

## **Scottish Borders Access Forum**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held online on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

#### **Present:**

William Davidson (Chair)  
Walter Douglas (NFU)  
Keith Robeson (SBC Senior Ranger)  
Susan Gray (SBC Access Ranger)  
David Langworth (Melrose Paths Group)  
Trevor Bryant, (Cycling)  
Beryl Masson (British Horse Society)  
Bruce Anderson (Police Scotland)

#### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially PC Bruce Anderson, Police Scotland, attending for the first time.

#### **Apologies:**

Denise Brydon (SBC Access and Transport Assistant)  
Douglas Wright (Scotways rep.)  
Andy Pearson (Water access)

#### **Minutes of last meeting of the Access Forum**

The minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and will now be added to the SBC website.

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/378/minutes\\_of\\_local\\_access\\_forum](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/378/minutes_of_local_access_forum)

#### **Matters arising**

No matters arising.

#### **SBC Access Rangers Update**

The Access Rangers' report for 1 October to 31 December 2022 was circulated prior to meeting.

KR noted that Ben McCallum (Access Ranger West has had to deal with a lot of maintenance and access issues whilst settling in to his new post and that he and

Susan Gray had surveyed St Cuthbert's Way as part of Ben's induction. The team were still having to deal with fallen trees brought down during storm Arwen and concerns were raised about recent flooding issues on the path network in Tweeddale. DL raised an issue of a blocked path in the Chirnside area which the access team was aware of and were in the process of arranging for a tree surgeon to remove. WD congratulated KR and the Team on a comprehensive report again.

## **Other Interest Updates**

### **Cycling**

A report by DB was circulated prior to the meeting. KR noted that DB had spent a large proportion of her time managing the Eddleston Water multi-use path recently. This is now close to completion and should be open to the public soon, with an official opening being planned for the spring.

A feasibility study for the Tweedbank to Eyemouth cycle route should be made available soon. This is an active travel route intending to utilise the disused railway from Earlston to Reston. TB commented that this would be a very useful link. DL has been working with Greener Melrose and other community groups to help further develop this route. BM noted that a landowner of part of the route close to Reston was keen for it to be useable for ponies and traps and BM had informed DB of this. BM requested that DB send a link to the feasibility study to forum members when it is made public.

It was noted that South of Scotland Enterprise are currently developing a coast to coast on road cycle route through Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders (from Newcastleton to Eyemouth) as part of a bid to promote the south of Scotland as a cycling destination.

### **Equestrian**

BM noted that Ben McCallum was liaising with Lesley Muirden with regards to 3 horse related access issues in Tweeddale.

Concerns were raised about safety in some of the forests in Tweeddale with regards to the speed of some mountain bikers crossing paths used by walkers and horse riders, and the need for signage to address this issue. BHS have met with Katie Jarvis (FLS) to discuss these concerns.

BM and KR had recently met with the local community council to discuss and raise awareness of the responsible rights of access horse riders have in the Lamberton area. The access team will survey core path 99 to assess what may be done to make the route suitable for horses and will work with the landowners, BHS and the local horse riding establishment to see how this may be achieved.

### **Paths to Health report**

A report from Denise Carmichael covering the last 3 months of 2022 was circulated prior to the meeting summarising the significant achievements of Walk It during that period.

### **Water Access**

SG noted for information that Water Access points were recorded on the SBC website. Nothing else relating to water access was reported.

### **Future Meetings Format**

It was confirmed that the forum would like to hold the next meeting at Bowhill. KR to liaise with the Estate to try and arrange a venue.

### **Access issues updates**

#### **Craik firing range**

SG has visited the site in the company of the range operators and provided the forum with an update on how the range is being managed.

It was noted that the barriers on the main access points on the forest roads are left open when the range is not in use but when firing is taking place signs advise public to keep out when the gate is closed and red flags are flying.

On the higher ground on the north side of the range there are signs advising of the live firing area and to keep out at all times. The forum agreed that these signs do not comply with access legislation.

Concern was expressed that the range operators are unwilling to give advance notice of when firing was taking place or to publicise the location of the range, as the operators are concerned of these events being sabotaged.

The forum wished for further discussions to take place with the operators to ensure signage is compliant with access legislation and to encourage them to inform the public in advance of when and where firing is taking place.

#### **Lennel, Coldstream**

KR updated the forum on the blocked off path. The local community have been consulted and 140 completed questionnaires were returned. Discussions will take place with SBC Legal team to determine how to progress with this issue.

#### **Earlston**

Consultation with the wider community is planned in the form of a questionnaire to try and determine the status of a claimed right of way in the Earlston area.

#### **Coldingham**

An issue over the public being denied access along a claimed right of way in the Coldingham area is ongoing.

### **Any Other Business**

SG informed the forum of the Slow Ways, a UK wide project aimed at trying to identify paths/ routes which link neighbouring towns, further information can be found at: [Slow Ways - help create a network of walking routes connecting Great Britain - Home page](#)

### **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held face to face towards the end of May, date to be confirmed.