

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **30th January 2019** at Council Chambers, Town House, Haddington.

PRESENT:

James Wyllie (Chair) .. NFUS	Keith Burns Cycling UK
Bill Cuthill Scotways	Jane Henderson ELC Councillor
John McMillan ELC Councillor	Ken Reid Independent co-optee
Jon Swift AELCC	

ATTENDING:

Neil Clark..... ELC Countryside	Mark James Cycling UK
Jill Mackay..... ELC Communications	Nick Morgan ELC Countryside

APOLOGIES:

Erik Bigland Ramblers	Paul Chandler..... NTS
Eamon John..... ELC SCL Manager	Constance Newbould .. BHSS
Liz Poulson FCS	

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 31st October 2018.

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

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Nick has mentioned to the consultant, who is looking at the Drem to Gullane route, that the LAF desire an east-west route to link to the existing core path.
- 2.2 Neil has met with the Commercial Director of Dalkeith Estate. They have said that they will be putting in a pedestrian gate at the Monkton entrance. The Chair was keen to follow this up in two months if nothing has been heard.
- 2.3 Nick had sent a map of the new access into Yester Estate around the membership.
- 2.4 Councillor McMillan suggested that the LAF may want to host a walk for people who are interested in the countryside. Maybe this could be done in partnership with the Path Wardens. Councillor McMillan suggested Cockenzie to Aberlady on the JMW incorporating Gosford. He will try and sort something out. **JMcM**
- 2.5 Jon raised his concerns about the deer fence at Yester Estate. This has no provision for public access through the fence. Nick said that whilst accepting that access rights may apply to some of the area within the fence a large proportion of the area was curtilage or areas of privacy for the house. The tracks that the fence crosses all head towards the house or stables. The estate have allowed new entrances to be

made for public access and have paid for the new core path to be built along with improving the surface of various other tracks on the core path network. They also maintain the paths and have provided a number of bins. The Chair noted that no formal complaints have been received about the fence.

3. CYCLING IN EAST LOTHIAN

- 3.1 Mark James, a member of Cycling UK, gave a presentation about an “Everyday cyclist’s perspective of ELC’s Strategy and Infrastructure”. This included a review of the Council’s Local Transport Strategy, some of the issues that cyclists face, the recent improvements to the cycle network and the future of cycling.
- 3.2 There was a lot of discussion over various subjects. Wider pavements were seen as a great way forward, although it was pointed out that these have to be carefully segregated to ensure that they don’t present issues for the visually impaired. There have been various town centre regeneration consultations, which have given consideration to widening pavements, pedestrianising streets and limiting access by cars. However, it was appreciated that as all towns are different, they each need to be looked at individually.
- 3.3 Mark suggested that East Lothian Council needs a cycling champion. Councillors McMillan and Henderson will consider this. **JMcM/JH**
- 3.4 Mark would also like to see cycling representatives on community councils and area partnerships. He would also like to see more benefits for ELC staff to encourage them to cycle more.
- 3.5 When asked why he thought that cycling was so popular in Dunbar, but not so much in other towns, Mark suggested that the layout of the town made cycling a quicker option for getting from one side of the railway to the other.
- 3.6 Mark is keen that cycling is considered normal and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to everyone if more people were to cycle.

4. FACEBOOK

- 4.1 There have been two posts that were really well received since the last meeting. One was a discussion about the surfacing of the Pencaitland Railway Walk, which received a number of positive responses. The other was the post about dogs and sheep worrying featuring Constance. This received the largest number of views and shares of any post on the Local Access Forum page.
- 4.2 Constance had shared a Facebook post about the Seacliff ride with the LAF Facebook page. For some reason this doesn’t appear as prominently as if the post had been put on the page itself.
- 4.3 On behalf of the Local Access Forum, the Chairman thanked Ken for his work keeping the Facebook page up and running.

5 'PATHS IN EAST LOTHIAN' PUBLICATION

- 5.1 Nick has produced two more walks sheets since the last meeting. These are Prestonpans to Aberlady along the John Muir Way and the River Esk Path and Smeaton Railway (linking the JMW to the Pencaitland Railway Walk).
- 5.2 There was some discussion about whether we should say if particular routes are suitable for cycling. Because of the range of different bicycles and abilities, it was decided that the sheets will promote the route and it is up to individuals to assess if it is responsible to cycle on them.
- 5.3 Nick will look at promoting the Heugh and Waggon Way from Tranent to Cockenzie for one of the future sheets. **NM**

6. ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE

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

- 6.1 Councillor Henderson raised concerns that at a recent community meeting someone had suggested that the route from Drem to Gullane had all been agreed. Nick said that there have been no formal discussions with the landowners north of the Peffer Burn, but he had been in touch with some of the landowners to let them know that a consultant would soon be in touch regarding the route.
- 6.2 The application for exemption from access rights during the Scottish Open and Scottish Ladies Open at Renaissance was discussed. Councillor Henderson had heard that they may be looking for a longer exemption than 5 days, But Nick assured her that he had been in discussion with the organisers and confirmed that the orders will each be for five days.
- 6.3 The Chairman asked if a map of the requested right of way diversion at Mayshiel Estate could be circulated to the members of the Forum. **NM**

7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE

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

- 7.1 There had been four access issues since the last meeting. One was a rambler's group asking how they should pass by a recently restored holiday cottage, a lady was shouted at while walking on North Berwick Golf Course, a man was shouted at whilst passing a farm steading and someone had raised concern about a bund that has been built on a woodland track.

8. MEMBERS' UPDATES

- 8.1 The Chairman reported that Constance has been involved in a recent campaign urging dog owners to be more responsible and not allow their dogs to worry livestock. This is a joint initiative between NFUS, Scottish Land and Estates and Police Scotland.
- 8.2 Jon reported that the landowner who owns the field between the white bridge and Preston Mill is intending to put livestock in that field and is fencing it. He is aware that the JMW runs along one side and there are other paths through the field.

8.3 Councillor McMillan suggested that an Area Partnership manager be invited to a future meeting. Town centre access is something that many Area Partnerships have been discussing.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Keith was pleased to report that the landowner has withdrawn his appeal against the Section 14 notice in Penicuik, Midlothian. The blockage on a route towards Penicuik Estate has now been removed.

9.2 Jill reported that the East Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime has recently been formed. Various organisations are involved in the initiative, including East Lothian Council, Police Scotland and the NFUS. It aims to protect landowners against criminal activity and encourage those out in the countryside to report suspicious activity.

9.3 The Chairman reported a change in ownership of the field on the east side of Stenton, which may mean that the proposed path could be more likely to happen.

9.4 Potential subjects for the next meeting could be rural crime. Derek Oliver or the new Chief Inspector, Stevie Duncan could be invited. **NC/NM**

9.5 Mark James reported a locked gate at Fox Lake. **NM**

9.6 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.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

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

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

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