

**Countryside Access Forum  
Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007  
Islesburgh Community Centre - 10am  
Minutes**

**Present:**

Melanie Henderson	Equestrian Association (Chair)
Roger Tait	SIC Planning
Emma Georgeson	SIC Planning
Sheila Johnson	SIC Planning
Jill Blackadder	Shetland Field Studies Group
Pete Ellis	RSPB
John Ridland	A.C.C
Sue White	SCFWAG
Malcolm Johnston	Disability Shetland
Paula Nicolson	SIC, Infrastructure Services
Alex Miller	Shetland Anglers Association
Jim Henry	Shetland Islands Council
Simon Smith	Scottish Natural Heritage
Paul Harvey	Shetland Amenity Trust
Cath Clark	Paths for all Partnership
Mark Latham	Shetland Times

Meeting opened at 10.00

**Apologies:**

Vic Hawthorne	SIC Planning
Maurice Anderson	NFU Shetland

**1. Apologies**

The apologies were noted.

**2. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the previous meeting were noted. Roger explained that Jillian Morris was unable to take up the post of Access Officer; he introduced both Emma Georgeson and Sheila Johnson who were the newly appointed Outdoor Access Officers.

**4. Progress since last meeting and access improvements undertaken**

Roger explained that there had been a lot of hold ups on projects due to poor weather conditions. It was hoped that Fetlar would be completed by the end of March, 3 contractors were presently interested in projects in the North Isles and half was to be completed by the end of March as it was a large project. The Fetlar Community Council was to complete surveys and the whole community was keen to promote tourism in the isles.

The fences at Mavis Grind had been replaced and self-closing gates had been newly erected, there were still some issues to be resolved relating to the quarry.

There were still several issues to be resolved at the Ness of Sound. Quotes were to come in for an electric fence to keep the horses in.

It was hoped to concentrate more on Lerwick this year looking especially at Cunninyhame Way to replace the gates.

In Urafirth there was to be a path to the school.

Brae was to have a path to the school from behind "Toy Town"

The path at North Roe was to be set 3-4m back from the road

Alan Inkster was in the process of arranging to have a path around his plantation at Sand.

A coastal path was to be completed at Levenwick once an agreement had been made with local landowners.

Simon asked what the total length of all the routes, Roger explained that it was 200km in total.

Lingness in South Nesting was discussed and a small project was to be completed at this site.

## **5. Update on Core Path Plan**

Roger distributed a report that had been prepared for Council – "Land Reform (Scotland) Act : The Development of the Core Path Plan". The forum was to read through this report and give views at the next meeting.

## **6. Cath Clark – Paths for all Partnership**

Cath Clark gave the forum an interesting overview of how other forums in Scotland operated and the activities there were undertaking. She explained that there was not as much action in other forums as there was in Shetland, though all other Local Authorities had fully operational forums often with sub groups. Many of other Authorities were already reviewing existing routes. Promotional events are often held to promote the code and the local authority. She felt it was refreshing to see how involved and keen Shetland was in promoting the local paths and access.

Roger suggested that more was required to be done to promote access routes to the public.

Scottish Natural Heritage were in discussions to hold an outdoor access festival April – May 2007.

The booklet that was to be produced by Visit Shetland and the Shetland Field Studies Group was discussed.

Sue suggested that an Access Improvement Award should be promoted, it was agreed that this was a good idea and that it could be incorporated within the annual Shetland Environmental Awards. It was agreed that Mick Clifton should be approached to suggest this.

Producing a Shetland Map, which incorporated all the local routes was discussed and it was agreed that this would be a good idea if it could be made to a usable size. It was also agreed that sensitivity needed to use so the some routes were left untouched and remained “wild”.

## **7. AOCB**

Roger showed maps of Northmavine that had been completed, which the forum discussed. Simon and Pete suggested that they should get together and look at the maps for sensitive wildlife areas.

The group discussed dealing with potential access conflicts and how to manage them. It was agreed that an item should be kept on future agendas to discuss this.

## **8. Date and time of next meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on the evening of Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May to visit either Eshaness or Aith, more details would be sent out nearer the time.