

Minutes of Meeting of the
Sutherland Local Access
Forum held at Drumbuie,
Golspie on 22 May 2023

Present:	Ms Lesley Cranna, Community Representative	LC
	Mr David Hannah, Access Taker/User	DH
	Cllr Jim McGillivray, Councillor, Highland Council	JM
	Mr John Ross, Access Taker CHAIR	JR
	Cllr Leslie-Anne Niven	LAN
In Attendance:	Mr Matt Dent, Access Officer, Highland Council	MD

1. Apologies

Frances Gunn, Allan Mackay, Andy Summers

2. Notes from meeting of the 26 September 2022

Accepted as a true and accurate representation

3. Matters Arising

MD raised highlighted access issue raised by JR at Loch Fleet Access from Embo/Fourpenny. MD was unsure what this was? JR said it was the stiles from the old railway line to the Coul farm track, not great for bikes. DH said this route was part of the John O'Groats Trail (JOGT) and he said the stile predated the trail. Both noted the stiles were in a poor condition. **MD to contact Ken at JOGT** and Colin Taylor at Coul Farm as required to improve access (gates).

4. Sutherland Space Port Byelaws

MD introduced this item, that had been presented to the Sutherland County Committee on the 16th May 2022. The Highland Council will promote an order to remove access rights from land to allow the operation of Sutherland Space Port.

JR and DH aske about consultation of inland water interests and local walkers groups.
MD to consider these groups to add onto the consultation circulation list.

The Local Access Forum are statutory consultees so will be further involved.

5. Access Rangers

Full complement for Sutherland started at the beginning of the month but there was no site ranger at Smoo (or Glen Brittle/Arisaig). LAN said it was good news to receive the monies to allow this, MD said the Council had been successful with the NatureScot Better Places 4 fund which had not been guaranteed because of a greater level of interest in the fund compared to previous years. MD said funds for projects/materials is less than previous years but main focus on visitor interaction needed the staff which were in post.

6. AOCB

LC stated some members of public not happy with the path surface on the Diary park. MD reiterated the lack of ability to reinstate a grass based path and the soil type has made regrowth difficult whilst path is still being used. LC said planted crop type (oats) was very clumpy – MD agreed. Council efforts to improve the path will continue. MD showed current Heat map from Strava which indicated both path receiving high levels of use. JR suggested Golspie Path Volunteers may be able to assist with works. **MD to follow up suggestion.**

Following on from last meeting mention was again made of gorse encroachment in Balbair woods and track condition in area east of Dunrobin Castle. **MD to contact estate**

DH asked about Badvoon – MD said still no luck in contacting owner.

7. Date of next meeting - proposed

2nd October 2023
11th March 2024