

Candidates urged to 'lay cards on table' on climate friendly path

Election candidates in Lothian East are being urged to help end a long running fight to install a safe path for pedestrians and cyclists.

The candidates have been asked to specify a single decisive action that would ensure the completion of the four-mile Drem-Gullane path.

Now in its 20th year, the campaign for a safe pedestrian and cyclist route between the East Lothian villages stands as Scotland's longest-running path initiative.

The cycling and walking path will protect children and families by providing a safe alternative to the busy B1345 road, reducing the risk of serious injuries.

Campaigners are optimistic that pressure from election candidates will lead to the eventual approval of the path.

Drem-Gullane Path Campaign spokesperson Iain V Monk said: "To confront the climate emergency, immediate action is necessary. We have asked candidates to lay their cards on the table, to detail specific actions they will take to help ensure the completion of the eco-friendly Drem-Gullane pathway.

"Our campaign has attracted considerable support from residents and the business community. That's why it is essential to provide families and visitors with a healthy alternative that enables safe travel between the villages. The path will connect Drem railway station with the coast, improving the county's network of green routes."

Cyclist Suzi Irvine, an NHS nurse, says she currently feels unsafe using the road. She said: "I live in Gullane and work as a nurse at East Lothian Community Hospital. I like to cycle to work, but feel so unsafe on the main road. This path would give me a safe route for part of the journey to work. It is important to increase the number of people who choose to walk and cycle in East Lothian, but what puts people off is that they feel scared on the dangerous B1345."

Retired Gullane resident, Chris Holme, highlighted the dangers of cycling on the B1345. He said: "The community has been campaigning for this vital path for 20 years. In that time the last section of the road into Drem has become even more dangerous. What it needs now is strong political leadership to make it happen ... for everyone's benefit."

Scott Runciman, Scotland Advocacy Lead, Cycling UK which has over 70,000 members, including 5,000 in Scotland, said: "We are keen to see all Lothian East election candidates announce their support for this campaign to make certain the four-mile Drem-Gullane path is finally completed."

"The Drem-Gullane Path Campaign has been running for years, and in that time, we could have dramatically improved the safety, health, and environment of the local community. But it's not too late. With the backing of candidates now, we can highlight how important this issue is to local people and put pressure on local government to make a change that benefits everyone."