



Alex Paterson
Chief Executive
Historic Environment Scotland
Longmore House
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

11 May 2022

Dear Mr Paterson

Holyrood Royal Park, Radical Road and access issues

We represent a number of stakeholder organisations who are interested in the Holyrood Royal Park, its qualities, amenities and recreational access for the public. Each of us, in one way or another, has raised serious concerns about the prevention of access to the Radical Road as one of the premier and historic rights of way in the City of Edinburgh. Salisbury Craggs themselves are also an important recreational resource for climbers and one that has been enjoyed for many years until the fencing was erected.

We appreciate that HES has significant management responsibilities and acknowledge the public safety issues that are in front of us.

However, we do not accept that the approach adopted is in any way suitable for a public open space with Holyrood Royal Park's special characteristics and history of access. We also believe that the approach to managing paths in the Park and public safety is inconsistent. For example, in recent years, there have been serious injuries and even deaths due to falls on Arthur's Seat but no attempt to prevent access here to protect public safety seems to be proposed.

As such, we believe that it is essential for a whole Park strategic management plan to be prepared as a matter of urgency. The process must be open to public consultation and scrutiny. Indeed, we believe that public engagement is required now as a means of both helping guide the creation of this plan and enabling its successful implementation. This could include a discussion on vehicular access and the inconsistency in approach to closures of the Innocent Railway path, which have been a feature of social media debate during the pandemic, as well as issues such as habitat condition and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, the necessary legal processes for closing a right of way (the Radical Road) have not been followed, denying the public an opportunity to make their views known.

To this end, we ask to meet you and any members of your team to discuss our concerns and to see if there are areas in which we can assist HES in the preparation of a suitable management framework for the Park, and one which address the crucial access challenges posed by the current closure of the Radical Road. We would be delighted to work collaboratively with HES to achieve the very best for this very special place.

Yours sincerely

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About

The Cockburn Association

The Cockburn Association was founded in 1875 to promote and encourage the care and conservation of Edinburgh's unique architectural, landscape and historic heritage. and to enhance the amenity of the city and its neighbourhood. The Association is one of the oldest conservation, planning and architectural advocacy organisations in the world.

www.cockburnassociation.org.uk

ScotWays

Founded in 1845, ScotWays (The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society) is the independent charity which upholds and promotes public access rights in Scotland. We are widely recognised as experts in the law and practice of access and advise on access problems, provide information and training, and maintain a vast database about routes in Scotland. You can see our recognisable green and white signs on routes across Scotland.

<https://scotways.com/>

Mountaineering Scotland

Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains, and acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.

<https://www.mountaineering.scot/>

Ramblers Scotland

Ramblers Scotland is a membership organisation and charity. We have a grassroots network of 54 groups across Scotland who run 3,500 group walks a year, organised and led by 1,200 experienced volunteers. As the representative body for walkers in Scotland and a governing body of sport, we work to champion walking, protect and promote access rights and develop our path networks. We are part of the Ramblers, Britain's walking charity.

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland.aspx>