

Eddleston Street Access Audit

Tweeddale Access Panel

November 2022

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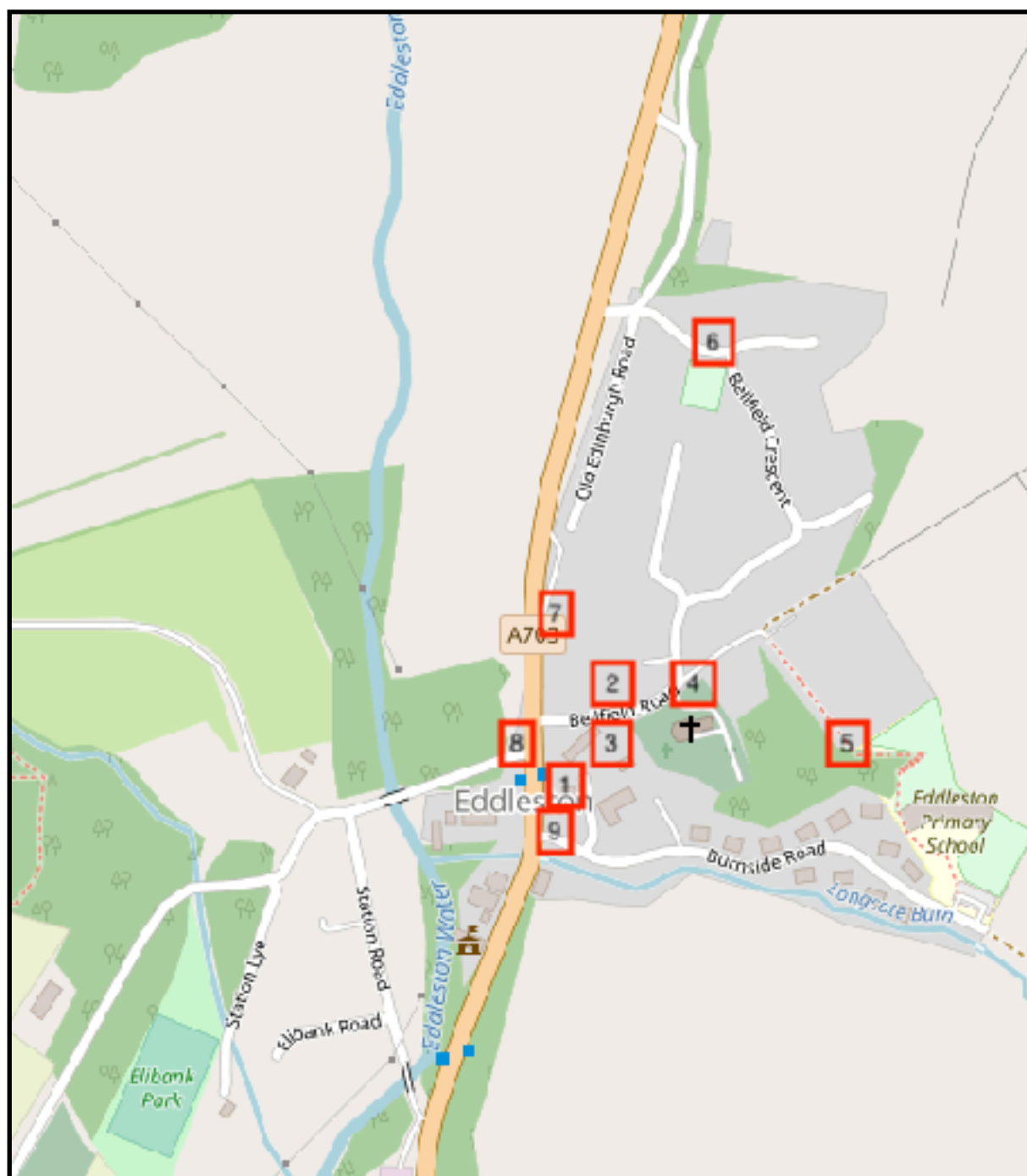
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1. Introduction

This report describes a street access audit of Eddleston carried out with a member of the Tweeddale Access Panel (TAP) on November 4th 2022. It is part of a programme of audits organised by TAP in small towns and villages with the aim of identifying opportunities to improve the accessibility of public spaces.

The route taken is illustrated below, starting from the Horseshoe Inn, eastward up Bellfield Road towards the primary school building, returning to the north along Bellfield Crescent to the main road (A703) back to the Horseshoe Inn.



2. Observations

The bus stop at the Horseshoe Inn heading to Peebles (picture 1) has no shelter or seat (unlike the one on the other, Edinburgh-bound, side). It is not possible to cross the A703 to the other bus stop opposite on a step-free route (see more below). Like other bus stops in Tweeddale, there is no timetable information, only a QR code directing smart phone users to the Borders Buses website.



1. BUS STOPS

Turning east up Bellfield Road (picture 2), there's a steep and narrow pavement (as little as 0.9 metres wide in places). It was reported that this is not gritted in winter which makes it unusable for some people. There is another steep route directly to the back of the Horseshoe Inn which is often used, but is very rough (picture 3). Resurfacing of this land (ownership unknown?) would improve its accessibility.



2. BELLFIELD ROAD



3. ROUTE TO HORSESHOE



At the junction of Bellfield Road and Bellfield Crescent there is a very rough section of carriageway which is hard for pedestrians to use (picture 4). A seat might be useful at this point, for people who have come up the hill from the main road.

4. TOP OF BELLFIELD RD



A footpath leads to the south towards the primary school. At the time of the audit this was covered with leaves, making it hard to spot a number of 'bumps' (assumed to be covering drains or utilities). As the path descends towards the Longcote Burn, it becomes stepped. There is a wooden railing on the southern/ western side of the path - extending this to the uppermost step (in place of the wire fence) would make it more accessible (picture 5)

5. TOP STEP OF FOOTPATH

Returning north along Bellfield Road, the pavement on the west wide or the road was fairly narrow, with hedges encroaching onto the footway. The pavements are between 1.2 and 1.6 metres wide but in quite good condition. The road ends at some garage parking where the surface is rough, at the entrance to the children's playground. The gate at the opposite (northern) access to the playground was partially obstructed by a laurel hedge (picture 6).



6. HEDGE AT PLAYGROUND



7. LARGE BEECH HEDGE

The Old Edinburgh Road is largely traffic free and leads south back towards the village centre. A large beech hedge has been neatly trimmed but nevertheless narrows the space available for pedestrians where the road joins the A703 (picture 7).



8. OLD MANSE RD JUNCTION

A major issue here is that there is nowhere to cross the main road, other than the 'island' crossing at the Longcote Burn. This means that anyone requiring level access to cross the road alighting at the western bus stop must head south to the crossing and then return north along the eastern pavement. A dropped kerb installed on the southern side of the junction of the Old Manse Road (picture 8) would improve the access to the western bus stop from both the Bellfield Road area and the old (western) part of the village. There is a bench on the grass area just north of the Old Manse Road which may be more useful on the eastern side of the road.

Outside the large gate to the Horseshoe Inn, there is a rough channel across the footway where it has been lowered (picture 9) resurfacing this is recommended. It was reported that the footway at the one crossing on the A703 can get muddy, and it is recommended that this is kept clean.



9. A703 AT HORSESHOE INN

Conclusions

Several village pavements are steep, which is clearly something that can't be changed. However, their accessibility would be enhanced with regular maintenance (cutting back vegetation, gritting etc) and perhaps also by adding seating at appropriate locations.

There is only one place to cross the main road with level access (at the Burn). It is understood that studies have previously been carried out to assess the possibility of adding controlled crossings, but these did not show a sufficient volume of pedestrian demand. It would be useful to revisit this issue in the light of the new 20mph speed limit on the A703, especially to review the possibility of introducing a second crossing opportunity in the northern part of the village.

Potential 'quick wins':

- cut back vegetation where necessary, including on Bellfield Road, the north entrance to the playground and the A703;
- consider adding seating to appropriate locations, such as the top of Bellfield Road and near the main road;
- ensure that key footways, especially where steep (eg Bellfield Road) have appropriate levels of winter gritting and are kept clear of mud and leaves;
- extend the wooden handrail on the eastern path from Bellfield Road towards the primary school to the top-most step;
- consider resurfacing rough sections of carriageway including the top of Bellfield Road, the path down to the Horseshoe Inn and at the Inn on the A703;
- a 'dropped' kerb should be installed on the southern side of the entrance to the Old Manse Road.

More strategic issues to consider:

The main strategic issue encountered were the limited opportunities to cross the A703, especially in the northern part of the village. A second crossing in the village would be useful to the north of the Old Manse Road. Ideally, this would be opposite the junction with the Old Edinburgh Road although this would require a new pavement being constructed on the western A703 verge from the Old Manse Road junction. As with some other settlements in Tweeddale, it may be useful to consider the suitability of zebra crossings, in the light of the reduced speed limits on the main road.

Although our audit route did not cover the western part of the village or the new cycleway to Peebles, the entry to this new facility in the village should be well signposted and made appealing. This could be a new accessible route for some disabled people using mobility aids as well as cycles.

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