

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **30th October 2019** in Saltire Rooms 1 & 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

PRESENT:

Jon Swift (Chair).....AELCC	Paul Chandler..... NTS
Sue KempsonELC Councillor	John McMillan..... ELC Councillor
Constance NewbouldBHSS	Ken Reid Independent co-optee
James Wyllie (Chair)NFUS	

ATTENDING:

Eamon John.....ELC SCL Manager	Jenny Hargreaves . ELC Countryside
Jill Mackay.....ELC Communications	Nick Morgan ELC Countryside

APOLOGIES:

Neil Clark.....ELC Countryside	Jo Daly Scottish Forestry
Mark JamesCycling UK	Andrew Ralton Scotways
Thomas Stanley.....Landowners	

ACTION

The Chair started the meeting by introducing Jenny Hargreaves, East Lothian Council's new Countryside Officer.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 31st July 2019.

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by Constance and seconded by James.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Councillor McMillan is still keen to arrange a walk, possibly with options of North Berwick Law, Traprain Law and Lammer Law. He has been unable to find the time, but suggested April. This would have to take into account the bird nesting and lambing seasons.
- 2.2 Nick will be asking the landowner at Fox Lake to put in a gap next to the gate to allow public access. **NM**
- 2.3 James will write to Sustrans about their new requirement for paths that they fund to be 3.5 metres wide. Nick to send him contact details. **JW/NM**
- 2.4 Neil has send the poster about irresponsible camping to Ken and this has been put on the Facebook page. Councillor McMillan thanked Ken for doing this and noted that it had been liked by a number of people.

- 2.5 Nick had sent details of the Beat the Streets projects with the previous minutes. He also circulated a leaflet with more details at the meeting.

3. ACCESS OFFICER'S CHANGING ROLE

- 3.1 Nick ran through a brief history of how the Access Officer's role has changed since he started the job 17 years ago. Nick was originally employed as the Path Development Officer and the emphasis in those days was about building paths, creating community path networks, longer strategic routes and the John Muir Way.
- 3.2 With the enactment of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act the job was changed to Access Officer and Jennifer Lothian was employed around this time. Work then concentrated on the Core Paths Planning consultations, which complimented the previous work that had been done.
- 3.3 It was noted that external funding used for paths reduced considerably after the financial crisis in 2008. East Lothian Council has continued to support path development with a £50,000 Capital budget each year.
- 3.4 With the increasing number of housing developments in East Lothian the Access Officers have been involved more and more in trying to ensure there is a good provision of active travel routes and green spaces in any applications that are approved. It is heartening that planners now consider such things as necessary, whereas we used to have to battle to try to justify any paths.
- 3.5 Things became more challenging when Jennifer left last April and then Duncan Priddle left this summer. Luckily Jenny is now in post as Countryside Officer and she will be looking after the Path Warden Volunteers, which should free up more time for Nick to undertake statutory duties, such as resolving access issues.
- 3.6 Councillor McMillan said that although some council duties are statutory there are many more that are equally as important that Council staff contribute towards. It is important that we all make sure that people are made aware of the importance of the work the Countryside team do on paths and greenspace and how this contributes to improvements in health and wellbeing and meeting carbon targets.

4. FACEBOOK

- 4.1 Ken reported that there had been a good response to the post on irresponsible camping. Also the Giant Hogweed programme on the River Tyne had been popular. Ken had also put up a picture of a friendly sign asking people not to park in a gateway that he had come across on the Fife Pilgrims' Way.
- 4.2 Ken made his usual plea for more material to put on the Facebook page.

5 'PATHS IN EAST LOTHIAN' PUBLICATION

- 5.1 Nick has produced a new walks sheet for a walk from Haddington to Athelstaneford. This is walk number 32.
- 5.2 Jenny suggested that Cicerone produce walking guide books and it may be worth seeing if they would be interested in publishing the walks sheets in an East Lothian book.

6. ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE

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

- 6.1 Councillor McMillan had met with the Drem to Gullane Campaign Group and they have said they would like to work collaboratively with the Council to find a solution for a path. He suggested that they could come as observers to a future Local Access Forum meeting.
- 6.2 James suggested that if more people walked the route of core path 357, then the landowner may be more inclined to give permission for a path to be built there.

7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE

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

- 7.1 Nick is conscious that a number of access issues have not been resolved, but he hopes to have more time to spend on them now that Jenny is in post.

8. MEMBERS' UPDATES

- 8.1 Paul reported that the NTS were producing a management plan for how Newhailes Estate will be developed. This will include public access.
- 8.2 James reported that the NFUS dogs and sheep worrying campaign continues and is gathering support.
- 8.3 Jenny has recently recruited two new path wardens. She will also be meeting three people on Monday who are interested in volunteering.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 Constance will ask Helene Mauchlen if she is able to talk at our January meeting **CN**
- 9.2 Ken noted that we haven't had a golfing representative attend a Forum meeting in recent years. He considers that, given the number of golf courses in East Lothian, it is important for a representative to attend. Nick will ask Paul Armour from Dunbar Golf Club if he is able to attend the next meeting. **NM**

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 29th January, in the Council Chambers, Town House, Haddington
Wednesday 29th April, in Saltire Rooms 1& 2 in John Muir House, Haddington.
Wednesday 29th July, in Saltire Rooms 1& 2 in John Muir House, Haddington.
Wednesday 28th October, in Saltire Rooms 1& 2 in John Muir House, Haddington.