

# EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

## PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**  
held on **17<sup>th</sup> April 2019** at Council Chambers, Town House, Haddington.

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### PRESENT:

James Wyllie (Chair) .. NFUS	Paul Chandler..... NTS
John McMillan..... ELC Councillor	Constance Newbould .. BHSS
Ken Reid ..... Independent co-optee	Thomas Stanley..... Landowners
Jon Swift ..... AELCC	

### ATTENDING:

Neil Clark..... ELC Countryside	Nick Morgan ..... ELC Countryside
Derek Oliver..... ELC Env. Health	

### APOLOGIES:

Sue Kempson ..... ELC Councillor	Eamon John..... ELC SCL Manager
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### ACTION

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

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

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Councillor McMillan is still keen to arrange a walk hosted by the LAF and Path Wardens. He will aim to take this forward. **JMcM**
- 2.2 Councillor McMillan is still keen on the idea of a cycling champion. He may even take on the role himself. Another option may be Councillor Hampshire, who chairs the Cycle Forum. **JMcM**
- 2.3 Nick had sent a map of the proposed diversion of the right of way at Mayshiel to the members of the LAF. The Chair had visited the estate and thought that the proposed diversion of the right of way onto the core path was satisfactory.
- 2.4 The Countryside Ranger has looked at the gate at Fox Lake and spoken to the landowner. Nick would still like to check this one out further.

#### 3. EAST LoTHIAN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST RURAL CRIME (ELPARC)

- 3.1 Derek Oliver, East Lothian Council's Protective Services Manager gave a talk about the East Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime. This is a multi-agency partnership consists of many organisations including ELC's Protective Services, Amenity Services and Countryside Services, the police, Scottish Fire and Rescue,

SEPA, NFUs, Neighbourhood Watch and more. The partnership was launched on 23 January

- 3.2 The Partnership aims to promote techniques to engage rural communities with information and support. There is a stronger deterrent if groups are working together.
- 3.3 The current priorities are hare coursing, rural theft, off road motorbikes, fly-tipping, fire-raising, poaching and livestock worrying.
- 3.4 The Rural Watch messaging scheme has already resulted in a reduction in the amount of hare coursing occurring in East Lothian.
- 3.5 The Chair commented that a lot of rural crime such as fly-tipping could be prevented by locking gates and asked if this was something that is recommended, as this could impact on access rights. Derek responded that farmers can be advised to lock gates, but access rights must be taken into account, such as leaving a gap.
- 3.6 Jon asked about off-road motor biking. This is illegal without the permission of the landowner. If permission is given to use private land then a public entertainment licence may be required.
- 3.7 The ELPARC will have a stand at the Haddington Show. There have been a number of complaints about commercial dog walkers, not picking up after their dogs, or having too many dogs. Other dog walkers can be useful eyes and ears, helping to report issues.
- 3.8 Ken asked if the Land Reform Act had caused an increase in conflicts between different user groups. It is difficult to know what may be specifically as a result of the LRA, but it is likely that there has been a reduction of issues since its enactment.
- 3.9 The Chair thanked Derek Oliver for coming to the meeting to give his presentation.

#### **4. FACEBOOK**

- 4.1 There has only been one post since the last meeting about the use of willow setts to prevent erosion along the edge of a path.
- 4.2 Ken had shared a post from the East Lothian Countryside Rangers page about ground nesting birds and dogs.
- 4.3 Ken encouraged members to contribute and encouraged examples of good and bad practice from elsewhere.

#### **5 'PATHS IN EAST LOTHIAN' PUBLICATION**

- 5.1 Nick has produced a new walks sheet describing the Heugh and Waggon Way.
- 5.2 Councillor McMillan suggested sending a copy to the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust. He also said that next year is the year of Coast and Waters, so could be an opportunity to bundle some appropriate walks together. Funding may be available for this from June.

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

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

- 6.1 The Chair reminded Nick of the Forum's desire for an east-west link from the proposed cycle path to connect in with the existing core paths (464).
- 6.2 The Chair asked for a map illustrating the current end of the Herring Road and the proposed cycle route that the consultant is looking at for the LEADER project. **NM**
- 6.3 The Chairman wanted to pass on his thanks to the Path Wardens. Nick will add a note to the next monthly report that he circulates to them. **NM**

## **7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE**

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

- 7.1 Neil has met with the Visitor Centre Manager at Dalkeith Country Park to discuss public access there. He claimed that there had been a lot of antisocial behaviour and their solution was to lock the gates at night. This is not a solution and Neil offered to put him in touch with the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Team. The estate plan to install a pedestrian gate at the Monktonhall entrance, but nothing has happened as yet. Neil prompted them again last week.
- 7.2 Jon asked that if a planning application is submitted for the gate then the Forum be made aware of it.

## **8. MEMBERS' UPDATES**

- 8.1 Neil reported that the Countryside Rangers' programme of events is now available on line:  
[https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210569/countryside\\_and\\_wildlife/12069/countryside\\_ranger\\_service/2](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210569/countryside_and_wildlife/12069/countryside_ranger_service/2)
- 8.2 Thomas reported that Midlothian are in the process of reviewing and amending their core paths plan and there is a lot to be learned from the process. Nick said that it is unlikely that East Lothian will be reviewing its core paths plan in the near future, but may make single amendments if necessary.
- 8.3 Jon asked if there had been any movement on the Newhailes path and potential core path diversion. Paul replied that the project is on hold for the foreseeable future.
- 8.4 James reported that the NFU responsible dog campaign is continuing.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 The Chair attended the joint National Access Forum/Local Access Forum meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April. He said that he would recommend that others attend a future meeting to see what other LAFs are doing. Some are lacking focus and it showed the quality of the people on our Forum. Some LAFs have been helping with reviews of core path plans. The NAF has been considering the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and making a youth-friendly version. There were also a lot of resources available at the meeting, including walks leaflets and booklets on how to build a path.

## **10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

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.