



New path begins at restored Aberdeenshire watercourse

The Torphins Paths Group, a Deeside charity focused on improving and developing walking and cycling access in the local area, has completed the first section of a proposed path connecting Torphins and Banchory. Stretching 1.5km alongside the site of the Easter Beltie river restoration, the path provides an attractive route from a new car park at Easter Beltie to the Black Linn Burn at Dam Wood.

Funded by an Improving Public Access grant of £58,000 from the Scottish Rural Development Programme Agri-Environment Climate Scheme and supplemented by £8,000 of funding from Torphins Paths Group, the two-metre wide, multi-user path is already proving popular with locals and visitors alike.

“We’re delighted to have the first section of this path now in place here at Easter Beltie,” says Chair of Torphins Paths Group, Will Maclean. “The route offers a great opportunity for walking, cycling, running and horse riding through the tranquil setting of the re-meandered Beltie burn, and we’re looking forward to developing the path eastwards as part of a planned 10km route between Torphins and Banchory. Users are urged to always follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to ensure safe and pleasurable access for all.”

Signage, benches and fencing along the route have been installed by the Group, with information panels on the burn’s restoration due to be added soon by the Dee Catchment Partnership, who managed the three-month rewilding project to boost the region’s biodiversity and resilience to climate change in 2020. “We want people to enjoy this special place responsibly, so it’s fantastic to have this route in place,” adds Dr Susan Cooksley, Manager of the Dee Catchment Partnership. “The burn and surrounding wetlands have really come into their own since the site was restored two and a half years ago, with a host of habitats and species now thriving here, so we urge people to keep dogs on a lead and be mindful of wildlife – taking only photos and leaving only footprints.”

Torphins Paths Group has secured permission for the next section of path which will provide a formal bridge at the Black Linn Burn and a route traversing the northwest side of Dam Wood. The opportunity is to return through the woodland area, or make a safe exit at a new layby to be built on the Glassel road opposite the Kynoch Plantation area.

“The section from Torphins to Easter Beltie is agreed with several landowners in principle and negotiations continue with one remaining owner,” explains Will. “Beyond Dam Wood the route from

Glassel road to West Brathens is being planned. From there to Banchory there’s a firm practical route identified in the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland feasibility study we commissioned in 2017 with EU Leader and Aberdeenshire funding.”