

# Scottish Borders Access Forum

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 27 November 2012 (6-8pm)

Scottish Borders Council,  
Committee Room 4,  
Council HQ,  
Newtown St Boswells.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**  
W Davidson (NFUS) – Chair; B Masson (BHS); J Hall (SBC – Outdoor Education); W Douglas (NFUS); Neil Mackay (SBC, Senior Access Officer)
2. **Apologies / Absent**  
P Tabor (Southern Uplands Partnership); K Robeson (SBC); D Carmichael (Walk-it); D Langworth (Melrose Paths Group); I Aitchison ( Scottish Land & Estates); D Wright (Central Tweeddale Paths), L Menmuir (Buccleuch Estates).
3. **Minutes of last meeting of Access Forum**  
Correct, unless any comments are sent electronically
4. **Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda**  
None
5. **Planning for Open Access Forum Meeting**  
It was noted that the Forum wishes the event to be scheduled for April 2013. The agenda should focus on Core Path Review, outdoor activities and that a variety of external speakers are requested to attend. Ideas included Northumberland Access, SCOTWAYS and BHS.  
**NM to discuss with interested organisations.**
6. **Core Path Planning Update**  
Core Paths are still being upgraded and signposted as required. NM advised forum of existing reviews which are linked to the maintenance and promotion of Core Paths. The bridges and publications audit. These Audits will be completed early 2013.  
**NM to circulate information when available to Forum.**
7. **Paths to Health Update**  
As circulated previously at last Forum. DC will update in February.
8. **A.O.B**
  - BM asked if the Forum had any information on the development of a riding route near Oxton. **NM to request information from Oxton CC.**
  - BM advised of a Land Reform review of locked gates which BHS are undertaking with the National Access Forum (View paper: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A563776.pdf>)
  - NM advised that the commitment of member organisations has been limited over the last 2 years. This could be due to a number of re-structuring and financial issues, however most likely due to a lack of physical projects and that the Core Paths Plan has largely been implemented without many issues. NM advised that the Council wishes to review the operations of the Forum through a survey and requests that all members complete the survey (as attached) and pass it onto other interested parties. Surveys are requested to be returned by January 29<sup>th</sup> 2013.
  - Also noted that the Interim Agreement (as attached) has not been fully agreed by all parties. NM advised that all organisations should instruct its adoption by emailing or

discussing further with N. Mackay. **Action - ALL**

- NM advised of existing access issue located within Broughton (papers circulated). The Forum recommended that the Council advises the landowner of their liability and that of the Core Path status. The Forum agreed that horses could be seen as being dangerous depending on the activity to the public therefore liability of any injury would fall upon the landowner. **E Niven to issue letter.**
- A request from Melrose Paths Group to seek resolution to the poor surface of route approaching Eildon Hills. NM advised the Council has sought costs from a contractor to install drainage. **NM to clarify implementation.**
- NM wished to advise the Forum of all National Access Forum papers can be accessed at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/access-forum/>
- BC updated the Forum on the Forestry Commission's policy on car park charges. The policy aims to charge a nominal daily car parking fee where there are additional facilities installed such as toilets, etc to assist the costs of these facilities. 15% of all Forestry Commission car parks issue a charge.
- The Forum discussed the legalities surrounding events within the outdoors, in particular the need to inform landowners. There are a guidelines available from Scottish Natural Heritage which clearly outline it is 'essential' to contact landowners and instances when landowner's 'permissions' are required. Further information at <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/SOAC/Outdoor%20Events%20in%20Scotland.pdf>

8. Date of next meeting

**Tuesday 19 February 2013 2pm Committee Room 1**