



## **Public Consultation 2017**

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## **Introduction**

Torphins Paths Group is a community voluntary organisation, which aims to improve and develop paths for walking and cycling in and around Torphins and to develop new paths connecting Torphins with other communities. To establish public interest and priorities regarding local paths the Group initiated a community consultation with the support of Aberdeenshire Council. The consultation was promoted locally over a period of weeks. The data and comments from the consultation have been recorded and analysed to provide a foundation and support for planning and development.

## **Methods**

A short questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed to obtain views of the public in Torphins about current and future paths and ideas that had emerged from the Paths Committee meetings. It was piloted amongst the Paths Group on 29 April for 1 week and modified at the Committee Meeting on 17 May.

An electronic version of the questionnaire, using Survey Monkey facilitated by Aberdeenshire Council, was distributed through the Paths Group Facebook page, with links from Platform 22, Torphins Community Council, Torphins Community Forum and Torphins Typhoons cycling group. It was promoted by posters and flyers distributed around the village and an article in the Deeside Piper. Paper questionnaires were distributed at the Torphins Paths Group Launch Event on 3 June, at Platform 22, Torphins Pharmacy and Torphins Medical Practice.

The survey commenced 18 May 2017 until 23 June 2017.

Data from the paper questionnaires were entered onto a Libreoffice Base database and exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Data from Survey Monkey were also exported into Microsoft Excel and the two datasets combined.

All the categorical data were analysed for frequencies of responses. Three questions were pre-selected for subgroup analysis; these were the questions about road safety, the challenge of current paths and whether having better paths would encourage the respondent to walk, run or cycle more. The subgroups of interest were 1) less fit people, 2) people with some disability, 3) young people (<18 years), 4) parents with children, and 5) older adults (>65 years). Due to small numbers in some subgroups, data from less fit people and those with some disability were pooled, as were data from young people and parents with children.

## Results

### Responses and characteristics of respondents

There were 166 responses, of which 92 were on Survey Monkey and 74 were paper questionnaires.

*Table 1. Characteristics of respondents. Values are numbers (percentages).*

	<b>N=166</b>
Fit people	127 (77)
Less fit people	18 (11)
Older people (>65 years)	41 (25)
Young people (<18 years)	3 (2)
Parents/carers with children	48 (29)
People with some disability	5 (3)
Visitors to Torphins	8 (5)

### Main findings

Of 162 respondents, 101 (62%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there were plenty of safe and easy paths for walking and cycling around Torphins. Only 22 (14%) agreed or strongly agreed. Of 163 respondents, 70 (43%) agreed or strongly agreed that walking on paths around Torphins is challenging. Of 163 respondents, 124 (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that the roads were too unsafe for most children to cycle to Torphins Primary School. Only 10 (6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. New off-road paths in a variety of locations were all welcomed.

*Preferences for new off-road paths. Values are numbers (percentages).*

	<b>N=</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly agree</b>
There should be more safe and accessible off-road paths around Torphins	164	157 (96)
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to the Deeside Way	163	152 (93)
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to Banchory	165	149 (90)
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to Lumphanan	166	157 (95)

Of 163 respondents, 147 (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that having better off-road paths around Torphins would encourage them to walk or run or cycle more. Seven (4%) respondents disagreed and 9 were uncertain.

### **Disabled and less fit**

There were 21 respondents who regarded themselves as less fit or having some disability.

11 (52%) agreed or strongly agreed that walking on paths around Torphins is challenging, with six uncertain and four disagreeing.

19 (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that having better off-road paths around Torphins would encourage them to walk or run or cycle more.

### **Parents and children**

There were 51 respondents who were under 18 or parents/carers with children.

Of 50 who responded, 37 (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that the roads were too unsafe for most children to cycle to school. Seven (14%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **Older people**

There were 41 respondents who were older (>65 years).

Of them, 16 (39%) agreed or strongly agreed that walking on paths around Torphins is challenging with 23 (56%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

34 (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that having better off-road paths around Torphins would encourage them to walk or run or cycle more.

### **Detailed comments**

Many respondents added detailed comments. These have not been fully analysed yet, but they are listed here and will provide valuable input to the feasibility study.

More path - routes - May 5 +025 Year Project

Known walks are fairly rugged, and maintenance is required on a few

Paths and routes should be well sign posted

Maintain and open up existing ones better eg Hill of Fare, path thru woods by church, safer route through the golf course

Just more of them please

There are some nice walks but not many that link up without having to go on roads, and none are mapped or signposted

Create a larger area for parking in the village centre. i.e. outside the shop - dangerous for pedestrians and drivers

We need to approach Aberdeenshire Council again re opening gate on Craigmyle Estate (Quadruple tick for path to Lumphanan box!)

Paths in the centre of the village are adequate but more country paths are needed as most walks are on roadways

A footbridge over the Beltie to allow access from Tornaveen (West) to Learney Hill would be great!

We have been unable to access any information about paths around Torphins

Learney Hill

Any initiative to encourage cycling and walking should be encouraged

There are far more cyclists on the roads now which is great but more cycle/walking routes would make it safer for everyone including drivers

Paths that youngsters can use without the dangers of road traffic (walking and on bikes) would give parents more confidence to let them travel alone

Would be great if paths network in wider area could link into Westhill too

Nice paths but not joined up. Learney Woods, Craigmyle. Need to walk on the roads. Can't safely cycle.

Pathway to Station Garage. Children must pass their Bikeability first (before cycling to school).

Also require an area for children to store bikes during school hours.

Existing paths are not linked up. Rough paths require attention / maintenance sooner rather than later. A focus is required, and the desire for paths must be highlighted.

A map of current paths would be good along with more information on rights of access, particularly now the Waulkmill bridge is open.

Would be great to have more routes for walkers / runners / cyclists / push chairs / wheel chairs / dogs). - roads through the village are often unpleasant to walk on due to speeding vehicles so off road routes are needed - existing walk on the railway line towards Wester Beltie is great - wish this could be extended - Connecting Torphins to Banchory / KON / Lumphanan off road would be great. - Craigmyle Road is nice to walk on but can lead to complacency as road is usually quiet but speed limit is actually stupidly high. Can some of the old railway line be used and this could link to... via a tunnel :) - Tracks along Beltie Burn (SE from NJ638005) are nice but need a bridge (and some vegetation clearing) at far end). Who owns the land? I'm happy to help clear the vegetation if we are allowed. - Off road route to the Hill of Fare. Is this achievable from back road to Campfield? - removal (or allow opening of gate) NJ639017 - Tracks beyond West Learney are good as well. - contentious issue I know re dogs but opportunity to place more dog bins?

Some villages in deeside have worked hard to provide more paths and cycle routes but torphins has fallen behind

While we do have numerous walks, all unmarked, which are excellent giving lovely views around the village, we could certainly do with more, particularly cycle paths which avoid use of the roads. Being generally narrow the roads are a disincentive to bike use with children, particularly the younger ones.

I am very much in favour of developing links to Banchory (especially) + Deeside Way & Lumphanan. Personally I live in Banchory and a member of Banchory Paths Association Lumphanan to Torphins off-road multi-use path must be a priority. It's less than 2 miles and there's no path!

I am sure more can be made of the old railway. There are many component bits of paths but if they could be joined up, it would make a huge difference

Raemoir Road (from Torphins to the Raemoir junction) is very dangerous for cyclists. Certainly too dangerous for children to cycle and this limits the ability to link with minor roads round Torphins (Glassal road or road behind petrol station)

The woods behind Craigmyle Road have some good paths although the gate at the top of the hill is padlocked so there is no easy access for anyone who can't climb the gate...due to ability, children, bikes etc...paths are not maintained and very few people use them ....such a shame as they are lovely, peaceful woods, teeming with red squirrels, deer, woodpeckers, and red kite.

Improve pavements in Kincardine Road.

Torphins should be linked up with the deeside way to both Aboyne and Banchory. It definitely needs better access for off road cycling and walking to encourage more people to get out and about.

A map showing all the different walks in the area on one of the notice boards would be beneficial.

Unless you are local it is difficult to find out about the routes in the area.

All age groups 40 years ago, enjoyed walking the countryside roads including horse riders and cyclists. THIS IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE.

More dog poo bins, some local sculptures and seating placed at various view points.

I don't believe the paths are an issue but the amount of cars parking in dangerous blind spots are for school children or elderly to cross and if cycling you have to cycle in the middle of the road due to parked cars. The village shop causes so much congestion that even I don't like to cross there at 50 !! I have no problem with cyclists on pavements as long as they respect pedestrians gave right of way. But that is down to education. As a suggestion It would be nice to shut the village off from

traffic for a weekend to see how much freedom everyone enjoys .

I am happy with the paths for walking in the immediate area of Torphins for short walks but agree that paths to take you further afield would give people more opportunities for extended walks.

I have 3 young children & would love to cycle to school every day, into the shops & to Banchory, Lumphanan & Aboyne but it is just not safe enough. Cycling is an easy way to stay fit & enjoy our beautiful countryside & contribute less pollution, it really is a no brainer & tragic that the government does not promote cycle & walking paths more.

This would be great for all the community and those visiting the village.

Would love to see more provision for walkers and cyclists.

Our only real option for a walk with the buggy and a balance bike is the railway track. It would be amazing to have more offroad options

It would be good if the woodland paths and public footpaths were better maintained. It would also be very helpful if there was a leaflet or booklet showing nice walks in and around the Torphins area.

More paths around the village and linking with other villages would enhance Torphins and certainly encourage more people to walk and cycle.

There are no real off-road paths around Torphins leading to people having to walk on quieter roads where they still encounter traffic

if not off road, would be good to have signing of cycle path to alert cars. junction at shop remains very dangerous for children- must be a high priority? Dog fouling still a recurrent issue even on roadside footpaths.

It would be absolutely wonderful if there was a proper walking/cycle-path network linking up the villages of Lumphanan and Torphins with Banchory and the Deeside Way, I am confident that it would be extremely well used.

There is a fantastic path up round the Learney estate and on the Hill of Fare, would be good to expand them

Some of the back roads are good for walkers - there already is a good road (via Tillyneckle) to the Deeside Way. The main roads are not good for cyclists and unsuitable for walking. The crossroads area is very dangerous for Children. A traffic light crossing near the Scot-mid would be good and also help to slow down through traffic.

Paths in and around Torphins are not too bad however connecting paths to other villages for cyclists and walkers is badly needed

Paths should be signposted better. Various walks mapped on a board somewhere in the village.

A pamphlet, incorporating a map, detailing, in a readable manner, and, perhaps, grading walks in terms of difficulty/demand would be a great asset. Especially to newcomers and visitors to the village.

Links to other pathways should definitely be a priority, off road cycling in torphins is next to non existent.

I personally think the walking paths are great. My children and I walk regularly round the village and out of the village, but I agree that there is no safe cycle path for children and a link to Lumphanan, Banchory or the Deeside way would be fantastic for children to cycle

Some pavements around Torphins are in dire need of resurfacing. Off-road paths with a reasonably flat surface would be very welcome especially for older people. It would be good to be able to walk without watching one's feet all the time.ÿ

Many of the paths are narrow and not fit for cycling. Having recently been in Essex there would be great scope here for wide paths for cyclists and dog walkers. Lottery money was used for the paths in Essex.

Paths around Torphins are fragmented, mostly informal trails, and not well maintained, thus being challenging for less able and not a reliable means to avoid busy roads. Also Torphins should be connected to other Deeside communities by proper paths to support walking and cycling and put Torphins on the Deeside paths map to support business and community development.

Huge potential to develop existing paths and create a network. Torphins could even be a hub.

## **Personal Interest to Participate**

Many respondents offered contact details to build a membership base and to enable their participation in future project work. These are being analysed to make appropriate contact for support.

## **Conclusion**

The data and comments received demonstrate a strong community response to the questionnaire. There is clear interest and concern for the development and improvement of multi use paths around Torphins and connecting to other communities. Additional comments also recommend work on publicity, signage and mapping. A formal technical feasibility study is the next step to establish a definitive development plan.



Do you consider yourself to be (tick all that apply):

- |                                 |                          |                               |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A fit person                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | A less fit person             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An older person (over 65 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> | A young person (under 18)     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A parent/carer with children    | <input type="checkbox"/> | A person with some disability | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A visitor to Torphins           | <input type="checkbox"/> |                               |                          |

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (please tick)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There should be more safe and accessible off-road paths around Torphins					
There are plenty of safe and easy paths for walking and cycling from Torphins					
The roads are too unsafe for most children to cycle to Torphins Primary School					
Walking on paths around Torphins is challenging					
Having better off-road paths around Torphins would encourage me to walk or run or cycle more					
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to the Deeside Way					
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to Banchory					
There should be an off-road path from Torphins to Lumphanan					

Please leave comments or suggestions about paths around Torphins (use the back if needed).

We are looking for more Paths Group members! Please provide contact details if you'd like to join.