

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on 30th May, with a small attendance this year, possibly because things are a bit quiet on access at the moment. Ellie McMillan was re-elected as Chairman and Sheila Hall was re-elected as Secretary / Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP FOR THE YEAR 2012/2013

The subscription for the forthcoming year is still £5.00. Just send a cheque payable to FARAG to Sheila Hall, Balcastle House, Slamannan, Falkirk FK1 3BB. If you know of anyone who would like to join please ask them to get in touch with Sheila. We hope everyone will re-join as we are the only local organisation trying to improve off road riding. Our progress is very slow, and sometimes it seems we make no progress at all. However we still try to do what we can and if any opportunity arises to get a new track or path we will try to make sure that horses are taken into consideration. The £5 membership is very good value for livery yard owners as they are listed on our web site and when someone searches for “livery yards Falkirk” our site appears.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Ellie reported that it has been a very quiet year and told members of the difficulties we have had with the Drumbroider track project. Firstly, the Forestry Commission agreed to a link to Gateside Wood and then withdrew their consent because of habitat concerns about the Moss. We then approached another landowner who agreed to consider the possibility of a route through their land. However, our latest communication from Central Scotland Forest Trust is a bit discouraging as they are now concerned about the cost of the project and the difficulty of raising sufficient funds. We will have to see if there is another way of proceeding with this project. Ellie also reported that the bridge project between Lodge Farm Woods and Limerigg Woods is currently awaiting landowner consents and this may cause further delay. The core path improvements on the track from the bottom of Salterhill Road to Limerigg Woods have been partly completed but there is still one section to be drained.

OTHER ISSUES:

MUIRAVONSIDE

Concerns have been raised about the state of the Country Park and we are currently trying to arrange a meeting with Falkirk Community Trust who now have responsibility for the Park. The Country Park was one of our first projects and is now suffering wear and tear as well as storm damage.

MAINTENANCE OF PATHS AND TRACKS

It was mentioned at the Annual General Meeting that we should be reviewing the state of the earlier tracks and paths which we were involved in financing as they are now likely to be suffering some deterioration in places. If any members notice damage to tracks could they get in touch with Sheila and we can then either ask the Council to help with repairs if it is a core path or see what we can do ourselves if it is an unofficial path.

BESPOKE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The Board of Bespoke is working on a plan for the maintenance of the multi use paths as well as the cycle trails. This will involve regular inspections so that repairs can be carried out promptly. If any horse riders are willing to report on problems/damage to the multi use tracks used by horses on Callendar Estate please get in touch with Sheila so that we can organise a reporting system.

DALES WOOD, DENNY

We are investigating the possibility of a track in Dales Wood. We hope to have a meeting on site in the near future.

EQUINE ESTABLISHMENTS

The British Horse Society is part of the Equine Establishments Working Party investigating the possibility of a system of registration or licensing for equine establishments. At present “riding schools” are inspected by Councils but no standards are applied to livery yards etc. Obviously there are some very well run

establishments but information is lacking and a survey is being carried out by the BHS. They need a good response and have asked riders to take part at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GR8YQHF>

HORSE RIDING ON HEADLANDS AND FIELD MARGINS

The British Horse Society is also concerned that some horse riders have been behaving irresponsibly by damaging crops as they ride through or around crop fields. Grass grown for hay and silage is regarded as a crop and therefore excluded from access rights when newly sown or when it reaches above ankle height (about 20cm) when it is far more susceptible to damage. Access rights can be exercised in fields of stubble and in established hay or silage fields before grass reaches ankle height. Crop damage is less likely hereabouts as most fields are fenced and not easily accessible.

THE PROPOSED WIND FARM NEAR AVONBRIDGE

This was turned down at the planning stage but had now gone to appeal.

SUGGESTIONS

If anyone knows of any areas where horse riding might be a possibility, please get in touch with Sheila so that we can at least investigate. Access is still at the top of the list for many riders, some of whom still have little or no off road riding.