

## ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE ACCESS

### SUMMARY NOTE OF THE JOINT NAF/LAF MEETING – 16 MARCH 2018

#### Background

The annual NAF/LAF meeting, held at Battleby on 16 March 2018, was attended by about 60 people. It focussed on engaging with young people to promote responsible access, in the context of Year or Young People 2018.

#### Presentations

##### *Morning*

During the morning session, participants heard about a range of on-going initiatives that directly target young people providing them with training, skills and information about responsible access. The underlying themes running through these initiatives are a sense of; physical activity, team working, confidence building and most importantly fun and achievement.

Richard Armstrong explained the '**Path Skillz**' project run by Paths for All. This project aimed at young people, gives them the skills to undertake path surveys, cost projects, reinstate paths, combining practical work with team building over a period of 4- 5 days. It culminates with a presentation by the young people and guided walks to celebrate their achievements. Further info: [www.pathskillz.com](http://www.pathskillz.com).

Eleanor Birch described how the **Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme** and in particular how their expedition programme, helps young people understand the Code. Expeditions of between 2 – 4 days (including overnights) are unaccompanied, so the 14 – 16 year olds must understand the Scottish Outdoor Access code and a range of access issues to achieve this successfully. Over 20,000 young people participate in the DoE award scheme annually with at least 50 % completing their awards. Further info: <https://www.dofe.org/notice-boards/scotland/>.

Dougie Pollok gave an overview the '**Re-route**' initiative, Scottish Natural Heritage's partnership with Young Scot. Aimed at 14 – 24 year olds, made up entirely of volunteers 'Reroute' is Scotland's Youth biodiversity Panel. Their aim is encourage more people to connect with nature and the outdoors and overcome barriers to achieving this. A Re-route survey found that 89% of young people surveyed consider nature and the outdoors important to them. Their success in engaging with young people is due to their ability to co-design, co-produce materials and use creative processes, rewards schemes, sharing photos etc. Opportunities exist to work with Young Scot and Reroute to promote the National Walking and Cycling Network and perhaps the Code. Further info: <https://young.scot/reroute/>

Eric Baird described how work with the '**Junior Rangers programme**' in the Cairngorms is reconnecting young people with nature. The cost of physical inactivity in the UK is put at £8.3 billion/yr so it is very valuable if children connect with nature and the outdoors for health and development reasons. Their Programme, which covers 5 local authority area and 7 secondary schools, includes residential days for the John Muir Awards, biodiversity, visitor management, outdoor access, experience of wild camping, FUN and ADVENTURE. Further information: <https://scra-online.co.uk/what-we-do/junior-rangers/>

## *Afternoon*

In the afternoon a number of shorter presentations showed how different initiatives throughout Scotland are successfully encouraging groups of young people to venture into the outdoors and the benefits that this has for education, physical and mental health and social inclusion.

Sally York explained how the 'outdoors' affords a huge opportunity for **play and outdoor learning**, as evidenced by the success of **Forest Kindergarten** and Forest Schools. This makes use of local greenspace within walking distance. With Government targets to double the number of nursery places by 2020 she suggested that there is a need to scale-up of this type of activity. Further information at: <https://www.owlscotland.org/local-options/forest-kindergarten>.

Grant Murdoch described the development of the **Cycling Hub at Cupar Angus**, which offers after school activities, night rides, mountain bike tuition, leadership skills, free events etc A workshop and café have made this a social place for families as well as young people, helping with community cohesion. He stressed the value of creating more opportunities like this to harness the energies of young people. Further information at: <https://cacyclinghub.com/>.

Toby Clark highlighted some of the successful components of the **John Muir Trust Awards** scheme. These include avoiding a set syllabus, meeting people where they are at, using co-design, working in partnership, benefitting the non- specialist, and giving people the chance to make a difference by putting something back. He emphasised that enjoyment is crucial to success. Further information at: <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award>.

Laura Lucas described how the Dundee Countryside Rangers use their '**Family Fresh Air Club**' to reach young parents in target areas identified using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This has helped to break down some of the barriers that normally limit young people visiting the outdoors, for example by providing the right clothing, transport and working in partnership with community development staff to provide a visit to a natural area once a week for 5 weeks where families can walk and discover nature. Further information at: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/Dundee%20family%20learning%20-%20Family%20Fresh%20Air%20Club>.

Lara Campana explained how the young ramblers group, '**Edinburgh Walkers**' (aimed at 20-30 year olds) operates from the City. It currently has 260 members and connects members primarily through social media (Instagram, snap chat, twitter), an approach that is considered to be part of its success. As well as walks, it also offers young people weekends away, wild camping, training and volunteering opportunities. Further information at <http://eyw.org.uk/>

Pony club representatives from Perthshire came to the meeting to introduce a film they had made with their ponies about obtaining their Countryside Access Badge. This requires them to understand the Code and demonstrate responsible access when riding in the outdoors.(film clip will be available on the SOAC website shortly).

### **Group Activity:**

During the day the participants split into six groups to brainstorming how to improve engagement with young people on access issues in the context of the six Year of Young People 2018 (YOYP) themes of culture, education, enterprise and regeneration, equality and discrimination, health and well-being, participation.

## *FEEDBACK SESSIONS – key messages and actionable ideas*

### *Culture*

1. Create a young person's guide to SOAC
  - Delivered by young people using their own language and dialect.
  - Co-produce with Young Scot/DofE/SNH.
  - Find a balance between urban and rural access issues
  - Use existing SOAC guidance – interpreted for a younger audience.
  - Focus on positive messages
  - Recruit cultural icons (chosen by young people) to help promote the Code.
2. Ask young people to deliver a creative pitch for SOAC issue/activities using;
  - Mixed media – music, film, spoken word, poetry, dance, tech, animation, theatre, art etc.

### *Enterprise and Regeneration*

3. Inspire young people;
  - Example at Ayr College “Amaze me” initiative/programme, where 60 young people (age 18 and 27) from Dumfries & Galloway, Finland and Europe come together. The focus is the Biosphere and how young people can help to improve the future of the planet.
4. Target those at risk:
  - eg Youth Awards Programme in D & G, where they have a drop in centre for “young people at risk” where they are shown the great outdoors and what it has to offer. They also think about the potential impacts of their activities/actions and sharing their experiences and learning.
5. Get young people involved in access through volunteering
  - this may help to direct them into careers relating to the outdoor such as tourism, visitor attractions, marketing, engagement, engaging with other young people etc
  - Involve young people in the Central Belt of Scotland in enhancing and expanding the John Muir Way (including the JM spur to Glasgow) ie path creation, greener path network, habitat enhancement etc
  - Target this audience via social media, via peer groups and tease out young people's creativity and identifying mechanisms to support and encourage this.
6. Make responsible access relevant to urban areas/urban fringe rather as well as the wider countryside.
  - Develop young people's understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Use young champions to promote this within their peer groups.

### *Equality and Discrimination*

7. Work with established groups such as Young Scot to improve equality and reduce discrimination
  - Include young Scot on the access forum
8. Provide more representative images of young people and diverse sectors of the community when promoting access and recreation.
9. Increase the educational focus on social media eg an “Access Blogger”.

### *Health and Wellbeing*

10. Improve marketing and communication
  - Use different ways to reach different social groups
  - No preaching
11. Improve place making
  - Make the child the focus of place making in the cities
  - Design in ‘walking’ in the city, building this in at early stages into master plans etc

## *Education*

### 12. More families doing outdoor activities together

- encouraging young people to explore local environments with their families, currently not as inclusive, as those parents who aren't comfortable in the outdoors are less likely to take their kids out.

### 13. More schools doing outdoor learning

- inclusive as the entire class would be involved. The Curriculum for Excellence has a strong emphasis on outdoor learning (age of 3 upwards) and there is enthusiasm from teachers, but many teachers still don't have the knowledge/ experience themselves to teach it.
- Ideally each class should have some experience of outdoor learning in every year of school education (and ideally of course they should be like Scandinavia and go outside for lots of lessons).

### 14. Deliver more through external providers,

- Brownies, DofE, John Muir Award, Scouts, ranger-led activities, etc. Ranger services are fantastic but don't have the resources to cope with demand, due to cut backs in funding, and DofE/JMA had wide reach but not across every school and in every year.
- LAFs could make links with existing community initiatives to encourage them to increase inclusion, eg: "Friends of" groups, parks and open spaces groups, gardening groups, etc.
- Need to overcome perceived hurdles such as the need for disclosure, risk assessments, etc, if young people are involved in activities, but many of these can be overcome by making sure children only attend with parents/guardians.
- NAF could work with SNH and Young Scot to look at making SOAC messaging more relevant to young people in the same way as they are working on the Biodiversity Strategy through Reroute?
- NAF: the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE) may be able to advise on appropriate times to seek to influence the outdoor learning components of the curriculum, through the GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland).

## *Participation*

### 15. Tap into social media use by young people

- especially peer-to-peer experience sharing and story telling – is there something simple that can be done on range of initiatives already capturing this to target access rights / responsible access e.g. hashtag #accessrights.

### 16. More young people could be represented on organisation boards or structures,

- raise the profile and voice of Young people eg. Scottish Seabird Centre.

### 17. Simply celebrating Young people and the outdoors throughout the year and beyond as individual organisations.

- raise the "right" to access –celebrate/champion the right to access as a key part of our citizenship.
- General consensus exists on the importance of early years engagement in the outdoors - especially in fostering a sense of stewardship, providing critical life skills, enabling play at all ages

### 18. Promote the existing positive initiatives / programmes; Changing Lives (British Horse Society), Path Skillz, using targeted approach, identifying participants through social work depts, tapping into existing resources to ensure partners/schemes are supported.

- Opportunities to engage more with pregnant mothers/family planning – in terms of accessing the adult 'gap' not currently accessing outdoors through baby-box

schemes, engaging new-mothers and thereby enabling and establishing a new family pattern of outdoor access – along the lines of Fresh Air Club approach

- As teaching seems to be swinging back towards a more holistic approach including outdoor engagement it is timely to tap into this e.g. Learning for Sustainability, is there something NAF can be doing on this?

#### *Other suggestions in Open Forum*

- More age specific SOAC education resources are needed. Current education resources cater up to the age of 12 but there are fewer educational resources for teenagers/young adults.
- More could be targeted at Young Farmers, especially in relation to farm diversification. Perhaps work with NFU Scotland, Royal Highland Educational Trust, promote responsible access to the countryside through farm visits etc.

#### **Follow-up**

It was noted that, if available, presentations would be placed on the NAF web-site. In addition, at its next meeting the NAF would consider how it might take some of the 'actionable ideas' forward, and it was suggested that LAFs might also wish to consider them.