

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 30th August 2018

Report Title: Lochaber Local Access Forum Appointments

Report By: Director of Development & Infrastructure

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to detail the work of the Local Access Forum and for the committee members to approve the appointment of new forum members.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the appointment of those members of the public who have applied to be members of the Local Access Forum for Lochaber.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Local Access Forums were created in Highland in 2005 as a duty of the Council set out in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- 3.2 The Local Access Forum advises The Highland Council on countryside access issues and provides assistance in resolving disputes in relation to the exercise of access rights, the delineation & existence of public rights of way and the amendment of the Council core paths plan.
- 3.3 The membership of the forum is made up of 10 members of the public and two Highland Councillors. Representation is balanced across a range of interested groups in each of the following categories.
- **Land managers** – estate owners, crofters, farmers, foresters (3 representatives)

- **Community groups** – community councils, environmental groups, local path development groups (3 representatives)
- **Access takers** – walkers, cyclists, horse riders, canoeists (3 representatives)
- **Disability access panel** – one representative.

3.4 Local access forums in Highland operate across the following geographical areas.

- Caithness
- Sutherland
- Ross and Cromarty
- Skye and Lochalsh
- Lochaber (also taking in the Corrieyairack Pass to Garvamore in Badenoch and Strathspey)
- Inverness and Nairn (including the northern end of Dava Moor up to Easter Cottartown)

3.5 The Council appoints members to the forum and this power is delegated to the area committees.

3.6 The forums meet twice a year but can meet more frequently should demand arise for the forums feedback. Members of the Forum are entitled to claim travel and approved out of pocket expenses from the Access budget in the Development and Infrastructure Service.

4. Existing forum membership and new applicants

4.1 Existing members of the local access forum were asked if they wished to continue their membership of the forum for a further 5 year term. They are listed in **Appendix 1** below.

4.2 A press release and public notice was advertised in May 2018 for new members to fill the vacant places, again for a five year term. An application and a nomination were received for the individuals listed in **Appendix 2** below.

4.3 The Forum has three vacant positions; two in the community group and one for a disability access panel representative. Interest came from individuals with community credentials. Information on them is summarised in **Appendix 3**.

For any remaining or subsequent vacancies on the Forum within the 5 year term, Council officers will seek to invite suitable persons, agreed by the Forum members, to sit on the forum. Such applications will come to the area committee for approval.

5. Implications

5.1 Resource – funding from within existing resources to cover meeting rooms, site visits, hospitality and travelling expenses.

5.2 Legal - none

5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - Membership of the forum is open to all those who qualify for one of the three membership categories.

- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - Forum members are encouraged to share transport to meetings and when site meetings are necessary an appropriate vehicle is hired to transport all Forum members to the site.
- 5.5 Risk – None
- 5.6 Gaelic - None

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Date: 20 August 2018

Author: Donald Kennedy, Access Officer, Skye, Lochalsh and West Lochaber

Appendix 1

Existing members of the Local Access Forum

Name	Representative Group	Comments
Ian M Stewart	Land Manager	Bidwells
Drew MacFarlane-Slack	Land Manager	
Jackson Anderson	Land Manager	
Lea MacNally	Community Group	
Vacant	Community Group	
Vacant	Community Group	
Marion MacDonald	Access User	
Bridget Thomas	Access User	
Ian Moir	Access User	
Vacant	Disability Access Panel	
Cllr Ben Thomson	Highland Councillor	Ward11- Caol and Mallaig
Cllr Niall McLean	Highland Councillor	Ward 21- Fort William and Ardnamurchan

Appendix 2

Applications to the Local Access Forum

Name	Representative Group	Comments
Michael Foxley	Community Group	
Ruari Watt	Community Group	
No application was received for the disability access panel vacancy.		

Appendix 3

Name	Dr Michael Foxley	Ruari Watt
Location	Achaphubil	Roy Bridge
Personal Application	Yes	Yes
Category of Representation	Community	Community
Other public appointments	SFRS Board Scottish Wildfire Executive UHI Court Colleges Scotland Board FE Regional Board for Highlands and Islands – training Highlands and Islands Forestry Forum – Chair Mallaig Harbour Authority Crown estate Scotland Board	Recreation Ranger, Forest Enterprise Scotland
Relevant skills/abilities/experience	Regular and keen walker in Lochaber hills Actively and historically involved in access legislation Path development with Sunart Oakwoods Initiative Scottish Rights of Way Society member Active crofter and land manager	Hill runner Recreation and land manager Experienced in educating groups on responsible access and environment Advising community on access initiatives Partner in Long Distance Route management Extensive knowledge of Lochaber's recreation network, patterns and issues