

## **Scottish Borders Access Forum**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held in person at Bowhill Selkirk on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

#### **Present:**

William Davidson (Chair)  
Walter Douglas (NFU)  
Susan Gray (SBC Access Ranger)  
David Langworth (Melrose Paths Group)  
Trevor Bryant, (Cycling)  
Beryl Masson (British Horse Society)  
Ed Morris ( Bowhill)  
Rory Galbraith ( Bowhill)  
Denise Brydon ( SBC Access Team)

#### **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted thanks to Bowhill Estate for hosting the in person meeting.

#### **Apologies:**

Douglas Wright, Andy Pearson, Clare Sturla and Bruce Anderson

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

The minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 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**

Chair and SG reported on the National Access Forum meeting with Local Access Forums. It was noted that the local access forums have varied levels of activity.

Craik – SG reported on the firing range at Craik.

## **SBC Access Rangers Update**

The Access Rangers' report for 1 January to 31 April 2023 was circulated prior to meeting. SG gave a report to the Forum on the current staffing position of the team and on the transitional arrangements after the Senior Countryside Rangers retirement and the Forum noted the vacancy for the Access Ranger West. The Chair recorded the valuable work of the team. SG also reported on longer term maintenance and tasks including large scale repairs on the TVRP and bridge surveys/ repairs. At the moment, subject to capacity, we are concentrating on long distance routes and paths around towns. Strimming is ongoing but high levels of vegetation growth have impacted on workload for the path wardens. A discussion on community volunteers and support was held and it was noted that it would be useful to discuss the FLS example with the FLS representative and it was hoped that the representative will attend the next meeting. SG also discussed forestry applications and the storm Arwen aftermath. WD thanked SG for a comprehensive report and for providing full details on the forestry application process.

## **Other Interest Updates**

### **Cycling**

A report by DB was circulated prior to the meeting. DB provided details on the UCI Cycling World Championships and on the application for the South of Scotland UCI Velo Region. The Community Cycling Fund was also discussed and details of the application process and successful awards were noted. There will be a fanzone and fringe activities to wrap around the Glentress venue.

### **Equestrian**

BM reported on equestrian matters and the Forum noted particular discussions regarding

- the impact on the significant horse population in the Cavers area by the proposed development of Cavers House, near Hawick, which is going through Planning. The Access routes for building supply lorries are very narrow in an area where lorries are bound to meet many riders.
- BHS Scotland have planned an event in August, during the Cycling World Championships near Peebles, which aims to improve the understanding between Mountain Bikers and Horse Riders about safe sharing of Forestry Tracks.
- There was a discussion with the Bowhill representative about the effect of the proposed new gates on access to the estate for horse riders. Rory Galbraith indicated that there will be a bridlegate available when the main gates are

closed, and that during times when the main gates are open it is advised that those coming with horse boxes should contact the Visitors Office for advice on suitable parking.

### **Paths to Health report**

A report from Denise Carmichael covering January to April 2023 was circulated prior to the meeting summarising the significant achievements of Walk It during that period.

### **Water Access**

No issues relating to water access was reported.

### **Future Meetings Format**

It was confirmed that the next meeting was to be hybrid. Bowhill Estate offered to host future meetings if needed.

### **Access issues updates**

### **Any Other Business**

### **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held hybrid with location tbc on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 2pm.