

ACHMORE AND STROME PATHS GROUP MEETING – 08/11/2023

Present – Colin Parsons, Iseabail Howat, Mhairi M, Mary MacBeth, Kate Biss, Chris Cartwright, Marion Howat, Sunil Pullaperuma

PREVIOUS MINUTE AND ACTIONS ARISING	AMENDMENTS/UPDATES	COMPLETED	WHO	DATE
1. Previous Minute	Amendments discussed	Approved with amendments		08/11/2023
2. Action 1- Right of Way Improving Public Access (IMP) Grant	IH confirmed content of email to the group on 30/10/2023. This Grant is not available until at least 2025.	Completed	I.H.	30/10/2023
AGENDA ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION	WHO	TARGET DATE
1. Formalise Chair, Secretary, group Status	<p>i) CP and IH happy to be Acting Chair and Secretary in the short term which was not opposed at the meeting. If any member who was not at the meeting would like to hold either position, please let IH know.</p> <p>ii) The Achmore and Strome Paths (ASP) Group meeting members discussed that it did not have any formal status. CP and Mary M felt from an historic perspective there appeared to be overlap of the ASP aims and some of those of the Fernaig Community Trust (FCT). It was agreed it would be helpful to discuss this at a FCT Meeting. If significant overlap possible FCT sub-group status?</p> <p>iii) The meeting discussed the need to have the ability to apply for and receive grants. Also need to be clear on Liability Insurances needed for any voluntary work members would like to undertake on private or Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) owned land.</p> <p>iv) ASP Group members present recognised the need to have Terms of Reference which would include aims, constitution of membership, a map of relevant stakeholders, communication channels, decision-making processes, etc. Much of this would depend on the ASP's relationship with the FCT.</p> <p>v) FCT AGM – 12/12/2023. Noted that almost all ASP Group members are also FCT members.</p>	<p>i) Notify Iseabail if other nominations.</p> <p>ii) Place as an agenda item on the next FCT agenda</p> <p>iii) Hold pending discussion with FCT.</p> <p>iv) As above</p> <p>v) ASP Group Members are encouraged to</p>	<p>Any member</p> <p>Mhairi M</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>ASP Group members (if they can).</p>	<p>09/01/2023</p> <p>Completed 12/11/2023.</p> <p>Rolling item</p> <p>Rolling item</p> <p>12/12/2023</p>

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		attend the FCT AGM on 12/12/2023.		
2. Achmore/Strome Routes	<p>i) Road – Reference Andy Bone’s letter. Noted not wide enough as is. No-one had got back to advise who to contact to request a feasibility study. The Footpath Focus Group (FFG), which is organised by Kyle Community Trust’s Sustainable Travel and Active Travel Officer, suggested Ian Moncrieff at the Road’s Dept but he no longer seems to be there. The ASP Group want to pursue a feasibility study.</p> <p>ii) MH suggested a road width reduction as exists in other parts of the country was suggested for the A890 stretch of road between Achmore and the Stromeferry turn off. This effectively would make that part single track allowing the ‘spare’ lane to be used for non- car users and creating passing places. There were mixed views on this, but it will be explored in requesting a feasibility study.</p> <p>iii) Hill Route – CP had circulated his Rights of Ways maps which shows this route. He had also recently walked this route. There being no IMP Grant available discussion centred on the possibility of local volunteers undertaking work to properly reinstate it. The Group were clear that it was important the landowner was contacted and updated on the Group’s existence and its discussions on planning to re-instate this route first.</p> <p>iv) Mapping stakeholders such as landowners, the FLS, etc and systems of communication with them, stakeholder ASP Group membership and invitation to join the ASP Group were discussed. Terms of Reference are considered important, but these require the outcome of the FCT decision on the ASP Group.</p>	<p>i) Iseabail to identify who to contact to request feasibility study.</p> <p>ii) include in above</p> <p>iii) Update the landowner</p> <p>iv) carry forward</p>	<p>Iseabail</p> <p>Iseabail</p> <p>Colin</p> <p>Iseabail</p>	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Next Meeting</p> <p>Next Meeting</p>

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	<p>v) Noted Andy Bone’s suggestion of a Halt stop on the railway at Portchullin. Although a good idea this was not considered appropriate for a ‘paths’ group to pursue.</p>	<p>v) Noted only</p>		
3. Strome Woods Paths	<p>i) These need maintenance work. The Concordat between Fernaig Community Trust and FLS was suggested as possibly having potential to assist with this. CP advised the FCT and FLC should be meeting soon, and this would likely consider the need to review the Concordat. Colin would hope to be involved in this so would be able to represent ASP Group views. Again, the possibility of a local voluntary group doing some maintenance was discussed. Also clarifying any public liability insurance for volunteers were there to be an accident - see 1 iii) above. It was agreed the Hill Path and/or pavement is the priority. The possibility of monthly volunteer days during summers, making these community events was suggested.</p>	<p>i) Keep on agenda for outcome of FCT discussion.</p>	Colin	Next Meeting
4. Portchullin to Strome old route	<p>i) CP advised this would require significant work to reinstate and need grant aided funding. It remains a desire but not priority.</p>	<p>i) Hold on agenda</p>		Rolling item
5. Footpath Focus Group (FFG) feedback (including bike trails).	<p>i) The meeting of this group on 30/11/2023 began a process to compile an ‘aspirational’ map of existing and desired routes across the Lochalsh area. It became clear at the meeting that this would include not just access paths but activity paths too. Rory has considerable knowledge of existing and potential cycle linking routes so will be asked if he could map these on to the forestry map Colin had circulated. This can then be included in the Lochalsh map. ii) Inviting Nic Boulivant (who is creating the map) to one of our future meetings was agreed. iii) The Lochalsh map process will not necessarily result in funding for anything.</p>	<p>i) Rory to map bike trails ii) Next and future meeting dates to be established to allow this. iii) Noted only</p>	<p>Rory Iseabail/Colin</p>	<p>Next meeting When meeting dates decided</p>

	<p>iv) KB told the group about the voluntary work on routes done by Mountain Biking Groups in Skye and Lochalsh and Contin. This could offer another source for learning.</p> <p>v) Feedback from the FFG included to be cautious about ‘conditions’ that are often attached to Grant Funding as these can increase costs (e.g. may specify a specific, costly type of surface material is used, etc) and administration. The feedback on Core Paths and possibly adding new ones was that Highland Regional Council’s Core Path Plan Review is likely to have started and this would be the route if Core Status for additional paths was wanted. It was said this is normally notified to communities and input sought through Community Councils and/or Highland Council’s Outdoor Access Forums.</p> <p>vi) No-one present was aware of any Core Path Plan review. The Outdoor Access Forum are currently seeking new members (CP circulated link with the agenda). Anyone wanting to apply “must have the support of a recognised body whose interest they would represent”. CP said FCT members could meet this requirement if the FCT was supportive. Most of the ASP members are also FCT members. Colin will discuss at the FCT meeting. He would consider applying. The deadline for Outdoor Access applications is 18/1/2023</p>	<p>iv) Noted only</p> <p>v) Noted only</p> <p>vi) Discuss with FCT</p>		
<p>6. Rights of Way</p>	<p>i) The Rights of Way map CCP registered about 20 years ago were used as focus of discussion. CP advised since The Right to Roam (section 1) of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, maintaining some routes as rights of way is not guaranteed.</p> <p>ii) Mary M said some of the routes would benefit from minor improvements (i.e the gate at the Dalfern end of the Portchullin core path could do with a new gatepost and hinges). Funding ideas included – “Awards for All” part of the Lottery funding resource, extending the number of voluntary “invite to pay” money boxes for walkers or drivers.</p>	<p>i) Noted only</p> <p>ii) a) begin identifying small grant funding sources</p>	<p>IH</p>	<p>Next meeting</p>

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	<p>iii) Identifying existing sources of signage such as sign posting paths and explaining when paths crossed common grazing, what this was with right to roam responsibilities explained was agreed.</p>	<p>iii) Create list</p>	<p>CP IH</p>	<p>Next meeting Next meeting</p>
7. Fernaig Route	<p>i) Mary M updated that padlock was removed and that the owners were working to clear the route down to the gate. She clarified there may be issues around public liability for owners when volunteers were using machinery that could cause injury and therefore the owners will arrange to have certificated, insured personnel carry out this work on their land. The group noted thanks to the owners.</p>	<p>i) Clearing work</p>	<p>The owners</p>	<p>Update – next meeting <i>nb – since the meeting the route has been cleared</i></p>
8. Strome Beach Track	<p>i) Mary M had circulated contact details for the Stromeferry Yard owner. It was felt that although it was not clear if this person owned the track he should be asked if he did and if he did if he was okay with the scrub and growth being cut back on it. LM at the last meeting had said she had previously had some contact with him so she will be asked if she could do this.</p>	<p>i) MH will ask LM if she can do this.</p>	<p>MH</p>	<p>Next meeting</p>
9. Sulky Road and other forest roads	<p>i) CP shared a map of the Forest Roads (Strome/Achmore over towards Glen Udalain). This includes the Sulky Road. CP said this was walked recently and it was just possible, but it is another route that needs work done on. This is another possible volunteer project that would need discussed beforehand with FLC.</p>	<p>i) Hold on agenda</p>		<p>Rolling item</p>
10. Any other business Paying hall fees	<p>i) There was discussion about the ASP Group paying hall fees and how much this was. It was suggested that members could meet the cost of this once amount clarified. <i>Post meeting Mhairi M has confirmed Groups are charged £12.50 for 2 hours, min charge £10. As Hall treasurer she is happy for hires to be paid in cash on the night or sent by bank transfer to the Hall's business account.</i></p>	<p>i) Hold on agenda</p>		<p>Next Meeting</p>
11. Date of next meeting	<p>To be confirmed</p>			