

# Connecting communities on the Edinburgh to North Berwick line

by Iain V Monk of the Drem to Gullane Path Campaign

In March, Scotland's Railway (ScotRail and Network Rail) announced that it had seconded Sustrans Scotland's deputy CEO John Lauder. He's been tasked with preparing a blueprint to make it easier to travel to railway stations sustainably.

His new role was warmly welcomed, especially by us in East Lothian. For the last 17 years we have been campaigning to build a safe path for pedestrians and cyclists, away from the busy main road, connecting the coastal village of Gullane with Drem railway station on the Edinburgh-North Berwick line.

Responses to a survey we ran in 2020 during the first Covid pandemic lockdown showed that it's not just families and commuters who will benefit. Many of our local businesses such as The Bonnie Badger in Gullane, owned by restaurateurs Tom and Michaela Kitchin, have voiced support for the path plans.



New housing developments at the east end of Gullane have brought in people of all ages including many families with young children. As a consequence of the growing number of residents, there is a pressing need to make the rail system much more accessible.

The Covid pandemic has shown us all the value of getting out and about in our local area. Finding paths away from traffic gives us all space to appreciate the nature around us, and helps improve our health, wellbeing and quality of life. Active travel is good for the environment too.

Consultants Stantec, appointed by East Lothian Council earlier this year, are preparing a number of potential outline designs which may give an engineering solution for the 100 metre stretch entering Drem village, which will allow safe access for cyclists and pedestrians travelling to the station.

Once the finalised plans are on the table, we have every

confidence that Scotland's Railway, with John now on board, will heed our call and work with us and East Lothian Council to help deliver our climate friendly path.

