

## **CLYDE COASTAL PATH - Notes on multi-use access**

Starting at Wemyss Bay, on the border between North Ayrshire and Inverclyde, the Clyde Coastal Path links the Ayrshire Coastal Path with the start of the West Highland Way at Milngavie. Although originally designed and now promoted as a walking route, under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, horse-riders and cyclists enjoy equal rights of access as pedestrians on most paths and tracks. These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to help those interested in using the off-road sections of the Clyde Coastal Path to identify location and brief details of features which may restrict multi-use of the waymarked route. The notes are intended to supplement detailed route guides and other information already available from the route website (<http://www.focrt.org/ccp/>) and other sources.

All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves which, if any, sections of the Clyde Coastal Path, are suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. Inclusion of narrow footbridges and gates, steps, or sections of very steep, narrow, eroded or boggy path, does not necessarily mean that these are impassable with a horse, but will help you decide for yourself whether particular features might present an obstruction to you. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Clyde Coastal Path are urged to contact the route managers (see route website for details).

Remember that whether on foot, cycle or horseback, rights of access in Scotland depend on access takers and land managers accepting individual responsibility for their actions. Further details of what this means on the ground can be found at <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>. Specific guidance for horse riders can be downloaded from <http://www.bhsscotland.org.uk/responsible-riding.html>.

Courtesy, consideration of others' needs and good communication are the key to sharing paths. Always pass others you meet along the trail at a walk, and elsewhere limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. On surfaced paths and other well used sections of the route, riders need to be particularly careful to respect other users and either clear dung off the path or move their horse off the path to dung.

### **Wemyss Bay to Cornalees Centre**

1.2 m side gates provide independent access along the track up Kelly Glen leading up to Kelly Reservoir. Some sections are rough underfoot, there are some low branches on the path parallel to the burn, and a sheet metal surfaced footbridge at OSGR NS198 685, but no other physical obstruction to multi-use access.



North of the reservoir, the grassy/stoned track which follows the Kelly Aqueduct to Cornalees is mainly firm and dry, other than south and east of Daff Reservoir where there are

numerous collapsed culverts and boggy sections of path which riders would need to carefully pick their way around.



The sleeper bridge at the sluice at Gimlet Burn OSGR NS237710 is passable with care.



### **Cornalees Centre to Overton**

Parking is available behind the Cornalees Visitor Centre. Between Cornalees and Overton the Clyde Coastal Path follows the historic Greenock Cut around the contour. Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park's leaflet about the Greenock Cut "Walk" suggests that as a scheduled monument the path is unsuitable for horse riding. This may be questionable in legal terms but as the path is whin-dust surfaced much of the way and, not surprisingly, is very popular with walkers, including many with buggies and young children, as well as quite a few older people. Cyclists and horse riders need to be particularly careful to ensure they are riding responsibly.

Between Cornalees and Shielhill, riders and cyclists are recommended to follow the quiet road rather than the very well-used waymarked path, at the western end of which there is a narrow gate on a tight spring which restricts opening width.



Some of the kissing gates between Shiehill and Overton have been removed, although there are still a number of gates across the track which include a folding section which opens to provide wider access for buggies and all non-motorised path users.



### **Bishopton to Old Kilpatrick**

Logs placed to restrict illegal vehicular access on the waymarked path around Erskine Park are easily passable with a bike or horse but the path around Big Wood is narrow and very muddy in places. Exposed tree roots and fallen trees across the path through Big Wood are easy for a horse to step over but potentially less straightforward for people with restricted mobility. It may be possible to pick your way through the wood avoiding the narrow muddy sections on some of the informal unsigned paths which people have created through the wood.



There are no restrictions to non-motorised access on the hard surfaced clearly waymarked cycle path through Boden Boo Plantation east of Erskine Bridge.

There are parallel tarmacked cycle paths and footpath/pavement on both sides of the Erskine Bridge, separated from a constant heavy stream of relatively high speed vehicular traffic by low crash barriers. Both the footpath and cyclepath are intermittently closed for maintenance work, requiring diversion to the route on the other side of the bridge.



Physically and legally there does not appear to be anything to stop horses using the cycle lane, although side railings across the bridge are low (well below BHS recommended standards) and taking account of the length and height of the bridge and proximity to heavy, fast traffic, BHS suggest horses do not attempt to cross the Erskine Bridge other than in a box or trailer.



### **Old Kilpatrick to Duntocher**

The path from the interchange north of Kilpatrick station runs along the edge of a field and would in theory support multi-use but access is currently restricted by metal kissing gates either end which are impassable with a horse and require cyclists to lift bikes over the top. There is currently no readily identifiable alternative way around this, other than potentially following the A814 to Bowling Harbour to link onto the two-path along the south side of the Forth and Clyde Canal, which then involves busy roads to link back onto the Clyde Coastal Path at Duntocher.



The grass track north of the cemetery, which runs parallel to and north of the A82 east of the Kilpatrick interchange, is suitable for multi-use but also restricted at the eastern end at Carleith by a metal motorcycle barrier at OSGR NS483729. The adjacent metal barriers are permanently secured with cable ties.



### **Duntocher to Faifley**

There are no restrictions to multi-use access on the tarmac path from the roundabout east of Duntocher to Hardgate, where the waymarked path turns off the road through two large concrete bollards with ample space to pass between with a bike, horse or buggy. Immediately beyond this at OSGR NS503728 two access with a horse or mobility scooter is obstructed by offset metal barriers with a gap of only 80cm between. There is no alternative other than to follow the road through the housing estate to Faifley.



## Faifley to Craigton

North of Faifley at OSGR NS509736, take care over the relatively long wooden boardwalk which has no anti-slip surface treatment. Immediately north of the boardwalk are a long series of shallow steps.



Large stones have been placed across the end of the path leading off Cochno Road east of Whitehill at OSGR 511737 to restrict illegal vehicular access. The exposed slabs of stone (marked on the OS map as cup and ring marked stones) are potentially slippery but do not present an obstruction.



The narrow wooden kissing gate at OSGR NS513741 is impassable with a horse and requires cyclists to lift their bike over the fence. There is no evident alternative to avoid this obstruction. North of this fenceline, the path becomes increasingly boggy and indistinct, and is difficult to follow because of lack of waymarking.



The route as mapped and described on the Clyde Coastal Path website appears to run through the middle of a large, deep active sand and gravel quarry (Douglas Muir Quarry), with steep drops, open water and heavy machinery moving around. There is no evident path beyond the metal kissing gate at approximately OSGR NS514745, and the former wooden wicket gate at approximately OSGR NS515746 has been nailed shut. There is no evidence of any signed path or alternative access provision, although some people appear to be climbing the remnant dyke and fence to the west of the former gate to skirt around the very boggy field to the west of the quarry.



At the south-east corner of Todhill Wood a wobbly wooden stile over unsheathed barbed wire fence with Clyde Coastal Path waymark disk suggests that the route may be intended to somehow divert around the quarry and through the wood, although the whole of this section is currently passable only with care on foot, and impassable on a bike or with a horse.



It is presumed that the route follows the north side of the fenceline east from Todhill Wood. Wooden marker posts indicate the crossing of a deep boggy burn, across which three narrow wooden planks have been laid adjacent. Further single planks have been laid across the boggy ground to the east.



A wooden waymark post at the north side of the bog indicates an alternative but still very boggy 'path' which is not readily identifiable heading east.



A steep wooden ladder stile over the dyke at NS517750 makes this section impassable with a horse or bike even in dry weather. There is no readily identifiable alternative.



North of the dyke, the coastal path runs on soft ground between parallel dykes and then across boggy grass before linking to a stone farm track leading down towards Tambowie Farm.



At the time of survey field gates across the track were open and there was nothing to suggest that they are locked.



Although not waymarked, the mapped route branches off the farm track on the bend just before Tambowie at OSGR NS525757. The old metal kissing gate and 10' field gate are virtually impassable but the adjacent new 12' metal gate provides easy access into the field, from where an unfenced beaten earth path follows the south side of the burn to a new metal hooped kissing gate at OSGR NS527759, without alternative access provision. The gap where the original field gate stood is permanently closed with post and rail fence.



The wooden kissing gate which leads onto the A809 at Craigton has largely been dismantled but a metal handrail and steep, narrow, precipitous, slippery stone steps with a steep drop to the burn below immediately north of the former school at OSGR NS528759 make this section of path impassable with a horse or bike.



### **Craigton to Milngavie**

The Clyde Coastal Path continues east of the A809 through the remains of an old metal kissing gate. There are no other restrictions on access on the path through the wood until a wooden kissing gate at OSGR NS530760 where the path leads out into the field to skirt north of Low Craigton. It may be possible to avoid the narrow path alongside the burn west of the A809, and obstructions on the first section of path to the east, by using the farm track, past Tambowie, to Craigton Village, and then across the road to Laighpark,



The metal kissing gate in the dyke north of Old Craigton at OSGR NS531761 is impassable with a horse or bike and there is no alternative to get through this dyke.



The clearly signed new metal hooped kissing gate at the western end of the strip of houses between Low Craigton and Laighark, OSGR NS533761 (pictured above right) is impassable with a horse or bike, and it appears that the adjacent houses are less than happy with the established right of way which continues east along this strip across the end of ground now enclosed as gardens. There is an alternative well trodden beaten earth path which continues down the field (below left), parallel to the right of way, but the signed stile over the fence at OSGRNS535761 is obstructed by a barbed wire fence, relatively newly erected permanent compost bins and garden equipment (pictured below right).



It is understood there may be a gate further down the field accessing back onto this path. The signed path runs across mown grass between houses to rejoin the tarmac public road by the works.



The Clyde Coastal Path is clearly signed without obstruction through the middle of the farmyard at Laighpark, along the tarmac road through Milngavie Golf Club, past the club house and car parks and then along the west side of Allander Water. At OSGR NS535759 the width of the path is constrained between the remains of a building and stone dyke alongside the burn. Cyclists and horse riders may need to dismount to squeeze through.



The waymarked route crosses the Allander Water to join the West Highland Way, which links through to Milngavie without further restrictions on multi-use.

VWG  
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