

FARAG NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012



No doubt members are now thinking about getting out and about again after a very wet winter where a lot of tracks have been too boggy to use. Riders with access to tracks with good foundations have been lucky. Unfortunately, we have various bits of bad news and not much in the way of good news.

JOHN MUIR TRAIL - You may have seen in the press that the Scottish Government has announced plans for a "Sea to Sea" path from Dunbar to Helensburgh to celebrate the life of John Muir. A lot of this trail will follow the canals. There will be spurs off the main trail going into Falkirk but the route will link in to the trails on Callendar Estate going towards the Falkirk Wheel. There will be a new path section from the Greenrigg Car Park to the tracks at Lionthorn. This project has some funding already and more is being applied for by Bespoke Community Development Company.

DRUMBROIDER TRACK - Bad news here. After initially saying there should be no problem in joining the track round the farm to Gateside Wood, the Forestry Commission now says that a track cannot cross the boggy area because it is "habitat". This is extremely disappointing as a lot of work was done by Central Scotland Forest Trust in drawing up specifications, costings etc. We are exploring another option and will let members know the outcome in due course.

PROPOSAL FOR BRIDGE TO JOIN LODGE FARM WOODLANDS TO LIMERIGG WOODS - The Council is negotiating with the Forestry Commission to try to get a new bridge over the stream to join the two woodlands. We are trying to get it positioned on a flat area as the existing approaches to the current bridge are too steep for horses. We hope the Council have more success with the Forestry Commission.

CORE PATH INTO LIMERIGG WOODS - The Council's employment training unit are working on the core path which runs from the bottom of the road leading to Salterhill Farm into Limerigg Woods. This core path is shown on the Council's map but it was really not in existence. Work is being done to enable the ditches to be crossed and the very boggy area beside the large exposed pipe to be drained and made passable by horses. The work is not yet complete but should be ready for use this summer.

ACCESS FORUM - Complaints were made by the Lionthorn Community Woodlands Group about irresponsible horse riders. A group of volunteers had carried out repairs to some of their paths and they put up signs asking riders to keep off the paths for a month till the ground settled. The very next day a group of three riders rode through the repaired area leaving deep hoof prints in the newly repaired area. As these were local residents doing the work, they were very annoyed by the attitude of these riders. No doubt they are spreading the word about irresponsible horse riders.

It was also pointed out that horses were on the pavements and leaving droppings on the pavement. According to the Highway Code, “riders MUST NOT ride on the pavement”.

We have now received further complaints about horse riders on the new cycle trails on Callendar Estate. These trails were badly affected by the gales in January and 64 volunteers turned up over several days to help with the clearing and repairing. The cyclists are very enthusiastic about their trails as you can see from the numbers willing to help. The multi use trails were less badly affected which is just as well as it is unlikely that any horse rider would have volunteered to do any clearing.

These riders are not members of FARAG, the British Horse Society or the local riding club but they give all riders a bad reputation. We have tried posters and leaflets on responsible riding but we are not getting the message across to some people. As all members know, under the Land Reform Act, only responsible access is allowed. These irresponsible riders are putting at risk all that we have worked for and we all have an interest in educating them. If anyone has any ideas about how to reach and influence these riders, please let Sheila know.

There is not much other news at the moment. If anyone has any access issues they would like to raise, e-mail Sheila at balcastle@btinternet.com.

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