



Transport Planning & Engineering

Penpont to Thornhill Active Travel Path P1C

Community Engagement

Feedback Summary

04/06/2025

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1 Feedback Summary

1.1 Purpose of Consultation

The design for the active travel route between Penpont, through Burnhead, over Nith Bridge and into Thornhill has reached the point where the first 2 phases of the project have been completed. The active travel route has been constructed from Penpont through Burnhead up to the west side of Nith Bridge. The last section being finished at the close of March 2025. This means 3.4km of the 4.2km route has been completed.

The 3rd phase design is in planning and this is the section over the Nith Bridge itself and is known as P1B2. The 4th phase is the final phase into Thornhill and this is to take the route of heading up Boat Brae. This is also currently in planning and is known as P1C.

The purpose of the consultation was to showcase the completed works and to discuss the proposals of the route heading up Boat Brae with the implications of a road closure to enable this to happen.

1.2 Attendance

In total, 57 people registered attendance at the event on 4th June 2025 at the Drumlanrig View Social Space at the top of Boat Brae.



Figure 1 - Photo showing attendance and set-up of the consultation event

1.3 Methodology

The consultation event was open to the public and was in the form of a 'drop-in', where the attendees would find maps and design information for the project displayed on posters and maps around the room.

Old School Thornhill, Thornhill Active Travel Group, and KPT Development Trust members headed the event and were assisted by the design team at Transport Planning and Engineering. The designer's presence was to encourage engagement with the drawings and answer any technical queries. Attendees recorded their feedback using sticky notes which were adhered to the maps to help specify which part of the route the comment related to.

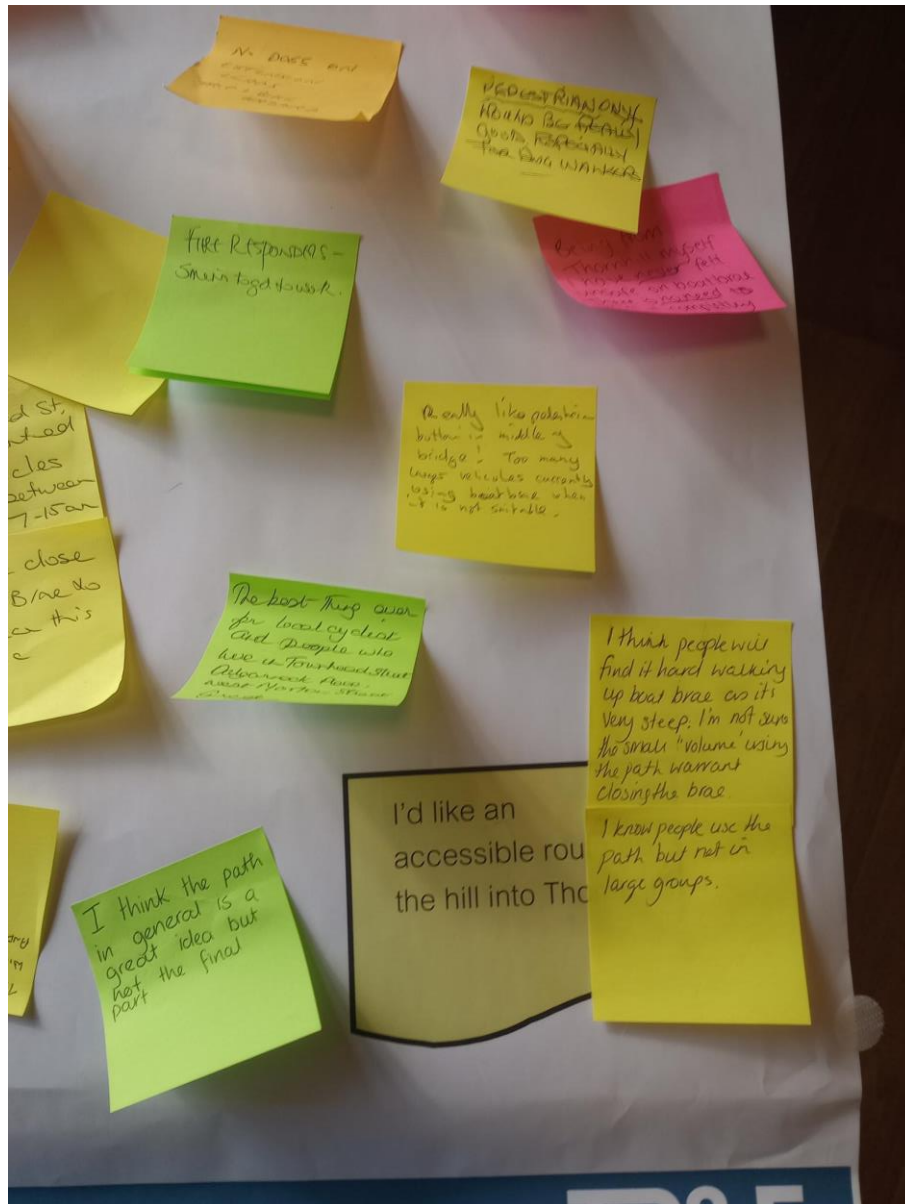


Figure 2 - Photo of method of feedback using sticky notes and maps

1.4 Comments

A total of 25 comments were provided through the post it notes. 56% of these comments showed clear and positive support for the project or aspects within it. 12% gave suggestions. The remaining comments - 32% - did not support the Boat Brae route as a way forward.

However, all attendees supported the route coming through from Penpont but as noted above some were not happy with the final section into Thornhill.

Verbal comments were noted separately for the designer's notes.

“Hope this will be completed without delay. Broadly in favour”

One of the many supportive feedback comments

This qualitative feedback was analysed and assigned to categories best fitting the content of the response. The summary of the categorised responses can be seen in the figures below.

Note that some individual comments covered multiple topics and so were assigned into more than one category. Therefore, the total number of occurrences for each topic ($n_0=26$) does not equal the total number of comments ($n_t=25$).

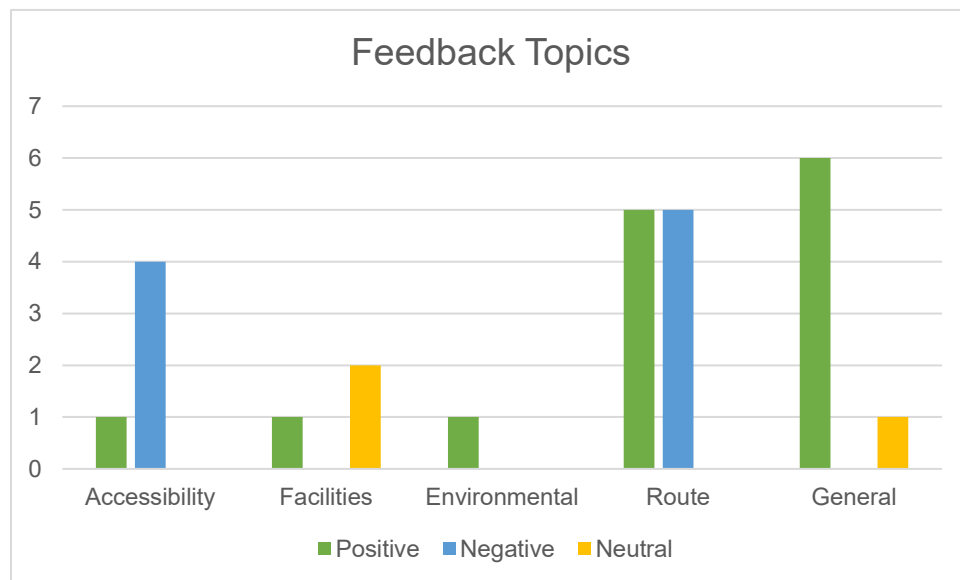


Figure 2 - Categorisation of comments showing the occurrence of the most popular topics

2 Response to Feedback Topics

2.1 Route

The previous route alignment was proposed to head up the A702 and join Gill Road coming into Thornhill from the north end of the village. The A702 forms junction with the A76 here the infrastructure for the active travel route would require to be fitted into the current streetscape and/or taken into the parallel minor streets to enable safe passage into the centre of the village.

The alignment was changed in February after discussions with landowners and public utility companies. The final viable option left was the route to run up Boat Brae. Its gradient in particular causes concern and so to mitigate the impact of the hill itself the proposal has been to exclude traffic from Boat Brae and enabling only authorised access to the fields and woods along Boat Brae's length. This mitigation would allow the route users up and down the road to use the full width of the carriageway in the knowledge that they were safe from vehicles travelling at speed.

An important comment was the impact the closure of Boat Brae would have on the response time for The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) staff. Staff members in Penpont have 5 minutes to travel and be ready to leave from 1st alert. Closing Boat Brae will put at least another minute onto the journey and that is if traffic is minimal. This is a major consideration and advice will be taken on how to accommodate this.

2.2 Accessibility

The steep gradient of the path is preclusive to non-motorised wheelchairs and scooters as the gradient in its steepest section is 1 in 9. Alternative routes have been considered to look at ways to avoid the passage up Boat Brae:

- As mentioned above, using Gill Road and entering the village from the north end.
- Continuing along the A731 and joining the village from the south end through Hospital Brae.
- Traversing up the wooded bank to the south of Boat Brae and gaining access village from the east.

2.3 Facilities

The facilities being proposed to assist with access up the hill are:

- A 1.1m high handrail up the left-hand side of Boat Brae along the verge length.
- Resting benches halfway up the hill and at the top brow of the hill.
- Signage and road markings to inform and remind users of the route difficulties.
- A gated access to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and to remind cyclists that there is a junction at the bottom of the hill.

3 Conclusion

The overall response to the route up into Thornhill was positive and there were more supportive comments than not. A safe route into the village due to a less vehicular movements is welcomed. However, the difficulties for SFRS staff are a major concern. The inconvenience of this shortcut to other vehicle users was also noted.

Appendix A – All Feedback Comments

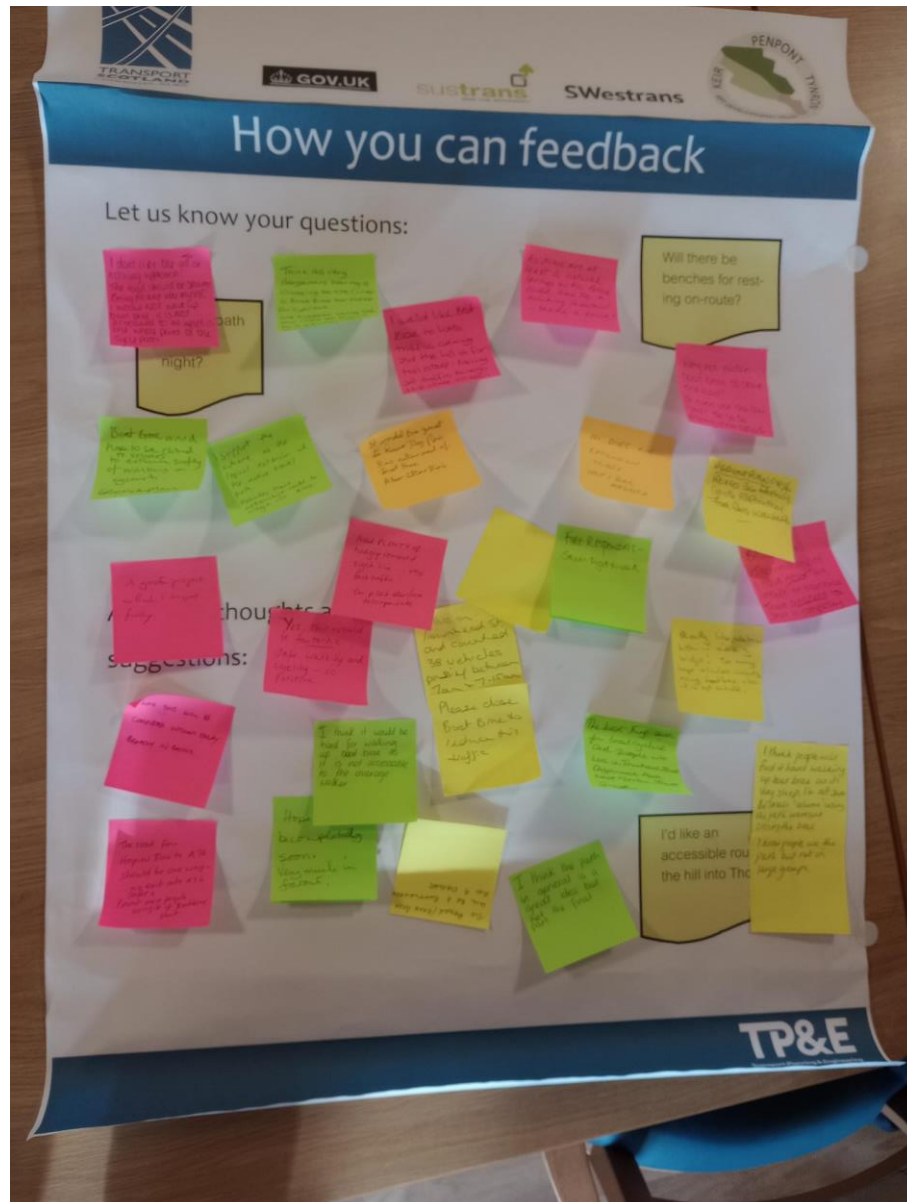


Figure 5 – Picture showing all comments left

4th June 2025 Post it Feed back

- I don't like the all or nothing approach. The road should be shared. Being fit and able myself, I would NOT walk up boat brae. It is NOT accessible to all which is the whole point of the cycle path.
- Boat Brae would have to be closed to vehicles to ensure safety of walking and cyclists. Excellent plan.

- I support the scheme as the logical extension of the active travel path. Vehicles have an alternative route to the village via A702.
- A good project which I fully support.
- Yes, this would be fantastic. Safe walking and cycling - so positive.
- Need plenty of hedging removed - sight lines, very fast traffic. Can plant elsewhere to compensate.
- It would be great to have dog poo bins either end of boat brae. Also litter bins.
- Think it's dangerous placing a crossing at the corner of boat brae. Too steep for cyclists. We suggest using the low road as should be a one way road anyway.
- I would like boat brae to have traffic calming measures and the hill is far too steep. Forcing all traffic through the whole village.
- As there are at least 2 natural springs on the brae, could there be a drinking fountain - beside a bench?
- No dogs on extension leads - trip and bike hazard
- Fire responders - (slower?)* to get to work
- I live on Townhead St. and counted 38 vehicles passing between 7-7.15am this morning. Please close Boat Brae to reduce traffic
- I think it will be hard walking up as boat brae is not accessible to the average walker.
- Hope it will be completed very soon. Very much in favour.
- The bridge/brae will be a bottle neck and a danger,
- I think the path in general is a great idea, but not the final part
- The best thing ever for local cyclists and people who live on Townhead Street, Dalgarnock Place and West Morton St. Great.
- The road from Hospital Brae to A76 should be a one way - no exit onto A76. Safer. Prevent more people using it if Boat Brae shut.
- Hope this will be completed without delay. Broadly in favour.
- Really like the pedestrian button in the middle of the bridge! Too many larger vehicles currently using boat brae when it is not suitable
- I think people will find it hard walking up boat brae as it very steep. I'm not sure the small 'volume' using the oath warrants closing the brae. I know people use the path, but not in large groups.
- Being from Thornhill myself, I have never felt unsafe on boat brae. There is no need to shut it completely.
- Pedestrians only would be really good. Especially for dog walkers.
- Why not widen boat brae to share the road! Or even use the low road. So so so many other options.

* couldn't make this word out.

Appendix B – Further Comment Data



Figure 7 – Feedback broken into visual chart by topic

- Of the 57 attendees 43.8% left a comment on the project.
- Of the comments left the largest proportion (56%) were in support of the project. The second largest portion (32%) were negative comments, and the smallest section (12%) were neutral comments or questions.
- Of the 14 positive comments made the main categories mentioned were general positive comments (43%), the route (36%) and the remainder were about assorted items such as accessibility and facilities (21%).
- Of the 8 negative comments made in the categories were concerns about the route (62.5%) and accessibility due to path steepness (50%)*.

*Percentages total more than 100% due to some comments belonging in multiple categories.

- Of the 3 questions and neutral comments made the topics were the facilities that would be available (67%) and a general comment about dogs on the path (33%).

Transport Planning and Engineering (TP&E) is Cycling Scotland's social enterprise consultancy, specialising in the design of cycling and sustainable travel infrastructure. TP&E is a unique organisation - an engineering consultancy that focuses solely on design solutions for cyclists and other non-motorised users. Routes are designed by cyclists, for cyclists, in line with worldwide best practice. A proportion of profits from TP&E are invested back into Cycling Scotland projects to encourage more people to cycle.

TP&E provide design services to a wide range of clients, including local authorities, community groups, national parks and other national organisations.

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