

Environmental Volunteer Network Newsletter

Autumn 2016

The Volunteer Network

The Countryside and Greenspace team have been working across South Lanarkshire for many years, to help volunteers improve parks, woodlands, walking routes and many other places.

We continue to directly support Friends Of groups as well as regular volunteer conservation groups across the county. If you would like any more information about joining the volunteer network, or would like to suggest training courses or events to help your group; just get in touch with us using the contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

In this article we have updates from Uddingston Pride, Friends of the Calder and the Friends of Langlands Moss; Clydesdale Community Initiatives report on the opening of their new base; the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership has been especially busy providing many events and training opportunities. The Hamilton Natural History Society is preparing to deliver their winter programme of talks – check out their article for more information. We have information from a new project run by the East Kilbride Community Trust who are improving a site for the local community.

We have 2 new Nature Space cards available for School Grounds and Work Places. These are online at www.southlanarkshirebiodiversity.co.uk and we can send paper copies if you are interested. These cards are a great way to assess your local space (other cards are available for meadow, woodland, bog, pond, brownfield, orchard, park and greenspace, and rivers and streams) and see how good it is for wildlife.



Improvements at Millheugh, Greenhall and Barnhill



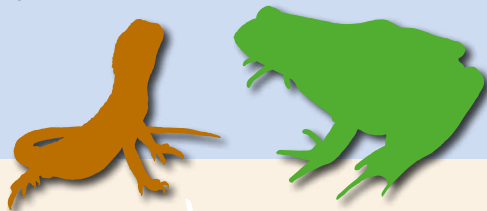
The Friends of the Calder, together with South Lanarkshire Council Countryside and Greenspace Service and Central Scotland Green Network are working to secure funding to carry out access and woodland improvements at Greenhall, Millheugh and Barnhill in Blantyre. This will include path upgrades and essential woodland management to safeguard the long-term health and biodiversity of the woodland for all to enjoy.

SLC and Community Links carried out an extensive public survey in 2013 to find out what local people thought about the woodlands and ideas for improvements. This information was included in a management plan that is designed to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the area and to improve the path network.

In June 2016 over 30 people joined officers from SLC and CSGN for a site walk and feedback gathering session, and the Friends carried out a wider public consultation in July to help consolidate the funding bid. The Friends also hold regular work days and events to get the local community involved.

In November 2016 the pond at Barnhill is to be refurbished as part of the Froglife Living Waters project, and to complement this two volunteer work days to clear trees have taken place. From the autumn term pupils from High Blantyre Primary School will be working with the Ranger Service to monitor the pond before and after the works using the OPAL Citizen Science pond surveying pack.

The Friends of the Calder meet in Priestfield Hall, Blantyre every two months and are always looking for others with an interest in the area to come along; check out the Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofthecalder for more information.





Have you found a water vole in South Lanarkshire

The water vole has suffered greatly in the UK, disappearing from over 94% of its former sites during the last few decades as a result of habitat loss and predation by the American Mink.

Today many local authorities, wildlife trusts and volunteers are working together all over the UK to conserve and protect this rare species.

The Countryside and Greenspace team (CAG) are launching a campaign to determine the presence of the native water vole in South Lanarkshire. The current records of this mammal are sparse in this large region and we would like your help to locate them.

Please send us any records of water voles using the contact details below. You can use the following field signs to help you confirm the presence of water voles.



Photo: Les Foster

Water vole field signs... what to look for

Water voles are the largest of the British voles, weighing up to 350g and measuring 14-22cm long (not including tail). The tail is 2/3 of their body length and furry. They have a short, rounded body, blunt muzzle and small ears almost entirely hidden in their thick brown fur. They might be confused with rats, but rats are larger (20-28cm long) with a pointed face and a scaly, hairless tail.

Where to find them?

Water voles occur mainly along well vegetated banks of slow flowing rivers, ditches and lakes. The burrows (holes) appear along the water's edge; the holes are wider than they are high with a diameter of 4-8cm. Water voles tend to be more active during the day than at night so you may see them during the daytime.

Droppings are the most distinctive sign of the water vole; they are cylindrical with blunt ends, 12mm long and 4-5mm wide. The colour can vary from green, brown to black.

The droppings are deposited in clusters at discrete latrine sites at boundary ranges and where they leave / enter the water. (Rat droppings tend to be scattered along their runs).



"Lawns" of closely cropped grass, occasionally with piles of chopped food may surround burrow entrances. These occur when the female is nursing young and time away from the nest is kept to a minimum. The sections of vegetation are typically up to 10cm long, showing the marks of two large incisors.

If you would like more information on water voles or would like to get involved with surveying, further information can be found on our Facebook page or by contacting us. If you have any sightings of water voles please send your records to cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk or call the Ranger Service on 0303 123 1015.

Please give details of the location or name of the site (grid reference if known), the field signs you found, the date and if possible your contact details.



South Lanarkshire
Countryside Rangers

East Kilbride Community Trust Community Woodland Project



The East Kilbride Community Trust (EKCT) are delighted to be embarking on their first community woodland project, with the aim of providing an attractive and accessible greenspace for those who live and work in the vicinity of the town's Peel Park area.

EKCT hope to build a safer, stronger and happier community by encouraging people in the local area to help care for a previously neglected outdoor space, and to make greater use of it for health and wellbeing purposes. The woodland will also be used to provide programmes of formal and informal education, including Forest School, and it is hoped that the site will become a valuable location for outdoor learning.

Thanks to support from the Scottish Government's Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Development Fund, EKCT have now employed Gail Ferguson to take this exciting project forward. In her role as Community Woodland Engagement Officer, Gail has been busy applying for funding to help cover the cost of essential woodland management and access improvement operations. Tasks such as the removal of storm damaged trees and the construction of new paths can then be carried out, to make the woodland a safer and more inviting place for visitors.



Greenhills Primary School visit the site

Moreover, EKCT are encouraging local people to help improve, monitor and maintain the site, as well as enjoy it, through a range of volunteering opportunities and community events. It is hoped that health walks will become a regular feature in their woodland events programme, which will include a variety of family friendly activities as well as practical sessions such as clean-ups and tree planting.

An exciting 12 week Forest School programme has been scheduled for autumn 2016, and further work with schools is in the pipeline. Pupils from Greenhills Primary Additional Support Needs Base have already visited the woodland to find out about the project, as part of their topic on 'Our Community'. Led by the Community Woodland Engagement Officer, staff and pupils took a walk around the site and were amazed by the beautiful views and abundance of wild flowers. They couldn't believe they were only 10 minutes from their school!

The success of this project will rely heavily on the generosity of funders, supporters and volunteers, so if you are interested in getting involved EKCT would be delighted to hear from you. **Please contact their Community Woodland Engagement Officer, Gail Ferguson, by calling 01355 576005 or emailing gail@ekct.co.uk for further details.**



The community woodland at Peel Park



Friends of Langlands Moss

In 2013 the Friends of Langlands Moss LNR, East Kilbride, raised £100,000 to replace the ageing wooden boardwalk and the signage pertaining to the importance of Langlands Moss LNR.

This new boardwalk was made from recycled materials and funded from several grants as well as South Lanarkshire Council. The Boardwalk was officially opened on the 19th of March 2013 by the Honorary Patron of The Friends, Professor Iain Stewart. He is a former pupil of Claremont High School and now a lecturer on Geosciences at Plymouth University as well as being a regular BBC Television presenter of programmes such as his most recent one, "Scotland's First Oil Rush!".

Late on the evening of Tuesday the 31st of May 2016, the boardwalk was damaged by persons unknown. Thankfully someone phoned the Fire Brigade who sent two tenders to the area. They found that the boardwalk had melted and resembled a river of molten lava. The fire was extinguished but not before approximately 50 metres of boardwalk had been destroyed.

On Saturday, 4th June a large group of local people assisted by SLC's Countryside and Greenspace team, Community Payback and SLC Land Services removed the melted plastic from the fragile surface of the bog. The damaged material removed filled three lorries!



The boardwalk at Langlands before and after fire damage

The Friends are now back in the position of fund raising to replace the damaged boardwalk; damage is estimated at £30,000. We have already set up a fund raising page: – www.gofundme.com/27t7mng and have received donations from Moss users and friends. We have a folk concert planned for 8th October in the Murray Owen Centre in East Kilbride. **We would appreciate support at all levels from residents and staff in South Lanarkshire Council.**



FOLM and volunteers clearing up the damaged boardwalk

To keep up to date with our activities, like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/FriendsOfLanglandsMoss



Clyde Walkway Community Links



View from the Monkey Road

A new series of walking trails has been launched in the Clyde Valley to help people get more active, provide better connectivity between communities, neighbouring settlements and the Clyde Walkway and to help people find out more about the landscape and heritage of the area.

The Clyde Walkway Community Links trails are new and improved trails which have been created as part of the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership project. They open up parts of the Clyde Valley that were not very easily accessible to the public previously.

The main aim behind the project was to improve the outdoor access network through both enhancing footpath linkages between a number of settlements lying in the Clyde and Avon Valley Partnership area, and developing local links with the Clyde Walkway; the main strategic long distance access route running through the area. The capital work funded



Law to Mauldsie

by Sport Scotland's Legacy 2014 fund, the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership (CAVLP) and South Lanarkshire Council has improved paths linking the communities of Rosebank, Ashgill, Dalserf, Larkhall, Law, Crossford, Nemphlar and Braidwood with the Clyde Walkway. The project was managed by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust; a core partner in the CAVLP Programme.

These new and improved trails are a great way to get out and learn more about the area while enjoying outdoor space and finding new favourite places to explore. There are five exciting routes to choose from:

- **Law to Mauldsie Bridge, Mauldsie Estate**
- **Nemphlar Moor Road to Braidwood**
- **Larkhall to the Clyde Walkway; 'The Monkey Road'**
- **Crossford – Stonebyres – Nemphlar – Kirkfieldbank**
- **Rosebank Circular via Ashgill and Dalserf**

A series of associated archaeological and social history projects are running to help local people to learn more about the heritage of the valley linked to these new and improved routes. Archaeologists, researchers and artists are working with local communities through a series of workshops and research events, using a combination of personal stories, archaeological survey techniques, archive images as well as old and new maps.

Route descriptions of all the new trails are available here –

www.clydeandavonvalley.org/explore



Hamilton Natural History Society

Our winter programme of monthly talks starts on 14th October through to 14th April 2017.

We have a varied range of subjects on offer, including beekeeping, orchids, community gardens, peregrine falcons and Shetland. Talks are held in Hamilton Old Parish Church Hall, Leechlee Road, Hamilton at 7.30pm. Entrance is £0.50 (which includes refreshments) at the door and members of the public are welcome to come along. Car parking is available and the venue is only 5 minutes walk from Hamilton Bus Station and Hamilton Central Train Station.

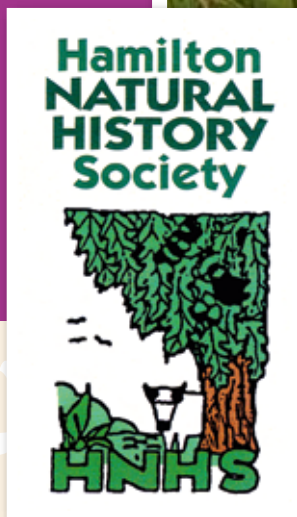
For further details, check our website at: www.hamiltonnaturalhistory.org.uk or call/text 07563 764 520

A new book, the "Flora of Lanarkshire" by the late Peter Macpherson is due to be published in autumn 2016, which will show the location of over 2,000 species in habitats such as upland, heath, rivers and urban areas. Glasgow Natural History Society will be hosting a launch event on 20th September – see HNHS website for details nearer the time.

The book can be ordered from www.naturebureau.co.uk/



Northern marsh orchid



The Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership

Triple award winning Clearburn Natural Play and Picnic Area, New Lanark, is turning the Big 2! On Saturday 10 September, pull on your wellies to join us for an afternoon of fun and games between 1-3pm. Tickets are limited, so book your space now at www.cavlp.eventbrite.co.uk.

Clearburn's birthday celebrations are part of a wider project promoting natural play through Forest School training, an Outdoor Play Conference and workshops in schools. The celebrations also come hot on the heels of the **free** Growing Up Wild family play sessions that took place with OutLET: Play Resource, in Mauldslie Woods, Lesmahagow and RSPB Baron's Haugh, Motherwell over the summer holidays.

We're looking forward to Fruit Day on Saturday 1 October at Overton Farm, Carlisle, 9am-1.30pm. Join the annual celebration of Clyde Valley fruity heritage, fresh local produce and crafts. Food and craft stalls will be accompanied by live apple pressing and tasty samples from the Clyde Valley Orchard Co-operative, children's activities, woodturning, archery, live music and much more. No booking necessary.

If you are interested in having a stand at Fruit Day, please contact info@overtonfarmshop.co.uk or phone 01555 860 226.



Clyde Valley Fruit Day



Did you know that Chatelherault Country Park was a seat of power for early Kings of Strathclyde?

The current clearance of mid-20th century conifer plantations is revealing previously unknown or unrecorded archaeological sites which are currently being researched by CAVLP Heritage volunteers.

Contact cavlp.heritage@gmail.com or phone 01555 661 555 if you'd like to find out about volunteering with the team on sites throughout the Clyde and Avon valley.

Historical figures like Major General William Roy, artists like Alistair Gray and poets like Joanna Baillie, have helped shape the landscape and cultural heritage of the Clyde and Avon valley throughout history alongside writers, designers, architects, gardeners and so many more. Local Landscape Heroes is a volunteering project which seeks to celebrate these often unsung heroes.

Contact cavlp.heritage@gmail.com or phone 01555 661 555 to find out more or to get involved.



CAVLP Heritage Volunteers

Winners of both the Clyde and Avon Valley summer photo competition as well as overall winners for the year, are due to be revealed in September. The competition is due to run again in 2016-17, so please send your stunning snaps of the area to info@clydeandavonvalley.com to enter. Amateur, professional and U16's categories are open to all.



For more information on any of the above or to find out about volunteering and events, contact us on info@clydeandavonvalley.com / 01555 663 430 www.clydeandavonvalley.org/ Instagram: [clydeavonvalley](https://www.instagram.com/clydeavonvalley)



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Clydesdale Community Initiatives

Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI) celebrated the opening of their new centre at Langloch Farm, just outside Lanark in July.

The culmination of years of hard work, the new premises will host projects, activities and tasks that will continue to change the lives of local disadvantaged people for the better.

The Farm was officially opened by Princess Anne, who was given a tour of the new facilities, meeting groups of CCI participants who showed her a range of the social enterprise activities the organisation is involved in.

This included a visit to the woodcraft workshop, where participants who have formed a micro business group were able to show her some of their skills, and a beautiful box made from Clyde valley oak was presented to the princess as a gift.

The princess also met CCI's landscape construction and gardening teams before visiting a new polytunnel for a demonstration of how CCI participants have grown marigolds and then processed the leaves into calendula products.

The farm represents a £1.8million investment, with principal funding coming from Big Lottery, European Regional Development Fund, Robertson Trust, Garfield Weston, Clothworkers and Clyde Windfarm cash administered through South Lanarkshire Council, and many businesses and individuals who also offered support.

For more information on CCI and how their work changes lives, visit www.cciweb.org.uk/





Refurbishment of Crofthead Park, Uddingston



Crofthead Park lies in the heart of Uddingston Village, and has been a well loved and well used facility over many years. It is surrounded by tenement flats, and is nearby the two Primary Schools in Uddingston.

Over the years, the play equipment became progressively dilapidated, until there were concerns over safety and appearance. South Lanarkshire Council were unable to finance the refurbishment of the park, and in 2012, local people approached Uddingston Pride to ask if the Group could arrange for the required improvements to be made.

The Committee decided to put in an application to the Big Lottery Fund, and, after some three years of applying, discussing, and negotiating, an award of £185,000 was made to Uddingston Pride, to enable the refurbishment to proceed. This award was topped up by the Council through "Planning Gain", and by a number of private donations from local businesses. In total, some £250,000 was raised, and the work was started, at long last, in January this year, and we now have a state-of-the-art playpark of which we feel very proud, and which is proving to be extremely popular with local people of all ages. As well as the usual play equipment – swings, climbing frames, roundabouts and a zip wire, the park now boasts a fenced-in toddlers area, a multi-use games area, and an outdoor gym for adults, so that all ages are catered for in the refurbished park. And, thanks to a very

competitive bid by the Contractor, we have been able to add a number of extra features – additional seating, picnic tables, and a bespoke Entrance Gateway feature, which we feel have all added to the attractiveness of the park.

An official opening ceremony was held on 14th May 2016, when local Businessman, Boyd Tunnock, CBE, graciously cut the ribbon on the gateway, and the Provost of South Lanarkshire eloquently spoke of her and the Council's appreciation of the efforts of the Uddingston Pride Group. There then followed a fun day of face painting, balloon twisting, and bands playing, with teas available for all in the adjacent old people's centre, free of charge, courtesy of our local supermarket.

The Group has attracted a great deal of praise for their efforts from a great many residents of Uddingston, the local Community Council, local Councillors, and MSPs. Uddingston Pride received excellent support from the Land Services Department of South Lanarkshire Council throughout the years of development of the plans for the park, and during the construction work, and we would like to record our gratitude for their assistance in creating a facility at Crofthead that all of Uddingston can enjoy.

For information about our forthcoming activities, please visit our facebook page <https://en-gb.facebook.com/uddingstonpride/>



Get in touch!

To see previous copies of this newsletter visit www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk and search for "Volunteer Newsletter".

If you would like to join the volunteer network, suggest courses or events, or would like any more information, please get in touch with us using the details below.



Contact us

Follow us on Facebook



Like us at "South Lanarkshire Countryside Rangers"
www.facebook.com/CountrysideRangers

Email: cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Phone: 0303 123 1015

Write to: Countryside Ranger Service, Calderglen Country Park, East Kilbride G75 0QZ

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

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