

Minister opens newly upgraded Water of Leith path

The shared-use path along The Water of Leith has been upgraded, and has been declared officially open by Minister for Active Travel, Patrick Harvie.

The work was supported by funding from The Scottish Government through Sustrans Scotland's Network Development Fund designed to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling. The project was led by Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT) in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. Other bodies involved included The Water of Leith Conservation Trust and The City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service.

Sections of the path had to be upgraded to enable everyone to use it. Many sections were very muddy and difficult to navigate along, and the new surface with new bridges should make that easier.

Approximately 6.7km of the path surface was upgraded on the National Cycle Network Route 75 (NCN75) from just upstream of the Union Canal at Lanark Road to Balerno. The construction was phased and uses a multi-use porous surface that will improve drainage and allow different users access during winter months and in adverse weather conditions.

Another core focus of the project was sustainability. By incorporating a new innovative rubber crumb surface using more than 49,000 recycled tyres, the carbon footprint of the project was reduced by 1,097,087kg when compared to standard

tire disposal methods.

As well as improving the drainage and quality of the path, the project also removed physical barriers to improve accessibility for everyone. This involved the re-design of 21 bollards, the removal of a chicane, and a new ramp to provide easy access to Lanark Road.

The NCN 75 links Scotland's two largest cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow through Currie, Bathgate and Livingston. It is 158km long and runs from the Port of Leith to Gourock. Part of the route includes the UK's largest continuous mural at the Colinton Tunnel, which has led to increased use of the route.

The path runs along the unique Water of Leith green corridor past several cultural and historical sites and will improve the links to the path network in the area.

Charlie Cumming, Chief Executive, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust said: "ELGT are delighted to have completed the upgrading of the path that will enable more people to benefit from accessing a wonderful walkway which links the city to the countryside and surrounding hills. The improved surface provides everyone a great way to explore the local area and will bring communities across the city and beyond together. The trail offers the perfect opportunity for locals and visitors to get out, exercise and try something new while enjoying some fresh air along the route of the Water of Leith, whether it is completing the entire length, or some of the more local circular routes".

Chris Brace, Senior Network Delivery Manager at Sustrans Scotland said: 'We are delighted to see the completion of a major upgrade to a section of Route 75 on the National Cycle Network.

"The new surfacing and sustainable measures ensure that walking, wheeling, and cycling can be an attractive and enjoyable option year-round, reaffirming our commitment to

providing accessible infrastructure for everyone.

“We hope the new shared-use path will be a vital amenity for the local community in Edinburgh West, making it easier and safer for everyone to make healthier, happier and more sustainable choices for their everyday journeys”.

Minister for Active Travel Patrick Harvie said: “I’m pleased to see the improvements to the Water of Leith path, which is part of the National Cycle Network route 75. Over £1.7 million from the Scottish Government has been invested here to make walking, wheeling and cycling easier for all and I know the path is particularly popular for families and people undertaking more leisurely journeys.

“During Scotland’s Climate Week, it’s particularly welcome to see that almost 50,000 old tyres have now been reused to make the new path.

“These improvements have been delivered as part of our record funding for active travel this year. For our health, wellbeing and environment, the Scottish Government has committed to invest £320 million to support make walking, wheeling and cycling easier for shorter everyday journeys.”

Cllr Scott Arthur, Transport and Environment Convener, said: “I’m really pleased to see this section upgraded and resurfaced for everyone to enjoy. This is already a popular path – in part thanks to the addition of the wonderful Colinton Tunnel mural – and the improvements will help even more people to benefit from a safe, off-road walking and cycling route.

“This accessible and attractive path not only links to our extensive network of paths, and further afield to the west of the country, but also lets people enjoy the biodiversity and wildlife along the Water of Leith green corridor.”

Helen Brown, Trust Manager, Water of Leith Trust said: “The

improved access along the Water of Leith Walkway will hopefully mean it can be enjoyed by all and our volunteer team will have less maintenance work to carry out. The use of recycled materials is a bonus and makes for a flexible permeable surface”.



Water of Leith National Cycle Network Path Opening PHOTO Andy Catlin



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