

**Countryside Access Forum**  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
**6.30pm Room 9 Islesburgh, Lerwick**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Jill Blackadder	Shetland Field Studies Group
Austin Taylor	Heritage Manager
Claire Linton	SIC, Administration (Minutes)
Kathleen Sinclair	National Farmers Union Scotland
Alec Miller	Shetland Anglers Association (Vice Chair)
Paul Harvey	Shetland Amenity Trust
John Riddle	Member of the Public
Denise Woodford	Scottish Natural Heritage

**Apologies**

Sheila Johnson	SIC, Planning
Abigail Robertson	Equestrian Association
Ian Walterson	A.S.C.C (Chair)
Steve Mathieson	Shetland Islands Tourism

**1. Introduction, welcome & apologies**

As Ian could not make the meeting Alec chaired it and welcomed everyone to the Access Forum AGM and passed on his best wishes to Sheila. Introductions were made around the table and are noted above.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Alec went through the minutes of the last Access Forum AGM, which included; problems with dogs, formal consultation of draft Core Path Plans and Sheila going through the responses and booking meetings in advanced. Jill proposed the minutes and Austin second them.

Alec asked Austin about the budget for the next financial year and Austin said that currently the budget will be sufficient and projects will proceed as hoped. The budget in the next financial year is the same at the moment but it may change. There is no direct national funding it is currently all local funding.

It was discussed in the last AGM about dogs disrupting lambing and Sheila has had signs made and given them to crofters.

**3. Matters arising**

• **Enquiry from Andy Strangeway (Island Man)**

Sheila has circulated an email, which she received from Andy Strangeway in January. He is currently going around all the Islands and is trying to open access rights for everyone to camp on them. Sometimes he is welcomed on an Island and sometimes not. He has stated that he has not received a satisfactory response from RSPB so he wanted to get in touch with the forum to see if he could get some help. Paul wasn't sure we could do much as it is an RSPB reserve and there is obviously something we are not aware of.

Austin says that his website seems fine and straight forward and he seems very responsible. Alec said that he would respond to his email and asked the forum if they think this is a good idea? Austin said he wasn't aware of any reason why the Access Forum could not write in support of responsible access. Alec said that it will also be a good idea to contact the RSPB direct and advise that body of the Forum's response to Andy.

#### **4. Core Paths Plan**

Austin gave an update; it was approved in April 2009 and has been on the web for the past 12 months. Sheila has been working with rangers on projects and making sure they are done. Alec asked how long will the plan remain in operation? Austin wasn't sure of the exact length of time of the plan but felt that there will be a time period and there will be a review timetable.

#### **5. Wind Farm Application**

Austin said that the Council has not made a response because, prior to the time that the Council would have been required to respond, the applicant put the application on hold in order to revise its proposals in the light of issues raised as part of the consultation. It is not like a planning application and he said that the Council had originally expected to have received an addendum before now but that spring might now be a realistic date to expect it. This would then be advertised again and consultees will get another month to respond to that. The addendum will likely be raising issues that will require the EIA to be re-written. Alec said that if it comes in April then the forum would have to make the comments again. Jill asked if it would be useful for Shetland Field Studies to make comments to the Committee? Austin said that Viking Energy have seen all the comments from before and will have used them so it's not necessary to submit comments now but that comments would be sought again on the addendum.

#### **6. Appointment of office bearers**

Ian is happy to carry on as Chair if no one else wants to take on the role. Austin proposed and Paul seconded.

Alec is currently Vice Chair and is happy to carry on, Jill proposed and Paul seconded.

Jill asked where do we stand in the Draft Development Plan? Austin said that Development Plans are currently working on the Main Issues Report (MIR). Consultation for this is from 26<sup>th</sup> March – 7<sup>th</sup> May and the Access Forum is on the consultation list for it.

Jill asked if there is funding for peat roads? Alec said that some of the Community Council's may fund this and this can be discussed at a meeting later on. Austin said that if it is on a Core Path Plan then there might be funding for it.

Jill asked if there is a way of getting paper copies of the CPP? Austin said that if you contact the office then you can get copies.

## **7. Dates, venues and times of next year's meetings**

Alec said that dates couldn't really be made without Sheila present but the meetings will still be quarterly. Jill suggested having a site visit to somewhere with issues in the Summer maybe Hillswick as it needs work on 2 parts near the cliff. Austin said that there isn't SIC workmen who work on the paths it is contractors who are from the area where the work is such as if there was some work needing done in North Mainland then someone from North Mainland will be sourced.

Kathleen asked about what happens if someone has an accident who is liable? Austin said that if it is on a CPP and it has been done by one of our contractors then it is the Shetland Islands Council.

Alec closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.