

NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM

NAF/LAF Joint Meeting 2019 – feedback from LAFs

Purpose

This paper summarises the responses from Local Access Fora on the arrangements for next year's joint NAF/ LAF meeting.

Action

Members are asked to note the summary of responses and advise on the forward planning of the Joint NAF/LAF meeting for 2019.

Background

At the May NAF meeting there was a short discussion about the NAF/LAF joint meeting for 2019. NAF members reported that fewer LAF members were attending the joint meeting and that perhaps the focus should be on topics that would be helpful to the working of the LAFs. Under AP 45/10 the Convenor contacted the LAFs to seek their views on the timing, location and topics for the next NAF/LAF meeting.

Outcome

The secretary received 9 responses to the request for ideas. Although the number was low the responses were very detailed and helpful in highlighting potential topic areas as well as highlighting what works well already. The summary is as follows;

- 1) **Venue:** All respondents were content with Battleby (Perth) as a venue. There were no objections to the meeting touring around the country either although no alternative venues were offered. The poor public transport links for Battleby were highlighted but also the excellent facilities Battleby offered.
- 2) **Timing:** Most respondents favoured April as a time for the meeting with a preference for early April and not later as things become busier and rail prices rise. All preferred a week day and not a weekend.
- 3) **Format:** There were many comments about the importance of 'networking' and recommendations for increasing the time for networking before, during and after the meeting. With this in mind there was general support for the format of the meetings ie a mix of presentations and group work. Several respondents highlighted the importance of NAF feedback on current issues not only as an update but also as a mechanism to gather views from the LAFs. Feedback from other LAFs about current issues was highlighted as an important part of the networking process.
- 4) **Topics:** There was a mixed response to views on topics. Some valued topic or themed based approaches providing the external speakers were good. Others only supported a topic based approach if the theme was critical or of new interest suggesting that LAF are more interested in how to do things and share good practice. Topics such as feedback from the Young persons' involvement in the Code and raising the profile of LAFs and their importance in each region (through publicity/roles/projects/dispute resolution/core path review etc) were supported. Other suggestions for topics included Open Water access (swimming/kayakers) or coastal access in general.

Other suggestions and comments included:

- LAF representation at NAF is currently inadequate therefore 'feedback from NAF' is a useful session and a means of collecting LAF views.
- A mediation 'refresher' course could be useful or exploring arbitration as a mechanism of dispute resolution.
- Support for raising the profile of LAFs and their importance locally'
- Include news and updates from other LAFs
- Only use one or two key note speakers rather than too many speakers
- Topic on Farmers and land managers - 'good working practice and issues of concern for them but also access takers,
- Joint marketing
- Revisiting the SOAC, are access takers and land managers following the advice given?
- Cycling as a case study– National Cycle Network and multiuse (how is active travel balanced against recreational use)
- Fees for land access in relation to commercial events; exploring the inconsistencies of those who benefit from access revenues and those who do not.

Forward Action

Based on the above comments from the LAFs and following discussion at the NAF September meeting, it is suggested that NAF agrees:

- (i) to hold the next joint meeting in Battleby on Friday 5 April 2019;
- (ii) to have a more interactive format than the 2018 meeting, with only 2-3 speakers;
- (iii) to ask a small group of NAF members to prepare the programme for the Joint 2019 meeting, taking account of suggestions from the LAFs and any further comments from NAF members.

The draft programme will be presented at the January 30th NAF meeting (but by that time speakers may have been approached so there will limited flexibility for change.)

Janice Winning – NAF Secretary
September 2018