

Transport & Environment Committee - Mon 18 Nov, 2024

*Spokes verbal deputation re Longstone Path, responding to motion by Cllr Ross McKenzie, Save The Burnside [item 9.2 [here](#)]
Deputation by Peter Hawkins (member, Spokes Planning Group) and Path 'caretaker'*

Notes for verbal deputation

Background: I live locally to the path and have used it as a short-cut from Stenhouse to Longstone and beyond for many years.

For the past 5 or more years I have been the path's caretaker, cutting back vegetation, clearing litter, removing blockages, etc, to ensure the path remains open for walkers and cyclists.

What does it connect?

The path runs from the Shell Garage on Stenhouse Rd (A71), via Stenhouse Mill Lane to the Longstone Inn on Longstone Rd (Inglis Green Rd); thence, Kingsknowe Rd leads to the Lanark Rd (A70). It's direct, and for pedestrians and cyclists it avoids busy main roads – Gorgie Rd, Chesser Ave., Slateford Rd, Inglis Green Rd and all the busy junctions.

Who uses the path?

When possible I engage users in conversation; users seem to be mainly care-workers who live in Longstone and work in Stenhouse; it's also used as a short-cut to access Saughton Park from the Longstone area.

What's the usage?

Currently fairly quiet at most times, but that's mainly because of lack of signage. Until recently the path entrance at Longstone Inn consisted of a narrow passage between the Inn and a row of houses, with no signage at all; at the Stenhouse end the path runs into Stenhouse Mill Lane and thence to the Calder Rd (called Stenhouse Rd at that point) at the Shell Garage. Again there is no signage.

Many locals in Stenhouse do not know of the path's existence. My neighbour, a bus driver who works from the Longstone Depot, didn't know of it. Now he walks or cycles to work along it, instead of driving.

What's needed from the TEC?

1) *urgent temporary repairs.* The wall now has water ingress when river levels are high. In a flood, the wall can now be undermined and is in danger of total collapse. The Water of Leith makes a right-angle turn at this point and the full force of the water hits the wall directly.

My suggestion for remedy: put sand-bags into the sink-hole to stop water ingress.

2) *longer-term repairs.* Re-build the concrete at the base of the wall to make the repair more permanent, to stabilise the wall and the path. Liaise with landowner – possible deal: Council takes ownership, in return for helping fund essential repairs.

3) *improve signage to and from the path* at both ends, to increase local usage, which will also lessen demand on the congested local road network. It takes just 7 mins to walk from the Shell Garage on Stenhouse Rd to the Longstone Inn, compared with 25 mins by nearest alternative. Driving is much further and can take the same time, esp. in congestion.

4) *ensure long-term maintenance* of the path by including it in the maintenance schedule (currently isn't).

5) *implement the Council's stated transport priorities*, viz active travel at the top of the hierarchy. If this hole (it's 1.5m deep!) had occurred in a public road it would have been fixed long ago!

Finally, thanks to the Council for (recently) improving safety around the sink-hole.

Peter Hawkins, Path caretaker, peterhawk@phonecoop.coop

Post-TEC notes from Peter

Alan Gordon from Longstone CC also did a deputation - he went first, and said virtually exactly my spiel - which I commented on to start, and got a bit of a laugh. I certainly found plenty to say, however, esp. the urgency of action before the next flood sweeps the whole wall away.

I was very pleased (and said so) that Ross McKenzie had organised a site visit a couple of weeks ago, so some of them had seen the situation; and pleased that the Council had already taken action to close off the path to prevent anyone falling in.

Alan got quite a few questions from Cttee members after his talk, and so did I. I might have made a faux-pas by naming the absentee land-owner! It seems he only owns a strip of the land where the path runs; the land between the path and the prison was sold to the prison in the 30's.