

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **25th October 2017** in the Saltire Rooms, John Muir House, Haddington.

PRESENT:

Erik Bigland	Ramblers	Rhiannon Naismith	NTS
Keith Burns	Cycling UK	Constance Newbould	BHSS
Bill Cuthill	Scotways	Thomas Stanley	SLE
Jim Goodfellow	ELC Councillor	Jon Swift	AELCC
John McMillan	ELC Councillor	James Wyllie (Chair)	NFUS

ATTENDING:

Eamon John	ELC SCL Manager	Duncan Priddle	ELC Countryside (item 3 only)
Jennifer Lothian	ELC Countryside	Paul Chandler	NTS
Jill Mackay	ELC Communications		

APOLOGIES:

Neil Clark	ELC Countryside	Iain Reid	ELC Transportation
Nick Morgan	ELC Countryside	Christopher Spencer	EL Golf
Ken Reid	Independent co-optee		Courses

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 26th July 2017.

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting, proposed by Keith and seconded by Jon.

2. MATTERS ARISING.

2.1 **Publishing of Forum's articles.** Jill said that another 'Living' magazine will be published in November and a Forum article could be incorporated. Thomas agreed to revise his article and it could be submitted for inclusion in 'Living'.

ACTION: Jennifer will send Thomas's article to him to revise for 'Living'. JL

2.2 **'Mud in your Eye'** (ELC Countryside Service's newsletter). Jennifer thanked the Chair for his article on the Local Access Forum in the latest edition.

2.3 **Good practice in grouse shooting management.** Action carried forward.

ACTION: Jennifer to draft text for confirmation by the Chair and then send the request to the National Access Forum for consideration at their next meeting. JL

2.4 **Robert Noble Centenary Walk.** Jon provided an update. This is still being pursued and it is hoped the walk may be ready early next year.

ACTION: Jon to progress the Centenary Walk and keep the Forum informed. JS

- 2.5 **Path near Tynninghame House along River Tyne.** Nick had provided an update. An alternative route beside the river has been agreed but he does not have any plans to formalise it. The Forum were supportive of this route being more accessible.
- 2.6 **Christopher Spencer.** The Chair thanked Christopher for his contribution to the Forum. We will try to find a replacement for him on the Forum.
- 2.7 **Chicane on access route under the A1 at Biel.** Nick had reported that the chicane was probably installed by Transport Scotland during the dualling of the A1. He has asked Iain Reid to contact them to see if it can be modified or removed.
- 2.8 **Preston Road, East Linton.** Jon reported that the proposed alternative route will not go ahead as the landowner is not supportive. The solution is a traffic light crossing but this has much opposition.
- 2.9 John McMillan thanked the Chair for his kind words on his appointment as Provost. He said he is happy to assist the Forum in his official role as Provost, and he offered to host an afternoon tea for the East Lothian Path Wardens in the Provost's Boardroom. The Chair thanked him for his support and accepted his kind offer.

ACTION: Jennifer/Nick to contact John to help arrange afternoon tea in the Provost's Boardroom for the Path Wardens.

JL / NM

3. EAST LOTHIAN COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS.

- 3.1 Duncan Priddle (ELC Countryside Officer) gave a presentation highlighting the good work of the East Lothian Path Warden volunteers (now a registered charity) and described how they have now merged with the other Countryside Volunteers to become the 'East Lothian Countryside Volunteers'.
- 3.2 The East Lothian Path Wardens have won a national award, the Community Path Volunteer Group of the Year Award, from Paths For All. The Chair congratulated the Path Wardens on their national award for the work they undertake every day, which has been acknowledged by their peer group.
- 3.3 The Forum discussed the Path Wardens, including the input and support required from ELC, their insurance, financial support for materials from the Council, and how their charitable status enables them to apply for funding.
- 3.4 There was discussion about the wider ranging benefits the Path Warden volunteers bring to the county which benefit all, and there is ongoing connectivity with the Local Area Partnerships, and with rambling, tourism and health agendas.
- 3.5 John suggested that the Path Wardens' national award should be placed on the Forum's Facebook page and on the Path Wardens' website.

ACTION: Duncan/Nick to ensure the Path Wardens' award is promoted on Facebook and website.

DP / NM

- 3.6 The Chair thanked Duncan for his interesting presentation.

4. GREEN DOG WALKER SCHEME – EAST LOTHIAN.

- 4.1 Jennifer provided a summary of this recently launched scheme to tackle dog fouling at local level across East Lothian. The scheme is underway at Gullane Bents,

Yellowcraig, and in Port Seton, Prestonpans and Levenhall. Local people are involved and lead the scheme in their communities.

- 4.2 There was discussion about how this scheme could be further rolled out, with the suggestion that Community Councils and libraries could be the best mechanisms. There is a need to encourage professional dog walkers to sign up to this scheme.
- 4.3 The promotion of the scheme was discussed. Jill reported that it would be best to formally launch it in the spring, in the next edition of 'Living' and on social media.
- 4.4 There was discussion about wider ranging issues of management of dog fouling and irresponsible dog walking more generally, with various suggestions put forward.

5. FORUM FACEBOOK.

- 5.1 Ken had provided an update about recent activity on the Forum's Facebook page. There are currently 213 'likes' on the page. There have been various recent posts, including one post on rights of way in a field which was seen by 4025 people. The walk guides had 7 shares, 12 likes, 1 comment, and were seen by 1820 people.
- 5.2 Ken asked members for new information and pictures to post on the Facebook page.
- 5.3 The Chair was pleased with the level of interest and number of views. Forum members reported that it is possible to 'boost' a page, for a small fee, so it can be sent to 5000 people who have 'liked' a similar topic. For example, information on the Green Dog Walker Scheme can be sent to people who have 'liked' dogs.

6. 'PATHS IN EAST LOTHIAN' PUBLICATION.

- 6.1 Nick had reported that 4 new walks descriptions have been produced by one of the Path Wardens, and Nick has formatted them into our series. These were circulated at the meeting. There are now 23 walks descriptions in total.
- 6.2 The Chair was pleased about the number of walks descriptions that have now been produced, and he was keen to continue to produce more.

7. ACCESS OFFICERS' UPDATE.

This was circulated in advance of the meeting.

- 7.1 **Launch of the Forth to Farne Way.** The Chair described the launch of this new promoted route, which he and Nick had attended.
- 7.2 **Newhailes.** Jennifer and Rhiannon updated the Forum on progress with access management at Newhailes. Planning permission has been received for the landscape aspects at Newhailes. Management of the 'visitor envelope' is progressing. Construction of the new proposed 'core path' around the sheep field requires planning consent. The gates at either end of the ha-ha have been opened to enable access around the outside of the ha-ha. Rhiannon will keep the Forum informed and she once again invited a group of Forum members out to Newhailes to view NTS's proposals on site.
- 7.3 **Drem to Gullane:** Eamon updated the Forum on the external consultant's progress. The Forum discussed this and particularly the history of the options for developing

this route. The Chair said the Forum would appreciate early notification of the outcomes of the consultant led process.

8. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE.

This was circulated in advance of the meeting.

- 8.1 Jennifer presented a summary of recent access issues reported to the Council. 182 access issues have been logged in total since April 2009. There have been 5 new access issues reported since July 2017.
- 8.2 **Dalkeith Estate:** Jennifer updated the Forum about this issue. She has not yet received any reply from the Estate, however, they have previously stated that they intend to install a pedestrian gate at Monkton Lodge by the end of this year. The Chair said that if there is no progress by late December ELC should write to the Estate again requesting a timetable for the gate installation.

9. MEMBERS' UPDATES.

- 9.1 Eric reported that the 'East Lothian Ramblers and Hillwalkers' now appear first in the Lothian region Ramblers' 'Trail' booklet, which has raised their profile. They are having a fundraising ceilidh.
- 9.2 Constance reported that BHS Lothian branch had agreed to fund two horse friendly gates for the New Winton area and these have now been purchased. The Chair thanked BHS Lothian and said this is a good example for all of us of the kind of contribution that is greatly appreciated.
- 9.3 Thomas reported that SLE has a new "Care for the Countryside" campaign, which includes promoting partnership working with the police, zero waste and responsible dog ownership. He will circulate the details of the campaign to the Forum.

ACTION: Thomas to circulate SLE's "Care for the Countryside" campaign details to the Forum.

TS

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no other business.

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS.

Wed 31st January 2018

Wed 25th April 2018

Wed 25th July 2018

Wed 31st October 2018

All meetings will be held from 2pm – 4:30pm.