

Achmore and Strome Footpath and Trail Group

Meeting, Achmore Hall 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Present:** Chris Cartwright, Mary MacBeth, Lynn McLaughlin, Rory Biss, Kate Biss, Colin Parsons, Iseabail Howat, Marion Howat, Mhairi MacRae, Kath Smith, Claudia Weegen

Iseabail had been looking into possible funding, (partly from a Community Council list). There were several possibles. A constituted community body would be required for any funding application, and the most appropriate was thought to be the Fernaig Community Trust. FCT has a history of footpaths and access in the area and a lot of members are enthusiastic, however the current FCT chairman has stated that they will not do anymore footpaths. Colin hoped that if the present group could do an application he could sign it off as an FCT director.

#### **Discussion of path between Achmore and Strome;**

Route alongside the road – Iseabail would speak to Andy Bone (HC) and the relevant HC footpath person (Footpath Officer Mark Crowe was no longer in post) to discuss feasibility, possible cost etc.

Mary informed the meeting that the Community Council in Dec 2022 and Jan 2023 had conducted a Community Interest survey to gauge the level of support for a path by the A890 between Stromeferry and Achmore. The CC received 21 positive responses from households in reply to the 3 questions included in the survey. In addition 3 households sent in statements in support of a path. The survey was distributed to all in our CC area by email. The results of the survey were sent to the path officer in Portree.

Route across the hill on old right of way – Colin had spoken to Fay MacKenzie (landowner) who was enthusiastic. Colin would be in touch with her to confirm this in writing. The Hill is grazed by cattle, so the path would have to be a simple unfenced unsurfaced hill track perhaps with boardwalks etc on boggy bits. Colin would walk the route to get an idea of what might be required. It was suggested that FLS might contribute as one end of the path is on FLS land.

**Paths in Strome Wood;** Maintenance was needed, cutting back vegetation etc. A link path to Portachullin was also mentioned, perhaps using the historic track which is listed as a right of way.

**Forest Bike Trails;** There was potential for this perhaps up the Glen. Trails could include links between forest roads, providing circular routes. These could also be used by walkers. This could relate to the Fernaig Community Trust (FCT) Concordat. The Concordat was signed some years back and may need updating and discussion with Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS). Colin was hoping to do this soon anyway in his capacity as an FCT board member. Rory was involved in the local biking Association [Skye & Lochalsh Mountain Bikers?] who could build trails.

**Core Paths;** These are on the HC website

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1203/map\\_21\\_-\\_dornie\\_plockton\\_achmore\\_and\\_kyle](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/1203/map_21_-_dornie_plockton_achmore_and_kyle)

There are 2 in our area – from the dairy across the raised beach, and the circuit in Strome Wood. Core paths are the responsibility of Highland Council, and there may be extra funding potential, so getting paths registered as core paths could be advantageous.

**Review of registered Rights of Way;** Colin had registered some Rights Of Way on behalf of FCT in 2003. (2 had already been registered.) These were registered with Scotways. The CC previously had

a subscription with Scotways which had lapsed. This had kept them up with developments and it might be worth someone doing again.

The path from the railway bridge across the stepping stones and up to the old kissing gate on the Plockton road was discussed. Mary (landowner) explained that there had been problems with the vegetation from the railway embankment and ownership, trees, and a broken gate which cows were getting out of. A temporary padlock had been put on to prevent cows escaping. This was all being addressed. Over the river the path had been strimmed in the past but this had lapsed, as the path had been little used. Mary told the meeting that there is no obligation on landlords to clear rights of way / footpaths and the HC Access department does not have any funds at the moment.

**Strome beach track;** this right of way between the old Marconi yard and the railway leading to the beach was discussed. The route was getting overgrown with young trees. Some cutting had been done but it was an ongoing problem. It wasn't clear who had responsibility or owned the trackway itself – yard owner or railway. Iseabail would try to find out the yard owner (land registry?).

**Kyle meeting;** Five of us had attended a meeting of Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust, concerning paths in the area, and Colin had circulated some notes. An email had been received with a form for path comments. This would be forwarded to the group for anyone to reply.

**Next meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November**