

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **24th January 2018** in the Adam Room, John Muir House, Haddington.

PRESENT:

Erik Bigland	Ramblers	Liz Poulson	FCS
Keith Burns	Cycling UK	Ken Reid	Independent co-optee
Paul Chandler	NTS	Jon Swift	AELCC
Jane Henderson	ELC Councillor	James Wyllie (Chair)	NFUS
Constance Newbould	BHSS		

ATTENDING:

Neil Clark	ELC Countryside	Nick Morgan	ELC Countryside
Jennifer Lothian	ELC Countryside	Jill Mackay	ELC Communications

APOLOGIES:

John McMillan	ELC Councillor	Eamon John	ELC SCL Manager
Rhiannon Naismith	NTS	Iain Reid	ELC Transportation
Thomas Stanley	SLE		

ACTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the new members introduced themselves. The Chair informed members that discussions are underway to find a new Golf Courses representative for the Forum.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 25th October 2017.

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

2. MATTERS ARISING.

2.1 Publishing of Forum's articles. Jennifer had sent his article back to Thomas for editing, and is awaiting a reply from Thomas.

ACTION: Jennifer to contact Thomas again about revising his article.

JL

2.2 Good practice in grouse shooting management. With the approval of the Chair, Jennifer has sent a letter from the Forum to the National Access Forum [*copy of letter attached for information*]. There was discussion about the responsibilities of land managers and the public in relation to shooting. Jennifer to circulate details.

ACTION: Jennifer to circulate a note of the responsibilities of land managers and the public in relation to shooting, from the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and BASC guidance.

JL

2.3 Robert Noble Centenary Walk. Jon provided an update. He has contacted the Robert Noble walks organiser about the idea of producing a leaflet of these walks.

- 2.4 **Provost's Reception for Path Wardens.** The Chair reported that he is assisting with trying to fix a date for this with the Provost, and he hopes that Forum members may also be invited. Jennifer/Nick to assist with the arrangements.

ACTION: Jennifer/Nick to liaise with the Chair and the Provost to help arrange Provost's Reception for the Path Wardens.

JL / NM

- 2.5 **Promotion of the Path Wardens' award.** Nick said that the information was placed on the Path Warden Volunteers' website and on the Countryside Volunteers' website. There was an article on the Path Wardens in the Winter 2017 edition of 'Living'. Ken asked for the details to place on the Forum's Facebook page.

ACTION: Nick to send Ken details of the Path Wardens' national award to place on Forum's Facebook page.

NM

- 2.6 **SLE's 'Care for the Countryside' campaign.** Thomas has circulated the details.

- 2.7 **Drem to Gullane.** The Chair reported that the consultant has now consulted and concluded. On 20th February there is a stakeholders' meeting, which he is attending, and he hopes there will be a consensus at that meeting.

3. SCOTTISH OPEN 2018 AND LADIES SCOTTISH OPEN 2018 GOLF TOURNAMENTS: SECTION 11 APPLICATIONS.

- 3.1 Jennifer provided details of the applications for Section 11 Orders under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, to temporarily exempt areas of Gullane Golf Course from access rights for the duration of the Scottish Open and Ladies Scottish Open golf tournaments in July 2018.

- 3.2 The Forum discussed this and asked questions. Forum members' views were that they had no particular concerns about the S.11 applications, and that it was significant that the organisers were asking for 2 exemptions each of 5 days only, to cover the duration of each separate event, and that this was reasonable of the organisers and a good practice example.

- 3.3 In conclusion the Chair said that the Forum approved the S.11 applications and had no objections.

4. FORUM FACEBOOK.

- 4.1 Ken provided an update about recent activity on the Forum's Facebook page. There are now 225 people following the Forum on Facebook. There have been various recent posts, including the launch of the Forth to Farne Way pilgrim route, which received the most views; the SNH campaign on dogs worrying sheep; and advisory signage.

- 4.2 The link to the Forum's Facebook page is here:
<https://www.facebook.com/East-Lothian-Local-Access-Forum-1393185384320597/>

- 4.3 There was discussion about signage at Yellowcraig about tree felling. Ken requested that in future this type of advance information could be added to the Forum's Facebook page to assist access takers. Neil agreed that he would do this.

- 4.4 Ken asked Nick and Jennifer to send him highlights of some of their path and access projects to add to the Forum's Facebook page.

ACTION: Nick/Jennifer to send details of completed path projects (with photos) to Ken to add to Forum's Facebook page.

NM / JL

- 4.5 When the Section 11 Orders for the 2018 golf tournaments have been finalised, the details can be sent to Ken to publicise on the Forum's Facebook page.

ACTION: Jennifer to send details of Section 11 Orders, once finalised, to Ken to publicise on the Forum's Facebook page.

JL

5. 'PATHS IN EAST LoTHIAN' PUBLICATION.

- 5.1 Nick has produced 2 new walks descriptions. These were circulated at the meeting, *copies attached*. There are now 25 walks descriptions in total. Nick would like to develop an overall map of East Lothian to show the locations of all of these walks.

- 5.2 The Forum discussed other walks that could potentially be included in this series, including U3A walking group walks. U3A are considering developing an access database of GPS walks.

- 5.3 'Walk Highlands' website promotes walks all over Scotland, including East Lothian: <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/lothian/east-lothian.shtml> . Our walks could be added to this, however, Nick and Jennifer advised that we can only promote walks on Core Paths, unless we have landowner consent.

- 5.4 Jill advised that the new Council website should be going live at the end of February. It will be more compatible with mobile phones and will be simpler to navigate. The walks produced by Nick will be added to the website as individual web pages, to be accessible to all.

- 5.5 There is an option to produce a series of walks articles to specialist magazines. We could work with ELC's Economic Development partners to develop this, with information on accommodation options and other relevant facilities and services.

ACTION: Jill to discuss options for producing walking articles with ELC Economic Development colleagues (Susan Smith).

Jill M.

6. ACCESS OFFICERS' UPDATE.

This was circulated in advance of the meeting, *copy attached*.

- 6.1 The Chair commented on the quantity of work reported in the update that the Access Officers have undertaken, including several large, key items.
- 6.2 Nick discussed the 'Improving Public Access' option of SRDP funding, and described how 3 farmers in East Lothian are currently applying for funding to build new connecting paths.

7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE.

This was circulated in advance of the meeting, *copy attached*.

- 7.1 Jennifer presented a summary of recent access issues reported to the Council. 189 access issues have been logged in total since April 2009. There have been 7 new access issues reported since October 2017.
- 7.2 **Dalkeith Estate:** Jennifer updated the Forum about this issue. She intends to email the Estate Manager again at the end of January. The Chair expressed the Forum's

concern that there is still inadequate access into Dalkeith Estate and there appears to be no progress. The Forum would appreciate that pressure continues to be applied.

8. MEMBERS' UPDATES.

- 8.1 Councillor Jane Henderson declared her interest in being a resident on the Drem to Gullane route, curtailing her involvement.
- 8.2 Paul reported that all the work at Newhailes is progressing well and they will be opening for Easter. He would be keen to show the Forum the proposals for the new core path route on the ground, and he will confirm with his colleagues the invitation to the Forum to visit Newhailes.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 9.1 **Agenda items:** The Chair encouraged members to bring interesting items to the Forum for inclusion on the agenda. The Chair is keen to include site meetings. A site visit to Newhailes was suggested by Paul as a possible venue for the next Forum meeting, and he will confirm this with his colleagues.

ACTION: Paul to discuss with NTS colleagues the option to hold the next Forum meeting at Newhailes, with a site visit, and confirm to the Chair and Jennifer.

PC

- 9.2 The Chair suggested showing FCS's short video on Lyme Disease at a future Forum meeting. Liz offered to bring this video to a future Forum meeting.

ACTION: Liz to liaise with Jennifer over showing FCS's video on Lyme Disease at a future Forum meeting.

LP

- 9.3 The Chair suggested that each member organisation invites someone to speak at a Forum meeting, to widen the breadth and depth of the meetings. Jennifer mentioned that Area Managers have previously offered to attend to provide information about major outdoor access projects they are involved with and this was noted.

ACTION: All to consider speakers from their organisations who could be invited to speak at future Forum meetings.

ALL

- 9.4 Nick said that he had attended Edinburgh Local Access Forum meeting where there was much discussion about dogs. He and colleagues are now in contact with Access Officers from Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils, aiming to work together on this to achieve a consensus view. The Chair said he was pleased to hear that.

- 9.5 The East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service's leaflet on 'Wildlife Activities for Adults and Hikes programme 2018' was circulated. The Chair said that this is a really valuable service and a valuable resource and he wishes to be kept informed. He praised the Ranger Service for the excellent service they provide and said they should be commended for continuing to provide this programme.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS.

Wed 25th April 2018

Wed 25th July 2018

Wed 31st October 2018

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