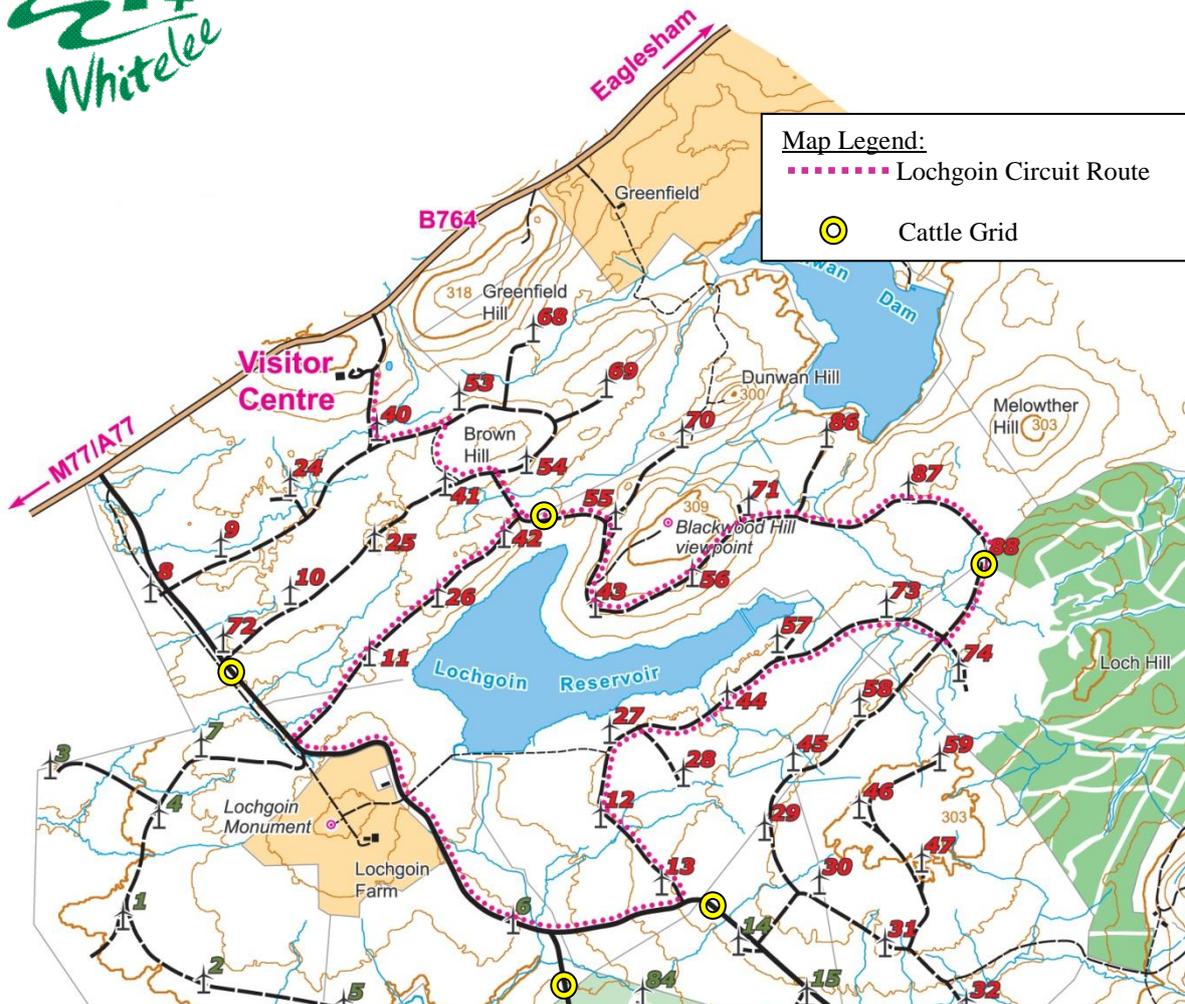




Lochgoin Circuit Equestrian Route

Length: 8 miles / 13 kilometres



This is the same route as recommended for walking and cycling. Starting from the Whitelee visitor centre there is ample parking for horse boxes and trailers and the first turbine (T40), is a good distance away so that horses new to windfarms / turbines can be introduced to the site gently. If you have never brought your horse to a windfarm before it is recommended to allow them some time outside the horse box to see and get used to the presence of the turbines, before setting off.

Again, if your horse has not been close to turbines before, it is recommended to start your visit slowly by heading from the visitor centre towards turbine 40 at a slow pace. Experience from horse familiarisation events at Whitelee shows that horses gain confidence from their riders and as long as riders aren't apprehensive about taking their horse into the site, the horses will generally be fine.

The windfarm tracks are generally wide enough to be considered multi-use tracks with space for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to safely carry out their activities but all access users are advised to use caution and care and to be considerate of others, particularly at blind bends or rises. Please also note that site maintenance and forestry vehicles can be encountered. All site traffic should be travelling at 19mph or less but caution is still required at junctions for example. Ground conditions along the route are generally very good but through wear and tear there will inevitably be some sections with loose gravel or an uneven surface. E.g. at junctions and road ends there can be a 'wash' of loose gravel swept together by vehicles and these pockets of loose stone can be uncomfortable for horses.

If vehicles are encountered in the site, move to the edge of the track or into a lay-by if one is close by. Do not go off the track as ground conditions can be extremely soft due to the peat structure and

horses could easily become stuck. (Seasonal off track routes will periodically be created and route cards added to the website or ask the countryside rangers for more information.)

The terrain along the route isn't particularly challenging for horses and is suited to various levels of riders. The route can be completed in under 2 hours (without pushing too hard). There are some sections that head up and down hill but none of these are particularly exhausting, long or steep. Care should be taken when going downhill however as it is easy to build up speed and there are of course other access users as well as site traffic (vehicles), in the windfarm to be aware of. Please also be cautious around dogs when off the lead and watch for livestock, to avoid startling them.

When setting off from the visitor centre please check the notice board at the entrance to the operational windfarm for any temporary access restrictions that could influence your route choice.

Due to the changeable weather at Whitelee and the potential to get lost (even on routes that are well known), it is recommended to always carry a copy of the Access Project map with you – these are available online as well as from the countryside rangers, visitor centre or in the leaflet dispenser at the entrance.

The Lochgoin circuit is waymarked along its length by green finger posts at every junction making it ideal for anyone new to the windfarm or not keen on map reading. The finger posts are intended to be viewed when moving in a clockwise direction.

There are 3 (4 depending on route choice) cattle grids along the route (indicated on map), all with field and / or bridal gates to the side. Notices have been placed along the route (both directions), indicating that cattle grids are 50 meters ahead. It may be necessary to dismount to open the gates but suitable boulders or benches for remounting are close by.

The Lochgoin reservoir which the route encircles is spectacular in most weathers and there are often waterfowl and waders to spot. Views out to Arran and Aisla Craig are possible in good weather making this an enjoyable route to ride. The circuit passes by the Blackwood Hill viewpoint which provides an excellent short detour up to the summit of the hill and where a toposcope and seating can be found to take in the spectacular views. (Please do not take horses into the viewpoint.)

Please note that on this route you will pass through a sheep grazing area where you are requested to keep watch for livestock and to keep your pace at a level that does not startle the animals. This is particularly important during lambing times (March – May).

When visiting Whitelee and whenever possible you are requested to remove horse dung from tracks.

WCRS
April 2014

Contact: Tel – 0141 614 0962 / Email – whitelee-crs@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
Web: www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/whitelee