Surviving Storms and Building Strong

The recent weather has been a challenge for our paths, although for the most parts they have withstood the weather well. The construction method we are using is actually very similar the pioneering methods of John Lowden Macadam who invented "Macadamisation" in the 18th Century. His process required that the road was built from stones ranging in size from small stones down to dust, such that the action of a passing carriage was always to compact the stone matrix, with the smaller stones locking the larger stones together. His instruction was that no stone should go into the roadway unless it fitted the inside the worker's mouth!

Today we don't apply that test! Instead we use graded quarry stones ranging in size from 40mm down to a fine dust. Normally this comes from Craiglash Quarry so is a natural , local product. When compacted this gives a firm, long lasting surface. its only weakness is to erosion from running water, so providing drainage routes is essential, ensuring water gets off the path quickly and does not build up into a torrent

The Monboddo to Craigmyle path has always been subject to erosion. In heavy rain water draining from Craigmyle and surrounding fields is funnelled into the path, causing serious erosion even of old tarmac surfaces.. Earlier this year we experimented with a drainage channel along side the path and cross drains to capture the water. This has been quite successful in preventing erosion during two recent storms. Work is going to complete refurbishment of the path. When completed we expect to have a path that will be suitable for all users for years into the future.

We are also working on a repair method for parts of the Beltie Wetlands path where water flooding from the burn in extreme conditions has scoured out the path locally.

The good news is that we have a group of enthusiastic volunteers to maintain and improve our local paths to withstand the weather that comes our way.

If you want to escape the computer screen and join our pathbuilding group click here