



# BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT

APR 2017 – MAR 2020





# Contents

	Introduction	5
01	Introductory information about your public body	6-8
02	Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature	9-15
03	Mainstreaming biodiversity	16-20
04	Nature-based solutions, climate change and biodiversity	21-23
05	Public engagement and workforce development	24-33
06	Research and monitoring	34-37
07	Biodiversity highlights and challenges	38





## Introduction

**The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004)** created a duty on public bodies, including West Dunbartonshire Council, to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities.

**The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE Act)** amends the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004) and places further obligations on public bodies to report on compliance with the Biodiversity Duty every three years.

The designated Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is **Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands' (2004)** which sets out a vision for 2030 for the health of Scotland's biodiversity. This was supplemented by the **2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity** which focuses on desired outcomes for 2020.

The two documents together are now designated by the Scottish Government as comprising the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. This report sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council has delivered biodiversity conservation and enhancement across a range of functions. The format of this report is based on Scottish Government suggested reporting format, Template 1.



# 1

## Introductory information about your public body

### Context

#### 1.1

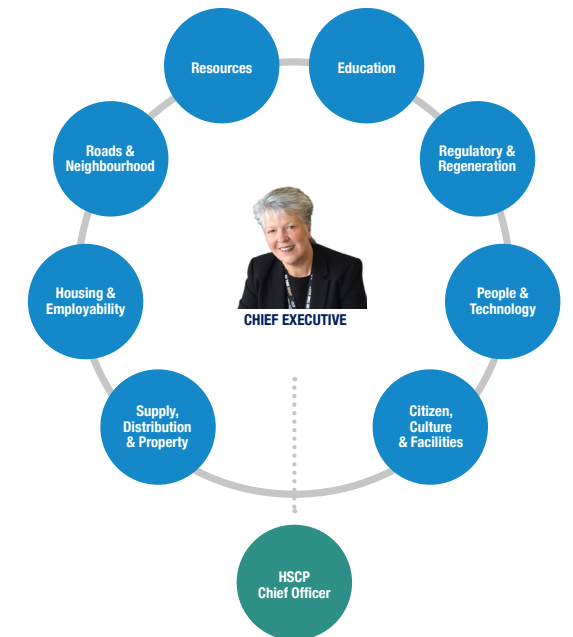
West Dunbartonshire Council is a Local Authority providing services to the residents of West Dunbartonshire. The Council are responsible for the collection of waste and recycling, the provision of schools and education, the management of planning and building standards and the management of open and green spaces amongst other statutory functions.

West Dunbartonshire extends to some 178sq.km. (68sq.miles) with a population of around 88,930 in 2019. In terms of land coverage it is the fourth smallest Council in Scotland. Over 40% of the land is classified as open countryside, representing a notably higher proportion than many other local authority areas in Scotland, and there are sizable areas of native woodland and freshwater. The majority of residents in West Dunbartonshire live within 300m of an area of open space over 1 hectare in size. Open and green spaces in West Dunbartonshire, such as parks, playing fields and woodlands form the green network and link to similar networks in other authority areas. The northern part of the Council area falls within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park which is one of only two national parks within Scotland. The total area of West Dunbartonshire is 183 km<sup>2</sup>; the area within the National Park is 57 km<sup>2</sup>.



Much of the northern shore line of the Inner Clyde estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive. The Inner Clyde SPA contains extensive intertidal flats that support large numbers of wintering wildfowl, including an internationally important wintering population of redshank (*Tringa totanus*) which are the qualifying interest under the Directive.

The site is also a Ramsar Site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. Upstream of the River Leven, the Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation is an important habitat for Atlantic salmon and river lamprey. The River Leven is the main outflow for Loch Lomond and acts as a critical wildlife corridor. Loch Lomond is designated as a Special Protection Area and under RAMSAR as well as a designated National Nature Reserve(NNR). Loch Lomond Woods are designated as a Special Area of Conservation. 16 local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) exist, eight within the National Park and eight outwith the National Park area, reflecting the importance of the flora, fauna, and habitats of the area. There are 48 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) - these are sites that are recognised on account of certain local important features of habitat, plant or animal communities or geology. The Saltings at Old Kilpatrick is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in recognition of the high natural heritage interest and value of the site for education and informal enjoyment of nature by the public, and there are proposals for further LNRs at Brucehill Cliffs and Faifley Knowes.



### Governance and structure

#### 1.2

West Dunbartonshire Council has 22 Councillors representing six wards. Over the course of this reporting cycle The Council has been led by the Scottish National Party. The following areas are delivered by Chief Officers under the Chief Executive:

- 1 Citizen, Culture & Facilities
- 2 People & Technology
- 3 Housing & Employability
- 4 Resources
- 5 Regulatory & Regeneration
- 6 Supply, Distribution & Property
- 7 Roads & Neighbourhood
- 8 Education

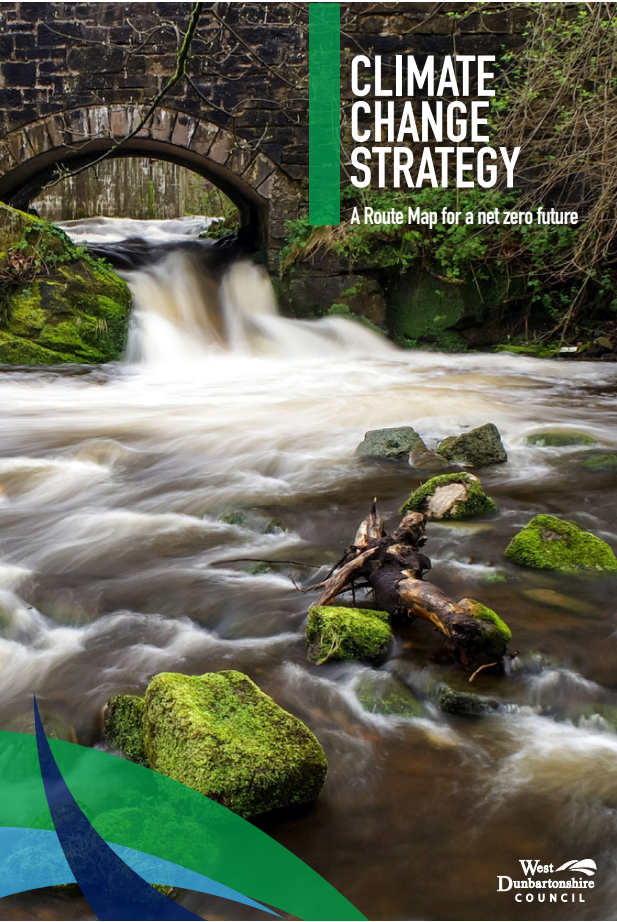
The Council delivers its key biodiversity responsibilities and project implementation predominantly through Regulatory Service which incorporates Development Management and Forward Planning; Regeneration, Environment and Growth directorate which includes the Greenspace and Sustainability departments and Transformation and Public Service Reform which includes Education, Learning & Attainment.

West Dunbartonshire Council is a signatory to the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Concordat as well as The Scottish Climate Change Declaration. West Dunbartonshire Council has embedded the CSGN in the new proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan. The work of the Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership as a regional expression of the CSGN.



Greenspace work to a three year departmental biodiversity plan that correlates with the reporting cycle for this document and are responsible also for implementing capital projects incorporating biodiversity elements, community engagement and learning, and countryside access. They also deliver a joint partnership project with the Health and Social Care Partnership. The Ranger services alongside the Greenspace Volunteers deliver practical conservation tasks throughout the district.

The Council has a sustainability officer who has been tasked with the production of a new Climate Change Strategy which will be agreed by committee in 2021. Once agreed a Climate Change Action Group will be established which will include senior level involvement throughout all departments engaging in a range of discussions and actions relating to climate change including the enhancement and conservation of biodiversity across the Council's scope of work.



Education Learning & Attainment deliver the Curriculum for Excellence and many aspects of biodiversity are covered through this curriculum. There is a cross sectoral Learning for Sustainability Strategy group with representation also from national agencies, Education Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Partnerships

**1.3**  
The Council has agreement with two partner organisations that are responsible for carrying out a range of functions from growing space, play spaces, habitat creation and community engagement including education. These are:

- 1 West Dunbartonshire Environment Trust who have received £600K in funding over the three years of this reporting cycle.**
- 2 The Leamy Foundation who have received £75K in Greenspace funding and £56K in Education funding over the same period.**

Additionally, there are three key organisations that have delivered biodiversity monitoring and project works that have actively worked in partnership with The Council in delivering their project aims and objectives. These include Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust and The Conservation Volunteers. There are also a range of friends and community groups that operate with the support of The Council to engage people with the natural environment and carry out a range of practical tasks to benefit biodiversity. The Council also work in partnership with a range of environmental organisations such as Woodland Trust, Forest and Land Scotland, Buglife, Froglife and RSPB.



2

Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature

Section 2 will outline programmes of work that have contributed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity through a range of practical conservation tasks delivered by The Council and in partnership with environmental organisations. It will focus on the improvements and how these have helped to connect people with nature. The majority of community engagement is discussed in Section 5.

West Dunbartonshire Council Greenspace

**2.1**  
The Greenspace department sits within the Environment and Neighbourhood division of the Council with an estimated 200 staff and has responsibility for the strategic management on all aspects of the Council's Greenspace service including parks, open spaces, outdoor recreation, play areas, cemeteries and crematoria, litter management, countryside access, Countryside Ranger Service, Community engagement and biodiversity management. Most of the habitat management works is delivered by Greenspace staff and Greenspace Volunteers, local community groups and contractors. Much of the practical conservation tasks are delivered in conjunction with partners and volunteers. This section will focus on the physical projects and the public engagement detail will be discussed more fully in Section 5.

Countryside Ranger Service

**2.1.2**  
The Countryside Ranger Service delivers practical conservation management on Council land and engages in public events covering open space, greenspace and the wider countryside. The operational base is in Balloch Castle Country Park (BCCP) and the service is delivered by 1 Countryside Ranger managing a core group of Greenspace Volunteers, corporate volunteers and partnering with Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park volunteer programme. Practical conservation tasks carried out by the Countryside Ranger Service and volunteers over this reporting cycle have included:

- Created new pond in BCCP as well as hibernacula
- Created bird hide and feeding station in BCCP
- Removed regenerated Western Hemlock in BCCP
- Removed Invasive Non Native (INN) Himalayan Balsam at BCCP, The Saltings LNR and Havoc
- Planted 2000 trees in BCCP
- Secured 15 trees from Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as part of the International Conifer Conservation Programme
- Planted 4000 native bulbs in BCCP
- Partnered with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) to remove Skunk Cabbage
- Coppiced Willow Plantation for delivery to schools for weaving
- Made, installed, mapped and inspected 50 bird boxes in BCCP
- Removed invasive Broom, prepared ground and sowed 1.5 Acre wildflower meadow BCCP
- Secured funding and created new 1 Acre wildflower meadow in BCCP in partnership with Buglife
- Bug hotel project for The Saltings LNR as part of community gain from Murphy Group
- Delivered 12 days of corporate volunteering, removal of INNS – Himalayan Balsam. Companies included Clydesdale Bank, Axa- Insurance, Aggreko and Department for Work and Pensions
- Secured funding for 2 new pond projects in BCCP with Lottery funding via Froglife
- Create and manage 9 outdoor classrooms in BCCP, The Saltings LNR, Haldane Green Corridor, Strathleven, Bellsmyre, Havoc, Christie Park and Auchnacraig woods and continue to support



- teaching staff by helping provide materials for school grounds improvements and for using in outdoor learning
- Create volunteer programme for Canal College including infrastructure improvements such as fence painting, waymarker improvements and interpretation board cleaning at The Saltings LNR
  - Supported local volunteer group, Friends of Havoc Meadows, with Himalayan Balsam removal and biological monitoring

Invasive Non Native Species

**2.1.3**  
Management of Invasive Non Natives is essential as the spread of these species that out compete native flora. It is recognised as a key driver of biodiversity loss.

Although there is a volunteer element to the management of Himalayan Balsam, *Impatiens glandulifera*, the majority of INNS management is implemented by contractors and overseen by Greenspace.

Japanese Knotweed, *Fallopia japonica*, is managed on Council land and is treated each year in September and October. Giant Hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, is treated by contractors as required. One barrier to overcoming the issue with invasive management generally is relying on surrounding landowners carry out the same level of treatment and thus reduce the spread collectively. This is particularly true of Giant Hogweed that favours railway lines, roads and water courses.

American Skunk Cabbage, *Lysichiton americanus*, has been treated in BCCP by LLTNP volunteers and contractors. In recent years the Skunk Cabbage has spread to occupy the open habitat created by a programme of *Rhododendron ponticum* eradication. It's location close the River Leven has caused concern for future transfer downstream and as such has been prioritised for treatment. In addition, it's vast ground coverage occupies space that other native vegetation will recolonise once eradicated and so it's treatment will have an overall benefit to biodiversity.

Information on each of the INNS that the Council manage is on the Council website and the public are encouraged to report incidences to Greenspace where is it mapped and put onto a rota for the next treatment round.

Himalayan Balsam, *Impatiens glandulifera*, lends itself to volunteer tasks as it is easy to hand pull but it's vast spread over recent years has meant the Council will seek to use a combination of volunteer work parties as well as contractors for future management. Where it stands as a monoculture or covers vast areas we will investigate chemical treatment for future management.

Habitat management change to mown grass, including tree planting

**2.1.4**  
Over this reporting cycle, Greenspace committed to relax the intensive grass cutting regime of amenity grass areas covering approx. 100,000m2 or 24 Acres. This has had a cost benefit but also a net biodiversity gain by allowing flowering plants and grasses to establish on these sites thus improving habitat for pollinators and providing shelter. In addition, less fuel is being used on grass cutting equipment thus reducing carbon emissions. There are approximately 50 sites covered under this new schedule and various planting regimes have been implemented to enhance them for aesthetic value and to benefit biodiversity. 330 trees have been planted in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven. A trial area of pictorial meadow was established at Barloan roundabout along the A82 covering approx. 1 Acre.

In the Clydebank area 620 trees have been planted throughout these sites and 3 wildflower meadows were trialled.

Additionally, 120 native trees were planted reinstating a shelter belt at Overtoun Estate. Around 1000 saplings were planted around the area and about 200 in Christie park as part of the Big Climate Fightback (Woodland Trust).

620  
trees planted in  
Clydebank area

120  
trees planted at  
Overtoun Estate +  
1,000 saplings

200  
saplings planted  
at Christie Park



Levensgrove Park Heritage Project

**2.1.5**  
West Dunbartonshire Council's Greenspace section are also involved in the delivery of large scale capital works. Greenspace were successful with a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme to restore the heritage of Levensgrove Park. The award was £2.8 million with the Council committing £800,000 towards the project with a further £120,000 of work in kind.

The project included the following:

- Restoration of the park's heritage features St Serf's Church, Shiers Well, Kilmahew Fountain and the Cenotaph
- The re-creation of the original main entrance to the park by reinstating the missing gate post and installing replacement gates to the original design
- Repairs to the existing pedestrian gates and replace missing gates
- Repair sections of the boundary wall
- Replace the existing dilapidated pavilion with cafe facility and Park Ranger's office/workspace
- Extend Social Work/Grounds Maintenance facility in the depot, including improved access, parking for disabled, new pedestrian access, disabled play area and reduce height of hedge
- Instigate traffic management measures including provision of improved vehicle access point to rear of park
- Remove old play areas and install new play facilities for all ages, including facilities for disabled visitors
- Repair paths and associated drainage throughout park
- Remove dilapidated buildings and fences throughout the park

- Reduce impact of tarmac area at former bandstand by replacing with paths, soft landscaping and a gazebo in the style of the old bandstand
- Install signage and interpretation panels to promote greater awareness of the heritage value of the park and enhance the visitor experience
- Install new seats and picnic benches
- Implement findings of tree survey and recommendations (eg removal of inappropriate planting and the restoration of the original park design where appropriate)
- Restructure arboretum
- Install CCTV round heritage features, new pavilion and Social Work/Grounds Maintenance Facility
- Install lighting from new pavilion through park to main entrance to improve personal security
- Employment of staff to work with the local community to develop and promote the park and heritage features
- Community orchard
- Wildflower areas

The project at Levensgrove Park included the rebuild of the pavilion which is now a café and Ranger Office. Biodiversity groundworks such as the creation of wildflower borders through the parkland trees, designating areas for grassland management thus reducing the cut grass area and installation of interpretation boards relating to wildflowers in the meadows and birds of the shore line. This project secured funding for a Community Engagement Ranger who has carried out bulb planting, orchard management and bird watches as well as a full range of public engagement activities and events covered in Section 5.



## Health and Social Care Partnership

### 2.1.6

Work Connect delivers a service at Levensgrove park in partnership with Greenspace which provides the client base the opportunity to engage in various activities regarding horticulture. They also provide space for external providers to come along with their clients and be part of our horticultural service.

Work connect is a specialist employment service within WDC Health and Social Care Partnership, working with adults with learning disabilities, mental health, addictions and autism spectrum disorder. Work Connect offers support to help clients along the Scottish strategic skills pipeline, this may include vocational profiling, advice on benefits, better off in work calculations, help in how to prepare a CV, employability skills work placements, access to training, volunteering, college and employment opportunities and support in the work place.

At Levensgrove there is access to poly tunnels, greenhouses and garden plots including raised beds inside and out, training is provided in all aspects of garden maintenance (grass cutting, weeding, digging, bed maintenance, seeding and planting). The majority of this work focuses on growing vegetables from seeding in the greenhouses to out into allotments, raised beds and plots.

The facilities at Levensgrove allows use of purpose built activity areas including a wood workshop, pottery and craft rooms, within this space we are able to support our clients in the construction of simple environmental projects like bird feeders, bird nesting boxes, bat boxes, insect boxes and bug hotels. There are future plans to develop some land within the site to turn into new allotments which we will use to develop into vegetable plots. Working in partnership with Greenspace it is hoped that Work Connect will be in a position to offer allotments to use for community groups which will also include environmental and biodiversity projects this will including Work Connect clients as well as local educational establishments.

## Litter Management

### 2.1.7

Pollution is another key driver of biodiversity loss and in particular the issue of marine plastics is now well documented. Greenspace are actively involved in litter management, fly tipping, supporting the community in local clean ups as well as community engagement and enforcement.

The Litter Control section within Greenspace is tasked with upholding the Litter Control Strategy which has a focus on education which will be discussed further in Section 5. The two Litter Control Officers are responsible for a number of areas pertaining to the delivery of the strategy and responsibilities include:

- patrols and engaging regularly with local dog walking services and clubs within the WDC.
- Distribution of around 4 million dog waste bags per year. These are biodegradable, and are distributed for free to the public, via various locations throughout the area including Libraries, Community Education Centres, and various other Council and privately owned buildings, there is a list of these on the WDC website.
- Improving bin provision for litter and dog waste. Since 2003 there was around 250 street litter bins, now in 2020 there are over 1600 dual purpose street litter bins both able to take litter and dog fouling.
- Local PR campaigns to engage the public such as 'Do the right thing' campaign, and 'We think its disgusting'. These have included adverts along the A82 and other main routes.
- Delivering fixed penalty notices.
- Having a presence at community events. displaying literature and promotional materials on delivering the Litter Control Strategy.



The Community Greenspace Officer is responsible for providing opportunity for litter picks in the West Dunbartonshire area. Two event highlights include:

#### 1.

**The Keep Scotland Beautiful Upstream Battle project which aims to remove plastic from watercourses before it enters the sea. Four young people, undertaking the Action for Children Positive Choices programme, were able to collect the canal litter at water level from the "Poly Rodger" a boat built from recycled plastic bottles. The canal banks saw pupils from Our Lady of Loretto Primary School, Staff from Clydebank McDonald's and Department for Work and Pensions take part in a canal clean up in the Dalmuir and Bowling areas supported by staff from WDC, KSB and Scottish Canals.**

#### 2.

**A multiple partnership event that supported a corporate event for Chivas Brothers, as part of their Responib'All day. The national action day saw almost 700 Chivas Staff working in clean ups as far apart as Dumbarton, Paisley and Findhorn. In the West Dunbartonshire area, around 500 employees with the support of Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust and the Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore attended clean up events at the canal basin and beach at Bowling, Havoc foreshore and Brucehill Cliffs and along the River Leven at Kilmalid. Nationally 730 bags of litter were collected including 300 bags full of plastics for recycling into a plastic punt that will be used on Scottish waterways to further reduce litter. 480 bags of waste and 4 trailers of fly tipped items from ranging bikes, tyres and old sofas to a old caravan were collected at the 3 sites. In addition to these large scale events, support was provided for solo pickers and community events including educational events and these are discussed further in Section 5 on public engagement.**

## Your Community

### 2.2

The Communities Team is responsible for leading on the Community Empowerment agenda within the Council. Keys areas of work for the team include leading the delivery and implementation of the WD Community Empowerment Strategy and Action plan, this was developed in response to the Community Empowerment Act 2015. Also community capacity building, the Your Community neighbourhood approach, support to community Councils, CCTV and developing Community Transport.

Your Community is an initiative to bring local people and services closer together. Working with local communities to find out the key issues in local neighbourhoods in West Dunbartonshire, the aims are to: Improve service delivery; make improvements in local communities and promote community activism.

The team sits within the Housing and Employability service within The Council and consists of a Communities Manager, Community Empowerment Officer, Your Community team leaders, Communities Project workers and Communities Workers.

Recent projects have included:

- **Creation of Friends of Christie Park who have been involved in litter picks, woodland enhancements and engaging with the local community, Greenspace and other partners to identify priorities for an action plan for the park**
- **Canal Clear ups – identifying the worst areas around the Forth and Clyde Canal and working with local community members and partnership organisations to clear up the local area around the canal to improve it for the benefit of residents and local wildlife**
- **Linear Park, South Drumry – The group have carried out soil sampling in preparation for future planting of a community orchard and native woodland**
- **Castlehill community – a 12 week programme of engagement was delivered with Dalreoch Primary School focussing on improvements to the local environment. A 'Superhero' Litter Campaign was delivered alongside a creative programme of drama, arts, video making and storybook creation of their journey**
- **Our Holy Redeemer – were funded to have an outdoor classroom in the school grounds**
- **Haldane Youth Services – developed an urban garden which included a sensory garden, fairy trail and some pupils gained their John Muir Award**
- **St Stephens Primary School – had their garden developed and the funding awarded included storage, garden furniture, tools and equipment**
- **Carrochan Burn – Levenhowe Residents Association were awarded £10,000 for the delivery of a civil engineering solution to a failed wall on the Carrochan Burn, this is part of a Flood Risk Management project on the burn.**





Partnership organisations



**Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust**  
**2.3**

Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT) is an environmental charity that champions the conservation and restoration of Loch Lomond’s native fish populations, their habitats and the freshwater environment.

LLFT have been involved in West Dunbartonshire improving riparian corridors including native tree planting to secure against erosion, increase shading for habitat improvement and increase insect populations into watercourses. LLFT has been involved in community engagement with local communities and formal education work which will be discussed further in section 5 on public engagement. Additionally, survey and biological monitoring works will be discussed in section 6, Research and Monitoring.



**The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)**  
**2.4**

TCV works across the UK to create healthier and happier communities for everyone. This is realised by connecting people and green spaces by projects that improve wellbeing, conserve outdoor space and bringing people together to promote social cohesion, combat loneliness or enhance employment prospects. Greenspace have worked with TCV to achieve their aims through series of practical conservation tasks and community engagement in the Clydebank area working on sites such as Faifley Knowes and Auchnacraig Woods.

The works were delivered under their Community Rewilding Project. The aim of the project is:

1.  
**to engage local communities in the Clydebank area in making access and biodiversity improvements to their local greenspaces**
2.  
**to provide opportunities for people to get outdoors and make use of their greenspaces.**

This was delivered through a series of public events, outdoor play sessions (Rewild the Child), a regular volunteering group and engagement with groups and organisations such as schools, scouts, community groups (see section 5).

Practical works were delivered by TCV volunteers and around 20 local community volunteers who attended regular fortnightly volunteer session for the duration of the 24 month project in 2017 – 2019. Works carried out were predominantly at Faifley Knowes and included a series of habitat management such as thinning out woodlands, removal of old plantation chicken wire fencing, litter clearance from the watercourses and sowing wildflower areas. Additionally, to encourage more public access, paths were widened and upgraded and new timber steps were installed at Hardgate entrance. TCV planted 1200 native species of trees and several thousand wildflower bulbs and plugs in Faifley Knowes.



**West Dunbartonshire Environment Trust (WDET)**  
**2.5**

WDET undertakes a variety of biodiversity activities in the course of delivering regeneration programmes throughout West Dunbartonshire. The Trust aims to engage people and communities with nature through physical interaction and improved knowledge and respect for the natural environment. Projects endeavour to make greenspaces more attractive to encourage greater use and value. Where possible our projects include tree, shrub and flower planting mainly using native species as a first principle. Over the reporting cycle WDET have delivered the following improvements:

- **Woodland tree planting in schools**
- **Planting of ‘edible’ hedgerows and trees**
- **Wildflower meadow planting**
- **Creation of ponds and wetlands**
- **Creating natural (planted) boundaries in play, sports and residential spaces**
- **Creating green spaces for community interaction in residential areas**
- **Creating ‘natural play’ spaces**
- **Creating outdoor learning spaces**
- **Wildlife camera ‘trapping’ with the Learning in Local Greenspaces initiative**
- **Experiential learning with Outdoor and Woodland Learning initiative**
- **Educational workshops with schools Eco Committees**
- **Improving access and removing barriers to green spaces**



**The Leamy Foundation**  
**2.6**

The Leamy Foundation is a charity established in 2015 to support individuals and communities to achieve positive changes through the power of the outdoors and community green spaces in West Dunbartonshire. The Leamy Foundation and WDC Greenspace, established Growing West Dunbartonshire (GWD) a forum for community gardens and allotments which lead to the establishment of the Learn and Grow Project.

The Learn and Grow project, provide direct support and training in food growing and wellbeing activities to community groups, schools and nurseries thought the local authority area. Sessional workers from the Leamy Foundation and volunteers from GWD, work with partner organisations such as WDC Greenspace, RHS and community groups, to support the following projects:

1.  
**Better Views**  
A wellbeing focused social gardening and community food growing project managing 2 community spaces in Alexandria as community food growing and green spaces.
2.  
**Growing West Dunbartonshire**  
Established by WDC Greenspace and the Leamy Foundation to inspire people to establish West Dunbartonshire as a ‘Best in Scotland’ community food growing and garden location.
3.  
**Learn and Grow**  
A 15-year vision to establish an active community food growing and natural heritage resource in every education centre and community in West Dunbartonshire. Delivered by a partnership of residents, family, community, volunteers, local authority and national groups. A consistent part of the delivery of outdoor learning within our schools and communities. See section 5 for further information on educational involvement.



# 3

## Mainstreaming biodiversity

Section 3 will outline the Strategic Framework of Plans, Policies and Strategies which seek to mainstream biodiversity measures so that they are considered at a strategic and operational level. This section will outline the organisation's framework for delivery of fulfilling the Council's biodiversity duty.

### Strategic Plan

#### 3.1.1

The West Dunbartonshire Strategic plan 2017-2022 establishes the strategic plans and outcomes as follows:

1. **A strong local economy and improved job opportunities**
2. **Supported individuals, families and carers living independently and with dignity**
3. **Meaningful engagement with active, empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged**
4. **Open, accountable & accessible local government**
5. **Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents**

Each Chief Officer within the Council prepares an annual delivery plan which sets out the key actions to be undertaken by the service in supporting delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan. In addition, the plans set out actions to address the key challenges and priorities identified through the service planning process. As well as providing an

overview of resources, including employees and budgets, and identifying relevant risks. There are eight identified Council Officer areas:

1. **Citizen, Culture & Facilities Delivery Plan**
2. **People & Technology Delivery Plan**
3. **Housing & Employability Delivery Plan**
4. **Resources Delivery Plan**
5. **Regulatory & Regeneration Delivery Plan**
6. **Supply, Distribution & Property Delivery Plan**
7. **Roads & Neighbourhood Delivery Plan**
8. **Education Delivery Plan**

Of these, the Regulatory & Regeneration Delivery Plan, Roads & Neighbourhood Delivery Plan, and Education Delivery Plan most closely correlate with the consideration of biodiversity protection and enhancements.

#### 3.1.2

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 details a range of ways in which local communities can get more involved in the design and delivery of services in their local areas. The Act also details how Community Planning Partnerships will work to support this empowerment agenda – including the requirement to develop a Local Outcome Improvement Plan for the area. Your Community Delivery partnership group and Strategic group co-ordinate the implementation of this. WD Community Empowerment Strategy and Action plan was developed in response to the Community Empowerment Act 2015.

#### 3.1.3

The priorities of the Strategic Plan is guided by the Administration's election commitments, and support delivery of Community Planning West Dunbartonshire's (CPWD) Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027. In West Dunbartonshire this plan is known as the Plan for Place 2017-2027 and replaced the Single Outcome Agreement 2014-2017. The Plan for Place details long term priorities and aspirations for improving outcomes for all citizens. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan has 5 priority areas:

1. **Our local economy is flourishing**
2. **Our adults and older residents are supported to remain independent**
3. **Our children and young people are nurtured**
4. **Our residents are empowered**
5. **Our communities are safe**

Biodiversity is incorporated across these themes due to the associated benefits including improved health and wellbeing, employability skills, volunteering opportunities, protection of the local environment, provision of education and reducing social inequality. The remainder of this section will highlight the Plans, Policies and Strategies that allow for decision-making within The Council.

### Performance and Strategy

#### 3.2

##### Equality and Mainstreaming Report 2017-2021

Details an Equality Outcome of increasing participation of under represented groups. The team were involved in the Climate Ready Clyde work, social justice impact assessment workshop alongside local group ISARO, community network based in Whitecreek.

### Forward Planning

#### 3.3.1

##### West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan

There are currently two local development plans covering the West Dunbartonshire Planning Authority area. These are the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (Adopted 2010) and the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan 2015).

A new Local Development Plan is currently being prepared, which will, on adoption, replace these plans. The West Dunbartonshire Local Plan was adopted in March 2010. It forms part of the Development Plan for West Dunbartonshire (along with the Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan) and is used in the assessment of planning applications and development proposals.

The Plan sets out the Council's strategy, policies and proposals for the use of land within the Council area (with the exception of that part of the authority within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park) for the period from 2020 to 2030.

The Plan's aim is to create places for people, spaces for investment and destinations to visit and enjoy. It is also the first Plan in the UK to be awarded the Building with Nature Excellence Award for its green infrastructure first approach to design and its approach to green infrastructure throughout the Plan.

#### 3.3.2

##### Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environment Report 2015 -2025

Guides the future use of land and appearance of West Dunbartonshire; indicates where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not; and contributes to sustainable development and tackling climate change.

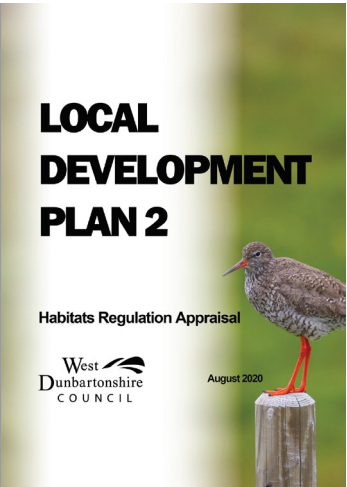
#### 3.3.3

##### Main Issues Report

The Main Issues Report (MIR) was the first milestone in the preparation of the WDLDP. Together with the Environmental Report, it sought to facilitate and inform the preparation of the WDLDP by outlining and assessing preferred options and reasonable alternative options arising from 30 identified 'Main Issues'. These options are assessed by the Environmental Report.

#### 3.3.4

##### Habitats Regulation Appraisal



In preparation of the new Local Development Plan, a Habitats Regulation Appraisal has been completed and published in August 2020.

This document determines whether a plan or project should be subject to appraisal; outlines the 'screening' process for determining whether an appropriate

assessment is required, as well as, any appropriate assessment. An appropriate assessment is only required where the plan-making body determines that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and the plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site.

This document outlines the qualifying interests and names the notable species which are prioritised for importance for conservation and that must be considered in the course of any future development.



Roads and Transportation

3.4  
Flood Risk Management Plan

The Local Flood Risk Management Plan has been developed to detail the actions adopted to reduce the devastating and costly impact of flooding in the Clyde and Loch Lomond Local Plan District. The Plan should be read in conjunction with the Flood Risk Management Strategy, which sets out the actions to tackle flooding, be it in our cities or rural areas and be it from rivers, the sea or from surface water. The Strategy identifies where the risk of flooding and benefits of investment are greatest.

Currently in Cycle 1 (2016 – 2022) of the Flood Risk Management Act 2009, the Plan was agreed with SEPA the objectives for this cycle & these were published on the Council’s website under the Clyde & Loch Lomond – Flood Risk Management plan. The plan identified 2 actions that could benefit biodiversity including:

- the agreement with LLTNP to lead a natural flood management study, in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, Argyll and Bute Council and Stirling Council, to further investigate the potential benefit for runoff control in areas surrounding Loch Lomond. This study will focus on reducing runoff to the small burns that feed into Loch Lomond, which can impact some communities and transport routes.
- Investigate native woodland planting in the upper catchment. The woodland will help to slow and reduce runoff into the river which could reduce the impact from high likelihood flooding. The Council plans to undertake woodland planting and investigate other locations with the potential for runoff control which have also been identified in the strategic assessment of this area.



Energy and Compliance

3.5  
The Energy and Compliance Unit carry out the following functions:

- Energy Efficiency projects and measures across domestic and non-domestic buildings;
- Managing Statutory Compliance in Council buildings (e.g. Legionella; Asbestos; etc.);
- Measuring and assisting the reduction of Council and wider Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions;
- Support service areas in becoming more sustainable, and providing support and/or guidance on Sustainability to staff.

The Sustainability Officer post sits within this team and is tasked with the development of an updated Climate Change Strategy (CCS). Expected in 2021, this will replace the previous strategy. This is a high-level route map detailing how the Council will mitigate emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change and integrating Sustainability practices. It sets out the trajectory for net zero emissions by 2045.

Key themes will be set out within the new strategy including:

- Adaptation and Biodiversity/Greenspace - highlighting the necessity for biodiversity; greenspace; green infrastructure and ecological principles to be used for adapting to the impacts of Climate Change and extreme weather events. It also puts biodiversity at the forefront of what we do and puts emphasis on the need for these solutions to support health and wellbeing of locals.
- With the Greenspace team, the team plan to record and analyse the benefits of existing trees and flora across West Dunbartonshire to gain an understanding of how we can remove Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from the atmosphere.
- With the Greenspace team, the team will research opportunities for the removal of GHG emissions from the atmosphere, including (but not limited to) improving existing tree planting regimes. This will take a biodiversity approach first, meaning that focussing on endemic species with a combination of rewilding potential.

The Climate Change Strategy sets out the requirement for the Biodiversity Officer post to be reinstated. This has been secured and will be in post within the Greenspace team in 2021. Additionally, this new post will seek to carry out an update of the 2010 – 2013 Local Biodiversity Action Plan and re-establish a Local Biodiversity Network within the West Dunbartonshire area.



Greenspace

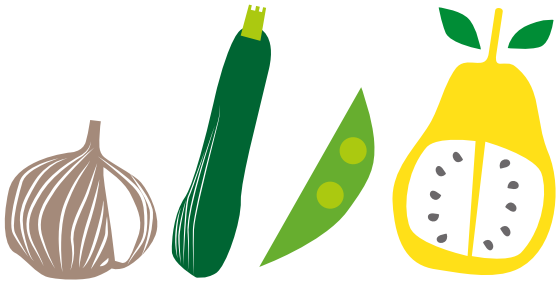
3.6  
Plans and Policies that are of particular relevance to Greenspace include:

1. Greenspace Departmental Biodiversity Action Plan 2017– 2020

This departmental plan guides the priorities for general maintenance practices; biodiversity enhancement works; incorporating biodiversity themes into capital and revenue spends; community engagement and education.

2. Greenspace Volunteer Policy

This policy outlines the basis for recruiting and maintaining volunteer relationships; code of conduct; project and development opportunities. Since beginning the programme in 2017 Greenspace Volunteers have become instrumental in the delivery of practical conservation and community engagement.



3. Food Growing Strategy

Greenspace have been working on a new Food Growing Strategy which will be published in 2020 and delivered in conjunction with Growing West Dunbartonshire.

4. Additional established policies that sit within the Greenspace Department that have a direct effect on biodiversity include:

- The Open Space Strategy
- Core Paths Plan
- Litter Control Strategy



Education, Learning and Attainment

**3.7**  
Education, Learning & Attainment is responsible for education services in West Dunbartonshire. This includes Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools. Education work together to ensure that opportunities to learn for life and to achieve potential are provided to all in the learning community. Education aim to ensure that children and young people in West Dunbartonshire has the opportunity to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. There is a cross sectoral Learning for Sustainability Strategy group with representation also from national agencies, Education Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Children and young people will learn about many aspects of biodiversity trough the Curriculum for Excellence. In Scotland there is an entitlement that all children and young people engage in regular, planned, quality learning in the outdoors. West Dunbartonshire schools participate in outdoor learning experiences including discovery, experimentation, learning about and connecting to the natural world, and engaging in environmental and adventure activities.

A number of educational programmes including a biodiversity theme are outlined below:

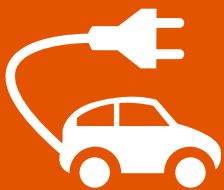
- **John Muir Award**
- **Eco Schools programme** which helps to empower children to drive change and improve their environmental aware ness. It also develops pupils’ skills and raises environmental awareness. At present 25 establishments have gained and maintain their prestigious Green Flag Award.
- **Forest Schools** involves participants journeying by foot (if possible) to a local woodland environment to learn outdoors on a regular sustained basis supported by around 60 practitioners who have engaged in high quality professional learning and gained accreditation at BTEC level 4. It is an educational process that promotes, observes and explicitly supports the social, emotional and physical development of children, young people and adults in an outdoor, preferably woodland, environment. The Forest School Handbook was updated in 2017 in collaboration with the Countryside Ranger Service and Risk Management.
- **Learn and Grow food growing project** – Engages, develops and equips West Dunbartonshire educational establishments in the provision of an active community food growing and outdoor learning resource.
- **Upstream Battle Campaign** – to change littering behaviour to prevent marine litter at source along the River Clyde. All schools participating in pupil conference and identifying sustainability ambassadors for every school to take forward pledges and actions, particularly around litter picking and a citizen science survey.
- **Creative Learning Project** – funding from Education Scotland to progress a pilot project with a group of schools using creative learning to teach about sustainability.
- **Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust, Lomond in the Classroom** – working with schools around Loch Lomond to educate and inform them of the work done to conserve and restore Loch Lomond’s native fish populations, their habitats and the freshwater environment.
- **Clyde River Foundation, Clyde in the Classroom** – working with schools near to the river Clyde, this programme uses the life history of a native Scottish species, the brown trout, to promote awareness of river ecology among young people across the River Clyde catchment.
- **Young Reporters for the Clyde** – Working with Keep Scotland Beautiful, pupils from Dumbarton Academy produced a video showing how litter discarded on land finds its way to the River Clyde. The damaging effects of litter on land to our waterways is the primary focus of Upstream Battle, our ambitious campaign to stop marine litter by tackling it at source across the Clyde Valley.
- **Climate Ready Classrooms** – Some secondary schools participated in Climate Ready Classrooms which helps young people navigate the science behind climate change and reducing their carbon footprint. It is a one-day accredited Carbon Literacy training course designed for young people aged 14–17 years. It uses interactive activities and examples to start a conversation about climate change. Upon completing the course, pupils receive Carbon Literacy accreditation.
- **Keep Scotland Beautiful Professional Learning opportunities** – a variety of Professional Learning opportunities to support the above initiatives provided by Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- **Campus@WDC** – our online school uses sustainability as a learning focus for interdisciplinary learning covering topics such as life on land, life below water and climate action.

4

Nature-based solutions, Climate Change and Biodiversity Sustainability

**4.1**  
As mentioned in Section 3 the new Climate Change Strategy is being prepared. However, direct actions relating to this strategy are already being implemented and include:

**4.1.1**  
From 2012/13 to 2019/20 – the Council has made a reduction of approximately 6735 tCO2e from energy efficiency, renewable technology and Sustainable travel projects. These range from energy efficiency improvements in schools, offices, depots, etc., including Solar PV installations, lighting, heating and Building Management System (BMS) efficiency projects. This also includes fabric improvements such as insulation, window replacement, draught-proofing and behaviour change campaigns. Furthermore, the Council is transitioning its pool cars to an electric fleet – 10 new electric cars with chargers have been sited at their main office in Clydebank, with 5 more installed at the new office in Dumbarton.



**4.1.2**  
The Council also runs a number of green travel initiatives using Choices Smarter Places funding each year. This includes working towards reducing the number of staff commuting in single occupancy vehicles and instead using bikes, public transportation and car sharing and a new signage strategy for the area.

**4.1.3**  
Queens Quay District Heating Network, Clydebank – The Council has successfully applied for £6.1m of grant funding from the LCITP fund to design and build a district heating scheme, heated via a water source heat pump in the Clyde River basin at Queen’s Quay. It will be active in 2020 and will heat a new state-of-the-art care home, some Council offices and a newly built leisure centre. In future years it is hoped to be expanded to heat newly built housing, the local hospital and college, and will be designed to provide for future extension and connection of demand in surrounding areas. District heating networks have a number of benefits over a standard gas boiler system including:

- **Lower bills for users:** district heating systems are more cost effective than standard gas boiler systems. Residents will be offered a reduced tariff and won’t have to worry about servicing or repairs, instead simply paying for the energy consumed.
- **Environmental benefits:** these systems produce much less pollution while delivering the same services. The project supports the UK Government’s energy strategy and will make a major contribution towards West Dunbartonshire Council’s climate change targets to reduce CO2 emissions by 15% over the next seven years.
- **Increased security of supply:** unlike a traditional boiler, the district heating system can be fed from a number of thermal sources and this means it is more reliable. In addition to the heat generated by the water source heat pumps, there are also backup boilers and a thermal storage system, which ensures continuity of supply, especially in times of peak demand.



4.1.4

The Council is also involved in Climate Ready Clyde, a project supported by Adaptation Scotland, to develop a strategic, regional approach to adaptation for Glasgow and the Clyde Valley region.

Exxon Oil Terminal

4.2

WDC have worked with NatureScot, SEPA and Marine Scotland to develop a nature-based solution to the requirement for reinforcement to the crumbling sea defences at the former Exxon Oil Terminal in Bowling. This reinforcement is needed before the site can be decontaminated ahead of any potential future development. A revetment will be installed which could result in more intertidal habitat for bird species including redshank. An Ecological Clerk of Works will be on site to ensure no works of any kind proceed during the ‘winter’ months (September to March inclusive) if there are birds feeding on the Inner Clyde SPA/SSSI within 150m of works. A Species Protection Plan will also be drawn up to help protect the otter lie-up at Dunglass Castle from impacts of development.

Melfort Park

4.3

The Forward Planning Department also delivered a large scale capital project in the development of Melfort Park in Clydebank. The project was awarded £448,000 as part of a major new £37.5 million Scottish programme of projects to improve the urban environment of Scotland’s larger towns and cities. The Green Infrastructure Strategic Invention, led by NatureScot, is part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). West Dunbartonshire Council had already approved funding of £900,000 for the project and is now worked with NatureScot to deliver the project in March 2020. Melfort Park is a new biodiversity urban park created on the site on a former primary school, which was found to be contaminated with asbestos. As part of the construction works, the contamination contained within the ground was capped with a protective membrane located underneath the topsoil. The project will delivered new biodiversity areas, raised bed allotments, recreational areas for children, outdoor exercise equipment, outdoor education areas and will also represent Clydebank’s heritage. In addition open pathways will be created through the site, providing accessible connections for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre to the south and residential areas to the north of the site. This new Community Green Space will improve opportunities for contact with nature and for physical activity for local children and adults. Having good quality green infrastructure near where we live and work will improve our physical and mental health and well-being.

Greenspace Sites

4.4

Due to budget pressures and a desire to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint, The Council has reduced grass cutting on approx. 50 sites throughout the district. These sites were selected on criteria that included areas that were difficult to cut e.g. steep slopes and waterlogged sites. Over the previous 3 years many sites have been chosen for:

- **Woodland expansion**  
with native woodland edge species being planted to expand and enhance existing woodland as well as under story planting of established woodlands
- **Pictorial meadows**  
several pictorial meadows have been trialled successfully
- **Grassland management**  
the long grass areas are being surveyed to record what species are emerging on grass that was previously mown. The Council are investigating the purchase of a flail collector for 2020 and funds have been secured for this. It will serve to reduce nutrients on these sites which are fertile given the previous mowing regime. Wildflowers prefer nutrient depleted grasslands and will be given a better likelihood of survival once brought under suitable grassland management. These sites will be audited in 2020/21 and management plans created for them. Without cutting these sites will become rank.
- **Parkland type planting**  
many sites have had standard and extra heavy standard trees planted on them and a suitable species list has been created to prioritise planting of berry, nectar and nut producing trees to benefit wildlife as well as being aesthetically pleasant for the local residents.

Green Infrastructure Improvements

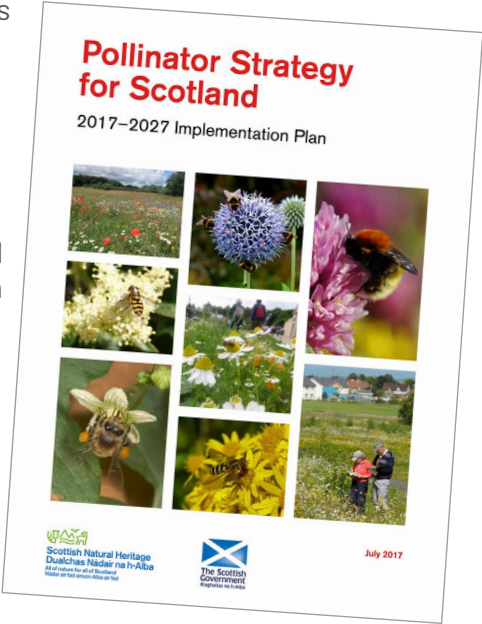
4.5

It is recognised that having access to open space, including greenspaces and the wider countryside, allows for improvements to health and wellbeing as well as interactions with nature and experiences in the natural environment. West Dunbartonshire has a commitment to improving and maintaining access throughout the district and has worked with a number of partners to achieve this. Highlights are outlined below:

- **Unadopted paths and roads upgrade**  
WDC have allocated £500,000 per year from the 10 year capital plan which contributes to upgrades to and new paths in parks, cemeteries, woodland areas and the wider core path network.
- **Kilpatrick Hills Car Park**  
space for around 40 vehicles has been created in a new carpark in partnership with Network Rail to cope with the demand of people accessing the hills.
- **Overtoun and Lang Craggs access**  
the car park has been extended in Overtoun Estate to accommodate the increase in demand of people accessing the hills. New way marked trails and interpretation panels have been installed in partnership with The Woodland Trust.
- **Millburn Bridge**  
the bridge has been replaced in Millburn Park and is used for school and early education commute as well as the general public. A series of other works has also taken place to engage the local community in the greenspace.
- **Cycle track**  
work has been done to improve community access to the NCN7 cycle route, including path upgrades and signage.
- **John Muir Way**  
management and promotion of the long distance route The John Muir Way is implemented in partnership with WDC, LLTNP, Forest and Land Scotland and the Green Action Trust.
- The Capital projects at Levensgrove and Melfort Park have also increased improved access to the natural environment.



All these actions will serve to enhance these habitats for pollinators and further work is continuing to establish a local implementation of the actions outlined in the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027.





# 5

## Public engagement and workforce development

Section 5 will detail public engagement and education activities that have been undertaken to inform or engage directly or indirectly, with communities, young people and the public. These include actions to raise enjoyment and understanding of, and connection with, biodiversity and nature. All activities in this section seek to address the disconnect of people with the natural environment, a recognised driver of biodiversity loss. Providing opportunity for quality interactions with nature is essential in engaging people with their environment. Many environmental projects that provide a physical element to benefit wildlife, such as the creation of a new woodland or pond, don't come as a stand alone project anymore. It is well recognised that these habitat enhancements should be delivered with a community engagement element and that is true of all the habitat improvement works considered in Section 2. This section will provide an overview of the public engagement associated with these works and a range of biodiversity projects, in recognition of the need to involve schools, community groups, businesses, residents and visitors with their natural environment. There has been considerable focus on the development of volunteering and food growing as part of achieving this objective. This section also outlines educational projects that are partnerships with the Education department, however, as biodiversity cuts across many broad themes in education, much of the work carried out by Education is outlined under Section 3, Mainstreaming.

### Greenspace Volunteers

#### 5.1

The Greenspace Volunteers project was established in 2017 to formalise ad hoc volunteering and to provide a regular and varied project that could engage and develop volunteers over a range of tasks including:

- Practical conservation tasks such as habitat creation and management
- Biological surveying such as bird watches and botanical surveys
- Assisting at events such as guided walks, open days and activities

The Greenspace Volunteers operate over the community engagement functions of the Greenspace department.

The Countryside Ranger Service delivered a total of 3,588 volunteer hours on practical conservation and maintenance tasks. This includes a regular weekly volunteer day at BCCP. Additionally, a total of 715 volunteer hours were spent on biological monitoring and surveying. This includes monthly biological monitoring site surveys at BCCP, The Saltings LNR and Havoc and Auchnacraig as well as road verge surveys and sites designated for reduced grass cutting.

The Community Engagement Ranger delivered a total of 997 volunteer hours assisting with practical tasks, surveys, events and activities, outlined further below. In addition to these volunteer hours spent, the Community Greenspace Officer assists and supports solo litter picks, corporate events, community clean ups and community growing.



### Greenspace Activities and Events

#### 5.2

Greenspace also provide opportunities for the public to get involved through a series of both public and private events, education, guided walks and activities. By providing a wide range of tasks and activities Greenspace seek to engage wide spectrum of society to become engaged in outdoor activities in the natural environment and have sought to do this indirectly through wellbeing, art and cultural activities as well as more direct activities such as tree planting.

#### 5.2.1

The Countryside Ranger Service has delivered the following opportunities for public engagement: Outreach Events – aim to engage underrepresented groups in the countryside:

- Nature Jam - multiagency event celebrating Year of Young People 2018. Working with John Muir Award, TCV and LLTNP. This was held in BCCP and delivered a full day of activities including path creation, Himalyan balsam removal, arts and crafts activities for young people from Tulloch Trust, Haldane Youth Services & Callander Youth Project, supported by LLTNP Youth Committee.

- Family Day – joint partnership event with LLTNP which was open to families who may be experiencing barriers to accessing the National Park. 5 Refugee families were supported to access BCCP and get involved in a variety of activities including: introduction to trees (matching leaves); children's exploring activities (Nature's palette). The families made nest boxes which they installed in the park, and also planted seeds. Followed by a sharing lunch and further woodland activities. (Part of Year of Young People's engagement).
- Delivered a series of conservation events for Glasgow based Pakistani women's group who had not ever visited BCCP.
- Lost Words project at Robin House, organised a gathering of a former walking club with a group of 12 adults in their 80's to get information on out of use names used in the natural environment.
- Delivered CHAS team building Forest School Event for Robin House



Educational input by Countryside Ranger Service.

- Forest schools – created 9 Forest Schools outdoor classrooms around the district in greenspaces nearby schools with the help of Greenspace Volunteers and Community Payback. Approx. 60 education staff were trained to Level 3 Forest School practitioners over the course of this report and have been supported by the Countryside Ranger Service in lesson planning and managing their sites.
  - Provided 6 Continued Professional Learning Development sessions for education staff in outdoor learning.
  - Initiated the establishment of the new West Dunbartonshire Outdoor and Woodland Learning (WDOWL) cluster group which has now become a fully constituted group and have secured funds for kit, admin costs and project grant for delivering a Literacy in nature project based on The Lost Words Book by Robert MacFarlane. This is a partnership between educational establishments and many of the outdoor learning providers operating in WDC as well as businesses and charities. There were 60 participants at the initial meeting, the largest of any local group in Scotland.
  - Created citizen science opportunities with LLTNP by delivering OPAL packs and creating kits for loan, including maps of suggested areas for use.
  - Created programme of work and provide tools and support for 2 High Schools and Vale of Leven Academy Communications unit which is a programme of practical works in BCCP tied in with Forest Schools and delivered by VoLA staff.
  - Supported the Learning in Local Greenspace Project, in partnership with Naturescot, West Dunbartonshire Environment Trust (WDET) and LLTNP, part of Priority Project 6 of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Routemap to 2020 which has been working with 115 of the schools serving Scotland's 20% most disadvantaged communities in 12 Local Authorities across Scotland, including West Dunbartonshire. Six West Dunbartonshire schools have been involved. Part of this project was delivering a camera trap programme. It involved camera trapping in a local greenspace and editing short videos of what we filmed, including the small mammal feed boxes. West Dunbartonshire schools will receive their own cameras from Naturescot for their video submissions. The Countryside Ranger Service worked with 3 schools, Balloch, Renton and Renton Language Unit and Clydemuir Primary, and WDET worked with Linnvale Primary.
  - Delivered Auchentoshan Woods volunteer day with Clydebank High School
- Supported Our Lady of Loretto at The Saltings forest school
  - Updated Forest School Handbook with Risk Management
  - Assisted LLTNP and Bonhill Primary school for their Junior Award Scheme for Schools sessions – usually P4 age group, around 45 in the class and a focus on Climate Change, Nature Connections and bush craft.
  - Supported LLTNP with outreach visits from Glasgow based Saracen Primary schools eco club to visit the Park – they were looking at the impacts of litter.

Public events delivered by Countryside Ranger Service

- Delivered 6 guided bird identification walks
- Delivered 3 guided tree walks
- Delivered 3 medicinal herb walks with Jean Senior
- Delivered 3 guided bat walk at bat roost
- Delivered Activities for World Wildlife Day, in Partnership with LLTNP and Forest and Land Scotland
- Delivered dawn chorus event
- Delivered 3 den building activity
- Delivered 1 moth trap event at BCCP
- Delivered 9 guided walk in BCCP and wider countryside
- Levensgrove Gala Day
- Levensgrove birdwatch

Group events delivered by Countryside Ranger Service

- LLTNP Tree Week staff planting event
- Delivered 1 group den building activity to CORRA at Havoc
- Host Dry Stane Dyking Course at BCCP
- Attended 1 moth trap event at Havoc with Greenspace volunteers
- Tree planting with Friends of LLTNP at Balloch Park
- Delivered 1 group den building activity to CORRA at Havoc
- Delivered series of work programme for Balloch Buddies

Communications and networks

- Installed and keep updated 2 new noticeboards in BCCP
- Manage signage relating to ground works to keep the public updated on habitat management works
- Post volunteer opportunities to WDC website and social media

- Provide regular updates to volunteer database and newsletters
- Update, print and distribute c15000 BCCP leaflets
- Attended National Tree Collection of Scotland Networking Event
- Attend LLTNP volunteer partnership meetings

5.2.2

The Community Engagement Ranger has delivered the following opportunities for public engagement:

Outreach events – aimed at promoting access to greenspaces

- Provided a series of guided walks to a local elderly care establishment & schools
- Led a walking event in partnership with Sporting Memories Foundation in recognition of Jackie Stewarts 50th anniversary of his 1st Grand Piz win and his 80th Birthday. Also to raise awareness of Dementia.
- Led a series of guided walks in partnership with Babies and Buggies, Dumbarton. Encouraging socialisation and the benefits of being out in nature.
- Delivered a series of 7 health walks promoted by WDC Active Travel, encouraging WDC staff on to lunchtime walks
- Hosted Millie's Magical Mile family walking event to 50+ attendees, in partnership with St Margaret's First Aid, in aid of the Hospice

Public events and activities

- Delivered a series of 12 Inspirational Walks in Levensgrove Park highlighting the cultural and natural heritage features of the park.
- Delivered a DOORS OPEN day event in partnership with Civic Trust
- Hosts a regular Park Run event which averages 180-300 weekly attendees
- Delivered a series of 30+ 'Art in the Park' classes and events for children, adults and vulnerable groups. In partnership with WDC Libraries & Cultural Services
- Delivered an Open Day in Levensgrove Park in partnership with Friends of Levensgrove Park
- Organised 4 large scale community day events in Levensgrove attracting over 5000 attendees
- Hosted 7 Mindfulness events delivered by Green Tree Remedies
- Hosted an Art Exhibition for members of the art clubs and the public
- Delivered 6 Christmas events to 130 children
- Hosted the Travelling Gallery Bus in partnership with WDC Libraries & Cultural services
- Delivered a series of 15 sessions on Orchard Care/Tree Pruning/ Fruit Tree and flower bed maintenance and bulb planting, in partnership with Friends of Levensgrove Park
- Delivered a series of 12 birdwatching events at Levensgrove Park, delivered to the local community and supported by Greenspace Volunteers
- Took part in RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch
- Delivered a series of themed events such as Halloween, Christmas, Dog's Trust, pony rides





Educational activities

- **Delivered a series of environmental activities for Clydebank High School, assisting them by taking part with their teachers with the pupils John Muir Awards, teachers carried out their Nature activities in the Park. This was a weekly input over the 18/19 session**
- **Worked with Education, HSCP and The Friends of Levensgrove Park to create leaflet and heritage trail for Levensgrove Park.**

5.2.3

The Litter Control Strategy has a public engagement and educational element to engage school children and the wider community in managing litter and learning about recycling. Projects include:

- **All primary 4 pupils within WDC receive an input from Greenspace Litter Control Team and Community Waste Services, the programme is called Binman and highlight the effects of littering and managing household waste.**
- **Experiential Learning is a hands on programme delivered to all P7s in West Dunbartonshire. This is an in-depth programme where the dangers of litter are exposed, covering needles, syringes and the consequences of leaving litter has in the overall community. The pupils also receive a session delivered by LLTNP on responsible access in the countryside and water safety. Sessions are also delivered by Road safety, British transport police, internet safety, Alternatives (Drug Misuse) and emergency services.**
- **The Community Waste Team also carry out visits to residents to advise them of when they have contaminated a brown or blue bin. Information and advice is then given to the resident to maximise the amount of recyclable material we are collecting. They also carried out visits to LLTNPA and Tenants Associations to advise on recycling and have delivered talks on composting to primary schools, P6/7.**



5.2.4

The Community Greenspace Officer engages with: members of Growing West Dunbartonshire including allotments and community gardens; schools and nurseries; community groups and residents associations and charities such as the Leamy Foundation. This work seeks to promote capacity building, outdoor learning and achieve the outcomes of the WDC Food Growing Strategy.

The types of community support and activities varies from project to project, Financial support over the reporting period is in excess of £87,000. Some examples of the diversity of support and the types of projects are listed below:

Education – The Upstream Battle Campaign which seeks to change littering behaviour to prevent marine litter at source along the River Clyde. All schools participating in pupil conference and identifying sustainability ambassadors for every school to take forward pledges and actions, particularly around litter picking and a citizen science survey.

The following education events were supported:

- 60 pupils from Linnvale Primary School litter picking along the canal and local play park.
- 30 young people, parents and staff from Great Start Nursery cleaned up an area near the cycle path in Milton.
- 37 Pupils and staff from Kilpatrick School assisted with a litter pick at Dalmuir Park as part of the Saltire and John Muir Awards
- 30 young people, parents and staff from Great Start Nursery cleaned up an area near the cycle path in Milton.
- 21 pupils Our Lady and St Patricks HS from supported by staff and the Community Police officer undertook a litter pick in Bellsmyre
- 70 young people from Brucehill Nursery, Dalreoch and St Michaels PS supported by the Your Community team and the Corra Foundation undertook litter picks in Castlehill.

The following community events were carried out:

- **Keep Scotland Beautiful Spring Clean**
- **Faifley Knowes clean up**
- **West Dunbartonshire Youth Councillors take part in a Clean Up at the Castle**
- **10 students and 2 staff from Glasgow University carried out a collection east of Dumbarton Castle**
- **50 climbers cleaned up the area around the boulders on the River Leven side of the castle foreshore**
- **Staff from Cameron House and Mc Donald’s Balloch took part in a litter pick on Loch Lomond and River Leven Sections of the cycle path**

Regular litter picks by individuals and groups were also supported:

- **Supporting 5 regular solo pickers by providing equipment and PPE and uplift of waste**
- **Monthly picks by Action Old Kilpatrick at The Saltings and Lusset Glen by Action Old Kilpatrick**
- **Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore regular litter picks**
- **Keep Scotland Beautiful Spring Clean**

Project support was also provided:

- **Tree Planting – Leamy Foundation, St Ronans Primary School**
- **Seed donation to Cordale Housing**
- **Intergenerational Gardening – Tulloch Trust programme linked with Crosslet House day care.**
- **WD OWL Group – supporting the formation and launch event**
- **Growing West Dunbartonshire – attendance at monthly meetings, supporting Spring Fest and Grow Fest events**
- **Providing support for John Muir Award and Duke of Edinburgh Awards**
- **Donations of raised beds, tools and PPE for start up garden project some of which are supported by The Leamy Foundation**
- **Donations of wildflower seeds**
- **Pallets, logs, bark for wild areas/growing spaces**
- **Providing equipment for litter picks for school events**
- **Creation of new storage area and footpath upgrade at Round Riding Road allotment**
- **Donation of poly tunnel to Bellsmyre Community Garden**
- **Donation of raised beds and tools to 3 Bellsmyre community projects linked to the Community Garden to provide growing space for young people**
- **Safe as Houses Project, Drumry – donation of tools, equipment and plants to set up a growing space at a homeless unit**
- **Sky Point Faifley – donation of tools and water butts to improve growing space.**

Services in kind:

- **Donations of branches, logs, bark chippings and pallets to schools, nurseries and community projects for outdoor play, growing spaces and biodiversity areas.**
- **Provision of historic maps and service drawings to schools nurseries and community groups to assist with project development.**
- **Attending community meeting to support provide advise for potential project funding, planning and administration issues.**
- **Organising training days and tool talks for community groups and volunteers**



Supporting Growing West Dunbartonshire:

- **Event funding Spring Fest/Grow Fest**
- **Provision of skips, topsoil and materials to community gardens and allotments**
- **Funding for the Leamy Foundation**
- **The purchase of materials, tools and PPE**
- **Provision of funding for insurance, site improvements and infrastructure**
- **Seasonal Support – donations of seeds and plants and trees**

The Leamy Foundation

5.3

Learn and Grow food growing project – Engages, develops and equips West Dunbartonshire educational establishments in the provision of an active community food growing and outdoor learning resource. Learn and Grow has a **‘15-year vision to establish an active Community food growing and natural heritage resource in every education centre and community in West Dunbartonshire’.**

Activities:

- **Up to 31 sow and grow, biodiversity and training sessions per week delivered within schools, nurseries, and communities**
- **Planted 382 Fruit trees**
- **190 Soft fruit bushes**
- **Visits to Community woodlands**



Natural heritage activities	# sessions	volunteer hours	# volunteers	visits made
School sow and grow	234	126.1	233	3888
Community sow and grow	201	1588.7	162	2259
Community cooking	67	636	60	450
Resource build and maintenance	62	567	62	269
Community heritage LNCS visits	31	79.5	31	645
Community engagement	16	21	14	219
Learn and grow training	15	243.65	15	123
Learn and grow community programme	14	9.5	12	224
Community woodland	10	0	9	60
Community biodiversity	9	20	8	118
School tree planting	4	2	4	145
School biodiversity	4	3.45	2	78
School cooking/ social	4	38	4	25
Community garden visit	3	7	3	38
Community event	2	103	1	105
Grand total	676	3444.9	620	8646

Differences made:

Strategy	Increased active community volunteers, family, and pupil leaders:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Activities established as Community empowerment and planning strategic priorities across Greenspace, economic, planning, housing and health and wellbeing outcomes.</li><li>Learn and Grow and Growing West Dunbartonshire seeking formal establishment as WDC strategic partners. Increased access to quality natural heritage activities (number of):</li><li>people access to/use of community natural heritage resources</li><li>of new resources</li><li>of Learn and Grow workshops</li><li>new community food growing space created</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>of new community volunteers, Family and Pupil Leaders</li><li>of volunteer hours</li></ul> <div>6203,445</div> <p>Increased number of participants, pupils/residents reporting improved well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>89% participants, pupils/residents reporting improved well-being</li><li>90% attendees see an improvement in their community from our work</li></ul> <p>Economic Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>4.5 FTE Jobs</li><li>£453,700 Community investment</li><li>£56, 000 Community Wealth service creation and delivery</li></ul>

Increased legacy capacity by participating communities:

of accredited schools – RHS Campaign for School Gardening	15
people attending training course	123

Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust

5.4 LLFT is involved in delivery of educational and community engagement events and projects:

- Carry out 8 week programme Lomond in the Classroom project with West Dunbartonshire Schools in the Lomond catchment
- Inform and educate people about the freshwater resource of Loch Lomond
- International Year of the Salmon mural was designed by members of a local community group.
- Installation of information boards next to the mural to inform the public about the mural and Atlantic salmon lifecycle.
- winter workshops with DACA to create bird, bat and kestrel boxes which will be installed along the riparian corridor of the River Leven.
- Designed and delivered an environmental fishing school, where groups from Tulloch and DACA joined us for 3 days to learn about their local burns and the fish and insects that live there. This was linked into fishing, and taught each group how to identify riverflies, how to match fishing flies to the river flies that were hatching (match the hatch) and how to set up a fly fishing rod before we taught them how to fly fish. The groups went to the Carman fishery so they could practice their new skills and learn how to catch and then safely release fish back into the water. This was followed this up with a fishing session on the River Leven where they were taught them another method of fishing, how to identify what fish they had caught, and how to safely unhook and release the fish back into the river.

The Conservation Volunteers

5.5 A number of public events and play activities were delivered by TCV on Council Greenspaces. These included:

- 10 Rewild The Child environmental play sessions in Auchnacraig woods during school holidays
- Continued Learning and Professional Development sessions with two primary schools, St Joseph’s and Edinbarnet
- Bird ringing demonstration – Faifley Knowes, Licensed bird ringer running the session
- Family Nature Day – Faifley Knowes, Practical conservation task and range of engagement activities
- ‘Play Wild’ Outdoor play day for families, Auchnacraig woods



Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore (FoDF)

5.6 FoDF is a shore litter-picking group cleaning the Clyde shore from Havoc sewage works to Dumbarton Rock and on to Dumbuck, with an annual excursion to pick along the Leven. The group aims to remove human-made litter from the shore and to promote the shore to the public as a beautiful place. Sixty-eight volunteers have taken part in more than fifty group picks since January 2018, as well as 36 members undertaking co-ordinated solo picks. The Council supports this group by offering assistance with litter bag and larger item uplifts; promoting their activities, for example, through posters and social media and by providing PPE such as litter picks, hoops and bin bags.

Highlights include:

- Winning the Group Volunteer Award in the 2019 WD Civic Awards
- Participating in the Keep Scotland Beautiful award-winning Upstream Battle campaign. This involved a shore litter survey to add to data of litter along the Clyde shoreline; talks to local schoolchildren about marine plastics; promoting the foreshore with displays at local fayres and events.
- campaigned on flushed waste and the dangers posed to wildlife by balloons
- contributed to Ella Daish’s successful national campaigns against period plastics. FoDF recently collected six kilos of Tampax tampon applicators from Dumbarton shore for Ella’s campaign, which was used along with plastic applicators collected by 14 other shore-cleaning groups all around the British coastline to construct a giant 6 feet tall model tampon applicator. This was to bring home how these seemingly small items soon add up to a lot of hazardous pollution. Many large chain store brands have changed their plastic use in applicators as a direct result of this campaign.
- Successfully campaigned for the Council to join many other Council areas in banning the public release of balloons
- Unusual finds collection such as a four-foot long python and a prosthetic leg



Friends of Havoc Meadows

**5.7**  
Established in 2019 as a result of meeting members of the Glasgow Natural History Society while they surveyed the shore at the same time FoDF was litter-picking. In 2019 the group worked in partnership with the Countryside Ranger Service and Greenspace Volunteers on four biological surveying and conservation days recording meadow and shore flora and fauna as well as removing Himalayan Balsam. The group also held two further group balsam-bashing sessions, one with local volunteers and another with 25 staff members of DXC, a Glasgow company on a work day out, supported by Greenspace. The group continues to eliminate balsam by hand whenever it occurs in the most biodiverse central areas and has been instrumental in liaising with Greenspace to secure a future eradication programme from 2020. The group also started recording meadow species by taking photographs for identification by Richard Weddle of the GNHS and have made links with other local naturalists who have made significant additions to the meadow species list including a number of rare species such as the Amber snail and the Sand Leek.

Friends of Levensgrove Park

**5.8**  
The Friends of Levensgrove Park are a group of people who wish to see Levensgrove Park restored and enhanced to be a Park at the heart of the community. Working in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council Greenspace and the HSCP Work Connect Specialist Supported Employment Service. The group base their activities in the park and volunteer their time assisting with various activities including managing and maintaining the Community Orchard, the War Memorial Garden. Group members also help deliver the inspirational walks, assist with community events, undertake visitor surveys and growing and harvesting fruit. The Friends Group also arrange jam making sessions with Cafe staff. The Friends group have been active, along with members of the wider community, organising and participating in activities and events. The Communities Fund enabled the group also to purchase the fruit trees for the orchard, equipment for the putting green and equipment for the harvesting at the Orchard. The group have sought advice from the Countryside Ranger Service on how to implement biodiversity improvements around the orchard area and in the future seek to plant a mixed native hedge and wildflower sowing.

Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK)

**5.9**  
Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK) was set up by local residents of Old Kilpatrick who want to protect and support the village. There are three subgroups: environment, horticulture and history & heritage. The group is supported by WDC with assisting with soil deliveries, accessing Council greenhouses, tool and equipment provision and staff input.

Projects have included:

- **Planted and maintained raised bed planters at the village entrance**
- **Volunteer planting days in the village**
- **Use of Council greenhouses at Old Dalnottar Cemetery for bringing on plants to plant round village and to grow fruit and vegetables.**
- **Active members of Growing West Dunbartonshire**
- **Regular litter picks at The Saltings LNR and Lussat Glen**
- **Engaging in cultural heritage walks**
- **They take part in yearly Community Day Events and sell produce for donation etc.**
- **They have adopted the Kilpatrick Station through KSB. They received funding from Network Rail and funds from contractor doing works on the gas pipes under the bridge to assist them with their planting at the station.**
- **They enter the KSB Your Community Recognition Award on a yearly basis. This comes under three categories: Environmental, Community and Gardening. With a yearly conference in Stirling attended by the group.**
- **The group have a yearly Santa Parade with an event in the hall for the children and young people and another event putting baubles on the trees in the village.**
- **Some members of the group support Gavinburn school in their garden with planting etc.**
- **The Heritage group received funding from HLF to do Heritage walks and print out books on the history and heritage of the village. They got training also whilst working with the University of Glasgow and the libraries department**
- **Rediscovering the Antonine Wall National Lottery Heritage Fund project in conjunction with West Dunbartonshire Council and Forestry and Land Scotland that we are working with. AOK and the Community Council in Old Kilpatrick are involved in the project.**

Workforce Skills and Training

5A Details of training activities that have been undertaken to support the development of the workforce, particularly in relation to skills relevant to biodiversity, nature, outdoor learning and community engagement in the natural environment, are given below:

- **Countryside Ranger attended Literacy in Nature training session delivered by John Muir Award and B-Walk training Bumblebee training at LLTNP**
- **Greenspace have around 30 L2 and L3 Horticulture apprentices that study at Langside College and carry out a range of practical gardening tasks. The course includes plant identification skills and care and maintenance techniques.**
- **Teachers have taken part in NatureScot's Teaching in Nature course**
- **Around 60 teachers have achieved Level 3 Forest School BTEC**
- **2 Greenspace Volunteers were funded and attended a Sedges and Grasses Course to assist with botanical surveys**
- **1 Greenspace Volunteer was funded to take on a year course with Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI), learning to identify flowering plants**
- **2 volunteers from The Friends of Levensgrove park were given walk leader training**
- **Orchard and Fruit tree Maintenance delivered to 17 volunteers at Levensgrove Park by Glasgow Orchard Project**
- **2 staff attended a Dementia Walks training day at Oatridge College**
- **Manual handling training provided to volunteers**





## 6

## Research and monitoring

### Habitats Regulation Appraisal

The Planning department have been producing the Habitats Regulation Appraisal which was published in August 2020. The Habitats Directive requires that plans or projects likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an ‘appropriate assessment’ of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. With the introduction of the new West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2, the HRA was required as there is one Natura 2000 site within the plan area and further three sites within 5km. Following consultation with NatureScot it was agreed the following two sites should be considered:

1. **Inner Clyde Special Protection Area (SPA) –**  
The Inner Clyde is of considerable importance for wintering waterfowl, notably supporting an internationally significant population of redshank (*Tringa totanus*). It is this redshank population, one of the highest density wintering populations of redshank in Britain, which qualifies the Inner Clyde as an SPA.
2. **Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation**  
(SAC Three species qualify the Endrick Water as an SAC: brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) and Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

The HRA sets out the conservation objectives for each of the qualifying species that may be affected over the course of the implementation of WDLDP2 which is due to be adopted in 2021. WDLDP2 sets out a series of local development opportunities and this accompanying document establishes the criteria for safeguarding the habitats and qualifying species covered in the document.

### Development management

#### 6.2

Development management are responsible for screening planning applications and to seek ecological reports for any development works that may impact on protected species as set out in the Habitats Directive.

### Biological monitoring and reporting

#### 6.3

The Countryside Ranger Service carries out a range of biological monitoring projects with Greenspace Volunteers and species specific organisations. Over the course of the reporting period there has been a focus on increasing botanical knowledge over several sites, passive camera trapping monitoring, exotic trees in BCCP and Red Squirrel surveying. Results of these surveys are sent to the biological records centre in Glasgow. These projects are described below:

#### 6.3.1

##### Botanical surveys

In 2017 with the establishment of the new Greenspace Volunteers a new survey group was created to increase species knowledge over a range of sites including BCCP, The Saltings, Havoc Meadow (working with the Friends of Havoc Meadow group also) and Auchnacraig woods. The species lists created over the three year period as a result of this is now combined with previous records from the biological recording centre. The results of the surveys have also helped to inform decision making on where to implement habitat works for pollinators. For example, a field initially selected for turning to pictorial meadow was found to have a population of over 400 Greater Butterfly Orchids and so was retained to prioritise the habitat for their protection. An acre of pictorial meadow was planted in an area in BCCP more suited for habitat enhancements and so



the surveys do provide helpful practical information. Additionally, the group surveyed several areas that were included in the relaxed grass cutting regime, known as ‘Greenspace Bio sites’. The results of these surveys showed the benefit of allowing some areas to flower and on several of these sites an average of 60 botanical species were found as opposed to around 10 species in cut grass which are not given the opportunity to flower. Over the period 2017-2020 these have been surveyed and the results show in some cases a decrease as the grass begins to go rank. Greenspace have committed to implementing a grassland management cutting and lifting arisings technique on some of these sites which will enhance these areas for the benefit of biodiversity. In addition Greenspace have committed to carrying out an audit on these sites to see where else biodiversity enhancements can be made.

#### 6.3.2

##### Passive camera trapping and monitoring

The Countryside Ranger has carried out camera monitoring on a range of sites throughout the district although most over this reporting period has been focussed in BCCP. It followed on from participation in the University of Aberdeen study by Dr Emma Sheehy who selected BCCP as a study site. The study was investigating the relationship between pine martens and squirrels in Scotland. It involved sampling (non-invasively) for pine martens and both red and grey squirrels in specific woodlands around

the Red Squirrel Project Officer. As a direct result of the study and in line with non native animal policy a grey squirrel management programme was implemented by SWT and the Red Squirrel Project. The continued use of camera traps has confirmed successful management of grey squirrels and breeding of both red squirrels and pine marten in BCCP.

The camera trapping project as part of the schools project has also highlighted their use as an educational tool and also for future small mammal surveying using bait boxes which may replace using small mammal traps for certain surveys which is less invasive. In future the data from these images could be used to contribute towards site species lists. Some highlights of the schools project included an otter in the Forth and Clyde Canal at Linnvale and breeding Raven in BCCP.

#### 6.3.3

##### Balloch Castle Country Park tree surveys

BCCP is now included as a National Tree Collection of Scotland site. As such there has been a focus on learning about what trees are in the collection and of their significance. The collection was described by Martin Gardner of the International Conifer Conservation Programme (RBGE), as ‘significant as it is most likely the best collection between the notable arboreta of Perthshire and those of Argyll’. Trees identified as Significant in the collection include:



- **Summit Cedar, *Athrotaxis laxifolia***
- **King William Pine, *Athrotaxis selaginoides***
- **Patagonian Cypress, *Fitzroya cupressoides* (several clumps of planting as well as individual specimens)**
- **Monkey Puzzle, *Araucaria araucana* (tree has a fissured bark usually only seen in the wild, usually smooth bark on cultivated specimens)**

8 species present in the park are identified as being on the list for high importance of conservation status by the International Union for Conservation.

Working with the Greenspace Volunteers, the International Conifer Conservation Programme (RBGE), The National Tree Collection of Scotland as well as Ian Sinclair, The Countryside Ranger Service has now established identification and importance of around 100 trees in BCCP. A tree trail has been written offering information on these and will be implemented in 2020/21. Additionally, further planting as part of the International Conifer Conservation Programme has been secured with the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh.

The Tree Register of Britain and Ireland (TROBI) also includes 8 ‘champion trees’ in BCCP.

Over the past 3 years Greenspace have implemented a programme of restocking conifers in the park, including trees such as Swamp Cypress.

6.3.4  
Butterfly Conservation

In February 2020, 4 butterfly transects/ surveys were identified and mapped for The Saltings LNR, Havoc Meadow, BCCP and Levengrove Park. These will create a formal monitoring process for butterflies in these areas and will be delivered by volunteers that have undergone training with Butterfly Conservation.

6.3.5  
Bee walks

A joint partnership with LLTNP, training was delivered to volunteers to carry out bee transects in BCCP. The walk was led by Bumblebee Conservation.



6.3.6  
The Countryside Ranger Service also carries out:

- **annual bat surveys of the maternity Soprano pipistrelle roost in BCCP**
- **ad hoc moth trapping events and surveys**
- **black grouse surveys**

6.4  
The Community Engagement Ranger has delivered a project on River Fly Identification in partnership with University of Glasgow. Electro fishing was carried out as an educational and volunteer project in the Duntocher burn and involved river invertebrate monitoring. The monthly Identification carried out covered the stretch of the Duntocher burn from Faifley through Duntocher, Dalmuir Park and to Farm Road in Dalmuir. Types of River fly found were, Cased and Caseless Caddisfly, Mayfly, Blue Winged Olive, Flat Bodied Up-Wings, Olives (Baetidae), Stonefly and Gammarus. The survey information was initially reported back to University of Glasgow and laterally online to the River fly Partnership Recording Database GIS (National Riverfly Database). This was also in partnership with CRIMP the Clyde Riverfly Foundation.

6.5  
Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust

LLFT carry out annual surveys on fish populations across the Loch Lomond catchment area, including the River Leven and its tributaries and are actively involved in the recording and control of invasive non-native species. Any new infestations or recordings of INNS are sent to the local land owner, Council or national park, and LLFT are fully qualified and licensed to control invasive plant species, North American Signal Crayfish, Pacifastacus leniusculus, and American Mink, Neovison vison.

In river habitats and functions are surveyed and monitored, particularly sensitive and valuable areas for wildlife, or areas that are subject to ongoing pollution, bank erosion, siltation, poaching by cattle and damage by invasive plants. This data is used for LLFT projects and management work but is shared with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and partner organisations when needed.

In river structures such as culverts, weirs, bridge footings or gabion baskets that form either partial or total barriers to the upstream or downstream movement of fish have been recorded, photographed and in some cases, assessed for their impact to fish

populations. This information has been shared with SEPA and Marine Scotland.

Litter surveys have been carried out along the tributaries of the River Leven as a way to try and identify the source(s). This information is shared with Keep Scotland Beautiful and project partners.

6.6  
Friends of Havoc Meadow

The group are now regular contributors to the local biological records centre and have identified new species to the list such Amber Snail, Succinea putris, this rare snail, previously unrecorded was identified and surveyed and found that it was abundant on the site. Sand Leek is yet another Havoc species that is “nationally rare but locally abundant”, along with the internationally important breeding colony of Redshank birds, nationally important breeding colony of Curlew, and the meadow’s abundance of Valerian, Hemp Agrimony and Royal Fern. The Cinnabar moth caterpillar (a Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species) was found this year and last at Havoc. It is hoped the continued surveys, including the butterfly transect adopted by this group will inform the Council’s management of the site and seek to reinstate suitable habitat types on the site for butterflies that were once previously recorded here.

6.7  
TCV

- **An invertebrate survey was carried out at Faifley Knowes prior to creating areas of wildflower meadow. The data collected was submitted to the National Biodiversity Network.**
- **Bird ringing event – the species ringed were submitted to NBN and will be on the BTO’s records of ringed birds**



Soil and Food Growing

6.8  
Greenspace have undertaken a series of soil sampling as part of an effort to assign suitable land to traditional allotments. Many sites have come back with contaminants such as lead considered to be beyond the tolerable threshold for suitability of growing food.

Greenspace have undertaken a series of soil sampling as part of an effort to assign suitable land to traditional allotments. Due to the industrial and built heritage within West Dunbartonshire finding suitable growing spaces can be difficult. When approached by community groups or schools about growing spaces a desk top survey of the area is normally undertaken. Service drawings, title deeds, historic maps and on occasion photographic and anecdotal evidence are considered to help make a decision.

There are normally 3 outcomes:

- **The sites heritage means that it is not suitable for food growing**
- **The site may require remediation or capping to allow raised beds to be sited at the location**
- **The site may be suitable for food growing at ground level**

Sites that are not suitable may be considered for biodiversity areas or left to naturalise. If the second or third option are favourable then soil sampling would be the next option. Works on a new allotment/ community garden site at the Hub, Whitecrook, were held up as the contractors for this new build used contaminated soil during construction. This means that the site will be capped by tarmac and raised beds sited at the location.

A second site at Townend Road in Dumbarton has been shown to have contamination and may require remediation or capping before work on the site commence.

Both the soil sampling and remediation are expensive processes which are currently limited by budget constraints.



## 7

## Biodiversity highlights and challenges

This section will conclude by examining the highlights achieved over recent years and challenges faced in the coming years.

### 7.1

Biodiversity Highlights focussing on Plans, Policies and Strategies include:

- Establishing the Environment Report and Habitats Regulation Appraisal to support the new West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2.
- Building with Nature Excellence Award for its green infrastructure emphasis for new WDLDP2
- Creation of new Climate Change Strategy
- Creation of Food Growing Strategy
- Creation and implementation of Greenspace Volunteer Policy
- Implementation of 3 year Greenspace Departmental Biodiversity Action Plan
- Creation of new Biodiversity Officer post to fulfil biodiversity duty, create new LBAP and further mainstream biodiversity actions and projects throughout West Dunbartonshire

### 7.2

Biodiversity Highlights focussing on delivery of large scale capital projects:

- Melfort Park, Urban Biodiversity Park
- Levensgrove Park Heritage Lottery Project

### 7.3

Biodiversity Highlights focussing on Community Engagement:

- Funding of Community Engagement Ranger post
- Establishing core network of Greenspace Volunteers, who collectively delivered 5300 volunteer hours of practical conservation tasks, habitat management and activities and events.
- Contribution made by the Greenspace Volunteers survey group to the biological monitoring process
- Establishing Growing West Dunbartonshire
- Establishing West Dunbartonshire Outdoor and Woodland Learning (WDOWL) group
- Ongoing training of education staff in Forest Schools and support for outdoor learning
- Taking part in the Learning in Local Greenspace project
- Providing ongoing support to community led environmental activity groups

### 7.4

Biodiversity Highlights Focussing on species:

- The return of Red squirrel and Pine marten
- First arrival of Eurasian Beaver to Lomond catchment and River Leven
- Planting of 7000K trees on Council land
- Ongoing management of Invasive Non Native Species
- The safeguarding afforded through the Habitats Regulation Appraisal

### 7.5

The main challenges going forward include:

- Climate Change and finding solutions to measure and mitigate negative impacts on biodiversity
- Continued spread of INNS
- Brexit disruption and any negative impact on degradation of afforded environmental protection
- Provision of clear funding routes to deliver biodiversity projects relevant to local need
- Locating suitable space for implementing Food Growing Strategy





For further information, please contact:  
**Gillian Neil**  
**Biodiversity Officer**  
**Greenspace**  
**West Dunbartonshire Council**  
**01389 608413**  
**[gillian.neil@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:gillian.neil@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)**

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعة الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.