

Countryside Access Forum
Tuesday 14th November 2006
Grantfield Conference Room, 9:15am

Present:

Maurice Anderson	NFU Shetland (Chair)
Roger Tait	SIC Planning
Jill Blackadder	Shetland Field Studies Group
Pete Ellis	RSPB
John Ridland	A.C.C
Sue White	SCFWAG
Malcolm Johnston	Disability Shetland
Melanie Henderson	Equestrian Association
Misa Kotkova	Visit Shetland
Paula Nicolson	SIC, Infrastructure Services
Alex Miller	Shetland Anglers Association
Jim Henry	Shetland Islands Council

Meeting opened at 9:15

Apologies:

Vic Hawthorne SIC Planning

1. Apologies

Maurice Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting, the apologies were noted

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting – 31/5/06

Sue White approved the minutes from the previous meeting on 31st May 2006

3. Matters Arising

Roger advised that he had received a map from Fair Isle and that they had marked on the styles that they required. So far no access improvement work has been done in Fair Isle.

4. Feedback from project working group (up-date on current access improvement projects)

Roger explained that 48 projects had been completed this year, the largest being in Fetlar, where an open day was to be held to advertise the routes. The coastal route in Sandness had been completed as had the Ramshead Lighthouse. The group discussed problems the problems at Levenwick where the residents that had not all been

consulted on the proposed access. A press release in the Shetland Times in November was proposed in conjunction with the NFU access officer to clear up any misunderstanding about Core Path Planning and also Land Management Contracts.

Councillor Henry advised the forum that he had been made aware of problems walking at the Ness of Sound. Roger said that most of the work around the Ness had been completed including a path around the side of the fish farm. The route would require to be surveyed again in the near future to see what else would need to be done to complete the walk.

The group discussed opening up the route at Cunningham Way, Melanie explained that horse riders found the surface on this route extremely hard. Roger agreed that horse routes required some investigation. Jim Henry asked Melanie if there were any suggested routes that were suitable for horse riding. Melanie replied that the Equestrian Society was in the process of conducting a survey of its members to ascertain how many horses there were and whether they were kept as pets or not. Melanie also added that Shetland had no tourist routes for horse riders. It was agreed that in the future, the possibility of sourcing routes, which could be used for horse riding, should be investigated.

5. Core Path Plan

Maps were still to come in from Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh; the communities have already discussed the maps.

Tracey-Anne Anderson gave a presentation on the paths throughout Shetland, the forum were able to select an area and see which routes were marked. Jill Blackadder suggested contacting all the crofters to find out their views, it was noted that the Development Department would have list of all crofters. It was also suggested that maps could also be available for viewing at local post offices. Roger added that anyone was welcome to come in and view the maps, they were at a draft stage and the public consultation would take place starting at the end of January.

The New Access Officer would be in post in January.

6. AGM

The Annual General meeting was to be held on Wednesday 29th November 2006 in the Islesburgh Community Centre at 7pm. Sue Hilder from the NFU was also to attend and will be holding an open surgery through the day for anyone who has an issue about access. She will be writing to all NFU members. The feature in the Shetland Times was to be the week before the AGM.

7. Any Other Business

Misa explained that Visit Shetland were to produce a walking brochure to promote walking holidays in Shetland. NHS Shetland were also now involved to promote the walking routes to Shetlanders as well. The brochure was to be available in April 2007.

The Meeting closed at 10:30