

## **EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL**

### **PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**  
held on **7<sup>th</sup> August 2024** in Saltire Room 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

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#### **PRESENT:**

Constance Newbould (Chair).. BHS	John Hardy .....ELCV
Peter Hildrew ..... Scotways	Mark James .....Cycling UK
Beth Leslie ..... Ramblers Scotland	Shona McIntosh .....ELC Councillor
James Wyllie ..... NFUS	

#### **ATTENDING:**

Jenny Hargreaves ..... ELC Countryside	Nick Morgan .....ELC Countryside
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#### **APOLOGIES:**

Martin Andrews ..... Wemyss & March	Cheyne Hamm .....ELC Climate Change
Eamon John..... ELC SCL Manager	Chris Milne .....ELC Sustainable Travel
Thomas Stanley..... Landowners	Gordon Stewart .....National Trust Scot.

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### **ACTION**

#### **1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by Shona and seconded by Peter.

#### **2. MATTERS ARISING**

- 2.1 Shona will contact someone she knows to see if she can recommend anyone who may be interested in representing people with disabilities on the Forum. **SM**
- 2.2 Jenny informed the group that Jo Allen has successfully applied for the role of Team Leader in Corporate Communications. Nick will contact her to see if she can attend future meetings. **NM**
- 2.3 Nick will take pictures of the Letham Bridge and put them on Facebook. **NM**
- 2.4 Nick has put Martin in touch with the John Muir Trust.
- 2.5 Nick will put together a post for Facebook about Thomas attending a Path Warden Team Task and send it to Thomas for approval. **NM**

#### **3. PLANNING AND ACCESS**

It was hoped that someone from the Planning Department would attend the meeting to discuss the progress of the Local Development Plan and how community groups

and the Local Access Forum could push for paths and public access to be included in future developments. Unfortunately, no one from Planning was able to make the meeting.

#### **4. ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE**

This was circulated in advance of the meeting and Nick ran through it.

- 4.1 Peter and John had recently received a newsletter from the John Muir Trust which inferred that the worst of their economic crisis was over.
- 4.2 Members of the Forum were very concerned that there continue to be delays with the delivery of the extension of the Railway Walk through the Community Hospital grounds in Haddington.
- 4.3 Shona suggested that the good work done by the landowner at the end of the Herring Road deserved publicity in the Courier or Facebook. Nick will ask the landowner if he would be happy with this after the signs have gone in. **NM**
- 4.4 The Forum members were happy that Sustrans appear to be softening their stance on the width and surface requirements for paths they are willing to fund. It was agreed that in many cases whindust is the best surface option, offering a good quality of surface and easy maintenance.

#### **5. FORUM FACEBOOK**

- 5.1 Nick has put up two posts since the last meeting, but noted that we get very few views or likes. Possibly this is because posts are not going on regularly enough.
- 5.2 Constance suggested that any member could send in pictures of a walk they are on, a sign or anything else and Nick can put them onto the LAF page. **All**

#### **6 ACTIVE TRAVEL**

- 6.1 Chris had already sent an update to members. Nick picked out a few highlights.
- 6.2 The Council has been awarded funding from Sustrans Accessibility Fund to look at barrier, bollard and surface condition improvements at the following locations: Musselburgh Monktonhall, Haddington, Whitecraig and West Barns. There were a number of similar improvements funded last year.
- 6.3 The LAF members welcomed the proposed activated warning signs at the crossing point of the Pencaitland Railway Walk and the A6093. Constance noted that the catches on the existing barriers can catch horses (and probably other users) when negotiating them.
- 6.4 Nick highlighted the path that will be built along Tynebank Road in Haddington. This will be a great addition to the path network, taking people off the narrow, busy road, giving safer access between Knox Academy and Aubigny Sports Centre.

#### **7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE**

A summary of access issues was circulated in advance of the meeting.

- 7.1 Nick reported that only one new issue has been received since the last meeting. In the last 12 months 7 access issues have been resolved and 1 is outstanding.
- 7.2 However, there have been a number of new complaints about access in Dalkeith Country Park. Many of them refer to new mesh that has been put on the locked field gate, preventing people from climbing over it. One person reported being approached by the farmer and told that there was no public access in the estate because it is surrounded by a wall. Another person was walking in the estate, with their dog on a lead, and standing admiring the horses in a field. A pick-up drove past, the driver stopped beyond the white wooden gate and locked it closed behind them. The lady and her dog had to squeeze through an electric fence into a paddock and then back out in order to get back to her car that was parked on Cowpits Road.
- 7.3 Nick will update the Council's Legal Team and ask if they have had any response to their letter to Dalkeith Estate sent earlier in the year. **NM**
- 7.4 Nick explained about the anti-social behaviour that has been happening at the Linn Rocks in East Linton. Groups of youths have been gathering there, taking advantage of free bus travel, and causing problems with noise, fires, getting drunk and antagonising the residents. The police have been involved and questions have been raised about gates and CCTV cameras.

## **8. MEMBERS' UPDATES**

- 8.1 Mark reported that Angie Kinghorn has been appointed Cycling Development Officer by Cycling UK. Initially this will be a 10-month contract, but it is hoped to get funding to extend this.
- 8.2 Mark also reported that the Dunbar Area Partnership will be screening "Women don't Cycle". A documentary encouraging women across the world to go out and cycle.
- 8.3 John had enjoyed attending his first Local Access Forum meeting and is keen to become a member. He sees a big overlap between the work reported to the LAF and funding opportunities available to the ELCV charity. He hopes in the future they can help lever in funding for projects.
- 8.4 James reported that the Giant Hogweed project was now in its fifth year along the Tyne. This year the interactive map shows 100% green ticks, meaning that no Giant Hogweed plants flowered this year. It is the third year of the project on the River Esk. There has been a lot of difficulty identifying and then persuading the landowners to take action there.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 30th October 2024 via Teams