

Minutes: Paths Group Meeting 3/12/18 at 6.30 pm

Venue: Strontian Fire Station

Present: John Jones (Chair), Izzy Baker, Dean Mann, Jean Campbell, Sue Metcalfe, Sheila McKenzie, Robert Dunn, Alastair MacDougall, Alison MacDougall, Morag Jones, Sheila Wilson.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from David and Val Barker.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 8th October were approved. An update was provided regarding Point 6: assisting a local resident with access to his property. New steps are being constructed by a local handyman to alleviate the situation.

The Chair requested items of AOB to be added to the meeting agenda. RD put forward the following items:

- a) Ongoing path maintenance on private land.
- b) Within group email communication.

3. Leaflet

IB had previously issued to group members a rough draft of the paths leaflet with content largely derived from the Sunart leaflet. Selected photographs have yet to be added. Font size may differ from the current font as the leaflet evolves.

10 paths are to be included in the leaflet. The idea of including further walks in the current leaflet, e.g. Carnoch, was rejected as the feeling was that adding to the current number may result in over-reach and the maintenance of the paths network would become unsustainable. Signposting will be required for some of the more challenging paths. IB raised the point that we will need permission from the Forestry Commission if we are going to advertise them to the public. It was noted that seeking such permissions is highly bureaucratic and perhaps to be avoided where possible. RD suggested that, although not strictly within the agreed 10 paths, a sign should be erected on the High Road path directing walkers to the Coffin Road and the Community Hydro Scheme.

IB reported that all information regarding signs requirements needs to be agreed by February.

A number of recommendations were made regarding the leaflet.

- The leaflet could perhaps direct readers to further information on the community website where a page could be held regarding the paths group and its function.
- The leaflet should be made available as a PDF for download.
- Different versions of the leaflet could be developed, with Version 1 comprising the initial 10 paths with other versions to include paths further afield.
- Other outlets, for example walking websites could be used to advertise the leaflet.

The subject of the grading difficulty of each path was discussed. IB intimated that this could be done using a desk-based approach.

Some further information requires inclusion in the leaflet:

- Paths lengths to be recorded in metric measurement.
- Suitable parking areas for visitors
- Add scale to leaflet map.
- Add OS grid Reference

Action points:

IB to review path lengths.

Graham at the Ben View to be approached regarding the use of his car park.

IB reported that the final version of the report must be agreed by the end of January so that she can bill for the work in February.

IB reported that all information regarding sign requirements needs to be agreed by February.

4. Benches

The five benches are currently at the MacDougall's property (Birchwood Cottage) awaiting a decision on where they are to be placed.

A discussion on potential bench locations highlighted the following points:

- The Chair intimated that it is too soon to make decisions on bench placements. We will require permissions once preferred locations have been identified.
- The benches are heavy and unwieldy which may impact upon eventual location.
- Locating the bench footings directly onto the ground is to be avoided due to the potential for rotting. It was suggested that there are a number of sources within the village that could provide advice re this issue.
- Commemorative benches erected by members of the public should not be discouraged.
- A paper trail may be needed to ensure that any issues with the state of the paths are identified and addressed.

Notwithstanding the Chair's comment regarding bench placements, JC noted that a list of favoured locations for the benches exists.

Action points:

JC to locate list and forward to group members.

Bench locations to be identified and agreed by group vote.

There was a discussion on the issue of necessary permissions (written agreements)/insurances with owners for bench placements and responsibility for ongoing path maintenance. (See A.O.B. (B) below). It was agreed to start with paths on SCC land before considering paths on land owned by third parties. The Chair issued a list of SCC ownership.

IB noted that all paths except Longrigg Burn path are well established and that not all the paths are the group's responsibility: we are to some extent doing the landowners a favour through our efforts.

Action point:

RD to send files of maps showing SCC land locations.

5. GPS Mapping

Karl Bungay to complete GPS mapping instruction sheet. The booklet which accompanies the GPS is considered too complicated for general use. Online guides/Youtube videos may be useful as references.

Action point:

IB to circulate the GPS make/model to group members.

6. A.O.B

A). Email. Emails strings too long and there is too much copying into group members unnecessarily. Emails should be sent/directed on a 'need to know' basis only.

Action point:

IB to update path group membership list.

B). Maintenance. The issues of long-term maintenance/public liability insurance of paths requires clarification. What requires to be stated in written agreements on the safety/liability considerations? The Chair indicated that these are issues for the community council and the landowners not the paths group.

C). Work Days. It was agreed that Path Group Working Days should commence on the 19th Jan at 10.00 at the Old School House Plot and thereafter on the last Sat of the month.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 14th Jan at the Fire Station.

The sole agenda item will be the paths leaflet.