

CAIRNGORMS LOCAL OUTDOOR ACCESS FORUM

Title: Outdoor Access Casework – access issues 2011-12

Prepared by: Fran Pothecary, Outdoor Access Officer

Purpose: This paper presents the statistics for the year ending April 2012 with a focus on the type of cases closed over the year, and some ‘good news’ stories that came from them.

Advice Sought

This paper is for information so no advice is sought but Forum members are welcome to make comments as they see fit.

Part One – Review of Last Year access issues

Live cases (active) are presented at the top of the sheet; and cases that have been dealt with and **closed** during the year so far, at the bottom of the sheet.

YEAR	2011-12	2010-11
Live	29	27
Closed	48	63
TOTAL	77	90

During the year from April 2011 to March 2012 we dealt with a total of 77 issues. At the year-end just over 48 cases had been resolved and closed, and 29 carried forward to the current year. In total, we dealt with less access issues than the previous year but the percentage of cases closed as a proportion of total caseload increased.

I. Community Council Area

The spreadsheet is presented in alphabetical order according to Community Council area. Donside and the Angus Glens has 7 and 4 cases closed last year respectively, these cover bigger geographic areas than the communities with bigger villages or town at their centre; Boat of Garten, Kinraig and Nethy each had five cases resolved during the year.

CC Area	2011-12	2010-11		2011-12	2010-11
Angus Glens	4	0	Glen Esk	0	2
Aviemore	3	7	Glenlivet	0	1
Ballater	2	5	Glenmore	1	0
Blair Atholl	2	1	Grantown	4	6
Braemar	1	7	Killiecrankie	0	1
Boat of Garten	5	2	Kinraig	5	7
Carrbridge	1	2	Kingussie	2	2
Cromdale	1	1	Laggan	2	4

Dalwhinnie	1	4	Nethy	5	3
Donside	7	4	Newtonmore	1	4
Dalnain Bridge	0	0			

2. Types of cases

- a) **Obstructions** - includes physical barriers such as gates, fences, stiles, ploughed fields, dangerous animals, cattle-grids
- b) **Information** - includes signs, leaflets, and other written information
- c) **Behaviour** - includes confrontation, on the ground conflict reported by either land manager or recreational user
- d) **Water** - any water based issues
- e) **Groups** - includes organised events, activity groups e.g. DofE, congregational camping
- f) **Legal** - includes rights of way, query over sections of the Act, planning, path agreements
- g) **Planning** - queries about curtilage, reasonable privacy etc

	2011-12	2011-10
Obstructions	22	26
Behaviour	14	12
Information	6	15
Planning	5	1
Legal	1	2
Groups	0	3
Water	0	4
TOTAL	48	63

3. Type of land management unit

This table refers to the nature of ownership or land management in the location where an access issue is reported. By far the most are occurring on private estates (large units of forestry, sporting estates etc) or the occasional public forest estate. A few access issues pertain to privacy or rights of way issues around private dwellings; or access past farms and crofts.

	2011-12	2010-11
Private estate	35	20
Farm/croft	3	3
Urban/industrial/commercial	2	2
Private Dwelling	4	0
NGO/Trust	0	2
Public body/stat undertaker	4	11
TOTAL	48	63

4. Reporting Source

Issues are generally raised by or on behalf of *recreational users* and *land managers*. *Official* sources are those that are raised with CNPA by representatives of organisations or

agencies e.g. other local authority access staff, rangers and planners; Community Councils; the police; Scottish Natural Heritage, etc. Reporting sources (REC = recreational user; LAND = land manager; OFFICIAL) are indicated for each case. The higher reporting by recreational users corresponds with the fact that most access issues concern obstructions and signage, but there are still a significant number of land managers reporting access issues too.

	2011-12	2010-11
Recreational user	29	49
Land Manager	10	7
Official	8	5
Rec user and official	1	0
Rec user and land manager	0	2
TOTAL	48	63

5. Core Paths

Of the closed cases, 15 out of 48 were on core paths, the rest were not.

6. Priority

Of the 48 closed cases, 19 were classified as higher priority and 29 as lower priority.

Good news stories of the year

This year has seen substantial progress on improving access on the ground in particular for horse-riders and cyclists. This is in part due to the leverage we have been able to exert through assisting with funding for alternative gates. We are also building up a number of good practices studies over the years and are able to speak with confidence to land owners about what works, and can be seen to work on other estates.

In respect of upland access, The Kinrara Partnership put in a new self-closing deer gate at the bottom of the Burma Road and donated the CNPA funding contribution to the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust; Gaick Estate put in two new self-closing deer gates as an alternative to cattle grids on the track through Glen Tromie and over the Gaick pass, a major route for long distance horse-riders. Similarly a new gate went in on a right of way in Glenshero and on Invercauld. Signage and gates have been put in at Toldaquhill on Edinglassie Estate – a farm yard that sees regular access now has a diversionary signed route; and a right of way over Duffdefiance sports a new horse-friendly gate.

Closer to communities, the Salmon Trail in Boat of Garten has two new gates installed as an alternative to the stiles at the railway crossing – this was a good collaboration between the community and achieved with the support of the Strathspey Railway Company.

The Speyside Way at Achnagonalin near Grantown also has two new gates replacing the unpopular and awkward ranger gates. A self closing gate at the Balliemore end of the Speyside Way also now gives access onto the way, whilst preventing vehicle access and stock escape.

A big case early last year which received a huge amount of public attention was the lack of an underpass at the dualled section of the A9 at Crubenmore. Thanks to a high degree of political pressure and local campaign, the CNPA have been involved with Transport Scotland in plans for the future and the First Minister made a commitment to finding a solution to this problem.

Fran Potheary
Outdoor Access Officer
franpotheary@cairngorms.co.uk