

Proposals for a Pump Track in Lochend Woods

Public Consultation

Extent of consultation

We emailed information leaflets to all Dunbar Community Woodland Group (DCWG) members, and distributed over 1000 paper copies to houses in the immediate vicinity of the woods, with a further 500 going home to families with children at the schools. We had information stalls at Dunbar Primary School Fair on 16th June, at Dunbar Bike Fest on 24th June and at the pump track event at Dunbar Grammar School on 7th June which was the ideal opportunity to engage with interested young people. Leaflets were also available to the public at the BeGreen shop at 16 West Port and were displayed at locations around the town including Dunbar train station, on the DCWG notice board on Kellie Road/Middlemas Road, Hallhill, the Bike Workshop in Hallhill carpark, church and school notice boards, Pine Street skate park, Parsonspool and on location in the woods. Information was available on the DCWG and Dunbar Cycling Group Facebook pages and on the Dunbar Cycling Group website.

As a result of this consultation we had numerous positive verbal comments from people excited about the proposals (particularly from those who'd tried out the track at the Grammar School), 6 positive written submissions and 10 written objections mostly regarding the proposed location. We held a site meeting on the 4th July to discuss the layout and location, which was attended by representatives from DCWG, Treelines, Dunbar Rotary Club, Dunbar Grammar School, Sustaining Dunbar and 3 members of the public .

Process and funding

Dunbar Cycling Group has been looking to identify a site for a pump track for at least a year as several members with young children would like them to be able to have fun on their bikes close to home. A pump track is ideally suited for family cycling as it is safe for all ages and abilities with the speed of the bike increasing only in relation to the skill of the rider. Keen mountain bikers use these tracks to train for their sport, and we envisage it being used by adults as well as children.

Dunbar Cycling Group approached DCWG early in 2012 with their proposals and Sustaining Dunbar put together a funding application on behalf of DCWG (as the custodians of the land) to Viridor Credits. This is a fund available to community groups within 10 miles of a landfill site and the panel meets quarterly to make decisions on applications.

Sustaining Dunbar is supporting the proposals as they want to promote local recreational activities to reduce the need for travel. They are also keen to see more people cycling generally as part of their bid to get bikes out of sheds and back in working order, and hope that this facility will encourage lapsed riders back onto their bikes.

Location

We have now consulted extensively on the location and layout of the pump track and will make an application for planning permission in the near future where members of the public will have a further opportunity to express an opinion. The planning application will specify a location 20x30m adjacent to Kellie Road to the south of the newly planted Learning Woods, in amongst the established sitka spruce in this area. The track will be below the level of the road at this point, but easy accessible from it.

Building, Maintenance and Liability

Some aggregate and windust surfacing will be brought in to build the track, but it will mostly be formed out of the natural landforms in the woods. Once completed and the vegetation has regrown the site will look very similar to other paths in the woods. The contract with the track builder

Treelines will include an element of ongoing maintenance but we expect the cyclists who use the track to take ownership and keep it in shape. If necessary the track can be resurfaced at the same time as any work being done on the other paths in the woods.

DCWG manages the woods on behalf of Dunbar Community Development Company which has public liability insurance covering the woods. When the track is built this will be extended if necessary to cover the new track.

Cyclists with experience of similar facilities elsewhere and indeed at TheSpace at North Berwick know that a well designed track allows cyclists of different ages and abilities to be able to use it at the same time.

Access, noise and nuisance

In response to concerns about noise levels in the vicinity of the adjacent houses we've identified a new site to the west of Kellie Road (south of the newly planted trees) which will take the track further from the housing than the original site proposal; however, the woods are small, so the number of suitable locations are limited. Much of the woodland is too wet, the police have advised that the track should be overlooked by the main road, and we are keen to position it among established trees that will not be damaged by the activities.

Indeed, Dunbar Cycling Group has been trying to identify a suitable location for a pump track for some time, but much of the land in the Hallhill area is privately owned, including the woodland around the new primary school building. You will note that in these areas vegetation is dense, access is difficult and the trees are not managed so may well be unsafe. The woodland under the remit of DCWG is bounded by the concrete road to the west and the path (Boundary Way) from Lochend Cottages to Leslie Way to the north.

The new proposed location for the pump track will be accessed from Kellie Road only, in response to concerns about increased bike traffic on the woodland paths.

Lothian and Borders Police are confident that the pump track will not attract anti-social behaviour. It will be sited so that it is visible from the road, and they are well aware that focussed activities such as this reduce incidences of anti-social behaviour. It was the police themselves who identified the need for recreational facilities in this area of the town and the community beat officers have been behind the project from the beginning.