

Newton Dee Community

Improving access on the Deeside Way, NCN195



Before



After

Background

Located next to the Deeside Way, Newton Dee is a Camphill community and charity in Aberdeen, where around 200 people of all abilities live and work together in a mutually supportive environment.

The community has a range of adapted bikes for residents and volunteers to use for everyday journeys, longer outings and assisted rides. Cycling helps people stay active, connect with others, feel independent and enjoy the great outdoors.

The Deeside Way provides a safe, traffic-free route linking to shops and local facilities, but residents have faced longstanding issues gaining access. A series of restrictive and unwelcoming barriers prevented them from using the path.

What we did

Funding was awarded to Aberdeen City Council following their successful application to the National Cycle Network Accessibility Fund. The barrier pictured is one of 13 restrictions along a 10km stretch of the Deeside Way that have been improved by Aberdeen City Council in partnership with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust Scotland.

Improvements include resurfaced paths, clearer wayfinding and the replacement of restrictive gates and bypasses, with highly visible bollards spaced to allow all legitimate users access to the path network.

“A great improvement”

Janusz Siporski (Jas), who lives and works on site, says the accessibility improvements on the path have increased opportunities and benefited the community.



Community Impact story

Jas explains that the community struggled to access the Deeside Way, **“The entrance had a barrier we couldn’t get through.”** Their only alternative was a short road section, but traffic made some volunteers hesitant to ride the adapted bikes, limiting how often they could take residents out.



Our closest access point is on a steep hill. It’s almost impossible to ride the adapted bikes. We had to go down the slope backwards, making sure not to tip over.



Janusz Siporski, Newton Dee

Photos (after and opposite) courtesy of Janusz Siporski (Above: Walk Wheel Cycle Trust)



Impact

“A sense of normality and purpose”

The path is now accessible to wider adapted bikes, such as the platform bike and trishaw used on assisted rides. Jas explains what this means for residents at Newton Dee.

“It’s a great improvement! Everyone in the community can access the path, we can use any bike now and it’s safe.”

Before, inclusive cycling sessions were held off site.

“The session was just a loop, you ride around, it’s great fun, but how many times can you ride in the same place? It’s great to have the opportunity, but not normal. Now we have a sense of normality. We can ride to Duthie Park and go to the café. In the future, we can go West to the countryside. It’s not just a short, fun ride, it has a purpose.”

With access to a traffic-free path, everyday journeys like going to the pharmacy, as well as longer rides venturing further afield, now feel safe and achievable. And the community have exciting plans for the future.

Key facts



Multiple small, low-cost interventions along a 10km stretch of NCN



High design standard achieved, opened the route up to everyone.



Benefits local Camphill community and creates wider opportunities



Impact story continued

Increasing opportunities

“Something we wish to create is a library of bikes. The idea is that adapted bikes could be booked for a few hours and shared with the wider community, including visitors from nearby care homes, so that they can have some fun.”



It’s really a treasure, what we have and where we are!



Janusz Siporski, Newton Dee

What’s next

“Meaningful work”

The community plans to expand their library of bikes.

“This would create meaningful work for residents with learning disabilities, who will help look after, maintain, and clean the bikes.”

Accessibility improvements along the Deeside Way have opened up the route for the community, giving residents more freedom to explore and supporting their goal of being a place where everyone can feel a sense of belonging and thrive.



All photos on this page courtesy of Janusz Siporski

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