

Countryside Access Forum - AGM
Thursday 11th December 2008
Islesburgh – Lerwick

Minutes

Present:

Sheila Johnson	SIC, Planning
Natalie Pion	SCFWAG
Abigail Robertson	Equestrian Association
Jill Blackadder	Shetland Field Studies Group
Austin Taylor	

Apologies

Ian Walterson	A.S.C.C (Vice Chair)
Claire Linton	SIC, Administration (Minutes)
Simon Smith	Scottish National Heritage
Deborah Kerr	Visit Shetland
Pete Ellis	RSPB

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Sheila thanked everyone who had come to the meeting and made the 5 apologies noted above.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were moved for approval by Jill and seconded by Abigail.

3. Matters Arising

Abigail suggested speaking to the dog club for ideas of how to heighten dog owner's awareness regarding the problem with dogs running through fields of sheep. This is an ongoing problem that is discussed at many forum meetings. Sheila and Jill suggested perhaps doing a feature in the Shetland Times at spring time to raise awareness also. Sheila has distributed laminated signs stating ' LAMBING TIME Please no dogs during April and May' to a few crofters that have had serious problems with dogs at lambing time. These signs are 'requesting' signs not 'demanding' signs and will be used as a temporary measure to see if it helps the problems next year. If they do help she will look at getting more durable ones made up to be used at lambing season. Jill suggested a possible poster competition

Funding for next year was discussed. Austin explained that we won't know how much money we will get for the next financial year until February. He also explained that a ranger's service has been provided for much of Shetland by Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) for some time, with grant funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). In the case of rangers services provided elsewhere in Scotland, these were managed by the local authorities themselves, with SNH funding. From 1 April 2009 that SNH funding will go directly to local authorities as part of the annual local

government finance settlement, rather than to SNH for subsequent distribution to local authorities.

In Shetland, the grant was awarded to Shetland Amenity Trust for the provision of rangers services so, from 1 April 2009, that funding will now be provided directly to Shetland Amenity Trust by the Council, rather than via SNH.

Sheila mentioned that the SNH workshop 'Planning for Access with Land Management', on Tuesday the 7th October had gone very well. Although not many crofters turned up those that did got some good advice regarding their problems and it was a very informative day.

4. Shetland Draft Core Paths Plan Formal Public Consultation update

Sheila started off by saying that the formal consultation had finished on the 29th September 2008. There was lots of feedback about the CPP and the Strategic Environmental Assessment that Emma and Sheila have also had out for Formal Consultation. Sheila is going through all the responses trying to iron out discrepancies and replying to them before the final approval process. The final format for the CPP has not yet been decided. One of the intentions is to provide a map near local amenities in each Community Council area showing the paths available in that area and replicate this in booklets.

5. Objectives for the next year

It was decided this would be best discussed at the next meeting when there are more people. However the Core Path Plan adoption is the main objective with continuing to improve the Core Path routes (subject to funding).

6. Appointment of Office Bearers

Ian Walterson is willing to stay on the forum as Vice Chairman. Sheila has also contacted Maurice Anderson who is willing to continue his role as Chairman.

6. Date and time of next meeting

It is hoped to book next years meetings in advance to allow for people to plan more sufficiently. However this will only be done at the next Forum meeting when there are more people there to discuss it. Jill suggested a possible site visit at summer time and possibly a bus trip to try to involve Councillors and Community council people.

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 12th March 2009 at 10am in the Conference room at Grantfield.