



# EAST AYRSHIRE RECREATION PLAN

A Guide to Enjoying East Ayrshire's Outdoors



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Scotland and the Outdoors

Scotland is full of recreational opportunities for every age and all levels of fitness and ability. It is a small country and yet boasts some of the most diverse landscape in the world where people of all aspirations can experience the perfect adventure alongside rivers, burns, lochs and coastline as well as rolling moors and glens, big hills and rugged mountains.

Experiences in Scotland's outdoors change and vary throughout the year. The same path on the same hill will feel different as the seasons come and go, sometimes even on the same day! Scotland's weather is notoriously changeable, be prepared.

Spring will bring fresh crisp air as colour slowly returns to the landscape after winter. Wild flowers will bloom and bird song will change, lambs and other newborn animals will bring life to the landscape. The temperature will slowly start to rise again, but not without the occasional Scottish downpour. In summer, the landscape will be at its most vibrant with the hills and glens coloured with different shades of bright green and the rolling moors will be splashed with purple heather. The temperature will continue to rise and with the warmer days comes increased footfall on the paths and trails. Autumn is the start of another change where the greens of summer turn to reds, oranges, yellows and browns before the trees drop their leaves. The hills and glens are still busy but will slowly become quieter as the paths and trails show less footprints, not so many hoof marks and fewer tyre tracks. Winter in Scotland brings snow and rain to the landscape and the uplands can become a harsh environment but this also offers a uniquely Scottish experience thanks to the combination of high pressure weather systems, snow covered hills and mountains, dramatic frosty glens and frozen lochs.

Outdoor recreation in Scotland is currently booming and the increase in visitors looking to enjoy and immerse themselves in this landscape is a very positive one, but with this positive change comes a challenge for the people and organisations who manage the landscape to provide enjoyable opportunities for visitors.



## Natural Wellbeing – the Benefits of Being Outdoors

Being outdoors can mean different things to different people, in particular outdoor recreation. To some it can be climbing a hill, riding a horse along a woodland path, a stroll, run or cycle within your local surrounding or getting close to nature in a country park. Whatever pace you set yourself, being in the outdoors and getting active is great for your physical and mental health and well-being.

Being active in the outdoors can improve your physical wellbeing, playing a part in weight management, reducing disease, strengthening your bones and muscles as well as improving your ability to do everyday activities. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

Research also shows that getting outside in nature has many mental health benefits as well, and has proven effective in reducing anxiety and depression, and there is further evidence that physical recreation in nature improves those results even further.

Making connections with the natural world is also good for us. No matter your age, taking a moment to look, listen and feel in your surroundings can be uplifting. Look at the shapes of the clouds, listen to the birds, check out the texture of tree trunks, rocks, leaves etc. and take time to breathe.

Spending time outdoors could improve your physical and mental health, ward off illness, and actually make you happier.



## When you plan to go outdoors for recreation it's important to stay safe:

Here's a few hints and tips to help keep you safe:

- **Know where to go:** plan your route and take into account its distance and how strenuous it may be.
- **Dress for the weather:** Check the forecast before venturing out, and be prepared for all possible weather conditions, such as rain or snow.
- **Wear sunscreen:** high factor sunscreen is a must, whether it's sunny or not. If you'll be physically active or in water, opt for sweat and water-resistant protection.
- **Stay hydrated:** Be sure to tote along plenty of water and a snack, along with a meal if you'll be off the grid for an extended period of time.
- **Check-in with loved ones:** Before making your way to the park or forest, let your loved ones know exactly where you'll be, as mobile phone reception may be spotty. Register your phone so you can [text 999](#), which may be more reliable where there is poor reception. You can also download the [What3Words app](#), which gives emergency services an exact location if you run into trouble.
- **Outdoor Pursuits:** when taking part in new or more risky activity, it's important to get the right advice and this can be found through local locals and national governing bodies.



## 2. SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

### Overview of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003



The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 received Royal Assent in February 2003 and came into force two years later, with Part 1 of this legislation establishing statutory public rights of access on and over most land, including inland water. Part 2 and 3 of the Act gave crofters and other local communities the right to buy land, providing opportunities for those who work and care for the land to have control over and input into how the Scottish landscape is managed.

Part 1 of the Act is affectionately known as 'The Right to Roam' and access rights are to be exercised in a responsible manner for recreational and other purposes. This provides extraordinary and unique opportunities for people to experience Scotland, by allowing them to travel through its landscape on foot, horseback or bicycle.

The infographic is titled 'When you're out and about, follow the SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE'. It contains six panels with illustrations and text: 1. 'Respect people's privacy and peace of mind.' with an illustration of a person walking a dog and another person in the background. 2. 'Help land managers and others to work safely and effectively.' with an illustration of a person on a bicycle near a yellow excavator. 3. 'Care for your environment.' with an illustration of a person kneeling to pick up litter. 4. 'Take responsibility for your own actions.' with an illustration of a family walking. 5. 'Keep your dog under proper control.' with an illustration of a person running a dog. 6. A panel about not disturbing wildlife. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO' and the website 'eastayrshireleisure.com'. Logos for 'East Ayrshire Council' and 'East Ayrshire Leisure' are also present.

### With Rights Come Responsibilities

As described in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, there is a slight difference between the rights and responsibilities of the general public and those of land managers, but they all come back to three key principles:

- **Respect the interests of other people**
- **Care for the environment**
- **Take responsibility for your own actions**



For the general public, the three key principles can be broken down further in to the following responsibilities:

- Take responsibility for your own actions by caring for your own safety, keeping alert for hazards, and taking special care with children.
- Respect people's privacy and peace of mind by not acting in ways that might annoy or alarm people, especially at night.
- Help land managers and others to work safely and effectively by avoiding land management operations such as harvesting or tree felling. Avoid damaging crops and leave gates as you find them.
- Care for your environment by taking your litter home with you. Be mindful of your impact on the landscape and do not disturb wildlife.
- Keep your dog under proper control and take care if you're near livestock or ground nesting birds. Always pick up after your dog and be respectful of other dogs.
- Take extra care if you are organising an event or running a business in the outdoors. If you plan to use land for such reasons, always seek advice and talk to the land managers.

For the owners or managers of land, the three key principles can be broken down further in to the following responsibilities:

- Respect access rights when managing land and water by not hindering or deterring people. Always take right of access into account when planning management tasks.
- Act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations by keeping any precautions or warning signs to the minimum area and only for the duration required.
- Work with the local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management. Show that people are welcome and work with the local authority to help manage access in a positive manner.

A practical guide for all can be found on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code website along with regional and national contacts.

### **3. ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS IN EAST AYRSHIRE**

#### **Description of East Ayrshire and its Landscape**

East Ayrshire is located to the west of South Lanarkshire and the north and west of Dumfries and Galloway. It is separated from these local authority areas by the western moorland plateau and the Southern Uplands, which extend west and north into the local authority area. The highest, most rugged hills lie in the area bordering Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire in the south, and include the scenic areas of Loch Doon and Glen Afton.

Many of the hills have been afforested with commercial plantations which are now mature. In recent years windfarms have become a notable feature, including the extensive developments in the Whitelee area to the north of the county. The upland areas are drained by three main rivers: the River Doon drains northwest from Loch Doon and the River Ayr west from the plateau moorlands, both passing into South Ayrshire and joining the Firth of Clyde at Ayr. The River Irvine passes through Kilmarnock to Irvine in North Ayrshire.

The upland areas grade through valleys and foothills to the west into the extensive Ayrshire Lowlands which extend into South and North Ayrshire. The foothill areas and the fringes of the moorlands have been extensively exploited for minerals, with a long history of mining. Most particularly in recent years extensive surface mining has marked the foothills surrounding Dalmellington, New Cumnock, Cumnock and Muirkirk.

The Ayrshire Lowlands are a rich pastoral landscape of undulating hills, meandering rivers and woodlands dotted with small settlements. Most of East Ayrshire's settlements are in the lowland areas, with the largest settlement and administrative centre, Kilmarnock, in the north of the local authority area. The main roads emanating from Kilmarnock include the A77/M77 north to Glasgow and south to Ayr; the A71 west to Irvine and east to Strathaven and the A76 southeast to Dumfries. The A713 between Ayr and Castle Douglas is a designated tourist route. The A70 runs between Edinburgh and Ayr through East Ayrshire.

### **East Ayrshire's Tradition with the Outdoors**

The natural world has been an important part of life and recreation for the residents and visitors of East Ayrshire. The farms and industrial heritage of the area have shaped the villages and countryside around us, and have provided jobs and work throughout the communities. East Ayrshire's green spaces and open water have been used commercially and recreationally through time from the rivers turning the mill wheels to the fishermen spending time on the lochs and rivers, not only for enjoyment but as a way to feed their families. Paths that cross the landscape have been used by armies and kings through our history, as well as by the local people travelling to work or to their place of worship, or even to a favoured picnic site or swimming hole. These places are important more than ever as the thirst for knowledge of our past increases, and the need to escape the pace of everyday life.





## Public Rights of Way

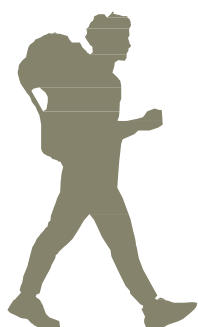
In Scotland, public rights of way (ROWs) may be created through common law by use over a period of time. Conversely they can be lost by non-use. A public right of way can be claimed to exist where the route satisfies **all** of the following conditions. It must:

- Connect two public places
- Follow a more or less defined route
- Have been used by the public as of right
- Have been so used without substantial and effective interruption for at least 20 years

You can find out if a path in East Ayrshire is a Right of Way by using [East Ayrshire Council's online mapping service](#), which allows you to view Ordnance Survey maps with various sets of map information.

## Outdoor Recreation in East Ayrshire

This guide will showcase some of the best recreational opportunities in East Ayrshire, not only for visitors but for the people who already live, work and play here. The guide will focus on the networks of paths and trails that connect various destinations in East Ayrshire – some of the trails will be longer strategic routes that connect settlements and towns, others will be shorter routes that are part of a local network that are known and loved by the people who live here. There will be remote and rugged hill paths where adventure awaits, as well as opportunities to paddle the rivers and swim in the lochs. The landscape here in East Ayrshire is waiting to be enjoyed, so create your own unique experience.



## Cycling Routes in East Ayrshire

East Ayrshire is an amazing place to cycle and has a variety of routes including quiet country lanes, off-road mountain biking at Craufurdland Estate and Loch Doon and brilliant traffic free cycling paths through parks and towns. Or enjoy the quiet country roads around East Ayrshire that link small towns and villages. There are many routes to enjoy whatever distance or difficulty you are looking for. Contact the Active Travel Hub for some suggestions to suit your ability, but here are a few to get you started:

### National Cycle Network Route 73

Kilmarnock to Irvine following the National Cycle Network 73.

- **Distance:** 7 Miles one way/14 miles return S
- **Start/End:** Shanks Pony Great Western Road Route: All off road on shared cycle path
- **Terrain:** Smoothed tarmac cycle path - suitable for all bikes

### Dean Castle Country Park

Shared cycle paths around Dean Castle Country Park. Can follow signs to link with NCN73 or cycle on country roads to Craufurdland estate.

- **Distance:** 1 ½ miles in the park
- **Start/End:** Dean Castle Visitor Centre Route: Off road in the parks and on road if linking to NCN73/Craufurdland
- **Terrain:** Smooth tarmac cycle paths, muddy trails, gravel paths. Hybrid or mountain bikes most suitable

### Galloway Forest

The Galloway Forest Park extends to Dalmellington in the southern edge of East Ayrshire. Cycling has become a well-established pastime in the park due to its abundance of rural country lanes and nearly 300 miles of forest road. Cycling is the ideal way, in this safe environment, to enjoy the breath taking scenery of the area. The Loch Doon area of the Park has a café, toilets, ruined castle, camping and caravanning and a fantastic opportunity to watch ospreys. You'll find lots to do in the area to enhance any cycling trip. [www.gallowayforestpark.com](http://www.gallowayforestpark.com)

- **Distance:** Many routes and distances
- **Start/End:** Dalmellington
- **Route:** Off roads on mountain bike trails and cycle paths
- **Terrain:** Muddy trails and forest paths – hybrid or mountain bike most suitable

### Whitelee Windfarm

- **Distance:** As far as you would like – lots of route options

**Start/End:** Whitelee Windfarm Visitor Centre

- **Route:** Off road or gravel trails
- **Terrain:** Gravel Paths – Mostly suited to mountain or hybrid bike with suspension.

### Kilmarnock's Parks- Kay Park and Howard Park

Enjoy cycling around the local parks with the whole family or make use of Kay Park's Cycle Track facility to teach children good cycle safety.

- **Distance:** Approx 1 mile
- **Start/End:** Kay Park or Howard Park Entrance
- **Route:** Off road. Shared paths
- **Terrain:** Smooth Tarmac paths – Suitable for all bikes

#### 4. SCOTLAND'S GREAT TRAILS – THE RIVER AYR WAY

##### East Ayrshire's Great Trail



Scotland's Great Trails are managed trails that are clearly waymarked, run largely off-road and offer a variety of different Scottish experiences. Ranging in length from 24-210 miles (40-340 km), many are suitable for short breaks as well as end-to-end expeditions. Collectively the 29 different routes offer over 1900 miles (3000 km) of trails with opportunities to explore the best of Scotland's nature and landscapes, and to experience amazing history and culture.

The River Ayr Way is East Ayrshire's only 'Great Trail' and offers a variety of landscapes for the visitor to immerse themselves in. Starting at Glenbuck Loch, situated in wild moorland, rich in natural and industrial history, it follows the growing river downstream as it becomes a powerful waterway, driving mills and carving a route through rocky sandstone gorges. The final section follows the river through open farmland and estates before reaching the historic county town of Ayr, finishing at its harbour.

The River Ayr Way is an ideal medium-distance route for novices, with mostly flat terrain and only a few steep climbs.

The distances are modest, but you have to organise your own logistics. The route can be walked over a long weekend, making an ideal short break for visitors to Ayrshire. It is also very popular tackled in short sections as day walks.

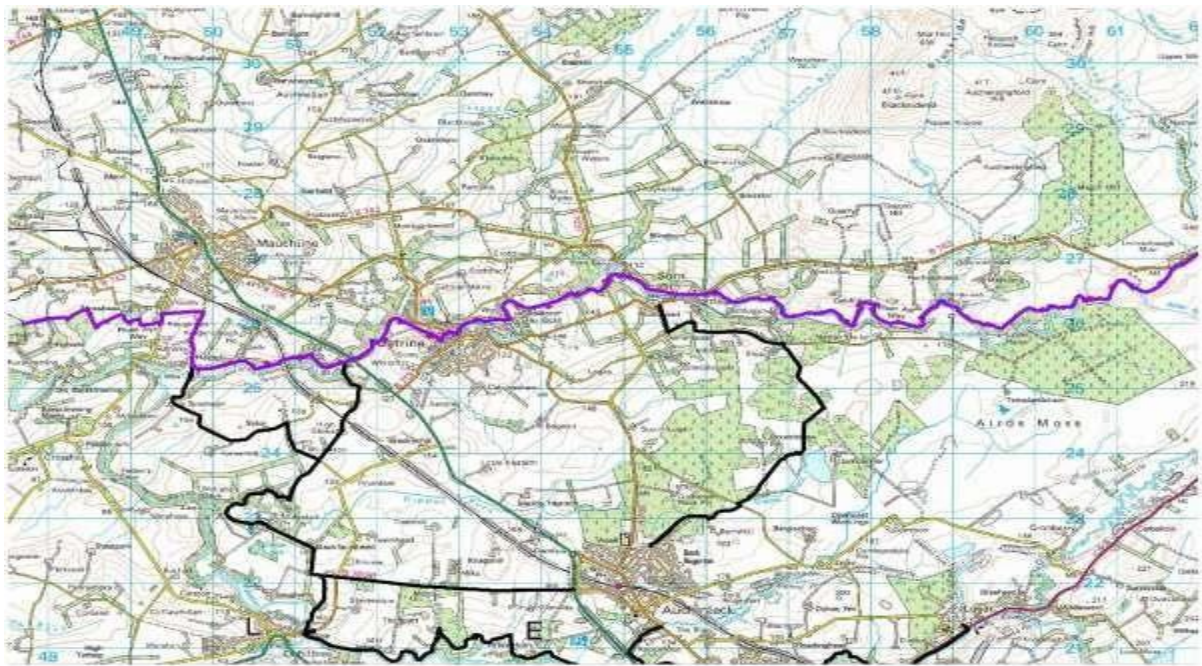
More route information can be found in the Core Path section of this document or on East Ayrshire Leisure website.



## The River Ayr Way in East Ayrshire



**Map 1: Core Path 17 River Ayr Way (Glenbuck to Limmerhaugh)**



**Map 2: Core Path 17 River Ayr Way (Limmerhaugh to Mauchline Burn, Barskimming Estates)**

## **5. CORE PATHS**

### **What is a Core Path?**

Core paths will vary from a trodden earth and rock path on the side of a hill to a minor road at the back of a housing estate. Although there is no specific standard for core paths, here in East Ayrshire, we view them as strategic routes that connect a network of destinations, settlements, towns and communities. Core paths are the links that the people of East Ayrshire will regularly use for journeys such as travelling to work, for visiting family and friends, or for visiting neighbouring towns and communities. They will also be used for recreational activities such as jogging, leisurely cycles, walking the dog or getting to the local park to have a picnic.

Throughout Scotland core paths will generally be designed as shared use and suitable for all walkers, cyclists and horse riders; however not all of them will be suitable for every ability. Due to their location or proximity to livestock, it may be necessary for some to have gates, and while these may restrict access to some abilities, it is likely that there will be an alternative route nearby that can be enjoyed. There will be some on water and these will provide recreational opportunities to kayakers and canoeists.

In essence, a core path is chosen not for how many people are able to use it or for its physical quality, but instead for the value of its location and route destination. They must be of significant value to both visitors and the local communities, land owners included, and it is vitally important that everyone who has an interest in a path, has a say in whether it should be a core path or not.

### **Core Paths Plan**

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 places a number of duties on local authorities, one of which is to produce a Core Paths Plan. This duty ensures that local authorities provide a system of paths that will give the public reasonable access through and across the surrounding landscape. The plan will also be publicised for people to view, providing information about routes that exist but might not be known to everyone – a promotion of sorts. The plan will include brief but key details of each core path and have an associated map.

After a very detailed process including a public consultation, East Ayrshire produced its first Core Paths Plan in 2006. The first review of this document began in late 2019 with the East Ayrshire Countryside Ranger Service undertaking a detailed survey of all proposed core paths. Each path survey took into account the condition of the route surface and what kind of path it was. It recorded what gates, fences and other structures were located on the routes and what condition these were in. It also recorded any changes in the routes compared with the original surveys undertaken in 2006, some paths had fallen out of use and were completely overgrown, with not enough footfall to keep the vegetation from reclaiming the path; some routes had been upgraded from grass paths to wide stone tracks to accommodate lorries transporting new wind turbines onto the moors. These changes have all been taken into consideration to determine a new suite of core paths, modern and more relevant to today's recreational needs.

## List of Core Paths

	Core Path Name	km	mile
CP1	Kilmaurs to NCR N73	1.6	1
CP2	Auchinleck to the River Ayr Way	7.4	4.6
CP3	Sorn to Auchinleck	6.6	4.1
CP4	Muirkirk to Sanquar	10.0	6.2
CP5	Lord Bute's Walk	2.4	1.5
CP6	Rankinston to Lethan Hill	8.9	5.5
CP7	Patna to Straiton via Scleteuch Moor	3.0	1.9
CP8	Loch Doon Forest Road	4.5	2.8
CP9	Dalmellington to Loch Doon via Ness Glen	6.4	4.0
CP10	NCR N73	4.1	2.5
CP11	Sir Chris Hoy Cycle Way	3.0	1.8
CP12	Irvine Valley Spinal Route	8.0	5.0
CP13	Kilmarnock to Whitelee	19.4	12.1
CP14	Waterside to Craigendunton Reservoir	12.2	7.6
CP15	The Weaver's Trail	10.2	6.3
CP16	Darvel to Loudoun Hill	4.5	2.8
CP17	River Ayr Way	35.4	22.0
CP18	Lugar Water Trail	5.0	3.1
CP19	New Cumnock to Afton Reservoir	3.6	2.2

## Evaluating a Core Path

Each course path is evaluated against a set list of criteria as outlined below. Each core path must meet the majority of these measures.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Level of demand within the community (from public consultations)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Links to wider path networks and other communities (including waterways and cross-border links)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creation of circular routes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provision of all abilities paths
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for multi-use

<input type="checkbox"/>	Links to local interests of natural, cultural and built heritage (including amenities)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing the environmental impact of access
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opportunities for community regeneration and economic development e.g. tourism
<input type="checkbox"/>	Possibility of avoiding or mitigating land management conflicts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Value for money



## **Core Path Maps and Route Information**

**For detailed route descriptions and maps go to:**

<https://eastayrshireleisure.com/countryside-outdoor/routes-in-east-ayrshire/core-paths/>

### **CPI: Kilmaurs to National Cycle Route 73**

CPI connects on to the Kilmarnock Road (A735). It follows the farm track past Kirkland Farm, The Old Manse and North Woodhill Farm. The path runs parallel to a railway line and connects to the minor road at South Woodhill Farm. At this point it links to National Cycle Network Route 73 which provides connections to the Kilmarnock Cycle Network and to the National Cycle Network to North and South Ayrshire.

### **CP2: Auchinleck to the River Ayr Way**

CP2 starts at the west end of Auchinleck and travels along a roadside pavement on the Barony Road until it reaches the Barony A-Frame. It then is on road until Auchinleck Estate. It then follows the Estate Road west then north the northwest through the Home Farm. The route then skirts around the western edge of Auchinleck House parklands until it reaches the bridge over the Lugar Water. The path then heads east and north along estate tracks until it reaches High Clews Farm where it connects to B7.

### **CP3: Auchinleck to Sorn**

**Starting from Cameron Drive in Auchinleck**, this route goes through a small community woodland site at Berryhill and connects to the dismantled railway line across the site. It continues along this line until it reaches Darconnar Reservoir, where it picks up forest tracks leading to the minor road south of Sorn at Shiel Farm. It then heads west and enters Sorn along the Old Avenue.

### **CP4: Muirkirk to Sanquhar**

Starting from Walkers Car Park in Muirkirk, the route follows the River Ayr Way until it reaches Macadam's Cairn. At this point it follows the track south away from the river. This track continues through the hills west of Cairn Table and enters into the forestry plantation to the south of Muirkirk and onto the minor road into Sanquhar.

### **CP5: Lord Bute's Walk**

The route starts from the B7083 Cumnock to Auchinleck road at Visions Leisure Centre and follows the north bank of the Lugar Water. It then runs parallel to the A76 before heading north east through woodland to Auchinleck where it rejoins the B7083.

### **CP6: Rankinston to Lethan Hill**

The route starts at Lethanhill and follows the course of a disused railway heading north then east through forestry plantations to reach Rankinston. The route joins Kerse Terrace and then again takes the line of a disused railway north east to Sinclairston.

### **CP7: Patna to Straiton**

The path runs south west from Patna mainly on forestry roads and unmade paths to the border with South Ayrshire. Once off forestry roads, this path can be waterlogged.

### **CP8: Loch Doon Forest Road**

This is an on road route from Loch Doon Dam. The road follows the east shore of Loch Doon for the length of the loch. At this point it leaves the loch and heads west to the border with South Ayrshire and on to Straiton via the Forest Road past Loch Riecawr.

### **CP9: Dalmellington to Ness Glen**

From the Dam at Loch Doon the path almost immediately splits, one line runs directly north up the west side of Ness Glen along a restored Victorian walkway and through an impressive rock gorge. The other runs parallel to this along the Blackney Brae. Both paths meet again at the Craigengillan suspension bridge where the route crosses the River Doon. The path follows the River Doon on an old farm track to Bogton Plantation where it joins the tarmac drive of Craigengillan. The path continues north till it ends at the A713 Dalmellington to Patna road.

### **CP10: National Cycle Route 73**

CP10 begins at the boundary with North Ayrshire Council at Springside and follows the dismantled railway line, upgraded to a cycle route in 2001 to Western Road in Kilmarnock.

### **CP11: Chris Hoy Cycle Route**

The Chris Hoy Cycle Route starts in Hurlford just off the south end of Mauchline Road and follows the dismantled railway path past Liffnock Yard and enters Galston at Gauchalland.



### **CPI2: Irvine Valley Spinal Route**

Starting at the running track in Galston, the route follows a tarmac path along the River Irvine past Barrmill and Greenmill. After Greenmill it leads onto an access track before reaching Newmilns at the former Vesuvius factory. It continues east up Brown's Road and eastwards along the River Irvine on the northern edge of Lanfine Estate. At Ranoldcupp Bridge, it follows a minor road past High Greenbank Farm to Priestland, known locally as 'up the bankers'.

### **CPI3: Kilmarnock to Whitelee**

Starting from Kilmarnock at the top of Grassyards Road, the route follows the minor road to Moscow. At Moscow, it crosses the A719 and heads along the forest track into Whitelee. This route continues over the East Ayrshire boundary into South Lanarkshire. It should be noted that at the end of the tarmac public road, near Cowan's Law, the route is poorly defined, simply following forest rides - it is unsurfaced, uneven and very boggy in places.

### **CPI4: Waterside to Craigendunton Reservoir (The Covenanters Trail)**

Park your car in Waterside, then walk the short distance south on the A719, before the left turn at Hareshaw. Follow this quiet country road for around a mile, before turning left again, up the access track for Airtnoch Farm. At the top of the hill, walk past the farm, through a large gate. You will start to see the turbines of Whitelee Windfarm in front of you. As you continue on your way, fine views of Arran and the Firth of Clyde will open up to your left. The track then heads into the forest. There is a cattle grid here at the start of the driveway for Craigendunton House, with a pedestrian gate at the side. Follow the track to the left of the house. After about half a mile you will come to a locked gate, with pedestrian access to the left hand side. Just after the gate there is a track to the right which gives the walker easy access to the windfarm, with a helpful fingerpost and map board. To get to Craigendunton Reservoir, continue straight on at this point, over the Dunton Water, and soon the dam wall will appear before you. Immediately below the dam, pass through the pedestrian gate, and follow the track up to the right around the side of the dam. This route finishes at a metal foot bridge. You can simply retrace your steps from here to get back to the start point, or you can make a circuit of the reservoir before turning back. Please be aware that even though the path appears to be good at first, there are sections along the northern bank where the path is little more than a peaty desire line.

### **CPI5: The Weavers' Trail**

The route is under development. It starts at Foulpapple Road between Newmilns and Darvel and heads north along a minor road until it becomes farm track at the turn off for Laigh Overmuir. Keep heading north along the long, straight access track to the now demolished High Overmuir Farm. Turn off this track when it turns sharply left, and follow the footpath as indicated by the wooden fingerpost. The route is now a moorland path, and eventually leads to Eaglesham in East Renfrewshire. It should be noted that the section across Whitelee Windfarm is still not a surfaced path. From High Overmuir to the SPR Spine Road, is an overgrown desire line. The last section from the Spine Road across the moor to Crook Hill just beyond Turbine No. 61, is very wet and boggy and not defined in any way.



### **CPI6: Darvel to Loudoun Hill**

A linear walk, mainly along a former railway track to the foot of Loudoun Hill near the Spirit of Scotland Monument. The route consists of grass and earth footpaths and farmland.

From Darvel follow the route until you reach the remains of the old viaduct, where you should follow the steps down onto a minor road. At this point, turn right towards a cottage then left uphill for approximately 0.5 miles until you reach a gate on your right. You will see the back of Loudoun Hill. Pass through the gate and follow the whindust path making your way around the hill, where you will see the Spirit of Scotland Monument on the other side of a wooden footbridge.

### **CPI7: The River Ayr Way**

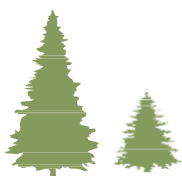
The River Ayr Way is East Ayrshire's only 'Great Trail' and offers a variety of landscapes for the visitor to immerse themselves in. The route starts at Glenbuck Loch and from here you can pick up the trail and follow it west towards the town of Muirkirk. The trail continues west to the village of Sorn where you will pass Sorn Castle. The next stage passes Catrine and Mauchline before coming to the noteworthy Failford Gorge. This area includes a woodland nature reserve located in a steep ravine of sandstone cliffs. After exploring the gorge the route continues to Stair, leaving East Ayrshire to Annbank before coming to the coast at Ayr Harbour.

### **CPI8: Lugar Water Trail**

The Lugar Water Trail skirts Knockroon Wood and heads towards Auckinleck. It follows the Lugar Water under the A76 eastwards to Ochiltree. The start of the path is a former farm track. Once in Waterside Wood, it leaves the track and runs parallel to the river. It continues through fields until arriving at Ochiltree.

### **CPI9: New Cumnock to Afton Reservoir**

From the A76 the path follows Mason Avenue south to the east bank of the River Afton and then downstream past Greenhead playing fields. It follows the track past West Park Farm and then through Glen Afton to Little Dalhanna Farm. At this point it heads west along the farm track to Meadow View where it connects back to New Cumnock.



## 6. LOCAL PATHS

### What is a Local Path?

Local paths are short routes that the residents of East Ayrshire's towns and villages are able to use for local rambles and short walks. Similar to core paths but generally shorter with less of a strategic connection value to them, most of them will also offer travel between home and nearby shops, schools, town halls, cafes and restaurants. These are ideal routes for doing regular errands and outings close to home and some may even connect to the surrounding core paths and offer connecting journey options to neighbouring communities.

Most of the local paths will be well-known and loved by the local communities already and some may even be signposted and waymarked. Even though situated close to towns and villages, some will feel rural and remote and will be perfect for those seeking to get a quick half hour of fresh air and solitude.

While some of the routes listed in this section were previously listed as core paths, their change in description has no bearing on their continued importance or protection under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. East Ayrshire's local path network will be an evolving network with old and new paths changing through the years as so will the needs of the local communities to use them.

Ultimately, a local path in East Ayrshire is a public path that enables pedestrian and nonpowered access for communities to local facilities, points of interest and for general informal recreation.

### Local Path Networks

The local path networks are the collections of local routes which are easily accessible, clearly defined and well used. Like core paths, they provide great value to both visitors and the local communities, land owners included. The local path networks of East Ayrshire will generally include:

- A variety of linear and circular paths
- Paths linking residential areas to local facilities such as a doctors surgery, post office, supermarket or school
- Routes to points of interest such as parks, nature reserves, play areas or viewpoints
- Pedestrian and cycling links to workplaces
- Routes used for informal recreation e.g. walking, jogging cycling and dog walking



## Local Path Network Route Information

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>ANNICK VALLEY (excluding Kilmaurs)</b>			
A1	<b>Annick Water</b> This route follows the Annick Water from Dean Street on the north east side of Stewarton to Lainshaw Street on the south west side of the town. It is a tarmac path from Dean Street to the Kirkford Bridge with links to the housing estates of the Robertland and Gameshill. From the Kirkford Bridge to Lainshaw Street, the route follows the historical right of way and is not a built path. The route at this point is a worn path through grassland heading underneath the Lainshaw viaduct and onto the A735.	1.45	0.9
A2	<b>Cunningham Watt Park (north)</b> This route begins at Kirkford in Stewarton, where it links to route A1. There is a gentle climb up Cutstraw Road and goes through a mini roundabout at Stane Brae onto the minor road passed Meikle Cutstraw Farm. The route continues along this road, with further gentle climbs until the junction just after Damhead Farm. Turn right onto the Clunch Road and it then connects south to routes IV13 and IV14 creating the links to Kilmarnock and Glasgow and north to route A11 to create the circular route around Stewarton.	0.77	0.48
A4	<b>Stewarton Academy Cycle Route</b> This route begins at Kirkford in Stewarton, where it links to route A1. There is a gentle climb up Cutstraw Road and goes through a mini roundabout at Stane Brae onto the minor road passed Meikle Cutstraw Farm. The route continues along this road, with further gentle climbs until the junction just after Damhead Farm. Turn right onto the Clunch Road and it then connects south to routes IV13 and IV14 creating the links to Kilmarnock and Glasgow and north to route A11 to create the circular route around Stewarton.	0.83	0.52
A5	<b>Lainshaw Estate</b> This route starts at the Lainshaw Viaduct as it enters Lainshaw Woods at the start of David Dale Avenue, continuing down a steep zig zag path until it reaches Annick Water. Follow the river past Lainshaw House, around the edge of the water treatment works until it reaches a steep flight of steps, turning left at the top, the path heads through broadleaved Woodland to Anderson's Mount, continuing on to Kilwinning Road. At this point users can decide whether to go onto the road, or whether to follow the path through a coniferous woodland until it ends at the other gate for Lainshaw Woods. Turning right onto Kilwinning Road leads back towards Stewarton Centre.	3.63	2.26
A6	<b>Cunningham Watt Park (south)</b> This route follows the south bank of the Corsehill Water. After crossing the first bridge towards the east end of the park, the route climbs a relatively steep gravel path until it reaches the tarmac path to Arran View. It then goes along Pottery Row and ends at the B778 Dunlop	0.59	0.37



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No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>ANNICK VALLEY (excluding Kilmaurs)</b>			
A10	<b>Commoncraig</b> This is an attractive walk, with a loop through new native woodland, planted in 2002. To begin, turn down Woodside place, then follow the steps down to a narrow metal bridge over the Glazert Burn. Once across, follow the path uphill until you come to a junction. Turn left here over a short boardwalk, then take the left fork in the path, and continue uphill. The path is unsurfaced and can be muddy in places. There is a bench in a clearing at the top of the hill with fine views to Ailsa Craig. To follow the loop in a clockwise direction, continue on past the bench, then take the next right back into the woodland. Follow the path straight downhill until you come to a second entrance. Turn sharp right here, then follow this path back up the hill. Ignore the first right turn you see, but take the second shortly afterwards. This emerges from the woodland near the bench. Turn left here to retrace your steps to the starting point.	2	1.2
All	<b>Wee Glen</b> A very short, but pleasant walk. Turn off Newmill Road to the left and follow the narrow surfaced path along the side of the Glazert Burn, amongst mature woodland. You can either return the same way, or walk back down the tarmac road from the other entrance at the top of the hill. The distance is around the same either way.	0.75	0.5
A12	<b>Millennium Woodland</b> Follow the unsurfaced path to the left of the pond. There are two picnic benches and four standard benches dotted around this nature park, specially created at the Millenium by the local community, with help from the National Lottery Fund, as well as Dunlop Tyres. East Ayrshire Woodlands continue to maintain this site. At the far side of the pond, you can choose to visit a commemorative cairn at the top of a small hill. The low path continues right round the pond, through a small memorial woodland and back to the starting point at the roadside.	0.5	0.3



No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>ANNICK VALLEY (excluding Kilmaurs)</b>			
	<b>Jubilee Walk</b> A country walk mainly along grassy paths and through livestock fields. Start the walk on a tarmac path at Pokelly place at the right hand side of Nether Robertland Primary School. Follow this for a short distance before steering right onto a grassy field at the side of Stewarton Academy. Follow the grassy desire line path upstream along the Cuts Burn, keeping right as you climb further up the path. The route will eventually meet the animal field adjoining Cauldhame Farm. There is a simple stile structure to climb over as you enter the animal field. Continue along the fence boundary towards the road leading up to the farm and you will reach a padlocked metal field gate. Climb over this and turn left up towards the farmhouse. At the top of the farm complex, take a left turn through the metal gate which leads you to another metal field gate, which you can be opened. Turn right down through the field to the edge of a small woodland, follow this woodland edge down the steep grassy slope to the edge of the Annick River.	2.37	1.47
A13	Continue on the narrow grassy path downstream till you reach some steps leading up to Jubilee Drive.		
	<b>Lainshaw Short Loop</b> Short circular walk on well surfaced paths and residential roads, taking you past the Annick River along mature mixed woodland. Start at David Dale Avenue and you will see the Lainshaw Woods entrance sign. This gently zigzags down onto the main path which you follow downstream. Keep left on the path as the route winds past the sewage treatment works. Up ahead is a small flight of steps, turn right at the top and carry on along the back of the housing estate. At the next junction turn right again down Fishers Grove and retrace your steps back to David Dale Avenue.	3.06	1.9
A14			

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>IRVINE VALLEY</b>			
IV1	<b>Burn Anne Walk</b> Join the path through the gate at Burnhouse Bridge. Follow the path through the wood until Quarryhouse, cross the road and continue through the Big Wood. At the footbridge, keep right and follow the path to the minor road. Turn left onto the minor road and follow it for 0.5km, then turn left back into the woodland. Follow the path back to the footbridge and retrace your steps back to Burnhouse Bridge.	3.48	2.16
IV2	<b>Big Wood</b> Starting from a lay-by on the A71 just west of Newmilns, the route follows the Hag Burn through Hag plantation, to a ruined lime kiln dated 1771, and past a Motte and Bailey – the original Loudoun Castle. At the top of the gentle incline, the route heads east past Woodhead Farm until it ends at the minor road and Woodhead Cottage.	1.24	0.77
IV3	<b>River Irvine Cycle Route</b> Starting in Kilmarnock, the route heads towards Hurlford. It follows the River Irvine eastwards on Grougar Road. As it passes Loudoun Kirk it moves north east until it meets the A719. After crossing the A719, the route enters Loudoun Castle Estate. It follows the main estate road, but heads north prior to entering the former theme park. It then follows this track to a minor road to the north of the estate and heads east. At the end of this road, the route turns south and joins with IV2- Big Wood.	9.64	5.99
IV4	<b>Newmilns to Darvel (Lanfine Estate)</b> Join the route at Lanfine Estate Gatehouse and follow the 'avenue' south west along Waterhaughs Brae. Turn left off the estate track at the bridge and join a path south uphill through Newlands Glen until it reaches the estate track just west of Garden Cottage. Turn right and then follow this estate track until it reaches Langdale House. At the T junction, turn left out of Lanfine estate on the main drive. After leaving Lanfine Estate, follow the minor road downhill at Gullyhill past Parkerston Farm and Mount Pleasant, reaching Newmilns at Browns Road.	4.65	2.89



IV5	<b>Long Cairn Walk</b> Beginning in Priestland, turn south down Loudoun Avenue and at the bridge turn left to join a footpath along the Gower Water. At the end of the footpath, turn left and after 150m turn right at Bransfield farm onto the minor road. Follow this road for 750m, then turn left onto the farmtrack for Loanfoot Farm. Keep to the left when going through Loanfoot farm and join the foot path behind the byre. Follow this foot path, through field gates past the prehistoric Long Cairn on your left, down to the footbridge over the Tulloch Burn. Continue to Saughall through 3 field gates. After Saughall, turn left downhill onto the minor road. At the T junction turn right and follow the minor road to the A71.	5	3.11
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No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>IRVINE VALLEY</b>			
IV6	<b>The Five Miler</b> A circular tarmac route consisting of minor roads with some pavements. Begin at Darvel Telephone Museum and head up Darvel Main Street towards Priestland. Before you leave Darvel, follow the blue Irvine Valley trail sign and take the last turn on your left uphill towards Darvel New Cemetery, then take the first left after the cemetery signposted for Lochfield Farm. The route continues north past Feoch Farm until you reach a cross roads. Turn left towards the Old School House and continue back towards Darvel on Foulpapple Road. With a green sign for Loudoun View on your right, take the immediate left turn towards Templehill and head down Burn Road taking you back to the start and Darvel Telephone Museum. The route has steep hills out of the Irvine Valley.	8	5

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>BALLOCHMYLE</b>			
B1	<b>West Welton Circular</b> Starting from Mauchline town centre B1 uses pavements, heading along Loanhill Avenue until it reaches Welton Road. It then continues eastwards until it reaches the farm tracks to West and East Welton Farms. Passing West Welton Farm it heads south until it reaches the B705 Catrine Road and then onto the A76 Cumnock Road. Keeping to pavements, the route heads back to Mauchline town centre.	3.02	1.88
B2	<b>Ladyyard Circular</b> The route starts at the Burns House Museum and heads along the Kilmarnock Road to the Burns Monument. It then heads north west along the Tarbolton Road, past the National Burns Memorial to Ladyyard Farm. Just past the farm it heads south along a minor road to Redcraig Farm and under Redcraig Viaduct. It then reaches the Ayr Road and heads back to Mauchline. There is no footpath on the B7743 Ayr Road from Redcraig.	6.69	2.09
B3	<b>Mauchline High Path</b> This route starts at the top of Sorn Road, where it passes the picnic site. It follows an old track between Sorn Road and Hillhead Road. This track is an unbuilt path through regenerating scrub. At the end of the path, the route crosses a stile to go along a field edge and back to Mauchline. This route has recently been upgraded, and the pavement now continues beyond the edge of the town, right up to the top of the hill. Here, turn left along the path to Hillhead Road. There are lovely views along this section, over Mauchline and the surrounding Ayrshire countryside. When the path meets the tarmac road, the route takes a sharp left over a stile along field margins back to Mauchline.	1.68	1.04

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>BALLOCHMYLE</b>			
B4	<b>Sornbank Plantation Path</b> From the small car park at Sorn Cemetery, the route follows the path through the mature woodland of Sornbank Plantation. It climbs a steep bank to the top of the site. The path runs eastwards giving magnificent views over Sorn and beyond before heading back down to Sorn on the B743 Main Street.	1.16	0.72
B5	<b>Smallburn Plantation</b> Starting at Burns Avenue, the route follows a gravel track to the north of Muirkirk Primary School. This route runs parallel to Smallburn Road. It goes down and then back up steep steps and then crosses the Small Burn before heading right to the northern path on the site. The walker can exit the site here, by not turning right, and continuing straight along to Millers Road. The northern route on this site skirts along the northern edge of the Smallburn Plantation between the top of Millers Road and the football ground. This section of the route is suitable for all abilities and multi use.	1.68	1.05
B6	<b>Kirk Plantation</b> Starting across from Muirkirk Cemetery on the Glasgow Road, this route runs through the woodland to Kirk Green. Further links from this spinal route have been developed to create a short internal circular route to a picnic and viewing area and a link route to a dedicated car park.	0.47	0.3
B7	<b>Burnfoot Moor</b> Starting from Millers Road in Muirkirk, the route heads into Burnfoot Moor Plantation, where there has been extensive felling. At the first junction, head straight on. At the next turn left, then left again immediately after. At the remaining two junctions continue straight on, until you emerge from the plantation. The route then crosses the Greenock Water and passes Burnhead Farm, before turning left at the next junction. Turn left again at Netherwood, before crossing the B743 at Dalfram. It then follows a minor road until it meets the A70. Here, the walker can return to Muirkirk, heading upstream along the River Ayr Way.	6.14	3.81



No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>BALLOCHMYLE</b>			
B8	<p><b>Mauchline to River Ayr Way</b></p> <p>Walking this circular route in a clockwise direction, leave the war memorial behind and follow the pavement on the right side of the road until it ends at the sign for Kingencleugh. Turn right, then immediately left where an unsurfaced path heads into the woodland. The surface is uneven and muddy in places, but it is an attractive path and keeps the walker away from the side of the busy A76. After about a kilometre, the woodland path forks. Take the right fork. Shortly after, the path emerges from the trees onto tarmac. Follow the road, keeping right. There is ample parking available here, providing the walker with an alternative start point at the old Howford Bridge. Turn right after about 100m, down through a field and back into woodland. The route now follows the River Ayr gorge, back towards Mauchline. It soon passes under the incredible 50 metre high Ballochmyle Viaduct, built in 1848 to carry trains across the gorge. Follow the green way marker arrows just after the viaduct. After about 1 kilometre, the path drops sharply down to fields leading to Haugh Farm. Walk through the yard of the farm, turn right and follow the tarmac road straight up the hill to the starting point in Mauchline.</p>	5.17	3.2

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>CUMNOCK, NEW CUMNOCK AND SURROUNDING AREAS</b>			
C1	<p><b>Woodroad Park</b></p> <p>The entrance to Woodroad Park is on Auchinleck Road. From the start, the section of path which forms the spinal route through the park is tarmac and suitable for all ages and abilities. Once the route reaches the bridge across the Lugar Water, it becomes a gravel path. It then heads along the south bank of the river onto Mote Hill. There are steps on the bridge and a steep incline onto Mote Hill.</p>	1.52	0.94
C2	<p><b>Barshare Path</b></p> <p>Starting at Holmburn Road, the path follows the north bank of the Glaisnock Water along the edge of Barshare Wood. It crosses the water twice and then follows the northern edge of the woodland at Murray Park. After crossing the old viaduct, the route continues along the north bank of the Glaisnock, passed the football grounds and onto Townhead Road. It is a gravel path along the whole route.</p>	1.51	0.94

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>CUMNOCK, NEW CUMNOCK AND SURROUNDING AREAS</b>			
C3	<b>Ochiltree Circular</b> This is a circular route on minor roads from the village of Ochiltree. The path follows pavement on the road east to Mote Toll then heads north past Cawhillan Farm. At the next road junction it returns to Ochiltree. Although this route is suitable for a range of user groups, account must be taken of vehicular access to the minor road.	3.25	2
C4	<b>Ochiltree to Auchinbay</b> The path starts from Broom Crescent in Ochiltree and follows a gravel path along the edge of the housing estate. It then continues west through open fields.	3.47	2.16
C5	<b>Knockshinnoch Lagoons</b> The path forms a network across Knockshinnoch Lagoons in New Cumnock. The paths connect Castlehill, Mossmark Road and Connelburn. The site is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve.	3.01	1.87
C6	<b>New Cumnock Circular</b> Follow the pavements on the B741 towards Bank Glen then take Boig Road towards Cumnock. Take the Fordemouth Junction towards Lochhill cottages and follow the farm track to the old brickworks. The route follows farm tracks to Lanemark Farm and back onto the B741 Burnfoot Road. Cross the road to Casaya and on the track through woodland to the old Furnace Road back to the B741 towards New Cumnock.	8.4	5.3
C7	<b>Castle Path</b> From the A76 Afton Bridge the path follows the west bank of the River Afton downstream to its confluence with the River Nith then upstream on the south bank of the Nith to the Nith Bridge.	1.13	0.7
C8	<b>Glen Afton</b> From the A76 the path follows Mason Avenue south to the east bank of the River Afton and then downstream passed Greenhead playing fields. It follows the track passed West Park Farm and then through Glen Afton to Little Dalhanna Farm. At this point it heads west along the farm track to Meadow View where it connects to CPI9 New Cumnock to Afton Reservoir back to New Cumnock.	3.62	2.25

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>CUMNOCK, NEW CUMNOCK AND SURROUNDING AREAS</b>			
C9	<b>Cave Loop</b> The route starts beyond Glen Farm where it follows the Lethan hill forest road to the first gate at the site of the old opencast conveyor belt. The route takes a sharp left and follows a quad bike track to another gate where the route follows the track of the conveyor belt to the former Garleffan opencast. Take a left and follow the opencast track to the derelict Watsonburn farm and on to the Mansfield road where a left turn takes you back to the start point.	8.8	5.5
C10	<b>Dalhanna Loop</b> The route follows Mason Avenue and on to the east bank of the River Afton then downstream passing Greenhead playing fields. It follows the track past West Park Farm and through Glen Afton on single track and open field until it reaches Little Dalhanna Farm where it meets the hill track. Follow the track up the hill and on to the desire line to the top of Dalhanna Hill. From here follow the faint quad track to the windmill above High Park Farm. The farm road is all downhill to the road at the former Farden Avenue. The route takes a left and at the first shortcut through West Park Drive and onto the farm track towards West Park Farm where it meets the Glenafton Loop back onto Mason Avenue.	5.3	3.3
C11	<b>Knockshinnoch Memorial Walk</b> The route starts on Afton Road across from the Old Cemetery which is well signed. Follow the tarmac path to the Memorial. The route continues on single track and fields to the old Knockshinnoch Road and links with the B741 Dalmellington road and the Leggate.	1	0.6
	<b>Lochside Loop</b> The route starts at the New Cumnock Station and follows the pavement on the A76 towards Cumnock. The route crosses the A76 and down the access road towards Lochside House Hotel. A sharp left after the railway bridge leads to a track passing the Loch of the Lowes and on to Meikle Creoch. The route is follows Boig Road back toward the Leggate and B741 back into New Cumnock.	8	5



No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>DOON VALLEY</b>			
D1	<b>Hannahston Ponds Circular</b> The path begins at a small car park, 100m up a track (the last left off the B730 as you exit Drongan towards the A70). There is a route map by the car park. The circular route is marked in red on the map. This former mine is now a fully planted up community woodland. Most paths here are surfaced in whinstone, wide and well drained. There are benches dotted around the site, and sections of boardwalk down by the ponds. These provide good wildlife viewing opportunities.	1.8	1.12
D2	<b>Drongan to Hannahston Pond Link</b> The route begins at a kissing gate on Watson Terrace, and follows a hedge line down through the field to a second kissing gate. Shortly afterwards you reach the signposted Hannahston Ponds on your left. A final kissing gate allows access onto the site.	0.56	0.35
D3	<b>Carnshalloch Circular</b> The starts route start on Carnshall Terrace. As you enter Carnshall Terrace the start of the path is not obvious but head along the gable end of the houses and you will see a small wooden bridge over a burn. You then enter the old Carskeoch Plantation, take the northwest trodden path along the old forest ride to Carnshalloch. It then joins a forestry road to the north to meet the Patna to Kirkmichael Road or south and back down a forest ride to Patna.	2.01	1.3
D4	<b>Hollybush Circular</b> The path begins at the layby adjacent to the A713 Ayr to Patna Road. It heads southwest to Hollybush House then through woodland to the River Doon. The path follows the north bank of the river to an island then returns to Hollybush through a woodland path to the northwest. The path is whinstone and well drained.	2.33	1.45
D5	<b>Dalrymple River Walk</b> The path runs from the bridge at Main Street Dalrymple (the access here is very narrow) to Skeldon Crescent. It follows the north bank of the River Doon. It is an unsurfaced path which is narrow in places.	0.84	0.52
D7	<b>Carmlarg Circular</b> This route starts at Dalmellington Graveyard and follows the track eastwards to Carmlarg Plantation. At the top of the glen, it turns due west and uses the track to Gillies' Knowe back to Dalmellington.	1.99	1.24

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>KILMARNOCK, KILMAURS AND SURROUNDING AREA</b>			
K1	<b>Kilmarnock to Hurlford</b> The route begins in Kilmarnock where Grassyards Road meets MacKenzie Drive. It follows this road until it crosses the pedestrian bridge over the A77. The route follows this minor road until it meets the River Irvine. At this point it leaves the road and follows the east bank of the River Irvine until the Hurlford Bridge. From here it uses pavements through residential estates to Mauchline Road where it meets route IV1.	5.25	3.26
K2	<b>Kilmaurs Town Trail</b> From the car park head towards the back of Weston Tavern where there is a narrow lane, known locally as 'Midge Lane'. Turn left to follow the lane to a bridge over Carmel Water and into Morton Park. Turn left then head up the steps to pass the war memorial, continuing ahead on a high path to reach the running track and Mill Avenue beyond. (Steps can be avoided by continuing ahead to skirt around the edge of Morton Park instead). Turn right on Mill Avenue. At Kilmarnock Rd, turn left then immediately right to pass in front of St Maurs-Glencairn Parish Church. The path ends at a field which often has cattle in it. The continuation of the route requires you to pass through the gate and cross the field by following the line of hedges down the middle. You will reach the famous 'Penny Bridge' at the other side. From here the route heads diagonally to the right uphill across the field. Head for the corner of the row of trees/hedges and follow the field edge to a set of gates. Pass through the kissing gate and continue to follow the hedgerow to a final kissing gate (sometimes overgrown) at the end of the field. The grassy path from here leads to an underpass where it can be very muddy. Going through the underpass you will emerge onto Crosshouse Rd. Turn right and follow the pavement back into Kilmaurs. Turn right on Sunnyside. At the end of the street turn left. Cross over when safe to reach Weston Tavern. The car park is at the rear.	2.6	1.6
K3	<b>Grougar Water</b> The path meanders along the River Irvine from the bridge at Crookedholm before gently sloping upwards through two small wooded areas towards the crossroads at Templetonburn Farm – a name associated with the Knights Templar of olden days. The remainder of the walk hugs the river through an historic and picturesque rural area passing by the site of the hut where the Hermit, Tam Raeburn, lived, and Grougar Row, a traditional row of miners' cottages. Follow the waymarkers to take you back into Galston or retrace your footsteps back to Hurlford.	1.6	1

No.	Name	(km)	(mile)
<b>KILMARNOCK, KILMAURS AND SURROUNDING AREA</b>			
K4	<b>Kilmarnock Infinity Loop</b> The Kilmarnock 'Green Infinity Loop' is a 'figure of eight' network of pathways comprising 26km circular route around the town with a Spinal Route from north to south through the town centre, linking into the circular route. The circular route provides connections between different communities on the outskirts of the town, offering greater access to local facilities.	26	16
K5	<b>Kilmaurs to Knockentiber</b> Start at the centre of Kilmaurs outside the historic Joughs building. Head South down the main street to the small roundabout turning right onto Sunnyside towards the local primary school. Take a left turn onto the B751 Crosshouse Road. Follow the road for approximately 1 mile until you reach Knockentiber.	2.4	1.5

## 7. HILL PATHS

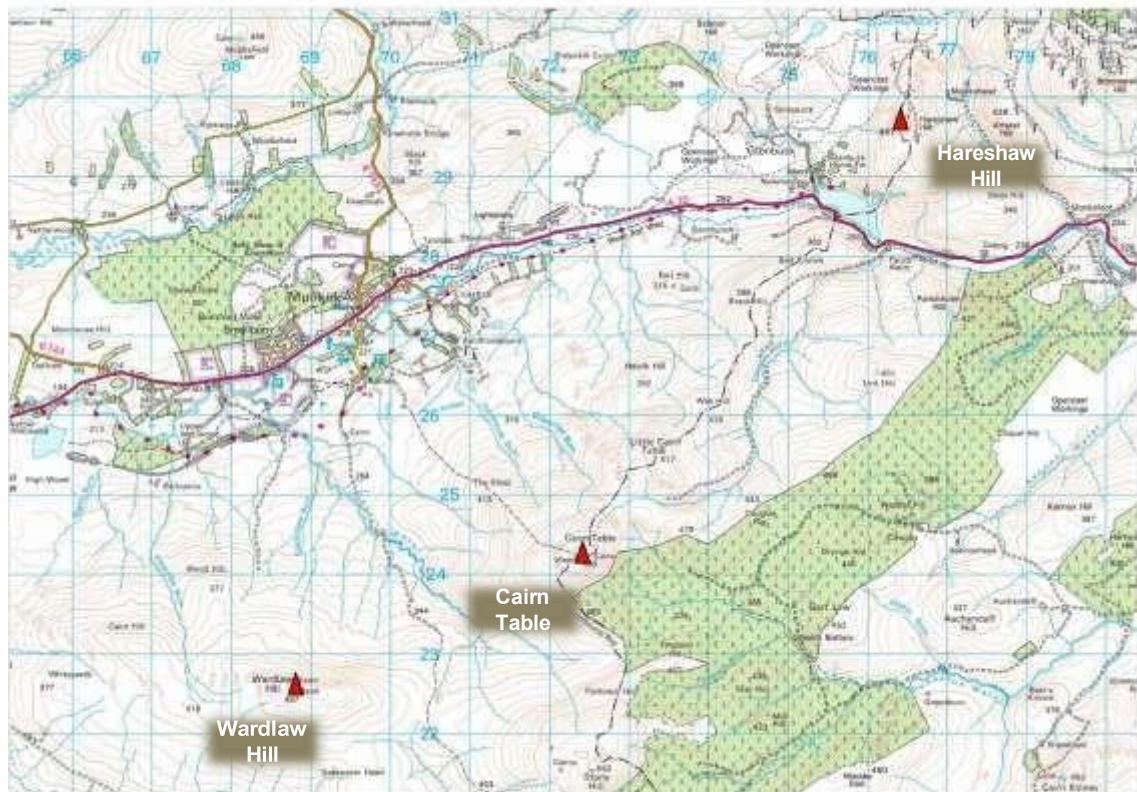
### Hillwalking in East Ayrshire

The hills of East Ayrshire have a rolling and smooth character, cut and formed from our glacial past. The farmland and moorland of the glens and lower hills are rural and can often be very remote and picturesque, providing an experience of perfect solitude higher up the slopes. Although most of the East Ayrshire hills are below 500m in height and may be small compared with other hills and mountains in the country, there are a few local rugged areas that more than mimic the beauty and expanse of the higher and more northern mountains.

Most of the hills in East Ayrshire are found in three areas. These are the Muirkirk Uplands, the areas around Glen Afton in New Cumnock, and the area around Loch Doon near Dalmellington.

## The Muirkirk Uplands

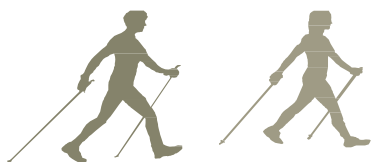
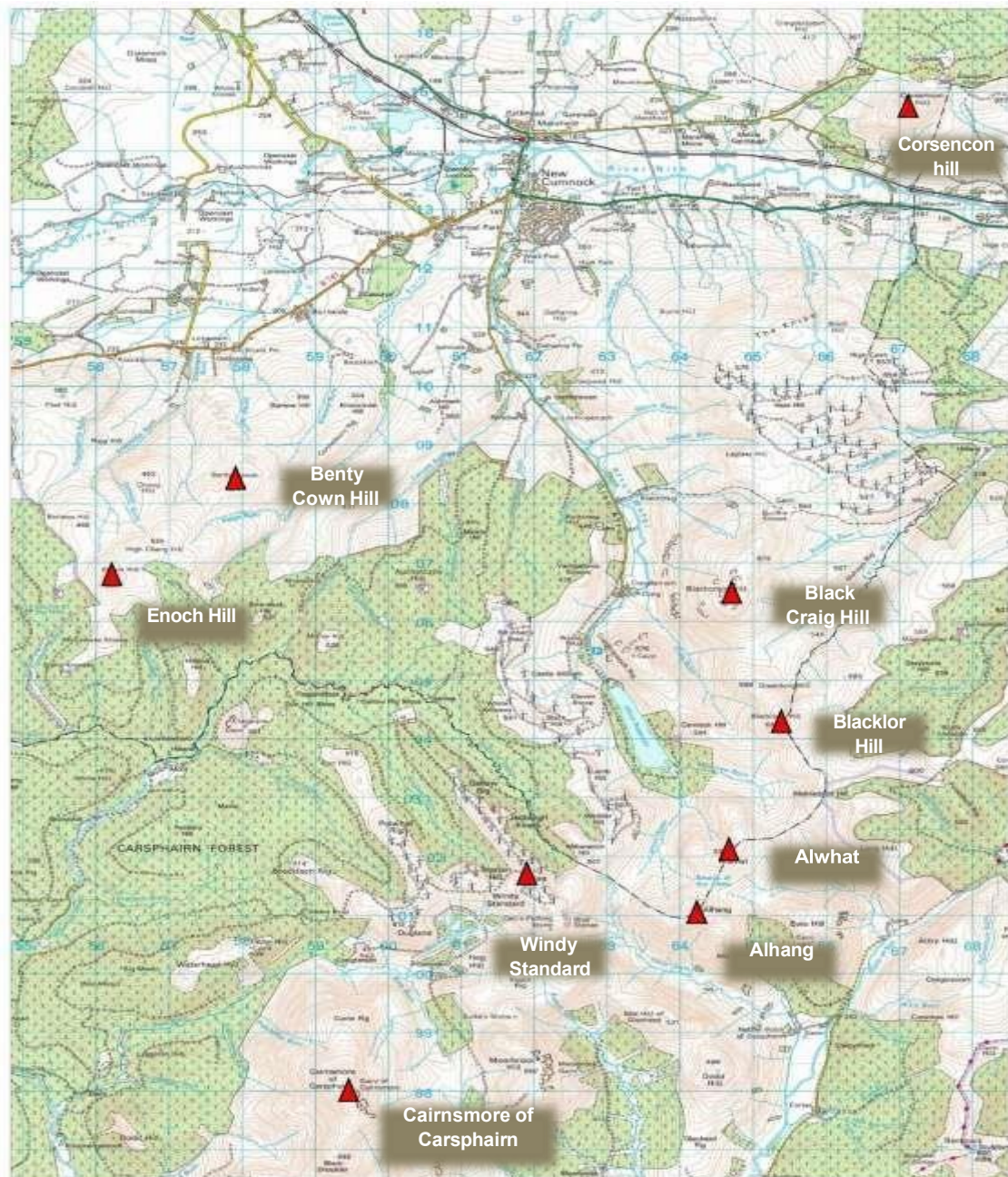
The uplands that circle the village of Muirkirk can be defined as rough moorland. The hills here are generally quite small in stature but can be described as the epitome of 'rolling moors' and most of them form the high edges of the Ayr Glen. With expansive grazing and farmland on the lower slopes, the higher slopes of hills such as the Cairn Table are made up mostly of rock covered in heather and blaeberry. The remoteness and lack of any major urban influence here makes it perfect habitat for species such as hen harrier and is why vast areas here are protected as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).





## The Glen Afton Hills

Near the village of New Cumnock, the hills situated around Glen Afton take the form of individual lumps, each linked with broad ridges and characterised by their own expansive panoramic view. The area is dotted with old farm buildings, most of which are still working farms. Some of the hills have paths to the tops, but most are pathless and give plenty opportunity to create your own route. The geographical spread of these hills lends itself to a perfect circular route, albeit a very long and challenging day out with the chance of a high camp.



## The Loch Doon Hills

Loch Doon is nestled within the Galloway Forest Park in the Southern Uplands just south of Dalmellington. Whilst the hills around the loch may not have the grandeur and ruggedness of the highlands, these Galloway peaks provide the walker a wealth of opportunity to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of rolling hills, countless lochs, picturesque burns and waterfalls, and an abundance of plants, bird and animal life. The range is known as the Kells which is an undulating ridge of hills stretching from Darrou at the southern end to Black Craig which rises above Loch Doon.





## The Loch Doon Hills



## Navigation and Safety

As the seasons change through the year, the hillwalking experience will also change – especially with the weather, and the remoteness and solitude that so many seek out can often become a hazard. It would be a mistake to underestimate these hills, especially in winter. Scotland's fickle weather visits East Ayrshire too.

When venturing into the hills, no matter what size they are, it is always best to dress appropriately and take a map and compass (and know how to use them). The weather has the ability to turn the easiest of routes into a difficult day out and staying warm and dry and being able to navigate in mist and fog can sometimes be the difference between getting home safe, and not.

Mobile phones and GPS locators can be great tools for navigating but mustn't be relied on, especially in cold weather where batteries can drain more quickly than normal. If possible, it's also good practice to let someone know where you are going and the route you're likely to be taking.

## 8. WATER ACCESS

### Using Lochs and Rivers in East Ayrshire

Water recreation is an essential and growing activity in Scotland and the rest of the world. It is an activity that a person does for enjoyment, usually to refresh the body and mind. It often involves some degree of exercise as well as visiting areas that contain bodies of water such as parks, nature reserves, lochs, rivers and visits to the coast. Common water recreation activities include:

- Canoeing, kayaking & sailing
- Angling
- Open water swimming
- Walking & nature watching

There are a range of water recreation opportunities across East Ayrshire including: Canoeing & Kayaking

Scotland is a paradise for paddlers, with many different types of kayaking and canoeing pursuits available. All you have to do is choose a vessel, grab a paddle and decide where you would like to go. Our rivers and lochs are waiting! Paddle through some of the country's most beautiful and remote wildernesses on an East Ayrshire loch or river. Take in staggering landscapes and wildlife as you float on a tranquil loch or tackle a flowing river complete with thrilling, white-knuckled stretches of river rapids.

In most cases, a canoe is a long, open boat used for exploring calmer waters. These boats can accommodate solo paddlers as well as a few friends at once. Take it at your own pace and you might even have space to bring a picnic with you.





## Angling

Fishing in East Ayrshire is predominantly loch and river fishing but commercial fisheries offer trout, carp and coarse angling. The county has several excellent salmon rivers and some fantastic trout fishing for wild brown and rainbow trout and is generally available all year round. Local angling clubs in East Ayrshire are a great source of information about the angling in the area and they often provide day tickets or permits for coarse and fly fishing. Whether it is due to the thrill of the chase, the quiet satisfaction of choosing the right spot or simply the chance to spend time surrounded by nature, fishing is one of the country's most popular pastimes.

Scotland's rivers and coasts provide a fantastic backdrop for this activity with beautiful scenery and well stocked waters. Wherever you live in this country, from the Highlands to the borders, there is ample opportunity to give this sport a try. Active angling clubs in East Ayrshire include:

### River Irvine

- Irvine Angling Club
- Darvel Angling Club
- Newmilns & Greenholm Angling Club
- Galston Angling Club
- Kilmarnock Angling Club

### Angling Clubs – Lugar Water

- Auchinleck Anglers Association
- Cumnock & District Angling Association
- Mauchline Angling Club
- Ballochmyle Angling Club
- Stanley Wright Estate Management (acts for Sorn Estate)

### River Ayr

- Mauchline Angling Club
- Catrine Angling Club
- Sorn Angling Club
- Muirkirk Angling Association

### Upper Doon Water

- Patna Angling Club
- Craigengillan Estate
- Drumgrange and Keirs Angling Club

### River Afton and River Nith

- New Cumnock Angling Association

## Open Water Swimming

Open water swimming is swimming in open outdoor bodies of water, including lochs, rivers, reservoirs and the sea. It's quite different to swimming in a pool, there are no lanes, no tiled walls, and no chlorine, there are fewer physical boundaries and perhaps more importantly, the outdoor environment is far different and varied. The water feels freer and alive with nature, the depths are deeper, the colours wilder and the views can be breathtaking.

The Scottish Access rights extend to swimming (subject to any local byelaws), however it is important to remember that swimming in open water can be dangerous, particularly for children, and that the water might be used for public water supply.

Stay safe in open water:

- Think before you swim. Check your entry and exit points and take into account currents, tides, wind direction and windspeed.
- Don't mix swimming and alcohol.
- Swim with other people – ideally that know the area and have swum in open water before.
- Don't jump in. Enter the water slowly to prevent 'cold water shock.'

- Let people know where you are and what you're doing. (e.g. inform beach lifeguards or even the coast guard if planning a long coastal swim)
- Make sure you're visible in the water. Wear a brightly coloured cap and consider using a tow-float.
- If someone gets in trouble, don't put yourself at risk but call for help – dial 999 or 112.
- If you find yourself in difficulty [FLOAT TO LIVE](#)

## 9. RECREATION AND TOURISM SITES

### What is a Recreation Site

Recreation Sites are places where people can enjoy a wide range of formal and informal recreational activities. Rather than just being a route from A to B, they are destinations and places where visitors can spend some time and enjoy the outdoors. These spaces may be areas to experience and learn about the local heritage or to go wildlife watching. The sites themselves will vary in type and will mostly be made up from the following:

#### Parks and Nature Reserves

- Annanhill Park, Kilmarnock
- Bellfield Estate, Kilmarnock
- Catrine Voes Local Nature Reserve, Catrine
- Dalmellington Moss Wildlife Reserve, Dalmellington
- Hannahston Wood, Drongan
- Howard Park, Kilmarnock
- Kay Park, Kilmarnock
- Knockshinnoch Lagoons Wildlife Reserve, New Cumnock
- Woodroad Park, Cumnock

#### Windfarms and Forests

- Galloway Forest Park, Dalmellington
- North Kyle Forest
- Whitelee Windfarm

#### Country Estates

- Auchinleck Estate, Auchinleck
- Caprington Estate, Kilmarnock
- Craigengillan Estate, Dalmellington
- Craufurdland Estate Kilmarnock
- Dumfries House, Cumnock
- Lanfine Estate, Darvel

East Ayrshire Leisure would like to thank everyone that took part in the Core Path Plan Consultation to help shape this document.

This document will be reviewed in 2025, but it is considered a dynamic document that can be continually edited and updated depending on relevant changes that apply. If you have any feedback or suggested amendments regarding the information within the document please email [EALeisureFeedback@eastayrshireleisure.com](mailto:EALeisureFeedback@eastayrshireleisure.com)