

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **29th July 2020** via Skype.

PRESENT:

Jon Swift (Chair)..... AELCC	Mark James..... Cycling UK
Sue Kempson ELC Councillor	John McMillan..... ELC Councillor
Constance Newbould .. BHSS	Ken Reid Independent co-optee
James Wyllie..... NFUS	

ATTENDING:

Neil Clark..... ELC Countryside	Jill Mackay..... ELC Communications
Nick Morgan ELC Countryside	

APOLOGIES:

Francis Hepburne Scottish Forestry	Eamon John ELC SCL Manager
Thomas Stanley..... Landowners	

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 29th January 2020.

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by James and seconded by Councillor Kempson. There was no meeting held in April due to the Covid-19 crisis.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 There have been various meetings held at the new Community Hospital to discuss the extension of the railway walk through the hospital grounds. Councillor McMillan, James and Nick have attended. There is slow progress being made and Nick recently helped with a funding application to design the repositioning of the fuel tanks to allow space for the path to pass.
- 2.2 The National Access Forum/Local Access Forum joint meeting which had been planned for 20th March was cancelled because of the Covid crisis.
- 2.3 Nick sent a draft of the proposed signs for North Berwick West Links Golf Course around the membership and received comments back. The amended signs have now been installed taking account of the comments received.
- 2.4 Jon has been in touch with Network Rail about the flooding in the underpass at East Linton. They said they were aware of the issue and will resolve it, although nothing appears to have been done yet.

3. COVID-19 ROUND UP

- 3.1 Please see separate note.

4. FACEBOOK

- 4.1 The Local Access Forum page has been liked by over 250 people.
- 4.2 Ken said that the Facebook page has been a great means of educating people during the lockdown. He had shared the Countryside Rangers' post about irresponsible camping and a sign that he had seen about clearing up after your animals. Ken had also shared the Spaces for People consultation.
- 4.3 A post about responsible access to golf courses reached over 21,000 people. There were a number of comments, not particularly positive but nothing abusive!
- 4.4 Ken will share the link to the consultation about the Highway Code review. **KR**

5 ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE

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

- 5.1 James expressed his frustration about the need and cost of moving the fuel tank at the new Community Hospital in order to meet the requirements of Sustrans and questioned if it is really necessary for all paths they fund to be 3.5 metres wide. Mark agreed that for some commuter routes a 3.5 metre width is fine, but there are other paths that don't need to be this wide.
- 5.2 James reported that he had been successful in his application to BeGreen for funding for the Forth to Farne Way. He was awarded £4,500, which will be put towards a guide book, way marking and the web site. The way markers will be the same size as the East Lothian Path Network ones, which will allow them to be attached to 3" fence posts. They may purchase some stickers for use on metal sign posts. James is aware of the need to be sensitive about the number of markers and signs, as the guide book will give much of the information and mostly it will be a case of following the Northumberland Coastal Path, Berwickshire Coastal Path and John Muir Link. The waymarkers will only really be needed where the route diverges from these paths.
- 5.3 Councillor McMillan thought the route was an exciting development and thought it presented many opportunities for self-catering and other small businesses. He suggested contacting the Tourism Officers.
- 5.4 Nick had hoped to talk about a meeting he had had with the Secretary of North Berwick Golf Club about public access on the course. He will put together a note and circulate it around the members for comment. **NM**

6. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE

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

- 6.1 Nick wanted to correct the figures in the note that he had circulated. There had been 16 access issues resolved since April 2019, not 12 as in the note.

- 6.2 Nick had also wanted to talk about the Ormiston Yew issue in more detail, but because of a lack of time it was agreed that Nick would also circulate this to the members as a note and ask for comments. NM

7. MEMBERS' UPDATES

- 7.1 Councillor McMillan wanted to thank Neil, Nick and the Countryside Team for all of their work during the Covid crisis. There has been concern from a number of landowners about irresponsible behaviour by the public.
- 7.2 Constance has been working on an idea to create a route in the Lammermuirs using the windfarm tracks. She will put together maps and draw up a potential route, identifying where cattle grids are with no gates. She also wants to identify areas where horse boxes can be parked. BHS can supply gates if the windfarm operators can fit them. She is conscious of the concerns there are about motorbikes using the tracks.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 James reported that the giant hogweed project to eradicate the invasive weed from the River Tyne is now in its second year. 60 miles of the river have been surveyed by volunteers and the landowners have sprayed any plants that have been spotted. He is confident that there has been no flowering giant hogweed along the river this year. There is an on-line map where people can see the progress that has been made: <https://www.elcv.org.uk/tasks/invasives/the-program/the-2020/>
- 8.2 Councillor Kempson said that she thought there was giant hogweed growing in Whittingehame Estate. She will send details to James.
- 8.3 Constance said she had contacted Nick about giant hogweed growing on the side of the A1. He had contacted Bear Scotland and it has now been sprayed.

9. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 28th October, 2pm until 4.30pm. The Saltire Rooms 1 & 2 in John Muir House have been booked, but it is likely it will be a Skype meeting again.