

WHITELEE ACCESS PLANNING GROUP**NOTES OF MEETING****VENUE: Chatelherault Country Park (Visitor Centre)****DATE OF MEETING: 11th September 2019****PRESENT:****Nick Prower, Whitelee Access Project Officer (NP)****Simon Pilpel, South Lanarkshire Council (SP)****Siobhan Jarvie, Scottish Power Renewables (SJ)****Rennie Mason, Whitelee Countryside Ranger Service (RM)****Duncan MacIntyre, Eaglesham & Waterfoot Community Council (DMc)****Peter Daly, Scottish Power Renewables (PD)****Tony Gannon, Scottish Power Renewables (TG)****APOLOGIES:****Neil McLauchlan, East Ayrshire Council (NM)****Paige Klinkman, Forestry & Land Scotland (PK)****Roddy McTavish, Forestry & Land Scotland (RMc)****Ian Parkinson, Whitelee Visitor Centre (IP)**

Item	Description	ACTION
1.0	Welcome & Apologies	
1.1	SP welcomed the Group and opened the meeting.	
2.0	Minutes of Last Meeting	
2.1	Minutes of meeting held 15 th May 2019 were agreed as accurate record of the meeting.	
3.0	Matters Arising	
3.1	All points covered in agenda.	
4.0	Health & Safety	
4.1	NP reported that a cyclist had fallen from his bike on 8 th Sept resulting in a suspected broken wrist. Emergency services were called and on arrival the paramedic was escorted to the scene by Cyclestation staff in their van. PD confirmed that the Control Point had not been contacted and the incident had been dealt with without SPR involvement. Emergency services had subsequently	

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<p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>made contact to thank Cyclestation staff for their assistance.</p> <p>SP asked what emergency access arrangements were in place if Cyclestation had not been on site to escort the paramedic, and whether there was an established protocol with emergency services. PD confirmed that SPR had a protocol in place which required the Emergency Services to contact Control Point to gain access by most suitable entrance. NP had also contacted emergency service re access to MTB trails prior to their opening and provided maps/access information. It was agreed that current plans should be kept under review and a single Emergency Response Plan kept up to date. NP to collate current plans.</p> <p>SJ highlighted the need to update and review policies in relation to lost children following a recent incident. Whitelee VC has relevant policy but restricted to VC only and aimed at ensuring children or vulnerable adults were dealt with appropriately during all activities. Advice from SPR Corporate Security in the event of a lost child was not to delay contacting the police. NP to check current ERC policies.</p>	<p>NP</p> <p>NP</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Whitelee Visitor Centre</p>	
<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>SJ reported that visitor numbers had been good throughout the summer, boosted by strong attendance at events inc. Run the Blades and SPR's Family Fun Day as well as the installation of 'Oor Wullie' statue at Whitelee. 785K visitors had been recorded since VC opened in 2009. Numbers for August were 9,500 which represent an increase of 15% on previous year despite mixed weather.</p> <p>A meeting had taken place to plan for forthcoming roofworks on VC building. It was decided that the best way of managing works was through temporary closures at key times but for the majority of the works the centre would remain open with scaffolding and a protected tunnel to the entrance. Any restrictions or closures would be publicised via social media and other channels. Work mainly involved repairing roof panels with insufficient overlaps. These would be covered by structural plywood. Repair of roof lights would require closure of centre due to associated risk. Internal decoration would take place during winter closure.</p> <p>GSC had received feedback requesting additional benches within site. NP to look at potential installation sites.</p> <p>RM asked whether SPR had considered allowing dogs into VC on a more permanent basis following feedback from Nae Fireworks event. SJ felt that more use could be made to develop outside facilities by providing protected area for dogs and owners. SPR would be careful of allowing dogs into centre on permanent basis. Café not large enough to have secluded space for dogs and</p>	

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	<p>owners. RM confirmed that a number of visitors had asked about taking dogs into centre and consideration should be given to a trial. NP reported that a similar trial had taken place at Culzean Country Park and offered to speak to Culzean staff and report back. DMc felt the mixing of dogs and other visitors inc children in a busy centre could be problematic. It was suggested that better use could be made of cycle storage area which is under-used and/or by providing some cover on the deck. TG suggested that some form of structure could be looked at for the deck and which provide additional protection but retain views from centre.</p>	<p>NP</p> <p>TG</p>
6.0	Whitelee Battery Storage Project	
6.1	<p>TG gave an overview of the planned battery storage facility being developed adjacent to Ardochrig sub-station. An investment decision was expected within a fortnight with a view to work starting in January 2020. FLS had agreed to fell the small coupe of trees to clear ground for the development. It is hoped the facility could be operational by December 2020.</p>	
6.2	<p>Construction traffic would mainly use Ardochrig road for deliveries and traffic management arrangements agreed with SLC Roads as per planning conditions. This had involved a traffic management plan and swept path analysis. TG confirmed that some traffic would also be routed through windfarm, mostly the larger components which would be convoyed along spine road.</p>	
6.3	<p>NP offered assistance to publicise any closures or health and safety procedures through additional signage and via WCRS' social media channels.</p>	
6.4	<p>NP asked what arrangements would be in place for security at Ardochrig entrance and any restrictions on public access. TG reported that the CDM boundary would be marked by fencing and although construction traffic would enter from Ardochrig there would be no impact on public access. Security presence at key times.</p>	
6.5	<p>NP asked whether consideration should again be given to a powered gate/intercom at Ardochrig. This had been discussed before but issues around who would manage the access never resolved. NP concerned that current gate is left open on regular basis and allows unauthorised vehicle access. NP to raise with FLS.</p>	
6.6	<p>RM asked whether interested groups may be able to visit the battery storage facility in future. TG confirmed this may be possible in Aug/Sept 2020 when construction well advanced but facility not yet operational. SJ suggested it could also be used for visits during Climate Change Conference being hosted in Glasgow.</p>	
6.7	<p>NP asked what proposed arrangements were for construction laydown areas and whether site of proposed Ardochrig car park would be impacted. Current planning permission due to expire in summer 2020 so cannot afford delays once legal</p>	

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	agreements allow for progress. TG confirmed there were no plans to utilise car park area as there were sufficient laydown areas adjacent to the construction site itself.	
7.0	Access Officer update	
7.1	<u>Legal agreements</u> : NP reported that the solicitor dealing with the FLS/Council agreement on behalf of councils was currently absent from work. Initial advice had been to wait for solicitor to return but due to prolonged absence was now hoping another solicitor would progress as a response to FLS was overdue. There were 2 main agreements being progressed by ERC, the FLS/Council agreement and a separate sub-lease for proposed toilet block. FLS/Council agreement to be treated as priority.	
7.2	NP had responded directly to S. Water solicitors in relation to toilet block agreement and sought confirmation of a fee cap being agreed as this was not reflected in agreement. ERC also required the same assurances from SPR.	
7.3	ERC Solicitor had previously sought updates from EAC in relation to their agreements with Lochgoin and Scottish Water. NP had asked for an update from EAC and was awaiting a response.	
7.4	<u>Carrot car parking</u> : NP had spoken to landowner and it was clear there was no appetite for re-establishing layby. ERC Roads also accepted that the legal status of the feature was unclear and were no longer pursuing its reinstatement. Furthermore the landowner will not consent to any parking provision elsewhere within his landholding due to long-standing concerns over littering and other anti-social activities which appear genuine.	
7.5	Taken in conjunction with FLS position, there appear to be only 2 options: Maintain the status-quo where parking is informal and extremely limited (and with on-going issues for residents and other road users likely to be unresolved) or create some parking spaces in FLS field adjacent to Carrot Cottage. The latter would inevitably bring issues of anti-social activity, littering and reduced residential amenity and require significant management interventions. In discussion with ERC Planning staff it also appears that although a small car park at this location would be broadly in line with policy, the likely impact on residential amenity means that securing planning permission would be far from certain.	
7.6	The Group were of the view that staff had attempted to resolve the issues at Carrot but should not pursue the creation of car parking in FLS field .	
7.7	<u>MTB toilet block</u> : Legal process had stalled so no attempt yet made to re-tender the opportunity. NP attempting to keep matters progressing and had re-applied	

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	<p>for planning permission as previous consent had lapsed as a result of delays. SEPA had raised an objection but subsequently withdrew this on provision of further information.</p>	
7.8	<p><u>Fingerposts</u>: Replacement posts for Lochgoin area (15) had been designed and ordered. These will replace the original green fingerposts and be better integrated with site-wide fingerposts later installed. All to be installed as direct replacements for existing posts but some require to be set slightly further back from road verge due to longer blades/larger text. This potentially brings some closer to windfarm cabling. PD agreed to assist with catscanning of positions prior to installation.</p>	PD/NP
7.9	<p><u>Mapping</u>: Cycle routes to be added to site maps with other promoted routes to follow. To avoid clutter and ensure clear mapping NP proposing to simplify some aspects of current maps particularly background information before adding further layers. SJ supports the need for a more simplified map which will be easier for some users. NP confirmed that he had already contacted the supplier and would liaise with SPR to agree content.</p>	NP
7.10	<p><u>Planning visits</u>: CPD visits arranged for East Dunbartonshire & North Ayrshire Council Planning teams hosted by NP & WCRS.</p>	
7.11	<p><u>Ardochrig car park</u>: NP had contacted engineers who previously completed SUDS design and flood risk assessments to see if elements of SUDS design could be amended, replacing manhole/weir structures with more natural elements. Initial discussions indicate this can be done without impacting flood risk and would result in a more natural design and potential cost savings. Current planning permission due to lapse in July 2020 so its important that work commences by then if a 3rd planning application is to be avoided.</p>	
7.12	<p><u>Electric wheelchairs</u>: 2nd Boma had been delivered but months later than planned due to manufacturing issues. Some training still required. Initial testing had taken place to check range and performance, involving project staff and a disabled volunteer.</p>	
8.0	WCRS update	
8.1	<p><u>WCRS PROGRAMMED EVENTS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 completed ranger programme events (3 cancelled due to weather/last minute participant cancellations): 157 participants 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boggy Beasts Summer Club (6+ years) – 6 sessions – 45 participants• Muddy Monsters kids club (2-5 years) - 3 sessions – 37 children, 26 adults• Stroller Striders: 117 participants <p><u>SCHOOLS, GROUPS ETC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 primary, secondary, and ASN school visits: 692 pupils interacted with.• 2 college/university group visits: 42 students interacted with, including students from the British University in Dubai.• 2 Scout and Cub groups: 70 children in total.• Contact with and access advice provided to several Duke of Edinburgh groups.• Community Networks coming to the end of their monthly sessions with us – average 9 attending each session – tasks include cutting back willow on MTB tracks, weeding the Blackwood Hill Viewpoint, sanding picnic benches at MTB facility to remove graffiti, clearing cross drains etc.• Waterfoot Inky Pinky park sessions (EWCC) – 2 sessions – 38 participants – river dipping and bug hunting.• VC Science Summer Club – helped out during first week due to VC staff shortages – 30 participants over 3 1hr sessions• Branching Out Programme – completed at Whitelee in partnership with RAMH Barrhead – 13 sessions in total (including awards week) – an average of 10 clients showed up each week. Group is limited to 13 clients. We plan to run another Branching Out block for new clients next year, starting in April. <p><u>MAJOR EVENTS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eaglesham Fair – 101 people interacted with• SPR Family Fun Day – 500-700 people interacted with (we lost count!)• Run the Blades - a success with over 1200 runners!• Christian Aid Power Walk – Saturday 14th Sep 2019 - cancelled due to low sign ups.• Oceansallover performance event – event date Sat 28th September• Run the Blades – The Night One – taking place Friday 18th October• Scottish Endurance Riding Club – have a ride taking place on Sunday 27th October 2019. <p><u>MISCELLAENEOUS REQUESTS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paisley and Glasgow Natural History Society visits – 8 & 5 participants – Renfrewshire county rarities recorded – Rove Beetle <i>Staphylinus caesareus</i> near the VC and Hare's Foot Clover <i>Trifolium arvense</i> growing on track layby at track to T40 from VC.• Parkrun – decision made by SPR not to allow this to go ahead at Whitelee due to H&S issues with volume of cars entering car park.• South Lanarkshire Horse & Pony Access Group – held a successful ride at Whitelee in May – 11 riders• Continuing to work with East Renfrewshire Food Growers Network.	
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8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 gardening work sessions planned with RAMH – to help work on their community garden in Barrhead. Between Oct – March. <p><u>ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strimmed Dunwan off-track horse route with help of Family Firm placement, array 1 verges ahead of Run the Blades event parking, and vegetation along MTB tracks to clear sightlines and prevent long grasses etc. from falling onto track at end of season.• Cleared rough Weavers Trail diversion route via forestry track at Northern end.• Brushed soft and wet patches at Cleughearn ahead of horse and pony club visit – path churned up by illegal dirt-bike activity.• Worked with Police Scotland, CycleStation and SPR Security staff after break-in was discovered at cycle hire container by one of the Rangers.• Interviewed for BBC Reporting Scotland piece alongside Erik Paterson from Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group about adders. Seems like reporter was looking for a negative story but instead all she got were positives from us all, and even our regular dog walkers weren't phased – still to be informed when this piece will appear on TV – unlikely to happen this year now – out of season.• Taken down seasonal signage. E.g. lambing/breeding birds• Almost completed our area-specific resources booklet (working with colleagues at Dams to Darnley and Rouken Glen Park) to accompany 'The Lost Words' book which we will be delivering to all ERC schools shortly.• All WCRS staff have been trained in using the Bomas (off road wheelchairs). Second Boma has arrived, and we are awaiting training for its specifics. Trialled boma with a disabled person who found out about the Bomas through CycleStation.• Second Makaton event planned for Sunday 22nd Sept in conjunction with a newly trained member of staff at the VC.• A number of litter sweeps have been carried out within the operational windfarm, including patrols of 'wild camping sites'.• MTB facility – ongoing track monitoring and maintenance.• Storage containers have been re-organised and tidied to make better use of the space.• 3 new cycling routes almost ready to launch – all markers in place.• YAH map progress – sites have been CAT-scanned, and are awaiting final posts to go in before installation of signs – a few more signs are up already.• We have helped SPR with access restrictions for turbine works.• One successful Family Firm placement worked with us for several weeks, assisting with our tasks.• Hosting school work experience placement this week (9th-13th Sept) with colleague at Dams to Darnley.• Carried out a badger survey at Ardochrig.• Geomagnetic survey of badger sett completed by strathclyde university department of structural engineering.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested and got new road signs for wildlife (badgers) just outside Eaglesham after finding 3 badgers killed by cars in 2 weeks – possibly from one of the windfarm setts 	
9.0	Major events	
9.1	Nae Fireworks event on 5 th November expected to be larger than 2018. SPR had agreed to meet cost of additional support (Breaking Strain staff) to assist with car parking.	
9.2	Park Run application previously refused by SPR. Project staff and organisers keen to get this re-considered as numbers can be controlled but this was not made sufficiently clear in application. Event could be run on a trial basis initially if SPR are willing to re-consider. SJ to consider a revised application.	
10.0	Any Other Business	
10.1	DMc asked whether VC winter closure arrangements were similar to 2018. SJ confirmed they were but with the added issue of roof repairs which may require temporary closures. DMc to add planned winter closure dates to Eaglesham community magazine.	DMc
10.2	PD asked whether there were sufficient disabled parking spaces in car parks and where further spaces could be provided. Additional spaces next to cycle compound were suggested for users of electric wheelchairs to use.	
10.3	NP asked whether a contract could be put in place to manage verges in car parks inc. approach from B764. PD confirmed this was being looked at along with weeding and tree removal on track sides within operational site. NP queried the condition of verges following mulching work by FC which had resulted in some complaints from visitors esp dog walkers due to sharp stumps being left. PD to raise concerns with FLS.	PD
11.0	Date of Next Meeting	
11.1	NP to circulate possible dates for next meeting.	NP