

West Lothian Local Access Forum

6th Meeting

Tuesday 23 April 2024

2:00pm to 4.25pm

Sutherland Building Beecraigs Country Park

Decision Record

	Item	Summary of Item / Decision Taken	Action to be Taken	By Whom
1	Welcome and apologies	<p>The Meeting commenced at the Sutherland Building at 2:00pm</p> <p>A welcome was extended to the Members of West Lothian's Local Access Forum ('the Forum' or 'the LAF') in attendance</p> <p>IN ATTENDANCE: Gordon Allan Michael Eagers David McRobbie Pippa Plevin Sammy Saunders Jamie Smart (Chair) Cllr Alison Adamson</p> <p>Deborah Sneddon (Corr)</p> <p>Invitee: Hannah Drummond of The Woodland Trust (standing in for Hannah Patterson)</p> <p>West Lothian Council: Tony Mason – Access Ranger</p> <p>APOLOGIES RECEIVED: Sandy Edgars Malcolm Hill Jo Young Cllr Tom Conn</p>	NONE	
2	Introduction of New Member(s) of Forum	<p>A warm welcome was given to the two new Members of the Forum:</p> <p>David McRobbie – Full Member representing Access Users</p> <p>Deborah Sneddon – Correspondent Member representing National Groups (as Access Officer for the West Lothian branch of the British Horse Society)</p> <p>Introductions were given by all members in attendance for the benefit of the new Members.</p>	Brief biographical details for David McRobbie the new Full Member of the Forum to be agreed with him and added to the LAF website	TM/DMcR
3	Quorum	<p>The Meeting was declared to be quorate in accordance with para 8.1 of the Standing Orders of the Forum which requires one third of the membership to be in attendance</p>	NONE	

4	Approval of Decision Record of previous meeting	The Minutes of the Meeting of 23 January 2024 were unanimously confirmed	Minutes to be uploaded to the LAF webpage	TM
5	<p>Action Points arising from meeting of 23 January 2023:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Sharing Agreement 2. Cross Border links 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The council's Data Officer had recommended that the Data Sharing Agreement was signed and this would be circulated in due course. The purpose of the Data Sharing Agreement was to regulate the confidentiality and destruction of personal information belonging to third parties where shared by WLC with the LAF in relation to an access dispute referred to the LAF for advice 2. TM reported he had reached out to the 5 access authorities sharing a boundary with West Lothian Council being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Falkirk o North Lanarkshire o South Lanarkshire o Scottish Borders; and o City of Edinburgh <p>The 3 access authorities with Access Officers welcomed the approach by the Forum. One access authority was in course of appointing a new Access Officer and a reply was awaited from the 5th access authority.</p> <p>The Forum welcomed developing these links and discussed the importance of keeping in touch with our neighbours particularly when considering cross border paths.</p> <p>The proposed Pentland Way and the European E2 National Trail were discussed although it was noted that, on current proposals, neither appeared to directly impact on the West Lothian council area</p> 	<p>Data Sharing Agreement to be circulated for signing by Full Members</p> <p>TM to maintain links with neighbouring access authorities and explore inter-communication options with our neighbours from which the WL LAF could benefit</p>	<p>TM/ALL</p> <p>TM</p>
6	<p>Report of LAF Subgroup re</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOAC in the Classroom • Control of Dogs 	<p>SOAC in the Classroom</p> <p>The Forum, thanked the subgroup for its good work in producing a working draft. The Forum then discussed and commented on the draft and discussed the importance of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code generally, and the role of schools in helping educate and disseminate the ideas of responsible access through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The Forum were of one mind that education was paramount and the inconsistency of approach across schools needed addressed and in particular how teaching of SOAC could be incorporated into the Curriculum. Particularly issues included how to engage with young adults of secondary school age. The existence of NAF training materials was highlighted as well as the excellent work done both by some schools and also by Forest Schools in disseminating the Code.</p>	<p>The Chair agreed to liaise with the subgroup to finalise the letter which would then be sent to the NAF/Scottish Ministers/local MSPs and MPs/ the Director of Education (list to be finalised)</p> <p>The finalised letter to be sent using the dedicated WL LAF email address.</p>	<p>CHAIR/ subgroup</p>

		<p>Control of Dogs</p> <p>No final consensus had been reached by the subgroup on the approach to recommended to the Forum on Control of Dogs and more work on this was needed by the subgroup. There followed a discussion of Dog Control in general and in particular the confusion and misunderstanding of the Law and the Code on what was meant by the statutory terminology 'close control' and also the occasions where the 2003 Act and SOAC required dogs to be kept on the lead, the difficulty of addressing irresponsible dog control, and the inconsistency of the wording of signage, etc.</p> <p>The Members of the Subgroup are: Malcolm Hill, Gordon Allan and Sammy Saunders</p>	<p>This was referred back to the subgroup for further work on the basis that the Subgroup once it had reached its findings/recommendations would circulate these to the LAF for final approval through the Chair.</p>	<p>subgroup</p>
7	LAF Workplan Discussion for 2024:	<p>Ideas for the LAF Workplan were circulated and taken away by the Forum Members for consideration and comment.</p> <p>It was noted that the LAF also needed to act dynamically as issues came to its attention from time to time.</p>	<p>Members were asked to consider the proposals and make suggestions to the Chair/TM with the aim of pulling this all together into the 2024-25 Workplan.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
8	WLPARC Update	<p>Jamie Smart gave an update on WLPARC business and highlighted two issues which the WLPARC were looking to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm security measures • Young drivers scheme 	<p>NONE</p>	
9	<p>National Access Forum (NAF) matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAF Meeting: 14 February 2024 • Joint LAF/NAF Meeting: 20 March 2024 	<p>TM highlighted current issues before the NAF. The NAF had met on 14 February 2024 and in a joint NAF/LAF Meeting on 20th March 2024 Topics relevant to West Lothian included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reduction of Funding available to all bodies for Access related matters generally • e-MTB research by Edinburgh Napier University • Landowners charging for access to sites for educational activities • New guidance is available on 'Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity in Scotland' • new Guidance is available on 'the Management of Visitor and Recreational Fires' • the possible publication of a national list of Local Access Forum contacts (along the lines of the national list of Access Officers) • NAF to look at providing national induction training for new LAF members 	<p>Copies of the NAF Minutes/notes are attached for information purposes and Members are referred to the Minutes for a fuller understanding of the National issues currently under discussion at NAF and relevant to local WL issues.</p> <p>Previous NAF Minutes are available on the NAF website here: https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code/national-access-forum</p>	<p>NONE</p>
10	Active Travel Plan 2023-28 Update	<p>TM reported that the draft Active Travel Plan 2023-28 had not yet been made available</p> <p>Agreed that the LAF would meet by TEAMS to discuss the draft once it was available at a time to be</p>	<p>The draft Active Travel Plan is to be circulated once available.</p> <p>Forum to agree date for a TEAMS meeting to consider and frame</p>	<p>TM/ALL</p>

		<p>determined based on the availability of Members.</p> <p>All Members would be welcome to attend this Meeting (both Full and Correspondent).</p> <p>TM confirmed that he would arrange for the draft Plan to be circulated immediately available but asked the Forum to note that the period for consultation was likely to be c 3 weeks depending on when the report was expected to be brought before Committee.</p> <p>The Chair expressed disappointment that the Plan was not yet available and that the LAF would have little time to review and make salient comments on the draft.</p>	<p>comments to the draft Plan once it is available.</p>	
11	The Woodland Trust – Knightsridge Management Plan	<p>Hannah Drummond of the Woodland Trust gave a short presentation on the draft Knightsbridge Management Plan and the approach taken by The Woodland Trust when consider the impact of estate management on Access and how Access can be best maintained during periods of ongoing tree works.</p> <p>The Forum noted that the Woodland Trust even during periods of extensive works did not usually find it necessary to close an entire forest/woodland and access could usually be maintained on a rolling basis as tree works progressed.</p>	NONE	
12	Training	<p>A training session followed on 2003 Act compliant signage with examples of good and bad practice.</p>	NONE	
13	Any Other Business	<p>Chair re-election Advance notice was given that in accordance with the Forum’s Terms of Reference the Chair was appointed for a period of 1 year and nominations for Chair would be required for the Forum’s meeting in August 2024. There is nothing to prevent the sitting Chair to seek re-appointment.</p> <p>Philipstoun South Bing The recent discovery of spikes buried in the ground on Philipstoun South Bing was discussed. While this was a Police matter the use of signage was discussed albeit the Forum’s view is that signage was generally ineffective</p>	<p>Anyone wishing to be considered for the position of Chair can speak to TM.</p>	ALL
14	Date of next meeting & Close	<p>In addition to the Forum meeting to be convened by TEAMS to consider the draft Active Travel plan at a date to be finalised it was unanimously resolved that the subsequent Forum meeting would be held on 20 August 2024 at 2pm.</p> <p>This Forum meeting would involve a Site Visit and Training and provisionally would be hosted by Mike Eagers at Hopetoun. Further details to follow.</p> <p>By way of placeholder the meeting following this would be on 28 November at 2pm (to be confirmed)</p>	<p>Next meeting: 20 August 2024 @ 2pm (location: Hopetoun)</p> <p>If any Member has any item that they wish added to the Agenda could these be brought to the attention of the Chair or the Access Ranger well in advance of the meeting</p>	ALL

		The meeting closed at 4:30pm		
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UNCONFIRMED

Appendix of National Access Forum matters – Item 9:

- NAF Meeting: 14 February 2024
- Joint LAF / NAF Meeting: 20 March 2024

UNCONFIRMED

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

National Access Forum – 62nd meeting

Hybrid meeting: 14th February 2024

Present:

	Representatives	Organisation
1	Don Milton	Convenor - National Access Forum (NAF)
2	Ali Tait	Secretary - National Access Forum (NAF)
3	Francesca Osowska	NatureScot
4	Bridget Jones	NatureScot
5	Paul Timms	Cycling UK (Scotland)
6	Simon Ovenden	Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)
7	Davie Black	Mountaineering Scotland (MS)
8	Helen Todd	Ramblers Scotland (RS)
9	Nick Cole	LAFs Representative
10	Willie White	Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)
11	Caroline Fyfe	NatureScot
12	Grant Dolier	Paddle Scotland
13	Graeme Scott	Police Scotland
14	Andrew Hopetoun	Historic Houses Scotland (HHS)
15	Malcolm Duce	Scottish Government (SG)
16	Stephen Jenkinson	Kennel Club/Scottish Kennel Club (KC/SKC)
17	Pete Creech	Wild Scotland
18	Frank Spencer-Nairn	Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG)
19	Adam Streeter-Smith	Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA)
20	Stuart Younie	Mountaineering Scotland
21	Lianne MacLennan	British Association of Shooting and Conservation
22	Hugh McNish	Scottish Forestry
23	Stuart Chalmers	Forestry and Land Scotland
24	Colin Mair	National Farmers Union of Scotland
25	Eleisha Fahy	ScotWays
26	Helene Mauchlen	British Horse Society

Item 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

1. The Convenor welcomed and introduced the attendees of the meeting, both virtual and in person.

Apologies: Eileen Stuart (NatureScot), Sue Hilder (Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority)

Item 2. NatureScot CEO - Francesca Osowska

2. Francesca last attended a NAF meeting in 2018 and expressed her enthusiasm to be at another meeting. She began by giving the forum some context for NatureScot's work going forward. In the face of the dual nature and climate emergencies, NatureScot released a new corporate strategy in 2022 - the three main themes are restore, protect and value. The co-operation agreement between the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Green Party has put nature on a better footing.
3. NatureScot recognises that the NAF is concerned about the visibility of outdoor access amongst ministers and in Scottish Government; Francesca wished to reassure the forum that the importance and value of access is recognised by ministers. NatureScot has received a budget increase for 2024/25; however this is in the context of an increased ask of the organisation e.g. delivering of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, legislative changes and more demands on NatureScot as a regulator. The increased budget is more than accounted for by the additional tasking and it may represent a high-water mark going forward.
4. There will be no Better Places Fund in 2024, which is disappointing, however the fund was established as an emergency response and was not intended to be long-term. Francesca sits on the VMS Steering Group; all of the member organisations recognise the loss of BPF and are looking to their own organisations to work out how they can resource visitor management and rangers for 2024/25 and beyond. Francesca noted the important role of local authorities while acknowledging many of them are struggling with their own budgets.
5. Going forward, NatureScot will convene, influence and work with other organisations to deliver on access, even if the organisation's ability to deliver directly is reduced. It is the organisation's goal to see the continuing increased connection of people with nature. The Economics of Biodiversity - [Dasgupta Review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review) [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review], ranked education alongside finance as two massive contributors to green solutions. NatureScot will continue to work on nature-based careers, skills and outdoor learning, the organisation has very good connections with Education Scotland.
6. With regards to campaign work on nature and responsible access, evidence shows that social media is proving to be more effective than TV adverts, and this year see's the launch of NatureScot's Outdoor Ambassadors on social media channels promoting examples of good practice and behaviour in the outdoors.
7. With the Government's commitment to the formation of another one or more national parks, NatureScot recognises that this may bring opportunities for recreation and access. NatureScot also facilitates other access and recreation related forums e.g. Upland Paths Advisory Group and the Long Distance Routes Forum, and will be continuing to provide and update access related advice and guidance e.g. [camping, wildlife disturbance](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/exploring-without-disturbing-wildlife) [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/exploring-without-disturbing-wildlife] and [deer management](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/deer-management-and-access) [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/deer-management-and-access].
8. In terms of delivery on the ground, NatureScot has benefitted in recent years from EU funding streams such as the Green Infrastructure Fund and the Cultural and Natural Heritage Fund; as well as funding linked to the Visitor Management Strategy work borne out of the Covid-19 crisis.
9. The upcoming Land Reform Bill and Agriculture Bill both provide opportunities for access as a consideration, as is the potential for the Visitor Levy to support investment in visitor management at a local authority level.
10. Francesca highlighted that 2025 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. There are often calls for a review, but there is currently no appetite for wholesale revision from government. There may be potential to look at

specific areas, NatureScot is considering what the options might be. Francesca closed her presentation by asking the forum, what is the SOAC that we need for Net-Zero in 2045?

11. Nick Cole highlighted some of the issues faced by some Local Access Forums. LAFs are often seen as being anti-access, local authorities lack resources and LAFs are not a statutory consultee for planning. It can also be challenging getting land-owners to join LAFs. He asked whether it would be possible to facilitate councils/LAFs taking action without legislative changes, and could there be a central organisation to take the lead on LAF/council issues? It was also highlighted that education needs to target all ages, not solely aimed at children. Finally, he raised an issue with social media campaigns - how can they reach people who do not engage with these channels? Simon Ovenden echoed issues with LAFs and highlighted that there can also be considerable variability in levels of access related knowledge and expertise amongst LAFs and their membership.
12. Francesca recognised the challenges faced by LAFs and wondered if there is an opportunity to seek change via the current Land Reform Bill consultation? She encouraged Nick to think about what could be in the bill that would give LAFs more footing. It was noted that if LAFs were statutory consultees for planning, this would create a significant resourcing requirement and may detract from the LAFs core purpose. The point about education was noted and SOAC related social media campaigns are designed and aimed at a variety of audiences young and older and often complemented by radio/written print to extend the reach.
13. Adam Streeter-Smith highlighted the challenges of the biodiversity/climate crises and how these can compound issues around wildlife disturbance; there is a need to strike a balance between recreational activity and enjoyment and looking after wildlife and habitats. In the Cairngorms National Park issues around access are often very complex. We need to look ahead to 2030 to decide where we want to be with this issue. Francesca agreed with this point and highlighted that the 2030 goal of halting biodiversity loss applies to habitats as well as species; increasing habitat restoration should help drive species recovery.
14. Stuart Chalmers highlighted that the NatureScot corporate plan gave the impression that the organisation is pulling away from access. Davie Black also highlighted that visibility of access is very low and all but absent from the corporate plan. Francesca reassured members that NatureScot is not pulling away. In 2022, NatureScot was given ministerial direction to focus on nature restoration as it is the lead organisation, rather than on areas like access where it is not the leading organisation. NatureScot will continue to deliver on two key areas relating to access: promoting/overseeing SOAC, and facilitating the NAF with Ali Tait as Secretariat. NatureScot is still committed to its statutory role around responsible access and visitor management, but multiple organisation involvement is needed.
15. Simon Ovenden highlighted the potential of the new Visitor Levy which could bring an opportunity for funding to support visitor management, but there is concern about exactly how income generated will be spent. Is there an opportunity for NatureScot to influence this and support use on visitor management and SOAC related activity? Francesca reported that this is being considered by the VMS Steering Group and NatureScot is looking at what potential influencing opportunities there might be. Bridget Jones highlighted that while we can influence and make the case, it will be for local authorities to decide on how Visitor Levy income is spent in their areas. Malcolm Duce reported that this area of work is being led by SG Tourism colleagues and referred to the meeting note of the VMS Steering Group.
16. It was suggested that the NAF/LAF planning group be used as the basis for a sub-group to look at potential influence on the Visitor Levy.
17. Helen Todd highlighted that resources for access have declined, but it is very difficult to quantify without any factual evidence or data - is there a way for

NatureScot to investigate this? The Scottish Government access monitoring framework has not operated since pre-covid 19, and key work such as the National Parks and the Scottish biodiversity strategy will not be able to deliver properly without the resourcing of outdoor access.

18. In terms of an evidence base, Bridget Jones highlighted SPANS as a good source of evidence on people and access and nature, and asked SG what the future of SG led monitoring of Land Reform Act access functions was and if there was any thinking about how or when it might be done? Malcolm Duce (SG) advised that access authorities can be asked to provide data via a Freedom of Information requests. It was pointed out that there are 34 authorities and where there are no access staff in place this work does not get done. Francesca agreed about the importance of proper resourcing for access work, but highlighted that NatureScot has to operate on a risk prioritisation basis.
19. Eleisha Fahy reported that ScotWays would like to see NatureScot take leadership with regards to over-seeing access management and the undertaking of duties and use of legal powers and highlighted that access work needs to be more overt. ScotWays would like to know how to address the situation when some public bodies do not work in the spirit of LR(S)A. Francesca requested that Eleisha get in touch after meeting to discuss further.

AP 62/1: Scotways to contact NatureScot to discuss issue of some public bodies not working in the spirit of LR(S)A.

20. Steve Jenkinson recalled that NatureScot used to provide sharing good practice events, which helped share knowledge and experience which could lead to the avoidance of costs down the line and would be helpful for people in access posts who are lacking resources. Overall, there are good comms at a national level, but sometimes lacking at a local level. NatureScot will investigate how good practice can be better shared, noting that NatureScot does provide a lot in published guidance and SOAN does a lot of work in this area through events and a knowledge hub.

AP 62/2: NatureScot to look in to better ways of sharing access related knowledge and experience at a local level.

21. Frank Spencer-Nairn asked what is the vision for expanding ranger services? And following National Park consultations, how can other land-based designations be highlighted?
22. Francesca suggested that the VMS Steering Group or Co-ordination Group could be used to capture the national picture for seasonal ranger provision in a visitor management context, and any consequences of not having BPF. She agreed that highlighting existing designations such as NNRs and NSA's can be a powerful tool in encouraging the people of Scotland outdoors, and the ambition is that everyone will be close to and able to benefit from natural spaces.
23. The Convenor thanked Francesca for attending the meeting and engaging in the discussion around NatureScot's role in access going forward.

Item 3. Charging for access/access for education

24. No feedback was received after the previous NAF meeting regarding national issues relating to access for education.
25. Willie White (new SAPOE rep) apologised for the gap in attendance and reported he was not aware of charging for access being a national issue. However, in order to properly assess he would like to set up a system of reporting these issues over a year within SAPOE to get a full picture.

26. The Convenor gave an update on the Pentland Hills/Skyline Race - Meeting convened by Pentland Hills Regional Park officers 25 January for key stakeholders including PHRP officers, event organiser community representation, two office bearers of the Pentland Land Managers Association (PLMA) and a member of NatureScot staff. Despite limited resource to support these tasks, the work of PHRP staff was commended for being extremely helpful in facilitating constructive engagement between event organisers and land managers and in coordinating proposed events in the Pentlands.
27. Important outcomes were:
- The PLMA events guidance document no longer applies and will be taken down from the PLMA website. Proposed events should now follow the Pentland Hills Regional Park Events Policy and Guidance (<https://www.pentlandhills.org/events-1/event-organisers>). This document was written in 2015 and is in the process of being reviewed by the PHRP with the intention that the revision will be signed off by the PHRP Joint Committee (the governing body of the PHRP) in June 2024.
 - PLMA no longer charging for event permission. The PHRP Guidance already encourages a financial contribution by event organisers to a dedicated fund to improve paths and infrastructure. This encouragement is likely to be strengthened in the revision of the PHRP Guidance.
 - Permission for events remains the prerogative of land managers. The Events Working Group (EWG) is a forum for discussion of proposed events between land managers, PHRP officers and the event organiser community. The EWG will seek to develop its process for considering events so that it facilitates productive negotiation between event organisers and land managers where needed.
 - The Convenor stated that he was pleased to hear that in the Pentlands positive working relationships have been developed, the meeting identified ways forward and that future discussions are likely to progress in a constructive manner. Member responses have not evidenced that there is a National issue with either unreasonable charging for access for events or education, although we should continue to monitor these situations to ensure that potential precedents are not being copied. He proposed that, for these situations, there is no immediate requirement for NAF action although future developments should be monitored to confirm that the positive work in hand results in successful, long term arrangements in the Pentlands and that issues with educational access and arrangements are dealt with suitably at a local level.
28. Steve Jenkinson asked if there had been any further update about paid access at Callanish Stones (HES) - no update.
29. The Convenor also reported that the NAF has been informed of a significant mountain bike event planned for this year partly in the Cairngorm National Park and across neighbouring estates. Organisers have stated this is a 'commercial event' and land managers have highlighted concerns around the proposed timing of 2,000 bikes traversing areas where there will be ground nesting birds. There is quite a lot of guidance available on access and wildlife disturbance in SOAC and the NAF Guidance published last year. The one year review of this guidance is at Agenda Item 6. The rather older [Guidance on commercial access to the outdoors in Scotland - local management](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-commercial-access-outdoors-scotland-guidance-local-management) (March 2014) [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-commercial-access-outdoors-scotland-guidance-local-management] is aimed more at commercial businesses but has also got some good points that are relevant to the organisation of "events". Is there a need for routine review of NAF guidance?
30. Adam Streeter-Smith reported that the CNPA is aware of the event. With regards to the guidance, a review could provide an opportunity to highlight when event

organisers are required to carry out an EIA and promoting it as good practice among event organisers.

31. The FLS guidance for event organisers was highlighted, with timescales for different types of events. It was also raised that motorised events have a standard process that they follow when events planning, potentially this could be useful for large non-motorised events also.

Item 4. Resources for Access sub-group update

32. Helen Todd reported that there has not been a meeting of the sub-group since the last NAF meeting due to staff capacity. Rona Gibb is leading on potential engagement with COSLA and a ministerial visit.
33. The sub-group did not put together a response to the Agriculture Bill as wasn't needed, and the Land Reform Bill has been delayed.

AP 62/3: NAFSec to set up meeting of sub-group within next two months.

Item 5. Snowsports touring code and managed resorts

34. Davie Black presented a paper on the revised Snowsports Touring Code of Conduct that has been prepared by Mountaineering Scotland in conjunction with the Snowsports Touring Advisory Group (STAG) and the Association of Scottish Ski Areas (ASSA). An issue arose, mainly at Glenshee, when it was identified that some ski-tourers take passage through managed ski resorts, using groomed runs and ski centres cited interference to their businesses. To aid tourers navigating their way through managed ski areas in Scotland, Mountaineering Scotland reviewed the existing guidance on its website, in light of the discussions around the current visitor management situations at the different ski areas. Opinions on access rights were sought from both Access Authorities with ski centres in their area: The Highland Council and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.
35. Adam Streeter-Smith reported some issues that have arisen in the Cairngorms National Park (which has the majority of the Scottish Ski centres), and highlighted the difference between historical ski-mountaineers, and ski-tourers who are newer to the activity. He also reported that there have been issues with dogs getting injured on the slopes. Steve Jenkinson suggested that better information relating to dogs could be provided at ski centres to encourage responsible behaviour. The Convenor asked Davie to consider whether more emphasis on dogs and slope crossings is required.
36. The NAF approved the paper presented by Mountaineering Scotland.

Item 6. Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity in Scotland

37. Caroline Fyfe presented a paper on the updated version of the 2023 guidance - Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity in Scotland. NatureScot would be interested to hear of any examples of use/promotion of the guidance from 2023. Some of the links in the guidance were broken and have now been updated and Caroline has proposed a few additions. The guidance includes habitats as well as species.
38. NatureScot is also in the process of producing guidance on drone flying around wildlife.

39. Caroline asked that the NAF agrees to the changes and provides any feedback/suggestions by the end of Feb ahead of the bird breeding season.

AP 62/4: NAF members to provide any feedback to Caroline Fyfe by end of Feb, and to continue promoting the guidance within their organisations.

40. Colin Mair asked whether Caroline felt most access-users are unaware of their potential negative impact. It was also highlighted that not only “wild” areas experience these issues, farmland can be impacted by wildlife disturbance also. This was reinforced by Pete Creech, who reported having feedback from international visitors who are surprised by the presence of dogs in protected/sensitive areas. Pete also commented that we can’t rely solely on electronic communication of guidance.

41. Caroline responded that most people are aware of their potential impact. NatureScot is continuing to produce graphics, webpages, and rangers on the ground to increase awareness. Yes, much of the focus is on iconic species and there is more work to do on farmland species. Also highlighted that this guidance is for access-professionals not the general public/accessusers.

AP 62/5: NAFSec to send link to Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity guidance out to NAF members.

42. Adam Streeter-Smith reported that the CNPA website is about to be updated which may affect some of the links in the updated guidance. He also highlighted the “Let It Be” campaign for photographers in the National Park to reduce disturbance at lek sites.

43. Adam also reported that there is a misunderstanding about NatureScot’s role when it comes to management agreements - it is down to the access authority to sign off any access related elements. Also highlighted that the NAF could improve how this guidance links to the [NAF outdoor events guidance](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-outdoor-events-scotland-guidance-organisers-and-land-managers) [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-outdoor-events-scotland-guidance-organisers-and-land-managers].

44. Adam also cautioned using the term, “quiet areas for wildlife” as it is not reflective of the aims of the CNPA.

45. The NAF approved the updated guidance.

Item 7. VMS Fires Messaging

46. Bridget Jones introduced the updated fires messaging framework for 2023 following on from the September NAF meeting update. The process of developing an updated fires messaging framework began in Aug/Sep 2023 with the messaging aiming to clarify its parameters and to improve with short, clear and simple messaging that is easy to communicate, and with the potential to also use symbols.

47. The messaging framework has been informed by all the partners in the visitor management groups, including national parks, Forestry and Land Scotland, local authorities and NGOs. Following a number of drafts agreement was reached and endorsed by the VMS Co-Ordination group and the VMS Steering group. The NAF was asked to approve the messaging framework and to provide 1 or 2 reps for a combined NAF/VMS sub-group to review the existing Fires and Access Rights guidance 2016.

48. Bridget guided the NAF through Scenarios A, B and C in the guidance framework. The messaging is deliberately in simple language, which is easy to understand.

49. It is hoped that there will be good comms from SFRS in terms of what “high fire risk” is and when it applies.

50. Stuart Chalmers commended the framework and asked that FLS be involved with the sub-group; Scotways may also be able to take part in the sub-group.

51. Davie Black reported that overall the framework is good, but requests more time for review in the future. Mountaineering Scotland (MS) would prefer the negative

messaging of “no fires” to be balanced with positive messaging around use of alternatives e.g. stoves. MS also feels the hierarchy is inverted and would prefer to see the least restrictive approach first and for muirburn to be acknowledged.

52. Bridget thanked Davie for the helpful feedback, and highlighted that the framework is for land and visitor managers/rangers to use as appropriate at their specific sites, and as a basis for communications campaigns led by the VMS Education and Marketing Sub Group.
53. An error was highlighted in Annex A, “never have a fire in times of high fire risk...but if you do...” This was an editing error and will be amended. It was also raised that “cultural heritage” is a broad term not readily understood by the public. It has been used as the framework is based on SOAC wording; Steve Jenkinson highlighted that SOAC wording is not always the most effective wording and it is important to make it easy for access-users to do the right thing.
54. Adam highlighted the cairngorms fire management consultation that is taking place. The main challenge within the park is that there aren’t many areas where people could have a responsible fire.
55. Discussion was had about stove use and the need for inclusion in guidance more widely than alongside wild camping. It was also note that while the main aim of the framework is visitor management, the framework can inform other areas e.g. for education groups.
56. The two proposals were approved by the NAF.

AP 62/6: Bridget Jones to compile a “Terms of Reference” for the fires and access rights guidance sub-group and NAFSec to disseminate and organise first meeting

Item 8. NAF/LAF Annual Meeting

57. Helen Todd gave details of the upcoming NAF/LAF meeting. The meeting will be entirely online on the 20th March 2024. The three main themes will be training, forestry and communication, with Hugh McNish giving a talk about the UKFS. There will be two break-out sessions; The Convenor highlighted that the sub-group is aiming to achieve what the LAFs want out of the meeting, so providing plenty of time for discussions is key.

Item 9. Minutes of previous meetings, action points and matters arising

AP 56/5: NatureScot to investigate the legal position on liability for third party promotion of paths. **On-going:** Feb 2024 update: Bridget Jones confirms that NatureScot legal advisors have been commissioned and will shortly provide a short summary response.

AP 61/1: NAFSec to make link to UKFS consultation responses available to members - *discharged*

AP 61/2: Members to self-nominate to be part of the sub-group by end of October, contact NAFSec - *discharged*

AP 61/3: Members to identify areas with issues, similar to that in the Pentlands with regard to organised events, in their regions/memberships to determine if this is a local or national issue. Provide details by correspondence to NAFSec - *discharged*

AP 61/4: NAFSec to add clarifying statement of ScotWays position to minutes of 60th NAF meeting - *discharged*

AP 61/5: Members to identify more context about where/why issues regarding access for education arise. Provide details by correspondence to NAFSec - *discharged*, NAFSec to stay in touch with SAPOE to monitor if issues do arise

AP 61/6: NAFSec to distribute VMS update presentation to members - *discharged*

AP 61/7: NAFSec to give feedback on fires from Co-Ordination group after next meeting - *discharged*

58. The Convenor reported that City of Edinburgh Council's Transport and Environment Committee approved the formation of a combined Transport and Local Access Forum. In the discussion of this, the issue of a vacant Local Access Officer post was raised and there is apparently a wider staffing review in progress to consider this and other vacancies. While focus on access is very welcome, it will be interesting to see how successful this combined Forum works out to be.

59. The Convenor also reported that he had attended the National Forestry Stakeholder Group meeting 5th October - first meeting with Cab Sec Mairi Gougeon attending. Topics included: future grant support, people and communities, biodiversity and environment, carbon cycle out to 2150, increasing sequestration while enhancing resilience, pests and diseases, breadth of benefit from forestry. The Convenor reports that he took the opportunity to highlight access and recreation and the many associated benefits.

60. It was also raised that NAF members will need to start thinking about a replacement Convenor as Don's tenure will come to an end after the September meeting.

AP 62/7: NAFSec to send out details of NAF Convenor role.

AP 62/8: NAF members to e-mail NAFSec with any potential convenor candidates.

61. The role of Local Authorities rep on the NAF is still vacant; if anyone has any ideas, please contact NAFSec.

Item 10. Forthcoming meetings and agenda items

- NAF/LAF meeting - 20th March 2024, online
- NAF meeting - 5th June 2024, hybrid, Battleby and online
- NAF meeting - 18th September 2024, hybrid, Battleby and online
- Agenda item - SOAC education pack

AOB

62. Nick Cole - Angus LAF is asking that all NAF members please highlight the need for LAF volunteers to their organisations.

63. Access for core path Maintenance – the matter, raised by John Urquhart (Convenor of the Helensburgh and District Access Trust) is about a land owner/manager refusing to allow access for the maintenance of a section of the Three Lochs Way Great Trail. The Access Authority has not taken any action to support the maintenance work. A similar situation prevents improving another link in the trail. If any NAF members can offer a solution or advice, contact NAFSec.

AP 62/9: NAF members to get in touch with NAFSec if they have any suggestions regarding issue raised by John Urquhart.

64. Helen Todd is retiring in April 2024. The Convenor gave the following, "I'm sure that all members are saddened to hear of Helen's retirement. Helen, you have been a staunch and particularly proactive member of the NAF for many years and even before becoming a full member you were a frequent attender of NAF meetings representing others. When sage common sense has been required, you have always been there to provide it. Your access knowledge and experience is broad and deep, representing a most professional approach in always seeking a true understanding of any issue. A very busy person, you have made time to be part of, and often lead, sub-groups, never letting go until the group work is complete. We are going to miss

you both as a person and as a fellow member although we hope that you are not lost to Access in the future. On behalf of all members, we give you our thanks and very best wishes for everything that you plan to do. I will add a further personal thanks as I have always been able to

rely upon you for anything that I have asked with your response being always full and unstinting. Thank you for all that you have done for the NAF and wider access.

AP 62/1: Scotways to contact NatureScot to discuss issue of some public bodies not working in the spirit of LR(S)A.

AP 62/2: NatureScot to look in to better ways of sharing access related knowledge and experience at a local level.

AP 62/3: NAFSec to set up meeting of sub-group within next two months.

AP 62/4: NAF members to provide any feedback to Caroline Fyfe by end of Feb, and to continue promoting the guidance within their organisations.

AP 62/5: NAFSec to send link to Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity guidance out to NAF members.

AP 62/6: Bridget Jones to compile a "Terms of Reference" for the fires and access rights guidance sub-group and NAFSec to disseminate and organise first meeting

AP 62/7: NAFSec to send out details of NAF Convenor role.

AP 62/8: NAF members to e-mail NAFSec with any potential convenor candidates.

AP 62/9: NAF members to get in touch with NAFSec if they have any suggestions regarding issue raised by John Urquhart.

Joint Meeting of National Access Forum and Local Access Forums - Summary Note

Communication, Forestry and Training

20th March 2024

Introduction

The joint virtual NAF/LAF meeting was held with 41 attendees. 17 local access forums were represented by LAF members and/or local authority reps. 11 NAF member bodies were represented. Compared to the NAF/LAF 2023 meeting, the ratio of LAF members to LA reps and NAF members was higher.

The meeting had three topics to focus on: communication, forestry and training. The aim of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for LAFs to share their local experiences, highlight opportunities and share potential solutions.

Welcome and highlights from the National Access Forum

Don Milton (NAF Convenor) welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting, highlighting that feedback from the previous two NAF/LAF meetings indicates strongly that LAF members wanted more time for discussion, especially in breakout rooms. Accordingly, he highlighted that there were to be no plenary feedback sessions after breakout rooms, but that any topics raised in breakout rooms could be raised during the final Q and A session if so wished.

Ali Tait (NAF Secretary) provided a summary of the key elements of the NAF's work since the 2023 meeting, which included:

- A paper brought by the NAF Upland Deer Management and Access sub-group to guide national level public facing communications, which identified key periods as the main theme for messaging. Members were pleased overall with the guidance and happy to endorse it for use beginning with the 2023 stag season. The guidance was updated in November 2023, following the removal of the closed season on male deer in Scotland.
- Graeme McLean gave an update in June 2023 on the progress of the research carried out on e-MTBs, by Edinburgh Napier University and available on the [British Cycling website](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/emtbstudy#:~:text=This%20extensive%20study%20was%20the,and%20future%20needs%20across%20Great) [<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/emtbstudy#:~:text=This%20extensive%20study%20was%20the,and%20future%20needs%20across%20Great>] _ DMBinS (Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland) has been developing specific messaging for their website.
- A paper [<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/national-access-forum-20-september-2023>] was presented to the NAF to seek feedback from NAF members as to whether there is a growing issue surrounding permissions, administrative requirements and charging for access to sites for educational activities, and whether this is impacting on outdoor practitioners. This was initially raised with the NAF by the Chief Operating Officer of Learning through Landscapes and co-lead of the National Network for Outdoor Learning (NNOL). No feedback was received from NAF members. There had been a gap in SAPOE (Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education) representation on the NAF. The new rep, Willie White, is looking into how to gather any examples of this issue from SAPOE.

- NatureScot CEO, Francesca Osowska, attended the Feb 2024 NAF meeting to update members on NatureScot's current priorities and involvement in access. Going forward, NatureScot will continue to convene, influence and deliver through others. NatureScot will continue with its statutory functions relating to access with the further development of SOAC campaigns and promotion; as well as facilitating the NAF. It will also continue with other access related activity such as long distance route forum, refreshing of access related guidance, providing advice and supporting strategic approaches to visitor management.
- At the Feb 2023 meeting of the NAF, the updated guidance, "Managing Access in Areas of Wildlife Sensitivity in Scotland" was approved and a commitment was made by the NAF to review the guidance following the summer season. Thus, at the Feb 2024 NAF meeting, Caroline Fyfe (NatureScot) led a review of the updated guidance and would be interested to know of any examples of use/promotion. The NAF approved the updates to the [guidance](#). [<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code/national-access-forum-role/guidance-documents>]. A new, updated fires messaging framework for visitor management was presented at the Feb 2024 NAF meeting. This has been developed through the Visitor Management Strategy groups for use by the VMS Education & Marketing group, operational managers and others, to deliver a consistent approach to fires related communications in a visitor management and SOAC context. The NAF also approved the creation of a sub-group (combined with visitor management group members) to update the existing [guidance, "Lighting fires and access rights under the Land Reform Scotland Act 2003"](#) [<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/guidance-lighting-fires-and-access-rights-under-land-reform-scotland-act-2003>].

Session 1: Communication

In opening the session, Helen Todd presented information available in the existing LAF guidance about LAF communication. Helen suggested four topics for discussion in the breakout rooms:

- Communications within the forum
- Communications with the contact group
- Communications with the access authority
- Communications with the media and the public

Summary of points made in the breakout groups:

- Recognition that the resources available to LAFs and access officers/authorities is much reduced compared to 2006. Access Officer (AO) budgets get used for other things - could they be ring-fenced? [PKC](#) [<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/15286/Access-forum>] is an example where a LAF is doing well, partly due to continued support from the wider LA greenspace team, not solely reliant on access officers. However, it is worth noting that the support above is under review, this LAF and LA are collaborating trying to source funding that could be used to provide secretariat service and support the LAF.
- There have been occasions where access officers have left the post resulting in a prolonged period where the LAF was getting no support. On several occasions this unfortunately led to the LAF folding.
- Could NatureScot have a list of LAFs online, like the [AO contacts page?](#) [<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/access-management-guidance/contacts>] Who would coordinate all this? NatureScot as part of their secretariat role? There is already lots of training out there that would be beneficial to LAF's, but it is difficult for LAF members to find these. Some of

these may not be specific to access, some may be around minute taking, running consultations events, mediation and facilitating workshops. A resource library of documents and links available to LAFs and indeed councils e.g. good practice guidelines, list of acronyms, etc.

Action Point: NAFSec to investigate possibility of webpage on SOAC website, containing links to useful documents, webpages, information that could be beneficial to (but not limited to) new LAF members.

- The Paths for All/NatureScot guidance - [Local Access Forums: A Guide to Good Practice](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/local-access-forums-guide-good-practice) [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/local-access-forums-guide-good-practice] - could be updated. As part of the update, suggest a change in emphasis toward building capacity within LAF's so they are self-sufficient and would require less input from Access Officers.
- Communication is mainly between LAF and LA. Publicity and announcements made through LA. The public visibility of some forums has faded away over time, despite still being a busy, active forum, largely due to diminished support from the LA.
- Lack of information addressed to disabled recreational users - see **Further Information**.
- It was generally felt that forum members are well connected and it's inspiring to talk to other members, keeps them all motivated. But the public is unaware of the LAF's work, needs a more positive message getting out about what their role is. On the other hand, some LAFs reported issues with LAFs comms and AOs. LAF members may not communicate between LAF meetings.
- Councillors also need to be kept informed and engaged. Difficult to keep up recognition of the LAF amongst council officers and councillors when there is a changeover of staff.
- One LAF member expressed concern that in their LAF they had a volunteer providing secretariat services. Unfortunately, they left and no one else took on that role which has made it harder for the LAF to function. Could Local Authorities provide secretariat services to LAFs?
- LAFs with long-standing members seem to work better than new forums.
- Membership issues/gaps: hard to keep a full forum quorum. Land Managers interest is generally lacking, and hence difficulty in recruiting them. If people apply to the LAF but don't get on (e.g., already a rep for that interest) they could be kept in touch with, useful for substitutes and wider dissemination (at the [2023 NAF/LAF meeting](https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/national-access-forum-26-april-2023-naflaf), [https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/doc/national-access-forum-26-april-2023-naflaf] an attendee highlighted that LAFs could potentially have full and corresponding members). Tendency to blur the distinction between member categories in order to make up numbers.
- Aspiration to make at least some meetings public but struggling with logistics. In person requires suitable venue – no funds to hire space. Virtual requires sufficient IT competence and good bandwidth. Meetings online makes it easier to reach out to potential members as there's no need to travel, whereas in person meetings during the day only really work for access professionals and retirees.
- There's an assumption that LAF members talk to their constituency, but no formal mechanisms for this to happen.
- Regional meetings would help, including inter-LAF networking options would be helpful.
- Use of social media – e.g. council FB page – can be useful in getting to new audiences, but unlikely to be younger ones. Need a range of channels. However, this is normally done by the access officer and capacity is an issue. Community Volunteer Path groups use social media (mainly Facebook) to

promote their activities and help attract new volunteers. Could LAFs make better use of social media or other online methods to raise their profile?

- Sharing of minutes, it would appear that these are not publicly available in some areas.
- Use existing channels of communication with various groups e.g. community councils. One advantage is that these other groups often are looked after by other council staff/ departments and so the message about access can be disseminated.
- Mountain bike trail associations are using QR codes so that riders can donate money to contribute towards trail maintenance, this is now being replicated by volunteer path groups and could LAFs be making better use of QR codes?
- Topic of GDPR took up significant portion of session both in terms of fora members' personal information and lack of information related to access issues.
- In D&G they have set up an Access Trust alongside the LAF. The Access Trust is freer to communicate directly with the public.
- Active travel is well funded right now, are there benefits in active travel staff discussing projects with the LAF to see what can be improved for general access?

Session 2: Forestry

Hugh McNish, Scottish Forestry, gave a presentation on the new [United Kingdom Forestry Standard](https://forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/ukfs-scotland) (UKFS) [https://forestry.gov.scot/sustainable-forestry/ukfs-scotland] and how it relates to access. Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations. Hugh highlighted the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS), which offers financial support for creation of new woodland and the sustainable management of existing woodland. He then introduced the new UKFS; the technical standard for forestry across the UK, which provides the foundations for sustainable forestry management. Several points within Chapter 7 (Forests and People) were referred to:

- Public access
 - Legal requirements 3 and 4
 - Good forestry practice requirements 1 and 3
- Public involvement
 - Good forestry practice requirement 7

Hugh also referred to FGS conditions of award, Section 10:

“You must allow access to the property by virtue of any public rights of way over the property and comply with your obligations as a land manager in relation to LR(S)A 2003 and SOAC”.

Session 3: Training

Nick Cole introduced this session by suggesting the following topics for discussion:

- What do people think they need, bearing in mind that each Forum is slightly different to each other?
- Legal issues, interpretation of the Act and how the Code fits in to it.
- Councils' operating procedures – interdepartmental roles.
- Mediating.
- Admin, such as taking minutes, reporting, chairing.
- Networking via site visits, learning what issues trouble different interest groups.

- Media relations.
- Promotional activities
- Fund raising

Summary of points made in the breakout groups:

- Some participants were unsure about their own “qualifications” to be LAF members and the purpose and extent of their role – good induction process and ongoing guidance and training would aid this.
- Generally no training or induction offered, members just learn as they go. Some participants had never received any training, despite being members of their LAF for up to 10 years.
- Scottish Outdoor Access Network ([SOAN](https://soan.org.uk/)) [https://soan.org.uk/] are developing an online training module introducing Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and SOAC. This course will cover a summary of LA duties and powers and introduce the act and the code. Although it is not aimed at LAFs their members could still benefit from participating, particularly if they are new members.
- Another good example from PKC, their greenspace team have delivered tutorials to LAF members to help with the running of the group.
- Suggestion that LAF members are given an induction into the work of the LAF, background reading and references. Could this be prepared by NAF? NatureScot?
- There was a suggestion that the role of NAF could be formalised put on a statutory basis.
- Could NAF members deliver training to LAF, e.g., BHS delivering a session on horse access?
- It is likely that NAF member organisations are already running training sessions for their members, some of which would be online. Should there be a central portal where all these resources could be made available to all LAF’s? Opportunities are taken to give briefings to LAF members, e.g. from the police on wildlife crime, and these are found to be useful.
- Neighbouring LAFs could join together for training sessions.
- Paths for All have run webinars where community path group representatives tell their stories e.g. how they got started, how they recruit volunteers, the challenges they face and how these have been overcome. These sessions are more engaging than a traditional online training format. The sessions also get recorded and shared online so people can access them whenever they want. Could LAFs be doing something similar?
- Should training be provided to LAFs to help raise their profile and recruit members, could this training be included in a review and update of the Local Access Forums Guide? Short YouTube style videos would be very helpful.
- Do LAFs need GDPR training, there seems to be a lot of mixed messages coming from LAs on how information should be getting handled. For example, if there is an access dispute is it right that the landowners’ details are often widely available?
- Online training makes sense, especially for those in more remote areas, but the value of in person training, including site visits, was recognised.
- Crossover with roads legislation impacts on access, could be useful to learn more.
- Forestry – some LAFs engage with forestry planning, public register can be viewed, but it can be difficult to understand the plans and only 3 weeks to respond. Could the LAF set up a subgroup to look at plans? Could a forester on the LAF (e.g., FLS staff) give quick training to members on how to read forestry plans?
- Planning – windfarm sites, planning applications - as above, can be impacts for access and often only a short period to respond. Sub-groups might engage with

planning lists or major development applications, crossover with community councils' work.

- Mediation skills training has been very useful for rangers/access officers, could be offered to LAF members, but there's a cost involved.
- Mentoring, perhaps neighbouring LAF members could help – sharing practice etc. (Cost could be an issue for the volunteers).
- Legal advice (currently completely lacking and relies on LAF member diligence and experience).
- Council structures (they will all tend to be different).
- NAF/NS could lobby Ministers to highlight LAF roles?
- Core path plan training

Q&A Session

1. Received before the NAF/LAF meeting - "Are there any other access authorities, apart from the one that I know of, who take the view that the provisions of s.3(3) of the Land Reform Act provide an authority with the discretion whether or not to take any action at all in accordance with the duty under s.13(1)?"

Discussion was had about the limited resources local authorities have, and several AOs highlighted they have to prioritise their work, e.g. focus on paths that are heavily used. It was also raised that in addition to the Act Sections mentioned in the question above, LAs have been known to use s.13(2) as a reason why they have carried out actions under their duties of s.13(1).

2. Received before the NAF/LAF meeting - "Can we table the issues of GDPR for discussion please, and generation of advice for Councils and LAFs to ensure consistency?" GDPR was raised in both break-out room sessions as an issue. Tony Mason reported that at West Lothian Council, privacy and data-sharing documents have been developed by the data officer. Bridget Freeman reported that at Aberdeenshire Council, LAF members sign papers about data sharing when they join. The LAF has open and closed meetings, and the Chair is able to consent when asked for advice.
3. Concern was raised that forestry schemes can be very concentrated geographically; could they be more spread out? Hugh McNish responded that this is something he would look into and reply to the LAF member in question.

Closing remarks and next steps

In closing, Don highlighted that feedback forms were to be sent out and encouraged attendees to give feedback either via the form or by e-mail to the NAF Secretary. He thanked the attendees, breakout room facilitators and speakers and noted that the discussions he sat in on were engaging and some interesting topics/potential solutions had been raised.

Issues raised at this meeting will be raised at the NAF meeting in June with a view to determining the best ways forward to support LAFs. A further update will be provided after the draft minutes of the June meeting have been prepared.

Further Information

[Outdoor Accessibility Guidance - Supporting Inclusive Outdoor Access in the UK - Paths for All](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/outdoor-accessibility-) [https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/outdoor-accessibility-]

