



EAST LOTHIAN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM MINUTES

25th OCTOBER 2023 | 2pm | Microsoft Teams meeting

Chair	Thomas Stanley	<i>Landowners</i>	(JS)
Minutes	Jen Newcombe	<i>ELC Countryside Ranger</i>	(JN inab)
Attendees	Martin Andrews	<i>Wemyss and March</i>	(MA)
	Laura Douglas	<i>ELC Senior Countryside Ranger</i>	(LD)
	Peter Hildrew	<i>Scotways</i>	(PH)
	Mark James	<i>CyclingUK</i>	(MJ)
	Nick Morgan	<i>ELC Access Officer</i>	(NM)
	Hanna Lundstrom	<i>ELC Sustainability and Climate Change Officer</i>	(HL)
	Shona McIntosh	<i>ELC Councillor</i>	(SM)
	Constance Newbold	<i>British Horse Society</i>	(CN)

Apologies

Chris Milne	<i>ELC Sustainable Travel Officer</i>
Jenny Hargreaves	<i>ELC Team Manager- Countryside</i>
Eamon John	<i>ELC Service Manager – Sports Countryside and Leisure</i>
James Wyllie	<i>National Farmers Union Scotland</i>
Beth Leslie	<i>Ramblers Scotland</i>

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

No amendments.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Haddington-Longniddry Railway Walk- Flexipave

Consultation went live, extended by a week. ELCRS added notices out on site to attract comment from local users. Sustrans had sent out details to local riding establishments and the Cycle Forum for comments. 588 responses, with a high proportion of cyclists as had been sent out to many cycling groups. NM has had responses sent to him out with the consultation and he will forward those to Sustrans. It was noted that the LAF should form a response. It seems that walkers and runners prefer the whindust surface, but it doesn't provide a year-round surface for cyclists. It was felt that it would be ideal if Sustrans could fund maintenance, such as keeping the drainage working and debris from the surface. NM is also trying to get data from the Sustrans path counter. SM asked why the previous LAF discussions had shown preference for non-sealed surface. NM responded that it was thought that it was urbanising the countryside and while the Esk path being tarmacked has been a positive in the long term, but most are concerned about the green credentials of surfaces like flexipave, as well as impact on the countryside, slippiness in winter and the degradation of the surface. MJ commented that whindust is not an all season cycle surface. SM agreed with MJ and questioned if Sustrans could be funding maintenance. NM replied that Sustrans can only fund capital projects and sealed surfaces. MA questioned if ELC has to commit to repairing active travel in the future and NM confirmed this is the case. SM mentioned that the acknowledgement of the capital project ongoing costs are being brought forward at a political level.

3. ACCESS OFFICER'S UPDATE

Provided to LAF members in separate document.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE

Hanna Lundstrom, the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Officer explained about the work she undertakes including managing the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Many of the outcomes relate to outdoor access and active travel. The more time people spend in nature, the more they want to look after it and see changes that climate change is making to the environment. People then are inclined to take action to try to reduce their impact on the climate. She works with many Council departments to ensure that the Climate Change Strategy is embedded in the work across the Council. It was noted that new housing developments should be designed better from an early stage to reduce car dependency. This is much easier than trying to break the habit and retro-fit paths once the houses have all been occupied.

5. FORUM FACEBOOK

Nick provided a quick update on Facebook pages. There has been little feedback to recent posts. If anyone has any relevant subject or pictures they think should go on the page please contact Nick. Also, if any member of the Forum wants to take over looking after the page, Nick would be happy to hand it on! There are 662 followers of the page.

6. PLANNING AND PATHS

Thomas introduced the topic saying that he had noted that a lot of the work that Nick undertakes is retrospectively fitting in paths that should have been included as part of new housing developments. He also noted that often neighbouring landowners are left to deal with increased public access on their land. Hanna noted that the National Transport Strategy contains the Scottish Travel Hierarchy which promotes walking over cycling, over car use. She said she would check the wording in the LDP, to see if it says "should" or "must" adopt the Travel Hierarchy. Martin is hopeful that the new National Planning Framework is shifting away from car use and hopefully the Council's new LDP will reflect that. He noted that for the recent housing development at Longniddry, about 90% of the Section 75 funding went towards education, £10,000 towards the cycle path and nothing for pedestrian paths. He also said that there was a requirement for Capital funding for the play park, with an annuity for maintenance, so there is a mechanism for funding for maintenance. There was discussion about why a developer will fund a road, even if it goes over third party land, but will not be asked to fund paths outwith a development. It was felt that there should be a mechanism to make developers negotiate with neighbouring landowners to provide paths. Thomas will draft a letter to be sent from the LAF to Community Councils, encouraging them to engage with the LDP process and ask for good path connections to and from new housing developments. TS

7. ACCESS ISSUES UPDATE

Provided to LAF members in separate document.

8. MEMBERS UPDATES

- PH- Supported the progression with the issues with Dalkeith Estate locked gates.
- NM- Countryside Services have been supporting the Spott community in their work on the Spott Circular Walk.
- MJ- Connecting Dunbar strategy being developed and circulated with 500 responses already. This will work in conjunction with the Local Place Plan.

9. DATES OF NEXT YEAR'S MEETINGS

Wednesday 31st January 2024. Saltire Room 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

Wednesday 24th April – via Teams.

Wednesday 31st July – Saltire Room 2, John Muir House, Haddington.

Wednesday 30th October – via Teams.