

CORE PATHS - ESSENTIAL USER INFORMATION

Introduction

Core Paths Plans were introduced under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act as way of recording and safeguarding important and popular routes. Glasgow's Core Paths Plan was approved by the Council in April 2012. Routes that appear on the Plan are designated as 'core paths' which are protected in a similar way to Rights of Way*. The aim of the Plan is to provide a network of safe and unobstructed routes throughout the City, linking people to local facilities, visitor attractions and the wider countryside, and supporting healthy lifestyles through active travel and outdoor recreation.

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, core paths do not have a standard specification but can be any type of route from a rough track to a road, or from a towpath to a worn line through a grassy space. There are even core paths on rivers and canals for water-based users. Whilst not every core path will be suitable for all types of use, the network as a whole includes opportunities for everyone.

Core paths can be used by all non-motorised users** provided they do so responsibly. This means that you may encounter other types of users when you follow a core path. In the City, the majority of use will be by walkers and cyclists, but the core paths network also includes routes suitable for horse-riders, canoeists, kayakers and other users. (Please see sections below for specific guidance).

As with all access rights created under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, guidance for responsible use is set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.outdooraccess-scotland.com). Anyone not behaving responsibly can be asked to change their behaviour or leave the route. The three key principles of responsible behaviour are:

- Respect the interests of others
- Care for the environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions

***Legal status**

The legal status of both Core Paths and Public Rights of Way means that they cannot be diverted or 'stopped-up' (closed) without going through a legal process. The deliberate obstruction of such routes, as well as the erection of misleading signs or dangerous impediments, is a legal offence. Unlike Rights of Way, Core Paths cannot be created 'through use'. They can only be designated by the Council through a process that involves public consultation.

**** Motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters**

Disabled drivers of these vehicles are allowed to use core paths when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Similarly, disabled drivers of motorised watercraft that have been adapted specifically for their use, may also use core paths.

Path Surfaces and Condition

Most core paths in the Plan already exist on the ground and cross both Council-owned and private land. Core paths can have any surface from grass to tarmac, and everything in between. Many of the routes in the City follow the roads network or are on surfaced paths through parks. In more rural or less-developed areas, core paths may be simple, unsurfaced tracks or 'desire lines'. There are also core paths on water for use by canoes, kayaks and other non-motorised craft.

All Core Paths should be open and signposted within two years of the adoption of the Core Paths Plan. At this time (September 2012) there are a small number of core paths that require improvement works before they can be fully opened. This work will be carried out over the next two years, along with signposting of core paths that are not currently signed.

It should be noted that, whilst the Council is required to ensure core paths are not illegally obstructed, we do not have a statutory duty to maintain them. Working with stakeholders and private landowners, we will do our best to keep core paths in a usable condition, however we are operating in a challenging economic climate and a system of prioritisation will be in place.

Temporary closure of core paths

From time to time it will be necessary to close core paths temporarily, for example to allow for repairs to the path itself, to enable development work or the servicing of utilities, or to allow an event to take place. Where this happens we will endeavour to provide on-site information indicating the purpose and likely duration of the closure, together with an alternative route, where available.

In addition, a very limited number of core paths cross sites that are closed at night to protect sensitive historic structures. We will keep night-time closures to an absolute minimum. Sites currently affected include the Botanic Gardens, Kings Park, the walled gardens at Pollok Country Park, the grounds of Provan Hall and one or two historic cemeteries.

Responsible use and shared routes

Core paths are available for all non-motorised users (and for those with mobility impairments using motorised wheelchairs and mobility scooters adapted for their use), so you should expect to meet users of different types when using a core path. However, the right of access is dependent on responsible use, as set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.outdooraccess-scotland.com). See also the three key principles of responsible behaviour, above).

In practice this means you should assess whether your use of a particular core path will have an unreasonable impact on other **people**, on the **environment** or on anyone's **safety**. If so, you should use an alternative route.

Specific guidance for different types of users can be found below. However, as a general rule of thumb, you should not use a core path if your use might:

- cause damage to the surface or other features of the path, or its surroundings;
- risk anyone's safety, including your own;
- risk damaging the environment, including wildlife and habitats (sensitive sites, such as historic monuments and vulnerable habitats will normally be indicated by signs);
- unreasonably inconvenience others.

You should also take heed of information notices warning of hazards or providing advice about the route or site. In parks, please take heed of the [Park Management Rules](#) and the Parks Code of Conduct which are posted at park entrances.

Future changes to the Core Paths Plan

In the longer term, the Council will carry out a full review of the Core Paths Plan on a timescale linked to that of the Local Development Plan (usually every 5 years). This will allow us to add new core paths and update the background mapping to reflect changes on the ground, such as new developments and changes to the roads network. Full reviews of the Plan will be subject to wide consultation, allowing path users, landowners, residents, businesses and other stakeholders to make comments or representations.

The legislation also allows for the alteration or removal of core paths from the Plan in the short term (between full reviews). Such changes will be subject to a more focused consultation process with specific, relevant stakeholders.

Supplementary Advice

You may also like to visit:

<http://www.politecycling.info/> - for guidance about urban cycling.

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com> – for information and advice about the right of responsible access in Scotland, and contact details of relevant organisations.

Additional advice for:

- [Cyclists](#)
- [Walkers, runners and wheelchair users](#)
- [Water-based users](#)
- [Horse-riders](#)
- [Dog-walkers](#)