

EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY

Minutes of the meeting of the **EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**
held on **25th January 2023** in the Saltire Meeting Rooms, John Muir House, Haddington.

PRESENT:

Jon Swift (Chair).....	AELCC	Mark James	Cycling UK
Beth Leslie	Scottish Ramblers	Shona McIntosh	ELC Councillor
Thomas Stanley.....	Landowners	James Wyllie	NFUS

ATTENDING:

Jenny Hargreaves	ELC Countryside	Chris Milne	ELC Sustainable Travel
Nick Morgan	ELC Countryside		

APOLOGIES:

Laura Douglas	ELC Ranger Service	Peter Hildrew	Scotways
Jill Mackay	ELC Comms.	Ken Reid	Independent co-optee
Parvine Woodger	ELC Ageing Well		

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on 26th October 2022

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

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Jon has received a response from the temporary secretary of the NAF about NatureScot attending LAF meetings. It is not a corporate decision and is up to each local area. They may attend if there is a specific reason. Nick confirmed that the local officer is on the mailing list.
- 2.2 Nick had received a call from the horse rider who had been in touch with Constance about various issues. After a long chat she seemed happy with the situation.
- 2.3 It is not thought that Neil had managed to talk to the landowner at Fox Lake about the locked gate. Mark pointed out that there is a new planning application to extend the facilities there and possibly access could be gained through this application. Nick to forward the planning application number to Shona. **NM**
- 2.4 Nick and Jon are meeting the owners of Linn Rocks in East Linton next week to discuss the issues of antisocial behaviour they have been experiencing. Jenny confirmed that this has been raised at the Water Safety meetings.
- 2.5 Nick has spoken to the landowners on either side of Becky's Strip. It is assumed that it is part of Balgone Estate, but the landowner wasn't sure, but said he would be

happy for the path work to proceed if he did own it. The landowner on the other side of the track doesn't think it is his, but he is also keen for the work to go ahead.

- 2.6 Nick hasn't been able to produce a map showing the location of all of the locations in his path report and the access issues. This would take a lot of time and given the scale may not be useful. He will always bring his laptop to meetings so that he can show the location of any specific issue.
- 2.7 Nick apologised for forgetting about an e-mail from Mark containing some access issues from Fiona Crombie. He had forwarded it to the relevant Countryside Rangers that morning and asked them to take a look and report back.
- 2.8 Mark said that the A1 underpass near Knowes still had not been cleared. Jenny had asked the Community Payback Team to do this and she will chase them up. **JH**

3. FORUM FACEBOOK

- 3.1 Ken had sent an update about the Facebook page:
- 3.2 21 January. Shared Rangers' post on dogs worrying sheep. So far, only 1 like.
3 November. British Horse Society warning about risk to horses from fireworks. 1 like.
16 August. Festival of walking and wheeling. 13 shares and 3 likes.
14 August. Guidance on overtaking horses. 6 likes.
3 August. Shared Rangers' post on fire in John Muir Country Park. 2 shares and 3 likes.
28 July. Haddington to Longniddry Railway Path upgrade. 35 likes.
As ever there was a small flurry of activity after the last meeting I was able to attend, in July. I missed the October meeting and missed sending an update, so no flurry. Looking forward to receiving several items in the next couple of weeks, by e-mail please.
- 3.3 Jon thanked Ken for the work he puts into the Facebook page and reminded members to send in a picture and a few words for Ken to post. **AI**

4 ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE

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

- 4.1 Nick will send a map with the minutes showing the location of the path in Tynningame which he is working on and the core path to Binning Wood. **NM**
- 4.2 Jon expressed his concern that Dunpender Community Council had been contacted about the proposed closure of the level crossing and new bridge at Markle, but they had only been given two weeks to comment. He felt this wasn't much time for such a significant proposal.
- 4.3 Nick has been invited to a meeting on the 7th March when hopefully the consultants will be reporting on the commitment for the John Muir Trust if they were to take over the management of the John Muir Way.
- 4.4 The Trust for Conservation Volunteers has been successful in its application for Lottery Funding for the development phase of their proposed project to train young people in conservations skills by improving the biodiversity along the John Muir

Way. If the project moves on to the next phase they hope to train up 24 students over three years.

- 4.5 East Lothian Council has been awarded over £11 million from the Levelling Up Fund to do landscaping work at the old Cockenzie Power Station site and the old Coal Store. This will make the sites better suited for development. The project will include improvements to the John Muir Way behind the old power station site, removing steps and a bridge and resurfacing the route.
- 4.6 Just after Christmas a section of the John Muir Way in Dunbar showed signs of cracking and movement. The old concrete wall that was behind the swimming pool at the Doo Rock appears to have been undermined and is still moving. Council engineers are monitoring the situation. Repairs cannot be undertaken while there is still movement. There is a simple diversion around this part of the route, but long-term this will be a very expensive repair if the original wall and path are to be reinstated.

5. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE

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

- 5.1 Mark said that the locked gate across the core path at Eweford may have resolved itself as Taylor Wimpey are using the farm access road as a site access. However, this may only be during working hours. Nick will ask the Countryside Ranger to take a look and see if she can find out what is happening. **NM**
- 5.2 Mark raised concerns about a no entry sign on the closed road at Wester Broomhouse, which is aimed at motorised vehicles, but is off-putting to cyclists and walkers. Nick will check this out. **NM**
- 5.3 Concern was raised about the motorcycle barriers on the River Tyne Path east of Haddington. These were put in when the path was built as a condition required by the landowner. However, the farm has recently changed hands, so Nick will see if a gap can be created around the barriers to make it easier for cyclists and mobility scooters to get through. **NM**
- 5.4 Thomas had noticed a number of informal paths appearing in the field on the south side of the River Tyne in Haddington, which appears to correspond to the growth in housing in the area. He asked if the impact on neighbouring landowners is considered when planning applications are approved. This is an issue that has long concerned Nick, as new housing developments tend to be built on the ground surrounding towns and villages where people have traditionally walked. The development displaces those walkers and adds more people into the area. He said that places like Clerkington had been overwhelmed with people walking on the estate and there is rarely any provision made when new developments are approved. Shona was interested to hear this and will look into what can be done.
- 5.5 Shona mentioned that the new Chair of the Musselburgh Area Partnership, Gaynor Allen, is keen to have a strategic plan for biodiversity in the area. She has identified an area of Japanese rose on the west of the Esk estuary and feels it would be better to have wild flowers. This would link in nicely with the current work at Levenhall, but may have to wait until the flood preventions scheme has been finalised.

6. MEMBERS' UPDATES

- 6.1 Jon hasn't been able to check the right of way up to Pencraig to check if it has been surfaced as was promised to the Planners.
- 6.2 Chris reported that the bridge over the Tyne at Riverside Drive in Haddington will need to be replaced in the near future. It will need to be widened to make it suitable for active travel. Plans are about to be drawn up, which will allow costs to be estimated and it is likely there will be a consultation about its replacement.
- 6.3 Chris informed the meeting that provisional agreement has been reached with the football club to use a section of ground to provide a path adjacent to Tynebank Road in Haddington. An options appraisal will be done to consider how to continue this path beyond this area. This is a route that has long been requested by the community.
- 6.4 Mark reported that Sustaining Dunbar has applied for grant funding from Sustrans to look at adding and creating paths on the south side of Dunbar near the School.
- 6.5 Shona said that members may have noticed an article in the Courier about residents in the Persimmon Homes being cut off because two underpasses under the railway were flooded. It was a condition of the planning consent that these underpasses had to be surfaced along with the connecting path, but there is no obligation on the developers to maintain them in good condition. She will ask Planning if conditions can be applied to planning applications for developers to maintain access, not just provide paths. **SM**

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 7.1 James wanted to remind members that it is lambing time, so people should think about where they go walking with their dogs.
- 7.2 Nick asked members to think about what they would like to see on the agenda for future meetings. We normally try to have a topic for discussion at each meeting.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 26th April – via Teams.

Wednesday 26th July – Saltire Room 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

Wednesday 25th October – via Teams.