

SHETLAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

1.0 Name

1.1 The partnership will be called the SHETLAND ACCESS FORUM (referred to below as the 'Forum.')

2.0 Aim

2.1 The aim of the Forum shall be: -

to provide advice on access in Shetland to Shetland Islands Council and to other persons or bodies consulting the Forum through a consensual approach which is inclusive of all interests

3.0 Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the Forum shall be: -

- to act as the local access forum for Shetland and to undertake the functions of that body if and when statutorily required to be established by Shetland Islands Council
- to advise Shetland Islands Council on strategic access issues and the development of the Core Path Network in Shetland through the policies and priorities of the Shetland Access Strategy (note that when the Core Path Network is completed it will supersede the Access Strategy).
- to promote responsible access through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- to promote the sharing of knowledge, awareness, and good practice in access
- to offer Shetland Islands Council advice which will assist in resolving access problems

4.0 Structure and Membership

4.1 The Forum will establish working groups as the Forum considers necessary to deliver the work of the Forum on particular tasks.

4.2 The Forum will:

- consist of representatives nominated by the respective stakeholder groups.
- allow any stakeholder group representative unable to attend specific meetings to be temporarily replaced at these by a substitute acceptable to

the stakeholder group concerned and irrespective of whether from the same organisation as the representative.

- include one elected Member of Shetland Council with appropriate interests in access matters who will attend in an observer capacity
- select a chairperson from its membership to serve for a term of one year
- there will be a minimum of 3 members present (excluding council officers) for any decision to be made.
- invite such parties to meetings as it may consider relevant for the purpose of providing expert advice on any matter arising
- be accountable to and report back to the yearly seminar, open to anyone who has an interest in access
- hold meetings four times each year or as it otherwise agrees

4.3 Membership of the Forum will be open to all with an interest in access management in Shetland and will include representatives of the following stakeholder groups: -

- recreationalists and access users including people with disabilities
- land owners and managers
- local community interests
- conservation organisations and individuals
- public bodies and agencies with an interest in access issues in Shetland

Council officials will not form part of the Forum however they will attend in an advisory role.

Once a year a seminar/AGM will be held and will be open to anyone with an interest in access provision. At the seminar, the attendees will nominate such representatives from stakeholder groups as may be required to serve on the Forum.

4.4 Forum Working Groups

Forum working groups will be established, where agreed by the Forum, for the purposes of advising the Forum on either topic or area based access matters. Working group's will: -

- have a clear remit, terms of reference, and expected life-span
- comprise membership which may be from the Forum, wider population and specialist advisers
- report findings and outcomes to the Forum for approval or further action
- implement specific tasks, projects or programmes as required by the Forum.

5.0 Administration of meetings

5.1 Administration of all Forum meetings will be undertaken on the basis that : -

- decisions will be made through consensus

- all Forum interests may request inclusion of items for discussion in meeting agendas (except in the case of working groups), agenda items to be collated by the Chairperson in consultation with Shetland Islands Council Planning Service as lead body
- minutes shall be kept of all meetings and shall be placed in the public domain
- agendas, papers, and minutes of meetings will be made available to the public electronically upon request.
- Shetland Islands Council will provide administrative support services, accommodation and facilities for meetings of the Forum and, at its discretion, for meetings of Forum working groups.

6.0 Communication

6.1 Communication Plan

The Forum will achieve communication with the wider population and working groups, in accordance with a Communication Plan, which will establish the nature and method of such communication. The Forum will be responsible for the preparation and periodic monitoring and review of this Communication Plan to ensure its adequate implementation.