

Minutes of the Sutherland Local Access Forum,

Monday 29 September 2025

Chamber, Drumbuie, Golspie and online

1500 – 1700

Present – John Ross (Chair), Cllr Jim McGillivray, Lesley Cranna, Betty Grieve

Introduction – two members of the public Mairi Munro (Ardgay) and Anne Henderson (Culrain)

1. Apologies

Marion Milligan, David Hannah (who stepped down after the last meeting), Francis Gunn

2. Notes from meeting of the 12 May 2025

Lesley Cranna – should read David Hannah could *not* enter the meeting

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Approval of Core Path Amendment (SU06.02 – Loch Brora) for formal consultation

Matt Dent (MD) presented the report regarding the loss of the bridge at Kilbraur with a proposal to modify the core path as detailed in the report, makes additional amendment at Carrol and modification to Dunrobin Glen as reported at last meeting.

Matt Dent (MD) explained he had written and emailed to all parties and all positive replies but he had no reply from the sheep stock club nor the crofting occupier at Farlary. MD asked if John Ross knew how active the sheepstock club were, Jogn suggested they did employ a shepherd over the summer.

MD went over the map for the Kilbraur, commented that bridge not accessible Mairi Munro said the nearby ford was able to be used.

Dunrobin Glen link still has locked field gate to resolve. A long route used by cyclist, no reply from wind farm company either.

Carrol amendment follows a route suggested by farming tenant Mr Smith. Need to be sign posted. Loch side path still overgrown. Lesley asked if any plans to maintain the route. MD just concerned over users getting lost, to manage

maintenance at a later date. John mentioned proposed OHL may impact this area.

MD asked the forum for approval to formally consult on these amendments for 2 months. No intention of pay for notice in local press. Consult land owners, managers and community councils. Regional and local land management groups, NatureScot, recreation groups and hard copy in Golspie, Brora, Lairg, Rogart etc.

No objections – to proceed with consultation. **Action MD**

4.b Rhives Farm

MD commented on Rhives Farm and core path work, MD had a call in May 2025 about work to the path, trees, signs moved and was worried about the extent of the works. However the site is much tidier and improved, the existing route is accessible but the alternative is much improved. Premature to formally divert route but to consider in 2026. LC agreed it was a better route and better communication required. LC also stated a lot of trees in the village had Dutch Elm so expected a lot of trees to be felled.

5. Ongoing Access Enquiries and Work

a. Ongoing Work - see attached paper

- **Dairy Park** LC mentioned path creep, to cut in 2026
- **Carbisdale Forest**, Anne Henderson (AH) commented on signs removed and misleading signs. Carbisdale not on FLS leaflet. MD stated there is to be a new THC leaflet. FLS de-badged Carbisdale so they no longer promote as a forest walk. Discussion on the mtb trails, FLS never intended to maintain them. Decommissioned separately from de-badging process. AH says community clearing trails on regular basis. More signage need to encourage use and comfortable to those not familiar with the place. Gate across drive mentioned. Other obstructions
- **Upper Bighouse**, not progressed but ongoing communication with land owner
- **Little Rogart**, communication required with land owner and also stile at Curling Pond.
- **Eiden -Torboll**, works required
- **River Brora kissing gate** is a little restrictive, but path greatly improved since first adopted.
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b. British Legion Route from A9 to seafront – verbal report

THC has advertised evidence of use of the route, 19 replies. MD has summarised these and will assess. LC commented that residents at Seaforth House are complaining about public walking past bedroom windows. MD says the Council could assert the route and use roads legislation or otherwise defend legal proceedings.

c. The Hill of Edderton – verbal report

Requested to be on agenda by Jim McGillivray, spoken to both sides. Not able to provide an answer to either party, offered mediation but not progressed. Suggested going to Strategic committee to hear all arguments and not be a decision just for individual Cllr. Issue is equestrian use on tracks within forestry, some tracks are hard some are not. Mairi Munro (MM) commented that there had been some altercations with riders and person grabbing onto reins of a horse which was videoed. MM says some folk are not willing to go back to the area.

Jim asked for report to next area committee, 1 Dec, all members of LAF agreed. **Action MD**

6. AOCB

JR mentioned charity walk Croick to Ullapool – not sought consent prior to event and had a portaloos delivered. Not well handled by organisers. MM said area popular with charity/organised treks, permission “assumed” by some with lack of courtesy. MD had no issue with estate.

Betty Grieve – Riverside Path, Helmsdale and Navidale Paths to clear. MD has both on list to work/trim.

7. Date of next meetings - proposed

23 March 2026

28 September 2026