

Scottish Outdoors Consortium meeting

16.06.2020

Zoom Conference

Attending:

Jane Campbell Morrison – Chair and SAAF

Myles Farnbank – SAAF

Alan Rankin – Sail Scotland

Neil Wightwick – AHOEC

Rebecca Raynes – DofE

Roger Srutton – SSA OPG

Andrew Denton – OIA

Rachel Cowper – Thriving Outdoors

Shaun Roberts – sportscotland

Ali Dreyer – SAPOE

Apologies:

Victoria Brooks – Wild Scotland

Judith McCleary – Scouts Scotland

Peter Higgins – University of Edinburgh

Marc Crothall – STA

1. Acceptance of the minutes from the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

2. Organisation updates (COVID-19 progress/ developments) – 3 points per organisation

Judith McCleary – submitted by email - From **Scouts Scotland's** aspect, communications with SG from meeting on 29th and follow-up:- Messages conveyed & received on financial challenges facing outdoor centres with threat of imminent closures, re-opening challenges due to inconsistent LA advice regarding third parties delivering in schools & residential bookings, and conflicting insurance guidance adding pressure. Opportunity to comment on education plan welcomed. Youthlink Outdoor Learning network recognised -rep group predominantly third sector (felt necessary given unique nature of orgs) Whilst it has felt positive to have engagement, no support yet offered in terms of solutions to help centres bridge the gap. We can help massively with facilities, staff training, OL delivery as outreach/ hubs/ centre specific but there is a cost attached-some LA's claiming no money to fund provision. Separately from above, we're continuing lobbying for support. We have meeting with the 7 outdoor centres in Argyll & Bute on Monday 22nd along with MP Mike Russell. Have had dialogue with some LA education but no confirmation of inclusion in provision. We will begin contacting existing school customers shortly.

Neil Wightwick – **AHOEC** - 1. Following up with government regarding parity of information given out by local authorities and outdoor education centres. 2. Sought clarity around insurance regarding school trips, which is putting the sector in some difficulties where councils are not allowing insurance claims to be made and 3. Sought financial help for outdoor centres as they are facing significant challenges at present as a result of COVID-19. NW sent through the latest information from Scottish Government for sharing. JCM to add to Basecamp. RS observed that there had been no mention of outdoor learning made in the press by John Swinney. MF mentioned that there are groupings of local authorities that are working together, and some had plans in place to open their schools in a safe manner. The announcement made by John Swinney has caused some difficulties for

schools. RC indicated that there has been some pushback on the announcement of 2.5 days, due to challenges around out of school care as there is insufficient capacity and funding. SR asked about the immediate support for outdoor centres, will there be funding made available either locally or nationally? NW indicated that at present a nationwide approach was being taken.

Alan Rankin gave a quick update from **Sail Scotland** – driven by the route map and have submitted their Safe Sailing guidelines through STERG. These guidelines will be published on 19th June and cover both commercial and recreational sailing. Work has also gone in to how to approach destinations and staying safe. Have also been in correspondence with STA and Fergus Ewing that the 2m rule doesn't allow businesses to reopen and are seeking to reduce social distancing to 1m. Have been engaging with Andrew Denton from OIA too with regard to Adventure Smart amongst other aspects. Real push is for season 2021 from the charter companies. AR to share the Sail Safe Guidelines once published. SR mentioned that Adventure Smart was being discussed within rescue services for the outdoors.

RR – **DofE** update was shared previously, and is available on Basecamp. Key aspects looking forward – DofE is keen to get a paper produced about blended learning and the part that DofE can play in the provision of outdoor learning and recruitment for 2020 is underway. Certificates of completion are now given for those who have been unable to undertake expeditions due to COVID-19. Further guidance to come from the project board for licensed organisations around the delivery of expeditions.

RS – **Scottish Governing Bodies** are liaising through sportscotland currently, and are using the Slack workspace to share best practice. National Access Forum agreed to send a letter to the Scottish Gov't with regard to the lockdown and violations of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code with terrible consequences for farmers in particular. The letter requests that more support is put in to the infrastructure around access. A Post COVID-19 futures commission has been set up by the Royal Society in Edinburgh which will meet for a year and will present their findings to the Scottish Government at the end of their time. There is no obvious individual with an outdoor perspective as part of this commission so RS has written to the Royal Society and asked about who would represent the interests of the outdoors.

MF – **SAAF** - has been working with Victoria from Wild Scotland to create a set of guidance for the outdoors which has been provided to Scot Gov as they had requested. SAAF are working on a map of the outdoor sector in Scotland including the full range of the bodies involved. This map is a large piece of work. SR asked about the response from Wild Scotland and the opening of the tourism sector and how this will relate to the outdoors. MF gave an explanation on the work that had been undertaken as requested by the Scottish Government, and that in some ways it was being challenged by the potential changes coming in during Phase 2 and 3. AR gave some background information about how well Wild Scotland and Judith Young/ Scottish Government and that the document requested was actually a signposting document. It seems likely that this document is to be hosted on the Wild Scotland website. JCM has been keeping colleagues across the UK apprised of the work underway within Scotland. She also asked about Enfor which are now known as Environment and Economics Leadership Group which is chaired by the SNH. This group has a wide representation from SNH, National Nature Reserves, Historic Scotland, Forest and Land Scotland and Scottish Government amongst others. SR is part of this group and has been able to keep this group up to speed with information coming from Scottish Governing Bodies and ensure collaboration and similar communication. JCM keen to have representation from EELG on SOC in some way.

RC – **Thriving Outdoors** - in relation to Active Scotland, it is worth noting that sportscotland was to look at two main areas for this year – 1. Engaging Parents and 2. The use of the outdoors. Thriving Outdoors had provided information with regard to engaging very young children in the outdoors. SR gave an update on sportscotland and its plans which have had to be paused but these plans will be back up and running as soon as possible. The local authority variances are significant, and there have been some difficulties for outdoor nurseries to open. The guidance coming from STERG is very broad brush and has allowed for a range of interpretations with regard to opening. The use of outdoor

spaces is a great idea however, many of the adults involved with delivering education outdoors have no awareness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and are now producing a code that can be used with nurseries. Looking to help nurseries to deliver high quality education wherever possible and following the Scottish Gov't guidance. RS indicated that everyone should be involved with sharing SOAC not just education establishments. AR raised the concerns coming from local and small communities about the possibility of people coming into small communities and creating a difficult position. AD raised the work underway between SAPOE and NNOL – a training module for teaching staff. RC raised the concerns coming from NNOL about the reduction in conversation about effective use of spaces outside and there is considerable work to do around keeping the outdoors as high profile as possible.

AD – **SAPOE** are designing a two-hour online course which will sit on the Education Scotland website in conjunction with NNOL. Applied for funding to support the design and development of the course but were knocked back. The intention is to provide this course for teaching staff who have no experience in the outdoors. This type of course has been around for some time however this shortened course is intended to provide easier access to information. Plan to have this course in place before the schools break up. SAPOE have also written to Chief Executives of local authorities and COSLA raising awareness of their representatives and confirming that these representatives are available to provide support in outdoor learning. An update and plans regarding outdoor learning have also been circulated amongst SAPOE members. This is to get support in place for outdoor learning as the pace has slowed down in getting traction around outdoor learning. Still engaging with Scot Govt and local authority around the outdoor learning message and trying to achieve a consistent response from local authorities with regard to school trips. NW shared that the online training has been highly successful so far with large numbers of people attending the training.

SR – gave an update on **SGBs and sportscotland** and indicated that the first target was supporting the workforce when COVID hit. A survey is out seeking input on how best to continue to support the sector moving forward. SGBs are still meeting in clusters and providing information to Scot Gov around equipment and personal hygiene.

AD – **OIA** – VisitBritain with DCMS are pulling together a 'Good to Go' campaign for tourism to provide reassurance to visitors that providers are COVID compliant. All 4 nations tourism organisations were involved with these discussions. OIA will be the lead licensor with this scheme. Will be writing guidelines for bothies etc shortly. Further campaign 'Know Before You Go' – is the community ready for you before you go which is encouraging individuals to check on their destinations before travelling. OS also have a project underway to show where it is safe to travel to undertake activity which is supported by OIA. Association of British Climbing Walls have written guidelines which are currently with Downing Street for consideration. The intention is that the protocols will be as similar as possible across the UK. 11th September 2020 sees The Gathering taking place in Manchester, and is free of charge and open to all. There will be outdoor individuals and organisations from across the UK attending this event. MF asked about the representation of Scotland within OIA and AD answered that there were Scottish individuals and businesses taking part in the Board and more widely within OIA.

Victoria Brooks – **Wild Scotland** – submitted by email - WG are producing a simple sign posting document for the sector. So far feedback on the document has been good. Now just need to finalise the text and populate with all the relevant guidelines in the sector which MF is working away at. WG will also including links to RNLI/ Mountain Rescue/ Access Code etc.

The Outdoor Alliance Wales agreed for WG to use their checklist which is great. Specific guidelines will be written for wildlife watching as there are none.

3. **Potential collaborative projects** – Agreed to postpone until a more suitable time was available.
4. **AOB** – None raised at the meeting.
5. **Proposed future meeting dates:**
 - a. Tuesday 30th June
 - b. Tuesday 14th July
 - c. Tuesday 28th July
 - d. Tuesday 11th August

Agreed that these meeting dates were appropriate and JCM is to send out the meeting invitations for all of the above dates.

Action JCM