

## **Nic Bullivant – Talk with Achmore and Strome Ferry Paths Group – 09/02/2024**

Nic explained Eilidh Munro is the Sustainable and Active Travel Officer for the Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust. He is drawing up a map of existing paths, old paths and aspired to paths across the Lochalsh area with the Footpath Focus Group of which he and Eilidh are both members. The FFG is specifically concerned with active travel routes i.e. paths/routes to walk, cycle, push a pram, use a wheelchair to get to specific places such as schools, health centres, or to join public transport links, etc. So, for more than health and leisure purposes. Nic's map will identify active which are travel routes and the Achmore to Strome Ferry road route will be one that is included in this Examples of projects that received funds from Highland Council (HC) include Glenelg for ramps and Kyle for some boardwalks.

Nic explained there were different types of paths and grades of work required to make them functional. Complete build, re-build, waymarking and advertising with leaflets and, some that include crossing trunk roads.

Nic confirmed that mechanical equipment cannot be used on rights of way without appropriate insurance and there was discussion about the potential for people who get injured on rights of way suing the landowner. Nic advised that where injury arose because of a natural occurring event (e.g. tripping over a tree blown down by the wind) this would not be the case, and, that there have next to no cases of this type that he was aware of. Nic suggested gates were safer than putting in stiles. (After the meeting IH checked the Government's guidance which says that the outdoors cannot be made risk-free, and that people must act with care for their own safety and that of others. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code says "that those taking access accept responsibility for their own actions and safety and that the outdoors is not risk free. Those using core paths should have both skills and equipment appropriate to the terrain and weather").

Regarding the Achmore/Strome Routes Nic had walked both and agreed the roadside route met the 'access route' definition. It would be preferable if any route went along the Strome side of the road but that if the opposite side was considered best suited then lights for crossings would need to be added. The group wondered about Glen residents perhaps wanting a roadside path/route extended to their road end in which case a crossing would be needed. Regarding the hill path Nic suggested this perhaps would improve with more people walking /cycling it with some tidying and way markers and or leaflets showing the route. Grant money may be available for signage and leaflets.

Nic confirmed the Lochalsh mapping process will not necessarily result in funding for anything and that we should continue to try and engage with HC. He also advised the Government's Core Paths Review has happened and should be available shortly. There was some disappointment that this review didn't include Local Access Groups

The Group thanked Nic for his helpful and insightful input. He is happy to return in then future.