



WL34 Round the Forth Cycle Path (NCN 76)

Start, route and finish

The western end is at Black Burn just to the east of Blackness as shown on C1. The path then runs through woodland and parkland (see C2) owned by Hopetoun Estate until it joins the private and then public road to Port Edgar and South Queensferry beyond. The West Lothian section of this path is 4.5 miles (7.2km) long.



Surfaces and features

The western section between Black Burn and Nethermill Bridge through Wester Shore Wood is on an estate track which can be very muddy at times. Once in the Deer park, the estate tracks and roads are metalled or tarmaced. The public road beside the shore to Port Edgar carries vehicular traffic to Hopetoun House but is safe for all users with care.

The experience

The path passes through some very attractive countryside. The Deer Park is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed in the Inventory of Designed Landscapes. There are good views of the Firth of Forth and Hopetoun House.



Opportunities and constraints

The western section of this route needs to be upgraded by improving the estate track through Wester Shore Wood. This will then be of an adequate standard to meet its status as a National Cycleway and provide access to all. After Nethermill Bridge the path will follow the existing estate track to gain access into the Deer Park which is owned by the estate. There are certain land management issues which cause the estate to have particular concerns with access arrangements at Nethermill Gate.

Currently this gate is locked for management reasons. However, the council has recently concluded negotiations with the estate to install a gate, adjacent to the deer gate, which will allow access for walkers and cyclists. It is possible that this work will have been completed by the time that this plan goes on deposit on 26th March. However, this cannot be guaranteed. If the gate is installed whilst the plan is on deposit an addendum will be attached to this page. Otherwise contact the Access Officer on 01506 775249 for an update.



In the meantime there is a way of avoiding this blockage. Heading west to leave the deer park, keep straight on through Blue Gate. Turn north and follow the minor road and tracks to Abercorn Church. To the west of the church a steep route drops down to Nethermill Burn, but please dismount and use this path with great care as it can be muddy. It then heads downstream to the bridge to continue westwards through Wester Shore Wood.

The sensitivity of both the built heritage of the Deer Park and Wester Shore Wood, as a potentially important breeding area for shelduck forming part of the Firth of Forth RAMSAR site, means that the upgrading of this path and its promotion need to be carefully handled. The upgrading will be carried out within the plan period.

The gate at Nethermill, to allow access for walkers and cyclists, was installed on 11 April 2008.

