

## EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

### PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**  
held on **31<sup>st</sup> October 2018** at The Education Room, Newhailes House, Musselburgh.

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#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **ATTENDING:**

Neil Clark ..... ELC Countryside	Nick Morgan ..... ELC Countryside
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#### **APOLOGIES:**

Eamon John ..... ELC SCL Manager	Jill Mackay ..... ELC Communications
John McMillan ..... ELC Councillor	Thomas Stanley ..... Landowners

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#### **ACTION**

Linda Wigley, NTS General Manager for Edinburgh and the East, welcomed the Forum members to Newhailes and briefly described the revival plans for Newhailes House and grounds. The first phase has already been completed, including the restoration of the ha-ha, flower garden walls, doocot and the new play park. There are plans to undertake further work to the courtyard and produce a masterplan and strategy next year. Longer-term the NTS would like to restore the water garden and possibly the shell house and summerhouse. At that stage they may want to divert the core path.

The meeting then continued with a site visit around the grounds, including along the existing core path and along the route of the path through the cow meadow that the NTS have applied for planning permission to upgrade. The number of dog walkers was notable and many of them were following the desire line next to the ha-ha.

After the walk around the grounds the meeting returned to The Education Room. James thanked Linda and Paul for their hospitality, the use of the room, the refreshments and for taking the time to show the Forum around. He said that the diversion of the core path was not currently an issue. If the NTS were to propose a diversion in the future the Forum would prefer the diversion to follow the route along the ha-ha, rather than a longer deviation into the field. He urged the NTS to be mindful of the views of the Forum.

Linda thanked everyone for coming to Newhailes and then left the meeting.

#### **1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018.**

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

## **2. MATTERS ARISING.**

- 2.1 Duncan Priddle will be very pleased to receive a regular article from Local Access Forum members for the Countryside Team newsletter, Mud in Your Eye. The publication is currently being reviewed and may combine with a volunteer newsletter, so it should reach a wider audience. The Chair has already sent in a draft article for the next issue.
- 2.2 The Chair is keen to promote the work of the Forum, responsible access and the benefits of access to the local economy and health. Nothing has been progressed since the last meeting but he is keen that this will happen in the future.
- 2.3 The Chair reminded Nick of the Forum's view that there should also be an east-west walking route, to connect the proposed cycle route between Drem and Gullane to the existing core path 464 where it would have met core path 357. This should be mentioned to the consultant, who will be looking at the route. The Chair offered his help, if necessary, to contact the landowners. **NM**
- 2.4 Nick sent details of the new access gate into Yester Estate to Ken and it was posted on facebook.
- 2.5 Jill sent a link to Nick, which was forwarded to Forum members, to a press release from the CSGN about the grants available for local businesses along the route.
- 2.6 Neil hasn't managed to arrange a meeting with the new Commercial Director at Dalkeith Estate yet. The Forum are keen that this happens, to hear of the views and proposals of the estate. Although there have not been any recent complaints about public access, it is important that the Forum can report that talks have taken place. The Chair offered to attend the meeting if that is appropriate. **NC**
- 2.7 The Chair is keen for members of the Forum to invite someone from their organisation to talk at a future meeting. This could include aspects of public access that are important to a user group, or difficulties they face. He felt that it was good to have someone external to the meeting to talk and asked Keith if he could arrange for someone from Cycling UK to come to the next Forum meeting. **KB**

## **3. FORUM FACEBOOK.**

- 3.1 Ken reported that he has not received much content to put onto facebook recently and asked members to send any pictures with some text of appropriate items to him for inclusion. **All**
- 3.2 The item on the new gate at Yester Estate attracted some positive comments. Other posts that Ken has put on include the start of the Grouse Season, the JMW marketing initiative and sheep worrying.
- 3.3 Ken urged members to look at the facebook pages and to like them. This helps to promote the page. Over 220 people have liked the page.
- 3.4 Constance will ask Francis Bakker if she can provide information about a recent pony ride at Seacliff that she organised. Erik mentioned an upcoming Ramblers' walk that could go on. **CN/EB**

#### **4. 'PATHS IN EAST LOTHIAN' PUBLICATION.**

- 4.1 Nick has produced two new walks sheets since the last meeting. These cover the Bolton to Haddington Walk and the North Berwick to East Linton section of the JMW. This brings the total number of sheets available to 27. Nick has drawn all of the walks covered onto a map and intends to try to fill in gaps between the walks that have already been described.
- 4.2 The Chair suggested the River Esk Path between Musselburgh and Smeaton for a future sheet. He is also keen to see if something can be done connecting Levenhall to the new development at Wallyford.

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

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

- 5.1 Nick will send a map to the members of the Forum showing where the new gate is into Yester Estate and the location of the paths in the area. NM
- 5.2 Nick reported that the landowner north of Drem had mentioned compensation for loss of productive land to him at a previous meeting. The Forum members were concerned to hear this and thought it would set a dangerous precedent.
- 5.3 Councillor Henderson said that the orders for the quiet roads trial around West Fenton were being drafted and it is hoped that the trial will start in December.
- 5.4 The Chair has been helping with a project that aims to eradicate Giant Hog Weed from the River Tyne. The local community and volunteer path wardens have been digging out plants for a number of years. The Chair has used his experience from co-ordinating a successful project on the Biel Water. The key being to involve all of the landowners and for them to know that all of their neighbouring landowners have signed up to spraying out Giant Hog Weed on their land. The volunteers will continue to act as spotters and the Chair is happy to act as the co-ordinator for this project. Nick passed on the gratitude of the path wardens and Dunpender Community Council for the Chair's help.

#### **6. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE.**

A summary of access issues was circulated in advance of the meeting, *copy attached.*

- 6.1 There had only been two new issues since the last meeting. One was a locked gate and the other a new fence that prevents access. Both issues are still being followed up.

#### **7. MEMBERS' UPDATES.**

- 7.1 Constance reported that there have been some problems in Midlothian with horse riders being told that it is not appropriate for them to ride on paths through new housing developments. She hoped that nothing similar would happen in East Lothian.
- 7.2 The Chair informed the meeting that the NFUS had produced a press release (*previously circulated to Forum members*) about sheep worrying and dog control orders. A FOI enquiry had revealed that 21 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities

issued no Dog Control Orders for livestock worrying over a six-month period. The press release did not say how many livestock worrying incidents had been reported in that time. Jon said that the 1953 Dogs (Protection of Livestock Act) already covers livestock worrying and it is a criminal offence, so should be dealt with by the police rather than the local authorities. The Chair pointed out that the law is not being implemented and that the control orders are an intermediate option that appear to also not be being implemented.

- 7.3 Neil informed the Forum that ScotWays have just produced a very comprehensive new book called “The Law of Access to Land in Scotland”, which guides people through the legislation surrounding rights of way and the right of responsible access.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

- 8.1 Keith expressed his delight that Midlothian Council had successfully defended its notice requiring a landowner near Penicuik to unblock a path on their land leading into Penicuik Estate. (*Since the meeting, Nick has heard that the landowner is to appeal the decision.*)
- 8.2 The Chair noted that Ken had been co-opted onto the Forum over a year ago as an independent co-optee to represent people with disabilities. The Chair asked if Ken would be prepared to remain on the Forum for another year, which Ken agreed to. Ken was then co-opted onto the Forum for another year.
- 8.3 The Chair also noted that his term as Chairman will end at the July 2019 meeting when a new Chair will need to be elected.

## **9. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS.**

Wed 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019 from 2pm – 4:30pm, Council Chambers, Town House, Haddington.

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from 2pm – 4:30pm, Saltire Rooms 1 & 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

Wed 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 from 2pm – 4:30pm, Saltire Rooms 1 & 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

Wed 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019 from 2pm – 4:30pm, Saltire Rooms 1 & 2, John Muir House, Haddington.