

i Allan Grant Dev. Alford – ground by Garioch Glazing, Oldmeldrum

Contacted and in favour of a cycleway / pathway.



A small section between A Grant and E Simmers must belong to the council and is the bridge crossing. Usable as a path. See below.  
h



The wire fence requires to be aligned and a suitable surface used, but a bridge over the burn exists. Discussions will be required in time.

**ii Edwin Simmers, Bructor Farm** – field next to bypass Meldrum

Contacted and in favour of a cycleway / walkway.

He voiced a preference for passage to be adjacent to the burn on the South side of field, rather than the North side alongside the road. The core path route is on the north side.

Permission has been given to developers aside the core path on the bypass, to drain run off water onto E. Simmers ground, enhancing the wetland taking shape. This is making crossing a growing wetland area a problem were one to take the path along the bottom of the field (S side).

Since the sewage works was built, drainage has become more problematic in this field, and since the bypass road and new developments it is being allowed to deteriorate quickly.

**iii Donald Kent, Whitefield Farm** – next to sewage works and Lochter

Not sure about it is his view currently. He commented that the expense and magnitude of the task might mean it might not happen till he's dead and gone.

Over the years, Donald has dedicated a great deal of his time to the Oldmeldrum sports, helping to raise money to benefit the town.

Concerns he has relates to who will maintain the route, inspect and maintain the bridges.

He also crops land to the west of Lochter, renting it off Patrick Sleigh.



July 2011



May 2012





#### iv Euan Webster, Lochter Activity Centre

Ospreys nesting within 300m on Muirton Of Barra ground are a concern. These are on camera and shown in the Lochter centre to visitors as an attraction.

Clay pigeon shooting on rented land to the west (Patrick Sleigh's ground) south of the rail cutting is a safety concern.

Deep ponds on the fishery are probably a concern as are some of the activities such as archery.

Possibly security issues are also a concern at Lochter. Keeping Wild mink and Otters out are concerns. Keeping badgers out is also a concern.

Presently Euan is saying no to a walkway / cycleway as he obviously has many concerns to discuss and find solutions to before he can say yes.

Under the core path plans he has agreed to a path entering Lochter gateway entrance along the roadside option.

Negotiations between SNH, Lochter Fisheries (Euan Webster), Barra Farming Co.(Richard Stephen), Meldrum Paths Group, Aberdeenshire Council, and others needs to come up with a SAFE solution for passage through or around Lochter. Three possible options are suggested on the following map and Estelle Gill from SNH has indicated that for SNH route B is the preferred option.

- A) Along the route of the old railway line. Quickest most direct. Existing grass path in place. Requires to be made suitable for vehicles along the west section. Some drainage work required and secure fencing to keep dogs and children safe possibly required. This option is well shielded from the osprey nest. Visits to Lochter possible along orange/blue route. Increased trade for Lochter certain.
- B) Along the core path route and then continuing within Lochter ground beside the road to border with P Sleigh West Fingask ground. 3.5 m Bridge over burn, then due S, alongside Lochter, to rejoin old rail track. Visits to Lochter possible along existing visitor route. P. Sleigh co-operation vital. Again increased trade certain.
- C) At border of Lochter on line of old railway, cross south to Muirton Of Barra, ground; a 6.3 m bridge required. Proceed west along riverside to cross back onto old railway wall [with 6.5mbridge], not far from the large 1.25 m culvert ditch bridge installed by E Webster, which with flood water has damaged a section of the old railway wall. Not well shielded from osprey nest. No visits to Lochter possible. Loss of trade likely.

**v Patrick Sleigh, West Fingask – rented out section**

As Patrick is renting out his ground, he has to bear in mind the interests of Euan Webster and Donald Kent.

Clay pigeon shooting by Euan next to the line is a concern.

The pond dug out by Donald was a problem but already the old rail drains have been reconnected and the pond is no more,

Patrick is non committal about the path, voicing concerns that spending on hospitals is more important.



Crossing over from West Fingask ground on a 10m span bridge, one comes onto Barra Farming Co. ground as shown above. A well kept path used by the public for walking and cycling.

#### **vi Richard & Anna Stephen, Muirton Of Barra**

With Euan next door saying no currently, pressure is on Richard with an osprey or two perched on a pole on his land, to possibly assist with possible suggestions as he is doing.

A suggestion from Richard is to hug the road from from Oldmeldrum to Inverurie. This would mean a pedestrian crossing as planned in the 40 mph speed limit area, and from Garioch Glazing round Barra Castle garden, alongside the accident black mile from Barra Cottages to Past Bructor bends (necessitating a good clearance from the road, crash barriers and expensive retaining fencing) See appendix 3.

Anna Stephen has made it clear that to use the Hoodles path, then farm track from North Mains of Barra to Muirton of Barra crossing a road on a bend with a 60 m.p.h speed limit is not an option; the speed limit must be lowered first.

The impression is that if the rail track itself that has been used over the years is used, there is no problem, but this needs to be clarified. This has repercussions on passing the ospreys possibly and fears require to be allayed by those who are in a position to do so. RSPB representatives are confident the path will not pose a problem to the ospreys.

SNH involvement to discuss the ospreys as mentioned earlier is underway. SNH Liaison officer assigned recently is Estelle Gill

A 10m bridge would be required to join Muirton Of Barra to P. Sleigh, West Fingask ground. This was measured by tape measure, 10m was a set width for 1860's rail bridges it seems.

The best and simplest solution is for all concerned about the SAFE passage through or around Lochter ground to be consulted properly; a prime remit of a feasibility study.

#### **vii Dave and Eileen Michie, Lochend Of Barra**

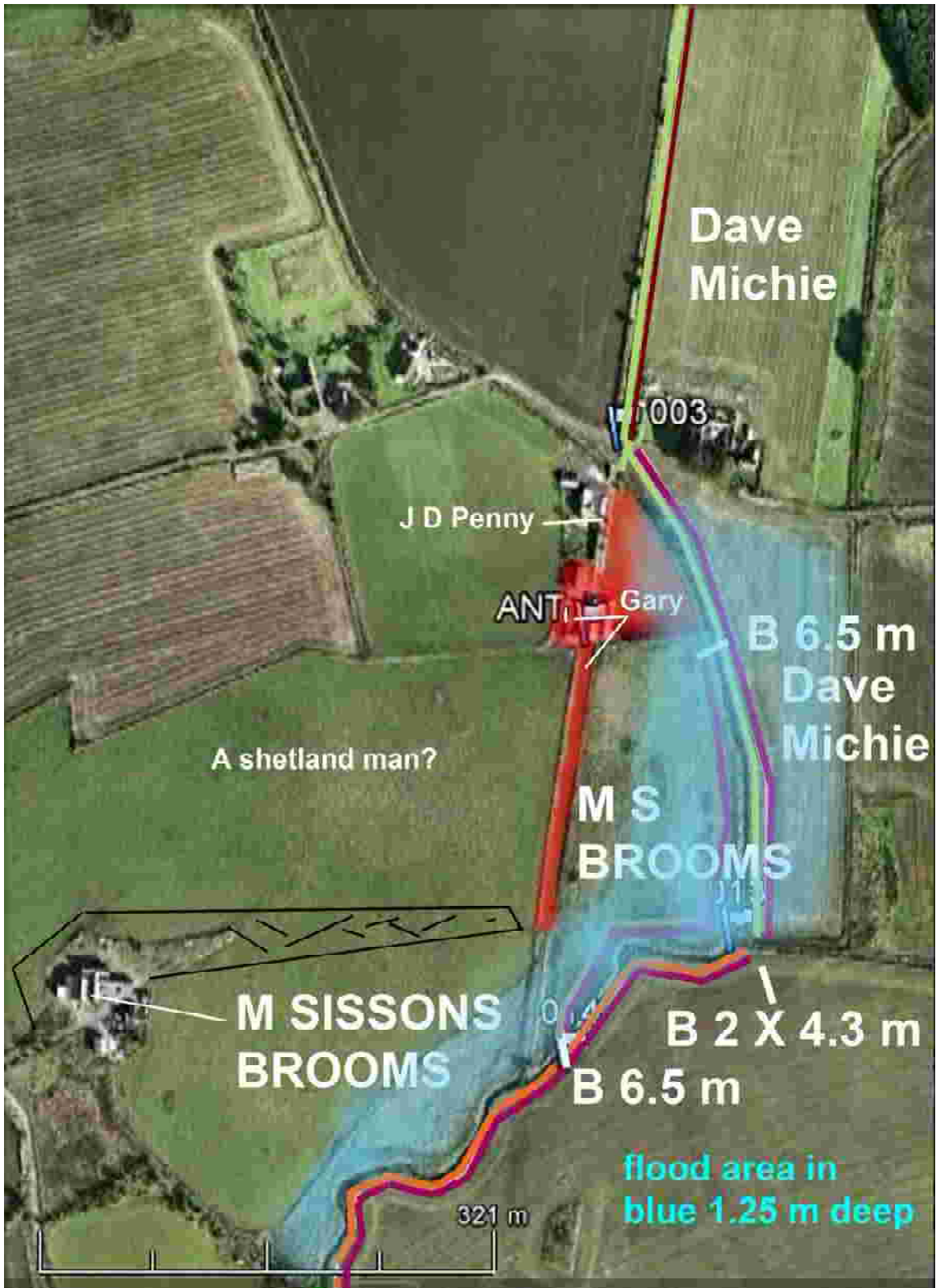
The Michie's are supportive of the path.

The rail section though it passes by a gable end of a house, has the badger wood path way marked along this section at the moment.

To avoid passing over J.D. Penny and Gary's ground, one option is to cross the road here onto L of Barra ground, continue alongside the burn and cross over to Martin Sisson's, Brooms ground before impinging on agricultural ground. Two 6.5 m bridges would be required to enable this.

A causeway raising the path by a minimum of 1.25 m high would be required as the area floods to the height of the fence posts every 2 years or so presently says Dave. With global warming this may become more frequent. Whether continuing along the field and directly onto J Green, Collyhill ground is acceptable, requires to be clarified. A two section (2 X 4.3m) bridge would be required to enable this with some stone foundations for levelling and support.





James Green, Collyhill ground is on bottom right here.

### viii Martin Sissons, Brooms, Lethenty

Martin has been consulted and has some concerns. He is supportive of the path.

The rail section is of little use as the kennels and a long dog run along the old train line block the way through. Martin is sure the bridge that exists spanning the river belongs to him.

One concern is that in the future he plans to install a hydro permissible scheme (a bit like the Haddo Estate scheme near Methlick) using the bridge supports. It may be possible to use the bridge as a crossing point but there would be little point as a cycleway, but certainly as a walkway as it currently is being used.

Another concern is partridges nesting within the forestry fenced area. No access can be allowed through it.

Another concern which has been proved to be an unnecessary one is badgers. There were old badger sets on the rail line at one time but now rabbits inhabit them and are breeding profusely. This has been checked out by me and Simon Knowles, a farmer – countryman.



To circumvent the rail line to the west is not a desirable route for Martin as passage between two fences is narrow and does not allow for a path. A path could impede access to the forestry. Going this way, one travels over a field sold to a woman from Shetland, (for details see adjoining landowner list). It would also require to pass through J.D.Penny ground on a line away from the houses for privacy reasons. It would be close to Gary's and Tina's ground who are anti the path robbing them of any ground.

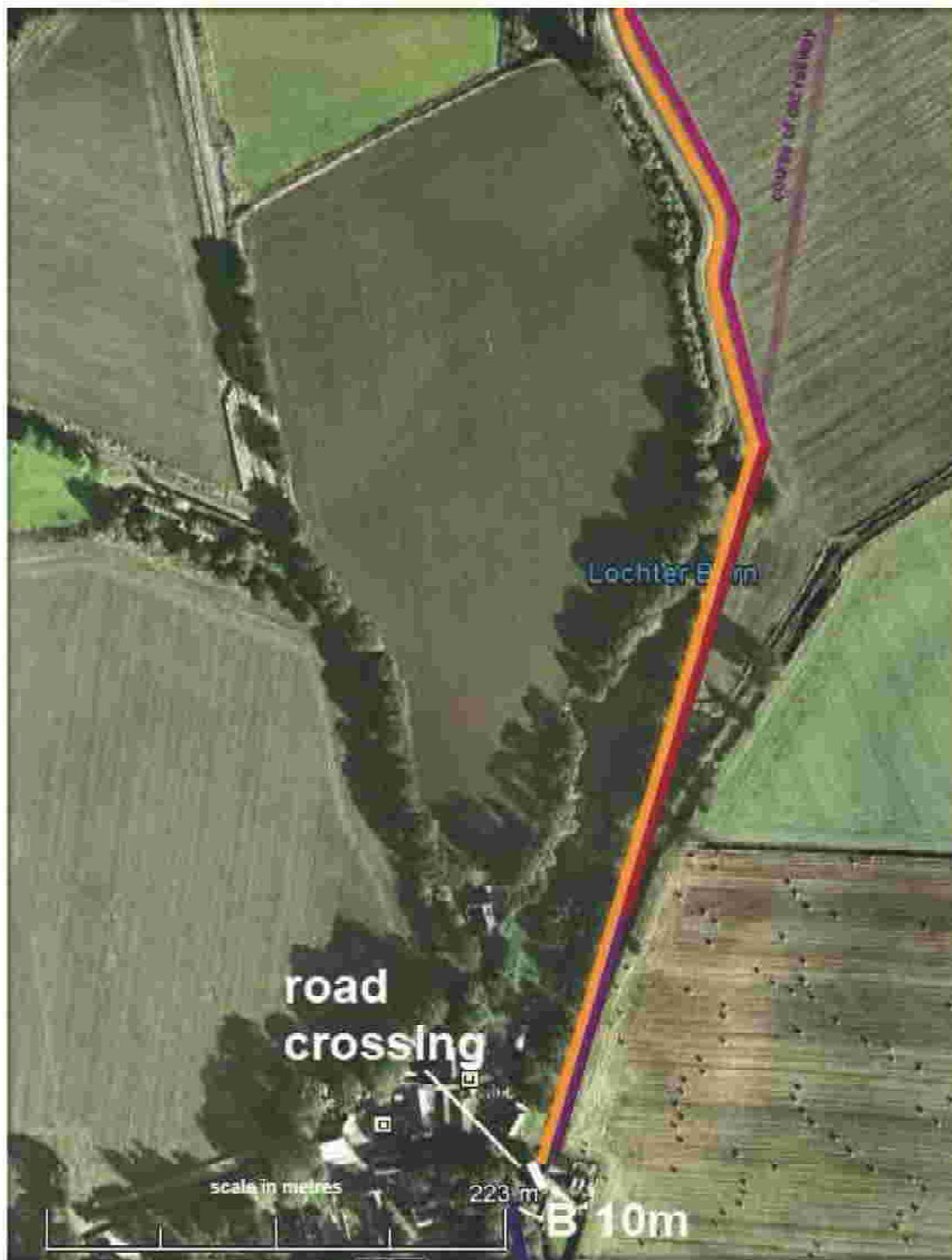
Martin Sissons has been generous in allowing us to have a path along the outside of the forestry next to the river. One will require to build this section up to a height of 1.25 to 1.5m to cater for flooding. Two bridges as marked would be required. 2 X 6.25 m bridges. This requires to be discussed with Martin to ensure there is ongoing agreement.



### ix James Green, Collyhill, Inverurie

James and Claire Green have been consulted and passage along from the mill of lethenty to Martin Sissons ground is approved so long as the edge of the field is followed.

This is a path that is used on a regular basis by a few walkers already. Use is made of the rumbling bridge still here, to make a circular offshoot walk as shown on previous the page.



On clay ground, the leveé made to hold back floods appears to be intact and up to it's task. No flooding apparently, but this requires to be kept an eye on in future and the leveé rebuilt and heightened in places.

A further consultation on the possibility of joining the path to D. Michie's ground is required.

Further contact and consultation are also required to see what the state of developments with the Scottish and Southern Electricity is, regarding power lines below Collyhill.



James is unclear what might happen here.

Flooding is a factor (to a depth of 0.7m) to be taken into account here were one to have to use Collyhill ground.

Possible sighting of rat or water vole at NJ768239 by damaged wall by B10M on Collyhill side.

The old rail line sits above the flood level.

**x Lethenty House, Ian Millership**

The owner has been consulted and is in favour of the path provided it does not divide his ground. Exactly what this means requires to be discussed in detail, but I took it to mean following the riverside at the time. With A Maitland saying no, perhaps the riverside it has to be. However it would appear that some raising of the path would be required to make it usable at times of the Lochter burn being in spate.

**xi Allan Maitland, East Balhagardy, Inverurie. (Auchencleith, Daviot)**

Allan was first informed of the Intention to look at a link path in autumn 2011 and in February 2012, a consultation took place.

Concerns based on past experience with dog owners, is that ground nesting birds in the undisturbed railway line would be either injured, killed or chased from the area by uncontrolled dogs. That is dogs not on a leash of 1m to no more than 2 m. This is a problem from April to late July.

Although not on the scale of Lochter, Allan has a shoot every winter over this area, and fears that a path would mean no shoot.

With a massive housing scheme being planned nearby (within 70 metres), one wonders how long this enclave can entice ground nesting birds. Any further developments of the path would entail a detailed bird survey to be carried out. Allan says Redshank, Snipe, Partridges as well as pheasants have been found here at different times of year. Another remit for a feasibility study.

**Xii Malcolm Allan, Housebuilders, Kintore**

Attempts were made to make an appointment to see M Allan in September / October 2011. I was unable to make an appointment and asked for details of the Meldrum Meg website to be made available to him to look at and come back to me. On plans, a core path exists from the houses to Inverurie, but nothing to facilitate a path to Oldmeldrum.

As yet no discussions have taken place with me but there have been with council planners.

**xii J Cassie, Portstown, Inverurie**

Discussion has taken place with John Cassie, who is amenable to the path provided that he has access for stock grazing both sides of the path until such time as building developments exclude him. It will be a matter of what comes first: the path or the Inverurie relief road or the housing development. It will take many years for the huge project(s) to be completed.

**xiii W Maitland, West Balhagardy, Inverurie**

A brief meeting confirmed they are aware of the road development plans, and that these mean matters are in the hands of the planners. A core path will follow the roadside from here, but as no building is planned no one knows whether eventually building will take place on the high ground of the field.

When inspecting the ground, markers for the bridge from Portstown ground were in place indicating that indeed plans are being drawn up. From a brief inspection of the plans in the



Inverurie Aberdeenshire council office a path, hopefully suitable for cycles as well as pedestrians and the disabled appears to be catered for. This requires to be checked on.

Bridge straightening over the Urie, should encompass a suitable path. Plans required to be checked. Rail bridge requires a safe wide bridge to be put in place. Not wide enough for prams.

#### xv Network Rail

Property Use (See appendix 5) in Inverurie for a commuter link to east platform.

Contact:- Network Rail has been assigned to oversee developments. advice has been to contact Sustrans, and take the suggestion in Appendix 5 forward with them. There are standard agreements with Sustrans I am advised, for passing on land for cycle path use.

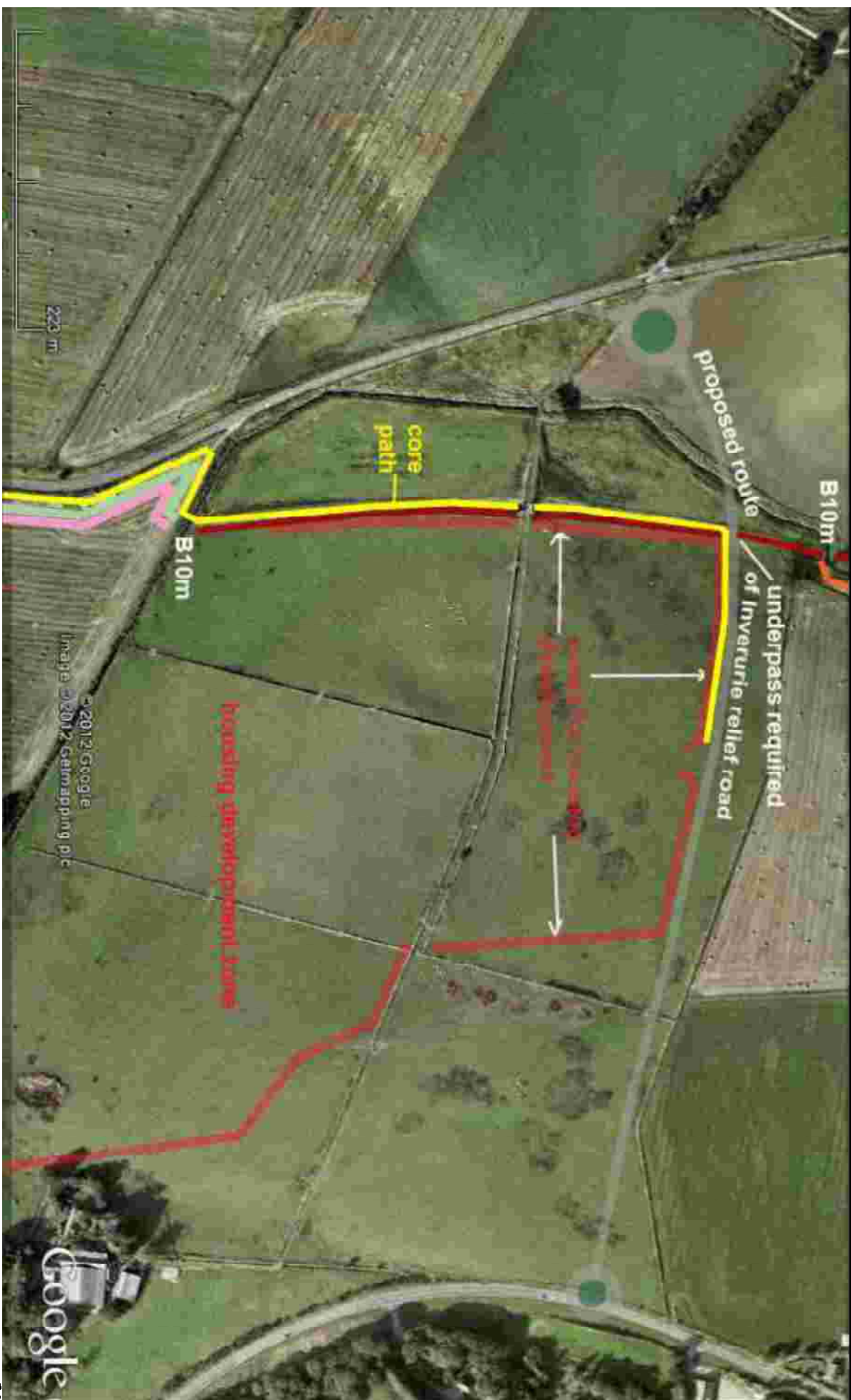
Network rail would need to consider the security issues with building a cycle path directly onto a platform. There is a stepped bridge and also a new accessible ramp and bridge over to the other side of the station.



Graded ramp for wheelchair users at Inverurie Platform.

This is seen as an important additional link as it would make sense so as to encourage cycling to the station, to have a path suitable for rail commuters.

This was inspected by Sustrans Rangers, Meldrum Paths Group and local Network Rail representative Ian Mackenzie on Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> July and passage behind the signal box is the only issue that now requires to be sorted out on rail property. A standard high 6 ft fence rail side will be required.



The need for an underpass at the point where the Meldrum Meg Way and the Inverurie Relief Road cross is crucial. Without it a surface crossing with graduated ramps suitable for disabled users will be required. This will be almost as expensive if not more expensive than to plan for an underpass.

Having children on bikes, disabled buggies, horses, cyclists as well as pedestrians crossing will require a lights operated crossing. Again more expense. Even with lights the prospect of crossing in a 50 mph speed limit area with traffic bearing down on one is a disturbing thought.

Aberdeenshire Council road planners and their decision making managers in particular, need to realise that their plans as they stand with no underpass, has resulted in a mother of three children being so upset by the news, to the point that she was crying.

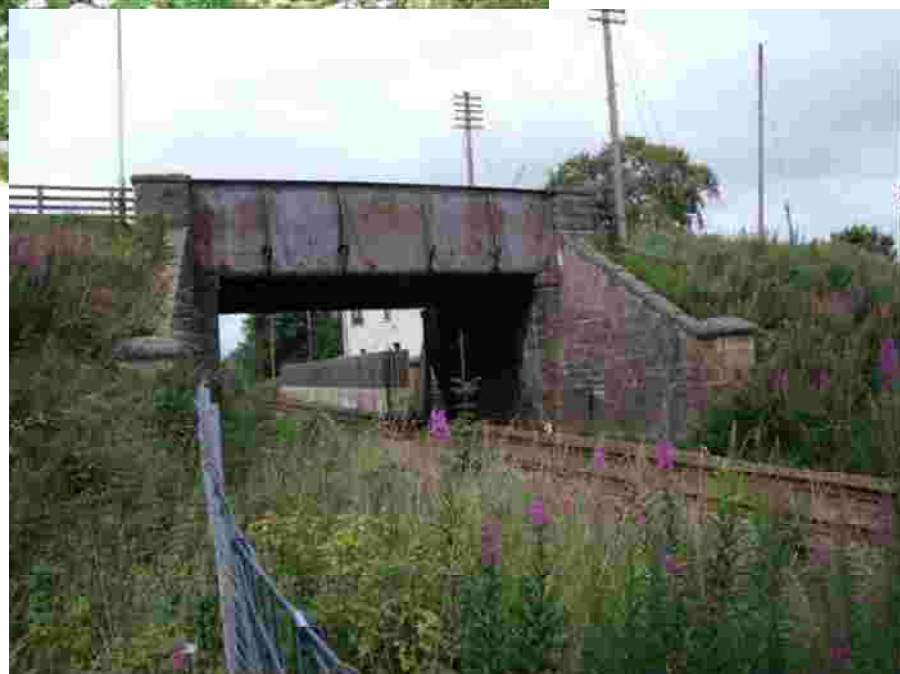
The Meldrum Meg Way is becoming more of a reality day by day. They will be kept informed of progress, they can plan and they will be responsible citizens.



The bridge over the Urie requires a cycleway /pedestrian bridge.

Right rail bridge at Inverurie with too narrow a pavement for a pram, cycle or mobility buggy. A new suitable bridge will be required.

Distance from here to Oldmeldrum bypass is 7.84k or thereby.





#### 4.0 Other Possible Route and Adjacent Landowners

- 4.1 L & I Ross in the Station House, Lethenty, adjacent to the road crossing required have been consulted and are in favour of the path.
- 4.2 Mr A Smart, The Store (Meldrum Meg Coal Shed) Lethenty, has been consulted and is in favour of the path.
- 4.3 Mr J D Penny, Jadoshah, Mill Of Bourtie, has been consulted and thinks a detour would be easily done.
- 4.4 Gary and Tina Biddlecombe, Kilbrannan House, Lethenty Kennels, Lethenty, Inverurie AB51 0HT, have been consulted and have no wish to allow any of their ground to be used for the path. The idea of the detour over the flood plain has been discussed, and he voiced concerns about possible deviation of water flow onto his ground. Privacy was also quoted as a concern.



The above two possible routes adjacent to G's house, would not breach privacy.

- 4.5 Badger Path Cottage, Mill Of Bourtie, owner or occupier has not yet been consulted. Shares entrance to rail line off the road, so agreement essential here.
- 4.6 Hilary Liebeschuetz (Burgess), Quendale Farm, Owner of 19 acre field (dark green above). Owner has been contacted and advised of the Meldrum Meg Way website address. <http://meldrummeg.jimdo.com>