak to Community Council

Jesson's Bridge – Two landowners in favour. MD would find out details of third landowner by searching the land Register. **ACTION** – MD

Crosskirk – Historic Scotland (HS) have not responded to letters sent. This is unacceptable. CH to write once again with further action to be taken if no response.

MD will be replacing some decking on the bridge as this was considered the sensible thing to do. Paths for All look at this issue. HS do not appear to be interested. No access to burial ground except via wind farm which is not recommended.

CH would speak to the Caithness West Community Council to see if they would be the driver to take forward this project.

Ormlie Moors – DG - this issue has been dragging on now for 2 years and the CLAF can take no credit for taking so long to respond to complaints from members of the public over the damage being done by motorised vehicles. In fact the problem appears to be getting worse.

Pentland Housing Association own the block of land at access. R. Taylor owns the Moor. There are no core paths with general access rights applying.

Forum Chair will write to local police and R Taylor expressing the concerns being raised by the CLAF. **ACTION** – CH

4. Local Disability Access Panel (LDAP)

No attendees. It is noted that minutes are now being received from the LDAP and are forwarded to Forum members by e-mail by the Clerk.

5. Local Access Officers report – Matt Dent

Core Path Plan review being looked at although no work has yet been done on the Caithness routes. Legal advice has been requested due to the wording of the Land Reform Act concerning the amended of Core paths requiring consultation of the whole Highland Core Path Plan. The deletion of or the modification of core paths appears to be less problematic as regards the Act.

Route to the bottom of Morven passes close to proximity of Stalkers cottage. Path will be moved to respect privacy and will be reinstated to same high standard as existing path.

Plan will be taken back to the CLAF once completed to look at the consultation.

MS – A 3m high fence has appeared on route from Ackergill to the Tower. I have investigated this and TEC's erected the fence. Matt has been informed.

Obstacles on the Strathmore Forest to Altnabreac are putting people off taking the route.

Reports of dogs running loose at Mill of Forse, Lybster.

6. AOB

Yarrows Heritage Trust are looking to take over the Yarrows Trail.

Thrumster Walking Group – Using many of the routes around the village. Some old routes are overgrown and/or fenced off. MD only able to clear routes at pinch points not whole lengths.

7. DONM

Thursday 17th September 2015 at 7.00 pm in Ross Institute, Halkirk.

Invite Hazel MacLean from FC.