

**Countryside Access Forum**  
**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008**  
**Conference Room Grantfield – Lerwick**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Maurice Anderson	NFUS (Chair)
Ian Walterson	A.S.C.C (Vice Chair)
Simon Smith	Scottish National Heritage
Sheila Johnson	SIC, Planning
Claire Linton	SIC, Administration (Minutes)
Natalie Pion	SCFWAG
Abigail Robertson	Equestrian Association
Jill Blackadder	Shetland Field Studies Group
Deborah Carr	Visit Shetland
Pete Ellis	RSPB

**Apologies**

Austin Taylor	Heritage Manager
Jim Henry	Lerwick Community Council
Alec Miller	Angling Association

**1. Welcome and Introduction**

Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting and started off the introductions, Maurice came in and finished off the introductions.

**2. Apologies**

There were only 3 apologies made, they are noted above.

**3. Minutes from the previous meeting**

The minutes from the previous meeting were moved for approval by Ian and seconded by Simon.

**4. Shetland Draft Core Paths Plan Formal Public Consultation update**

Sheila started off by saying that the formal consultation had finished on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2008. There was lots of feedback about the CPP and Sheila was going through them and replying to them all. There has not been as much funding this year for Access so people that have contacted the office for funding have had to go on a list until there is more funding. Sheila has also put Land Managers in the right direction of other means of funding. There were letters put out to Grazing Clerks but there was not a big response from them. The CPP just have to be put into a final document and then it needs to be approved. The final format for the CPP has not yet been decided and Sheila is waiting to see what other Local Authorities are doing. Other Local Authorities are at the same stage as us.

Ian asked about insurance and liability and Sheila explained that all the CPP have had risk assessments but if a landowner was to leave equipment or wire

etc lying out then they would be liable if anyone was to get hurt. Jill mentioned that it might be an idea to have in writing somewhere that walkers should wear sensible clothing and footwear etc. Sheila said that the case studies in the SNH book are quite useful.

It was discussed that the two Rangers based at the Amenity Trust survey all the routes that have had Access Improvements done on them either once, twice or four times a year. It was suggested by Ian that maybe a letter is written from the Forum to the SAT in support of the Ranger Service.

## **5. AOCB**

Sheila mentioned that SNH are having a workshop 'Planning for Access with Land Management', on Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> October and asked the group if anyone would be interested in attending.

There is the ongoing issue about the rules for members of the public when they take their dogs on walks and whether the dogs should be kept on leads or not. Sheila received a letter from a woman in Scousburgh about the problems she is having with walkers leaving the gate open and her sheep are getting out and falling over the cliff and dogs have been scaring the sheep as well. Sheila sent out signs for her to put up. Ian added that there is a lot of confusion about the legislation that dogs should be under 'Close Control' when they are out. There have been a lot of complaints about dogs scaring livestock and most people are unclear as to what the correct legislation is. Sheila said that dogs don't legally have to be on a lead but should be under close control. It would be a good idea if dogs were on their leads when in parks with livestock especially during lambing time and they can be let off the lead when they are in a park with no livestock. Sheila said there is not much she can do other than send out signs and try and raise public awareness. Next spring would be a good time to do a press release to raise awareness. Sheila will now write to the woman in Scousburgh and say that the issue has been discussed with the group and also run it past Vyv Wood-Gee, who is taking the Planning for Access Course. Jill suggested it might be a good idea for the woman in Scousburgh to write to the paper. Ian asked if landowners can put up signs saying 'No Dog's Allowed' but it is actually illegal for them to do this except during lambing time. Landowners have the right to shoot a dog if it is scaring or hurting livestock. Jill mentioned that it might be an idea to put up signs saying that the dog could be shot if it is uncontrollable. Simon added that Jill's comment about signs would be a good idea and might make dog owners more aware.

Sheila has also had complaints about landowners padlocking gates that were open before and landowners are refusing to open them as they have complained that walkers leave them open and livestock gets out. It would be good if self-closing gates or styles could be provided to solve the problem.

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

The date of the next meeting will be 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008 at 10am in the Conference room at Grantfield.