

## Scottish Borders Access Forum

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2014 (10:00hrs)

Committee Room 2  
SBC Headquarters  
Newtown St Boswells

1. Welcome and Introductions  
William Davidson (Chair)  
Andy Millar (Countryside & Heritage Manager)  
David Langworth (Melrose Paths Group)  
Keith Robeson (Scottish Borders Council Senior Countryside Ranger)  
Neil Mackay (Scottish Borders Council Senior Access Officer)  
Douglas Wright (Central Tweeddale Paths and Scottish Rights of Way Society)  
Rory Powell (Buccleuch Estates Bowhill Ranger)  
Trevor Bryant (Cycling)  
Ian Aitchison (Scottish Land & Estates)
2. Apologies / Absent  
Denise Carmichael (Paths to Health coordinator)  
Walter Douglas (National Farmers Union Scotland)  
Beryl Masson (British Horse Society)  
Cllr Stuart Bell (Scottish Borders Council)
3. Minutes of last meeting of Access Forum  
Agreed.
4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
  - **Rachan:** KR / AM advised that routes were permissive / useable, however continues to be local disquiet.
  - **Education / Signage:** DW advised of issues / signage on Cardrona railway route. It was agreed that SBC should continue to promote the SOAC to users through media / leaflets drops. DW advised of growing good practice whilst out on pathways. TB advised that cycling fraternity were actively promoting. AM concluded that there continues to be small issues in a vast area. **KR/NM Action**
5. Access Update / Issues  
AM relayed context regarding CAMS Reporting and Priority Status. NM / KR gave an update on the work undertaken by the Access Team since November. (Hard copy report circulated to attendees).

Cavers: KR advised of continued horse access issue. It was noted that the existing cattle grids will not only obstruct horses but also dog walkers. National Access Forum is due to discuss this issue.

KR / NM advised of approaching wind farm hearings (Cloich – May and Girthgate - September).

6. Paths for health update  
NM advised on that funding secured for 2015 through NHS Borders. 23 Regular Walk-It walks now available. Harestanes has recently been added and investigating possibility of Ayton and a buggy walking group in Eyemouth.

7. A.O.B  
AM advised of restructuring changes within the Planning Dept. Outdoor Access Strategy and Local Plan to be merged mid 2015, and Core Path Plan likely reviewed in 2017. The Access Team would also be managed by the Local Plans Team. AM also advised of his early retirement - end of May. On behalf of the LAF the chair thanked AM for the continued support and input.

IA, as per previous meeting, suggested inviting East and Mid Lothian to the next meeting. This would enable Scottish Borders to continue to forge links with our neighbours. **NM Action**

NM advised of continued coordination with East Lothian Council on the Lammermuir Hill Tracks Project and various wind farm developments.

KR advised of continued attendance at Long Distance Routes Meetings.

AM attended a meeting regarding the proposed Pentland Hills Park extension to lodge SBC's objection due to funding constraints.

DW advised of issue of narrow gates at Stewarton / Meldons. SCOTWAYS advised also, however may not be viewed as major issue. Access Rangers aware of the issue. TB suggested that narrow gates would restrict other users.

KR updated LAF on wild camping issues at St Mary's Loch. Ongoing discussions with landowner / community / Police Scotland.

Access exemptions (those required for events such as rallies) are increasing in number. Forestry Commission requested that large areas of forest be exempt when downhill cycling events are in operation. KR to discuss with Commission.

WD circulated a copy of EB Living which has an article on Access within based on WD's input as Chair of LAF (scan enclosed).

DW also circulated a Cycling Responsibly leaflet (scan enclosed)

8. **Date of next meeting:**

**10:00hrs 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015**