

Dams to Darnley Country Park: management plan stakeholder event

REPORT

On 19th May 2009 two sessions were held at the Auchenback Resource Centre (ARC) in Barrhead - one in the afternoon and one in the evening – with the aim to:

- Introduce the idea of a management plan for the country park;
- Flag up and progress the background work done to date;
- Provide feedback on objectives and actions that have begun to be formulated;
- Generate new ideas;
- Gain buy-in and backing from the public to get involved and get behind the ideas.

Both sessions were very well attended, with over seventy people taking part, including members of the public, interest groups, landowners, council officers from both authorities, and elected members. After a presentation on the background and progress to date, the participants were invited to attend two of four workshops that were run concurrently, each focusing on one of the four main themes that had been identified as being central to the management plan, namely:

- Built and natural heritage;
- Getting to the country park;
- Recreation within the country park;
- Education, learning, volunteering and training.

The following provides both the background information presented at each of the workshops (coloured boxes), and a distillation of the responses to the questions asked of the participants.

A. BUILT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

BUILT AND NATURAL FEATURES (AND THEMES)

Built heritage features

A country park cultural and built heritage inventory and strategy (completed 2008) detailed ten historical features:

- Farming landscape
- Pollock castle
- Darnley Mill
- Waulkmill Glen ruin
- Mining and quarrying
- Rifle ranges
- Bleachfields and Darnley House
- Prisoner of war camp
- Victorian railway
- Barrhead dams

Natural heritage themes

The country park biodiversity working group has identified ten priority themes to communicate the merits of the area's natural heritage:

- Butterfly beauties;
- Pond life;
- Habitat creation works;
- Contrasting human transport mechanisms with natural travellers;
- Wildlife on the verge – exploring localised extinctions and declining species;
- Grassland habitats;
- Balgray Reservoir - a bird watchers' paradise;
- Waulkmill Glen as a source for geological history;
- Story of water and life – exploring how water management has affected the environment;

- Industrial devastation and post-industrial reclamation and the incidental benefits for wildlife.

Landscape features

A country park landscape character assessment (completed 2006) established character areas:

- Darnley Mill - (*lowland farmland*);
- North Brae/Lyoncross and Waulkmill/Patterton - (*northern scarp slope*);
- Balgray (including the dams) - (*undulating lowland farmland*);
- Darnley Mill and Waulkmill Glen - (*enclosed river valley*);
- Tower Rais, adjacent to Cowan Park - (*estate*).

Built heritage objectives:

- Undertake further research to better understand heritage assets;
- Protect and enhance key heritage assets;
- Communicate the merits of, and raise interest in, the heritage of country park area among local residents and visitors;
- Utilise the heritage features for skills training;
- Develop the educational potential of the area's built heritage;
- Encourage joint working with land managers to protect and enhance heritage;
- Support local heritage groups and encourage voluntary involvement.

Built heritage actions:

- Develop an orientation display;
- Progress plans to make the Darnley Bleachfields and House area safe to allow public access;
- Investigate the remains of the Bleachfields and Darnley House site;
- Investigate the condition of the Waulkmill Glen ruin and rifle range features;
- Establish a countryside skills training and skills project and ascertain the level of landowner interest in relation to improvements to (and possible restoration of) the farming landscape;
- Develop an information point near the dams;
- Explore feasibility of a visitor centre;
- Ensure woodland management;
- Produce interpretation material including a leaflet, postcard series and DVD of the country park;
- Design a heritage walking trail with accompanying leaflet and hold heritage guided walks;
- Produce curriculum linked material in consultation with local schools;
- Explore access link between the country park and Glasgow Museums Resource Centre;
- Commission further research identified within the built heritage strategy and audit;
- Establish a 'friends of' group.

Natural heritage objectives and actions:

- Maintain records of assets, with ongoing survey;
- Protect and enhance the ecological value of sites (e.g. Waulkmill Glen);
- Explore water level control at Balgray Reservoir, and potential for minor summer fluctuation;
- Encourage land owners to implement site-specific biodiversity action plans;
- Minimise disturbance to breeding birds as a result of access;
- Retain marginal wetland habitats at reservoirs;
- Manage hedgerows, grasslands and scrub adjacent to reservoirs and on unimproved grasslands within Glasgow City Council (GCC) land;
- Pond work to create open water and burn/pond enhancement at Darnley Mill;
- Examine potential for corridor of semi-natural habitats and for wetland creation, along burn-sides;
- Encourage diversity, improved structure and restoration of privately owned woodlands and undertake management of GCC woodland;

- Explore reintroducing grazing on GCC land, using Highland Cows from Pollok Country Park;
- Work with interested local farmers to increase biodiversity through agri-environment schemes;
- Explore management of M77 and railway corridors;
- Develop interpretation, education and volunteer opportunities.

Landscape objectives:

- Protect intimate wooded landscape of Darnley Mill area, develop links into the *Enclosed River Valley* landscapes through proposals for woodland design, habitat creation and access;
- Reinforce urban edge of country park through design and planting;
- Exploit viewpoints from elevated upper slopes to Glasgow and the Balgray Reservoir landscape;
- Access infrastructure design to reflect the agricultural landscape character. Develop a 'planting design palette' based on the existing woodland character. Protect definition of the existing prominent tree belts. Reinforce agricultural landscape patterns through network of hedgerows, tree groups and belts.
- Protect open character of wider Darnley Mill area. Reinforce existing field boundaries and tree copses, maintain contrast between the urban and rural landscape and define edge of the country park. Protect remnant of landscape patterns and vegetative boundaries.
- Enhance the wooded character of Waulkmill Glen and extend strength of its visual and physical 'spine' through the centre of the country park, possibly by additional tree planting along the water courses.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the most important built and natural features within the country park?

- The dams and reservoirs were identified as the most important built AND natural features.
- Darnley Mill, the viaduct and the Waulkmill Glen ruin were also identified as important sites.
- Paths could be an increasingly important built feature if they were sensibly linked to the interpretation of key sites, with views of what can be seen, and what used to be there.

2. What are your short and longer term priorities?

Protecting and enhancing the key assets (both natural and built) was deemed to be a significant priority, as was addressing antisocial activities, including fly tipping, and controlling fishing and the building of adequate paths. It was suggested that there were ways of getting around vandalism through good design and that flagging up the park as a destination from local neighbourhoods, or from other parks would be a good start, as would increasing the linkages between Aurs Glen and the country park. Moreover, there should be more background information and publicity, including leaflets geared towards different audiences (including school children to take home), information in libraries, signage relevant to specific heritage sites/trails or themes, history events could be run which would capture people stories – perhaps including people in local retirement homes.

3. What can you do to help and who else should be involved?

Go Greener, the wider voluntary sector generally and local heritage groups were deemed vital for involvement, particularly in the context of communicating stories and memories of the area. It was also suggested that scuba diving could be considered as one of the activities on offer, bringing in the diving authorities to become involved in the process. It was suggested that moving beyond the 'usual suspects' needed to be considered using innovative methods such as digital and social media to engage young people, especially school children. It was suggested that if momentum was kept up, and events continued to run, that this would inevitably get people involved. Resolving problems associated with anglers was seen as key to addressing the country park's main issues. Uncontrolled fires were highlighted as an issue and it was suggested that management rules should be put in place to ensure that no fires were allowed except for the use of a camping stove. It was highlighted that Pollok Country Park had a 'no fires' policy.

4. What measures can be put in place to avoid potential conflicts?

Adequate parking would mean that local streets would not be used, thus avoiding potential conflicts. Striking an appropriate balance between the water resources, including the wildlife, with non-motorised water sports through appropriate zoning and improving the adequacy of paths, and actions such as interpretation and awareness-raising could help mitigate against potential conflicts between anglers and nesting birds. Appropriate measures should be taken to control fishing, and enforce the anglers' code of conduct. Phone numbers to report incidents should be advertised on site. Uncontrolled fires were deemed exceptionally antisocial, with significant potential to destroy trees and natural and built features. Education, particularly school education, could help mitigate potential conflicts further down the line, as would reinforcing the country code and increasing the numbers of warning signs on Corselet Road regarding cyclists.

B. GETTING TO THE COUNTRY PARK

Who will visit the country park, how will they find out about it and how will they get there? The 2004 indicative country park master plan identified broad proposals for access, potential entrance points and car park locations.

Who will visit the country park?

A recreation study (completed in 2008) and Scottish Recreation Survey provide the following statistics:

- 178,000 people live within the seven postcodes which cover the country park;
- 1.5 million people within 40 minutes drive;
- 85% of visitors to country/forest parks are local residents;
- Increase in visits closer to home.

The recreation study found that walking was by far the most popular activity in the country park, followed by wildlife watching, photography, dog walking, cycling and angling. There were higher levels of participation amongst regular visitors in wildlife watching, photography, dog walking and angling.

Visitor numbers

- Monitoring of visitor numbers has just begun in the country park but the estimated annual number of visitors to the area is put at between 7-10,000 (prior to new path works at Balgray Reservoir which have resulted in an increase in visitor numbers).
- In the early years of operation the country park should achieve visitor numbers comparable to the average annual number of a local nature reserve c20, 000.
- Connections with other green spaces such as Rouken Glen Park and Pollok Country Park are also important.

How do people find out about the country park?

At present there are a number of ways in which people find out about the country park:

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|--|------------------------|
| • Newsletter | • Press releases |
| • Countryside ranger service and project officer | • On site posters |
| • Council websites | • Events |
| • Articles (local press, er, Glasgow magazines etc.) | • Talks |
| • Word of mouth | • Country park website |

Additional potential measures to be developed:

- Leaflets
- Information boards

How do people get to the country park?

Improving access for local residents and visitors is one of the main challenges facing the country park.

Walking, cycling and riding

At present there are a number of entrances into the country park area from:

- Nitshill Road and Corselet Road (Darnley, Southpark Village and Glasgow);
- Parkhouse Road (Nitshill and Barrhead);
- Springfield Road (Barrhead).

Cycle access also via the local road network (e.g. from Newton Mearns and Barrhead along Aurs Road).

Bus

A number of bus services go along or near Nitshill Road, mostly from or via Glasgow city centre, and stop close to the northern entrance of the country park at Corselet Road.

Train

Nitshill and Priesthill and Darnley on the Glasgow to Barrhead/Kilmarnock line are the closest train stations to the country park, both about 800m north of the Nitshill Road entrance.

Car

There are very limited places to park or stop within, or adjacent to, the country park at present. Access to the country park at the Barrhead dams from Barrhead and Newton Mearns is along Aurs Road but parking is restricted to a small number of lay by spaces. Alternatively, parking is available along Springfield Road, Barrhead with access to the country park from Balgraystone Road, opposite the entrance to St. Luke's High School. Access to the country park at Darnley Mill is from Nitshill Road at Corselet Road, adjacent to the Ashoka Restaurant. B&Q car park is occasionally used by people accessing the park.

QUESTIONS

I. Is the country park easy to find and find out about and what more needs to be done?

- There are no 'gateway' features to be seen from the road. Signage is a big issue and signs are required to guide the way through and highlight the boundary.
- The newsletter and website is ok, but more could be done, working in partnership with local businesses, churches, tourism outlets, bus networks. Other opportunities for awareness-raising could include a local mail drop, the council newspaper/magazine, or local press. There was a general lack of awareness of where to go to seek information on the country park – not everyone has access to the web, for instance. Moreover, it was felt that it was taking too long and people have perhaps given up. Consultation was all well and good, but action was required. Higher priority should be given to increasing the profile of the park and what is happening. It was felt that the ranger service was working particularly well and this should be promoted more effectively to the wider public. More work was needed to promote school links, and the media used more effectively to promote events, such as the Barrhead News. More of these events were required to pull people in.
- Public transport is not easy from the north side and Neilston – changes were needed: cannot travel to Neilston directly, would need to change bus, and supplier too, so return/day tickets would not work, making fares an issue. Better maps are required, showing transport connections. Easy to use info. on travel

planning, using post code data to deliver directions, would assist. Posters on buses, and promotion of local stops (e.g. at Parkhouse Road) could assist.

2. Are there enough entrances and routes in from people's doorsteps, are they well located or are there any missing?

- There are no main entrance features – they are difficult to spot and it's difficult to work out how to get onto path connections. Walking takes too long – public transport is inadequate, particularly to access the centre of the park. The places of arrival need to be linked with built heritage sites, and made better than the Corselet Road entrance. Just now there is no 'unity' in the park, just separate compartments.
- Some of the access points are not easy to get to, and the size and shape of the park makes this more difficult. A local transport service (perhaps a small bus) would improve routes to the access points and it was felt that future road developments over the next ten years will improve access. The entrances are invisible – need proper signage/welcome maps indicating location (i.e. 'you are here' maps).
- Aurs Road is dangerous to cross due to the traffic speed and lack of space. It's not suitable for walking or cycling at present and requires proper segregated paths rather than calming measures. Cycling facilities and routes are poor, with Nitshill Road and Aurs Road potential problem hotspots.
- Disabled access is an issue, and resting places are non-existent. There needs to be proper facilities for groups – particularly children (and the example of James Hamilton Heritage Park was provided). Trains could work - particularly the Park and Ride at Patterton – but signs from the stations would significantly improve matters, as would the potential use of the bridge. Segregated paths next to existing roads and pathways would help provide multi-use and help avoid potential conflicts, particularly between cyclists, walkers and horses. Development planning needs to improve to make circular routes and some paths link up – continuity is required. Some cycling is done on safe routes to school, perhaps Smarter Choices funding may be applicable? There are potential linkages between Nitshill, Kennishead Road, the B&Q site, Deaconsbank, but there seems to be no masterplan or overall vision for cycling or paths generally to make it work as a coherent whole.

3. Where should car parking be provided to cater for different user-groups (e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders, water sports, anglers)?

- Runners/joggers should be considered too.
- Parking designed for family use is a significant issue, as is wheelchair access too. Shelters could be useful. The easiest access was from the Ashoka/Corselet Road and some housing areas. The combination of cars, walking and cycling at Aurs Road was a significant potential problem. Car parks needed to be sited close to the water if water sports were to be promoted. It was suggested that a cycle path to the Rugby Club at Whitecraigs would be a potential useful link, as would a car park at Balgraystone Road. Sharing car parking with businesses (e.g. Ashoka) would seem to make sense, with potential space at St Luke's too. Elsewhere, however, there is no capacity. The motorway bridge needs to be opened to open up access. There are no facilities for horse riders (especially parking) but some use of southern road network around the Malletsheugh area. The safety on roads is paramount as they are often used as 'rat runs'.

4. What are your short and longer term priorities?

Short term

- Car parking spaces an immediate priority – there are only four at present!
- Encourage local use (but be cautious about the amount of car parking – needs to happen organically to an extent).
- Investigate rugby club link.
- Get bridge open.
- Cross-connections to central spine.
- Car park next to Balgray Reservoir.

- Pleased with what has been done so far – particularly with ranger service but important to maintain momentum.
- Focus on local users – get the basic issues sorted first.
- Signage at entrances, in step with the infrastructure and coated for easy maintenance.
- More interpretation.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour (although increased use will help self police up to a point).
- Education packs to be developed – tied in to ranger service.
- Safety – perhaps covering hotspots with CCTV.
- Lighting on Corselet Road.
- Ensure mechanisms for providing comments and feedback, perhaps have a post/info. box at the Ashoka?
- Make one entity – with a proper branded identity – the country park has to develop its own identity and character.
- Better linkages with public transport – liaise with service providers to make it less difficult and more joined up.
- Complete access points around the park, particularly at the southern end.
- Children need to inform the process, for the park's future.

Longer term

- Visitor centre facilities/ranger station.
- Proper access routes and pathways, including family routes (e.g. cycling).
- Relieve Aurs Road, with traffic calming in meantime (consider proper crossing).

C. RECREATION WITHIN THE COUNTRY PARK

A recreation study (completed 2008) recommended that the country park should:

- Be themed around the water, with a focus on the reservoirs;
- Be a place/space for enjoyment focussing on the local community;
- Provide a variety of activities aimed at all members of the population;
- Develop a path network with a variety of routes of various lengths to accommodate all users;
- Consider potential for the development of a purpose-built, multi-functional visitor facility.

The study found that the main activities undertaken by people visiting the country park are:

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|---------------------------|---------------------|
| • Walking (79%) | • Dog walking (28%) |
| • Wildlife watching (34%) | • Cycling (25%) |
| • Photography (29%) | • Angling (15%) |

The main activities that people would like to be able to do within the country park (as a percentage of all responses given) were:

- | | |
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| • Walking (83%) | • See a display (24%) |
| • Use the toilets (56%) | • Mountain biking (21%) |
| • Picnic (50%) | • Angling (18%) |
| • Bird/animal watching (45%) | • Canoeing (16%) |
| • Have food and drink (43%) | • Sailing (15%) |
| • Cycling (41%) | • Horse riding (15%) |
| • Dog walking (34%) | • Camping (13%) |
| • Photography (32%) | • Orienteering (10%) |
| • Running/jogging (24%) | • Windsurfing (10%) |

The main weaknesses of the country park area (as a percentage of all responses given):

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Lack of car parking (60%) | • Litter (41%) |
| • Vandalism (54%) | • Lack of awareness (37%) |
| • Security and safety (48%) | • Bad reputation (30%) |
| • Lack of facilities (48%) | • State of paths (28%) |

- Flytipping (46%)
- Lack of public transport (43%)
- Limited activities (26%)
- Limited marketing (21%)

The most important ranked facilities and services in people's decision making process:

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Car parking | 8. Wet weather shelter |
| 2. Signage | 9. Food/drink |
| 3. Bins | 10. Learning/education opportunities |
| 4. Benches and seating | 11. Organised activities |
| 5. Waymarked trails | 12. Shop |
| 6. Toilets | 13. Changing rooms |
| 7. On site staff | |

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recreation study made specific recommendations in relation to the following activities:

Walking:

- Develop two main types of trail, moderate circular or linear routes and more difficult trails;
- Raise awareness among existing walking and rambling groups;
- Paths should link into the core path network and provide safe routes to local populations;
- Paths should be clearly signposted both pre and during visit;
- Toilet and car parking facilities are essential;
- Other facilities should include benches, seated areas, as well as picnic tables and areas;
- Joint working with land managers to be enhanced as agreement is essential to path network development.

Heritage related activities:

- Develop educational activities with schools, local interest groups and the local community;
- Consider use of heritage assets (e.g. wild birds) to market the country park;
- Defer investment in facilities or interpretative panels to long term due to current levels of vandalism;
- Monitor wildlife disturbance to inform access management around Balgray/Waulkmill Glen Reservoirs;
- Scottish Outdoor Access Code should form basis for encouraging responsible visitor behaviour.

Cycling and mountain biking:

- Cycle paths should be developed for a range of users, from young families to experienced cyclists;
- Safe cycling routes to and through the country park are paramount;
- Consider a mountain bike circuit, linking with other circuits and accessible by bike;
- Need to make available information both pre and post visit on cycle routes;
- Provide bike stands.

Non-motorised water sports:

- Provision and marketing should focus on canoeing and sailing, then windsurfing and rowing;
- Initial focus on attracting local users and clubs, in addition to beginners;
- Car parking should be located no more than 100m from the shore.

Angling:

- Once fishing rights have been established there is a need to set a more formal management structure such as a fishery or permit/ticket scheme.

Horse riding:

- Infrastructure should include cantering/hacking area, paths with adequate surface and car parking;
- Good access will be paramount to increase the use of the area;
- Signage must also target horse riders.

Other activities:

- Consider running/jogging and orienteering requirements.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with the study recommendations?

- On the whole, yes, although angling so far down the list was cited as very surprising considering the number of anglers using the reservoirs at present. An archery range was suggested as a possibility, as was routeways for runners and challenging walks, including specialist routes. There is potential unmet demand for canoeing locally, particularly with schools and local young people.
- There are areas of caution and safety that need to be addressed: infrastructure can be installed to stop canoes going over weir, and so on.
- There may well be demand for specialist mountain biking/bmx routes, with dirt trails and jumps and so on. This will need to be carefully managed but critically involve the young people in the design of the facilities. An important point was made concerning ensuring the good practice culturally embedded now rather than after bad habits have become ingrained through incremental use.
- Consideration should be given to 'green gym' type facilities – informal assault courses dotted around. The links to the health agenda need better teased out – particularly around expanding opportunities for people to walk for health, with progression of routes and increased accessibility.

2. What are your short and longer term priorities?

Short term

- Car parking facilities are essential in the short term.
- Connect the various spaces – especially linking up country lanes with path system around south reservoirs and Waulkmill Glen – linking potential and existing pathways and ensure that circular route (10k?) is established, filling in missing links and encourage local running clubs to use these.
- More clean ups.
- Benches and resting places.
- Toilets.
- Create opportunities to identify staged walks (short/medium/long distance/difficulty).
- Sort out fishing rights and establish angling and water sports code of conduct.
- Park identity needs to be addressed.
- Landmarks, interpretation and signage in place.
- Route integrity and safety has to be considered.
- Address issues of safety – whether real or perceived.
- Engage with private sector to see if appetite for private investment in developing facilities.
- The links between Cowan Park and the country park need to be better made.

Longer term

- Access from Glasgow and Renfrew needs to be addressed – it was felt that access issues will reduce visitors, including walkers and cyclists, hence landowners need to be fully engaged to iron out potential conflicts before they arise.
- Access over the M77 bridge needs opened.
- Potential orienteering routes.

- Equipment hire and designated zones for water based activities.
- Explore potential for community allotments.
- Possible link to 2014 games, such as a training facility.
- Link/contact major sporting organisations to help design facilities and see what help may be available.

3. What can you do to help and who else should be involved?

Consideration should be given for structured use of the country park, involving groups based round an activity or uniformed groups. 'Come and try days' through ranger services. Visitor facilities such as a café, shop and interpretation facilities perhaps makes room for private/social enterprise involvement.

4. What measures can be put in place to avoid potential conflicts?

- There are potential conflicts with agriculture and it was seen as vitally important for landowners to be fully engaged in the process. Multiple usage of paths could mitigate against conflict but could also raise conflicts. It was felt that there should be evidence of conflict with nature before seasonal restriction of paths (e.g. in breeding season). It was suggested that cyclists could have potential detrimental impact upon paths – the maintenance of these will be an issue.
- Balance will need to be kept to maintain wildlife, tranquillity and prevent overuse of site.
- Sailing/water sports need to be kept separate from angling – can use different reservoirs for each use.
- There should be subtle direction of uses through design rather than 'do not' via location of access and facilities, coupled with education and explanation of impact.

D. GETTING INVOLVED IN THE COUNTRY PARK: EDUCATION, LEARNING, VOLUNTEERING AND TRAINING

A key aim of the country park is to undertake environmental education, interpretation and communication activities to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the special heritage qualities of the area. Progress has already been made in relation to:

Events

- Two country park countryside rangers (appointed June 2008) have established a quarterly programme of community events, with 22 activities run to date.

Learning

- Links developed with local schools through an environmental education programme that has already benefited over 500 school children. A teacher training event focusing on the 'outdoor classroom' has also been run.

Volunteering

- Opportunities exist for established groups (e.g. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Scottish Wildlife Trust), community groups (e.g. Weegie Dirty Weekenders), or local volunteers, to undertake practical conservation, clean ups or survey work. Two recent community clean ups attracted over 60 people.

Training

- Opportunities for a practical training initiative based around countryside skills are under discussion.

OBJECTIVES

Potential objectives in relation to education, learning, volunteering and training could include:

- Design, promote and deliver a rolling programme of high quality community events and activities;
- Promote the country park and what it has to offer in terms of heritage and recreation amongst visitors and the wider local population;
- Promote responsible behaviour through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) and work to resolve antisocial issues;
- Educate staff and contractors about the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage;
- Establish and facilitate a regular volunteer or 'friends of' group;
- Create a sense of stewardship amongst local country park users;
- Provide environmental education to local nurseries and schools that inspires;
- Assist groups in achieving outcomes of certified awards e.g. John Muir;
- Progress the potential development of a countryside skills training initiative;
- Assist to deliver skills training for career development.

TARGET GROUPS

Potential target groups could include:

- Local population;
- Land managers;
- Established community and special interest groups;
- Affiliated groups (e.g. scouts, girl guides);
- Local nurseries, schools and colleges;
- Certified awards (e.g. John Muir, Duke of Edinburgh) affiliated groups (e.g. scouts, girl guides);
- External Training - (e.g. EEBL teacher training, Training Centre at Rouken Glen).

OPPORTUNITIES

Types of education, learning, volunteering and training that can be delivered through the country park:

- Practical habitat management;
- Countryside skills – path, wall building;
- Access rights, responsible behaviour and the SOAC;
- Flora and fauna surveying;
- Teacher training, environmental education techniques and activities;
- Tailored learning for recognised awards (e.g. John Muir and scout badges);
- Informal learning via guided walks, activities and events.

QUESTIONS

I. Are the objectives appropriate and are there any missing?

- It is vital to ensure that the existence of the country park, particularly with the local communities, is known. Signage will improve this dramatically.
- Interpretation – particularly concerning the geology of the area and the running of the country park, is vital.
- Encourage the ongoing involvement of a wide range of school groups – particularly secondary schools where it is harder to get them out of school – perhaps through the Determined to Succeed umbrella.
- Working with primary schools will help combat future anti-social behaviour, in particular litter.
- Hides – similar to osprey hides – to help wildlife surveying and increase appreciation.
- It is important to capture and record feedback from those who have participated in events, including numbers involved, where they live, and provide follow up material and record demand for services and usage. This will help inform ongoing priorities.

2. Are there any other opportunities to those listed?

- There are ongoing opportunities for outdoor pursuits.
- Linkages to Community Learning and Development activities – training opportunities for surveying, hospitality and rural skills can bring in different funding streams. Delivery of training by outside agencies (e.g. Scottish Wildlife Trust).
- Obvious linkages to the health agenda and the green agenda (including lowering car dependency).
- Moreover there may well be opportunities to capitalise upon local business involvement – particularly around the development of facilities and also tapping into their Corporate Social Responsibility ethos. Corporate training (e.g. team building) could be an avenue for bringing in income.
- Interpretation needs to be ongoing and sustainable: look at opportunities for awareness days or the use of web cams, especially working with young people.
- Orienteering trails.
- Non-motorised water sports.
- Possible annual local schools clean up.
- Sell the asset of the ‘outdoor classroom’ to teachers.
- Use older pupils as role models.
- Events out with the park to create linkages.
- Utilise areas near Parkhouse – currently barren.
- Engender community ownership – particularly from local users and youth groups. Engage with John Muir Trust, explore use of the E-Ranger diary, which has worked well elsewhere. Investigate the use of shelters (perhaps without roofs, to prevent congregation) and volunteer stewards.

3. What are your short and longer term priorities?

Short term

- Establish mechanisms/systems for visitor feedback to inform future priorities.
- Infrastructure development – including access, meeting points, walking access from Newton Mearns.
- Facilities – parking, toilets, visitor/learning/operational centre.
- Get backing and the message out, establish funding plans to achieve longer term aims.
- Signage/signposting.
- Locals walking – encourage dog walkers from local areas. Many don’t know the country park is there.
- Explore potential of Smarter Choices in the context of the country park.
- Establish robust education and learning plan – perhaps through a teacher placement to help develop these in line with Curriculum for Excellence (through the EEBL programme).
- Redirecting dirt bikes.
- Engaging with local businesses.
- Engage with local primary school children.
- Encourage responsible behaviour – leaving no trace, and improve local stewardship with locals reporting antisocial behaviour.
- Keep on top of litter and vandalism.
- Devise policy to deal with ‘wild campers’ i.e. in responsible/friendly manner to encourage good behaviour.
- Seek volunteer explainers/educators to assist.

Longer term

- Informative interpretation – not just ‘no’ signs but explanations as to why not.
- Zone fire areas.
- Informing parents and grandparents through children and vice versa.
- Community adoption of area or tree or section of the country park.
- Encourage artistic involvement through schools and local community competitions.
- Explore alternative funding streams to improve sustainability of facilities and interpretation media etc.

4. What can you do to help and who else should be involved?

- ‘Go Country’ could come in and lead events, tied into John Muir Trust.

- Link into Active Sports agenda in local authorities.
- Community clear ups are very popular.
- 'Friends of' group' – there are many ongoing issues and it is very important to maintain momentum.
- Engage with woodland community groups.
- Cardonald College could provide data collection resource.
- Glasgow Caledonian could also support this.
- Health agenda links through the CHCP and user groups such as flexicare.
- Public meeting and ongoing dialogue to involve local businesses and groups.