

# Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group Outline Nature Restoration Plan 2023

## Let's Get Started



### Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group

13 March 2023

Author: Colin Liddell on behalf of BCCPRG

## Table of Contents

<i>Summary: Let's Get This Restoration Started</i> .....	5
<i>Background and Purpose of this Nature Restoration Plan</i> .....	8
Brief History and Overview of the Park.....	8
Layout of Balloch Castle Country Park.....	9
High Level Nature Restoration Plan Structure.....	10
Our Vision.....	10
Mission Statement.....	10
BCCPRG Purposes and Values.....	11
<i>BCCP Outline Nature Restoration Plan METHODOLOGY</i> .....	11
<i>DEFINE PHASE</i> .....	11
Objective of the Define Phase.....	11
Opportunity Statement.....	11
Park Users' Voice.....	12
Scope.....	12
Strategic Alignment of BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan.....	12
National Strategies include:.....	13
Local Strategies include.....	13
BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 1.....	14
BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 2.....	14
BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 3.....	15
BCCPRG The People.....	15
BCCPRG Management and Reporting Structure.....	18
Communications Plan.....	18
<i>MEASURE PHASE</i> .....	19
Stage 2: Improvement of Natural Assets.....	19
Key Environmental issues and priorities.....	19
Data Collection Plan.....	20
Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) – Current State Conditions.....	21
Invasive Non Native Species INNS Survey.....	23
INNS Survey area data.....	26
INNS Survey Baseline Summary.....	28
Key Observations INNS.....	28
Water Pollution.....	28
Area Hydrology.....	29
Woodlands Management Plan 2014.....	31

Littering and Damage to the Natural Environment.....	31
Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT) – endorsement and support.....	32
Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA) endorsement and support.....	35
Tree Planting .....	38
Stage 3: Improvement of Built Assets / Services/ Facilities .....	38
Key Issues and Priorities .....	39
Data Collection Plan .....	39
<b>ANALYSE PHASE .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Evidence Analysis - Stage 2 Improvements to the Natural Assets .....	40
Invasive non-native species .....	40
INNS issues and impact .....	40
Water Quality and habitat issues and risks .....	40
Hydrology Issues .....	40
Anti-Social Behaviour .....	41
Tree Planting .....	41
Key Issues and Root Causes (Stage 2) .....	41
Partnerships and Key Stakeholders .....	42
Evidence Analysis Stage 3: Improvement of Built Assets / Services/ Facilities.....	44
Visitor Survey Summary .....	44
Current Education/Nature Engagement Utilisation of the Park .....	46
Stage 3 Key Issues and Root Causes.....	46
Existing Lease Agreement .....	47
Summary of the current state .....	47
<b>IMPROVE PHASE .....</b>	<b>48</b>
Development Plan Stage 1 Improvements .....	48
Stage 2 Issues, Root Causes and Solutions .....	49
Stage 2 Solutions: Impact/Effort Matrix .....	52
Development Plan Stage 3 Improvements .....	53
Stage 3 Issues, Root Causes and Solutions .....	53
Stage 3 Solutions: Impact/Effort Matrix .....	54
The Future State .....	55
Future State Outcomes and Deliverables .....	55
Balloch Castle Regeneration Group (BCCPRG) Nature Restoration Plan - Additionality.....	58
Additionality Drivers.....	58
Key Partnerships.....	59
Letters of Endorsement and Support.....	59
Initial Revenue and Demand indications .....	59
Demand for Nature Education (Outdoor & Indoor).....	59
West Dunbartonshire Schools.....	59
WeeStems Organisation.....	61
Children’s Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS).....	61
Summary of Total Inputs, Outcomes & Impacts .....	63
Potential Risks and Mitigation .....	64
Key Risks.....	64
<b>CONTROL PHASE .....</b>	<b>66</b>
BCCPRG Management Structure .....	66

Governance ..... 66

Reporting / Metrics ..... 66

Project Management ..... 66

*Appendix:* ..... 67

Appendix 1 : Potential Funding Sources (working document) ..... 67

Appendix 2: MSP Pam Gosal Letter of endorsement and support..... 69

Appendix 3: Archie Wilson River Leven Cruising Club & owner: Tree Surgery & Sawmill Ltd):  
Letter of endorsement and support.....71

Appendix 4: Martin Rooney, Leader of West Dunbartonshire Council and a local elected  
member in the Lomond Ward -Letter of endorsement and support.....72

Appendix 5: Jackie Baillie MSP, Member of the Scottish Parliament, Dumbarton Constituency  
- Letter of endorsement and support ..... 74

# Summary: Let's Get This Restoration Started

## Our Vision

People visit Balloch Castle Country Park to spend time in nature. In a nature and climate emergency, woodland recovery must lead the now critical restoration of the Park's outstanding built and natural assets. The Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneers initiative can be the key that unlocks investment and empowers the local community to fulfil the Park's potential to emerge as a beacon for nature, wellbeing and learning at scale and in partnership with neighbouring landowners.

The 217 acre Park already attracts approximately one million 'visits' annually due to being on the banks of the most accessible (by train, bike, bus, foot and car) part of Scotland's famous Loch Lomond. The Park plays a vital role in supporting the local economy but most visitors are not blind to its decline. While the magnificent views, lovely walks, stunning parkland and beaches are all very welcome, many people are disappointed by the deteriorating woodlands that are being overwhelmed by invasive species, land and waterborne pollution, closed castle, lack of facilities and, at times, anti-social behaviour and extensive littering.

While the maintenance of the Park is currently undertaken by the leaseholder West Dunbartonshire Council with limited resource, the opportunity to transform it into a sustainable, income generating, job creating, vibrant and safe haven for both people and wildlife is, we believe, unrivalled in Scotland.

BCCPRG led discussions with staff across several Council departments, and other stakeholders (including Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust, Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority, Woodland Trust [which owns the neighbouring Whinny Hill Wood]), confirm a strong desire at all levels to restore BCCP.

## The Problem

Publicly owned Balloch Castle Country Park and its native woodland and designed parkland are declining along with its once magnificent built assets. Reversing this, while also retaining full public access, will require a firm commitment among key stakeholders to agree a vision and work in partnership to achieve it. Inadequate resources means the Park environment is now riven with rapidly spreading invasive non-native plant and tree species (INNS). Pollution, flooding, drought, anti-social behaviour, littering, minimal organised education, events or volunteering opportunities and impacts associated with a huge increase in footfall over the last five years all add to the pressure.

The Park is a visitor magnet but currently generates no income or donations towards its upkeep. As well as attracting hundreds of thousands of international and UK visitors, it serves a broad range of users, including neighbouring Robin House Children's Hospice and some of the most deprived areas of Scotland.

The River Leven is a key migratory route and spawning ground for Atlantic salmon and Sea Trout within the Lomond system, but the salmon are ‘hanging on by a fin’ in a river blighted by sunken plastic boats, barren shores, INNS, and ‘average’ water quality (according to SEPA) in Loch Lomond.

The Park is owned by Glasgow City Council and has been leased to West Dumbarton Council since 1975, achieving country park status in 1981. The old fashioned lease could be a barrier to restoration and investment and therefore should be revised in 2023-24 to meet the challenges of a nature and climate emergency.

The Woodland Management Plan for the Park is out of date and must be updated according to the motion passed by the Council in 2022, with a specific focus on stemming the rampant spread of INNS within the Park and beyond its boundaries into the River Leven and other areas of Loch Lomond and neighbouring landholdings.

## **With People and Partners**

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group (BCCPRG) formed in 2022 as a constituted community group with a formed committee, data protection registration and bank account. The Group comprises a growing number of skilled and driven members of the local community who want the Park to be restored while retaining full public access. The Group has applied to OSCR to join the register as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

BCCPRG committee and members have a skills set that includes project management, business development, law, teaching, political representation (district and community council), community and third sector development and engagement, marketing and publicity, events management, social media, website design and tree surgery.

BCCPRG have obtained a copy of the existing lease from West Dunbartonshire Council and having sought legal advice, we understand we do not aim to assume any of the existing responsibilities that WDC currently have under this lease.

The Group has successfully engaged with a broad range of key partners and stakeholders and prepared a stakeholder engagement strategy ([see appendix 1](#)). A Park users survey ([follow link to view BCCPRG Visitor Survey](#)) in July 2022, attracted 246 responses, is informing the BCCPRG’s vision for the Park. The Group is seeking to work with stakeholders and the wider community to refine the vision and help produce a full scale Park regeneration action plan that all parties can support and action.

## **Finding and Implementing Solutions**

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group is committed to:

1. Addressing the decline of the natural and built environment by firstly restoring the native woodlands (some of which are included in Scotland’s Ancient Woodland Inventory as Long Established Plantation Origin [LEPO] and of high biodiversity value) and planned mixed woods, to improve the river environment and encourage similar improvements within adjoining areas of native and ancient woodland by collaboration with local landowners;

2. Restoring basic facilities and unlocking the Park's potential to be a centre of excellence for promoting environmental engagement, education & nature restoration that significantly improves visitor experience and supports people to take action to reduce their own carbon and biodiversity loss footprints; and
3. Ensuring sustainability by identifying and capitalising on revenue generating opportunities for the benefit of the Park, the wider environment and community.

## Short-Medium Term Actions

### Introduction:

#### **If we are successful for Riverwoods Stage 2, we would:**

- Lobby for a lease arrangement between Glasgow City Council and West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) that focuses on regeneration and re-investment into the Park to make it fit for purpose in a nature and climate emergency;
- Recruit staff, potentially in partnership with a key stakeholder, to develop and deliver a Nature Restoration Masterplan for the Park which also scopes out the potential for nature restoration collaboration with neighbouring landowners;
- Create a Memorandum of Understanding with WDC to define BCCPRG's role and agree the vision for the Park.
- Work with WDC to update the Woodland Management Plan and help to raise funds to remove INNS.
- Raise awareness among park users of INNS and work with WDC to implement biosecurity measures to reduce potential for spread and recurrence.
- Explore all fundraising opportunities, especially income generation, 'green finance' and potential for donations from park users, businesses and philanthropists. Grant funding and loans are also likely to be part of the mix.
- Create and administer a stakeholder engagement group and support stakeholders' visions and fundraising by providing support wherever possible.
- Grow BCCPRG's general members and produce a quarterly e-newsletter.
- Build on BCCRG's 2022 Park Users' Survey to engage with specific hard to reach groups and communities, at all times guided by the principles in the Scottish Community Development Centre's National Standards for Community Engagement (<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards>).

# Background and Purpose of this Nature Restoration Plan

## Brief History and Overview of the Park

Note: View a short aerial video of Balloch Castle Country Park and the surrounding area can be viewed here:

<https://ballochparkregen.co.uk/>

Designated as an official country park in 1981, the estate was originally developed in the early 19th century by John Buchanan, a partner in the Glasgow Ship Bank. It was hoped that this attraction (especially the estate's Castle) would encourage people to use the tramcars that ran from Glasgow to Balloch. The castle and estate were 'gifted' to Glasgow City Council in 1914 for £30,000 and then leased to Dumbarton District Council in 1975.

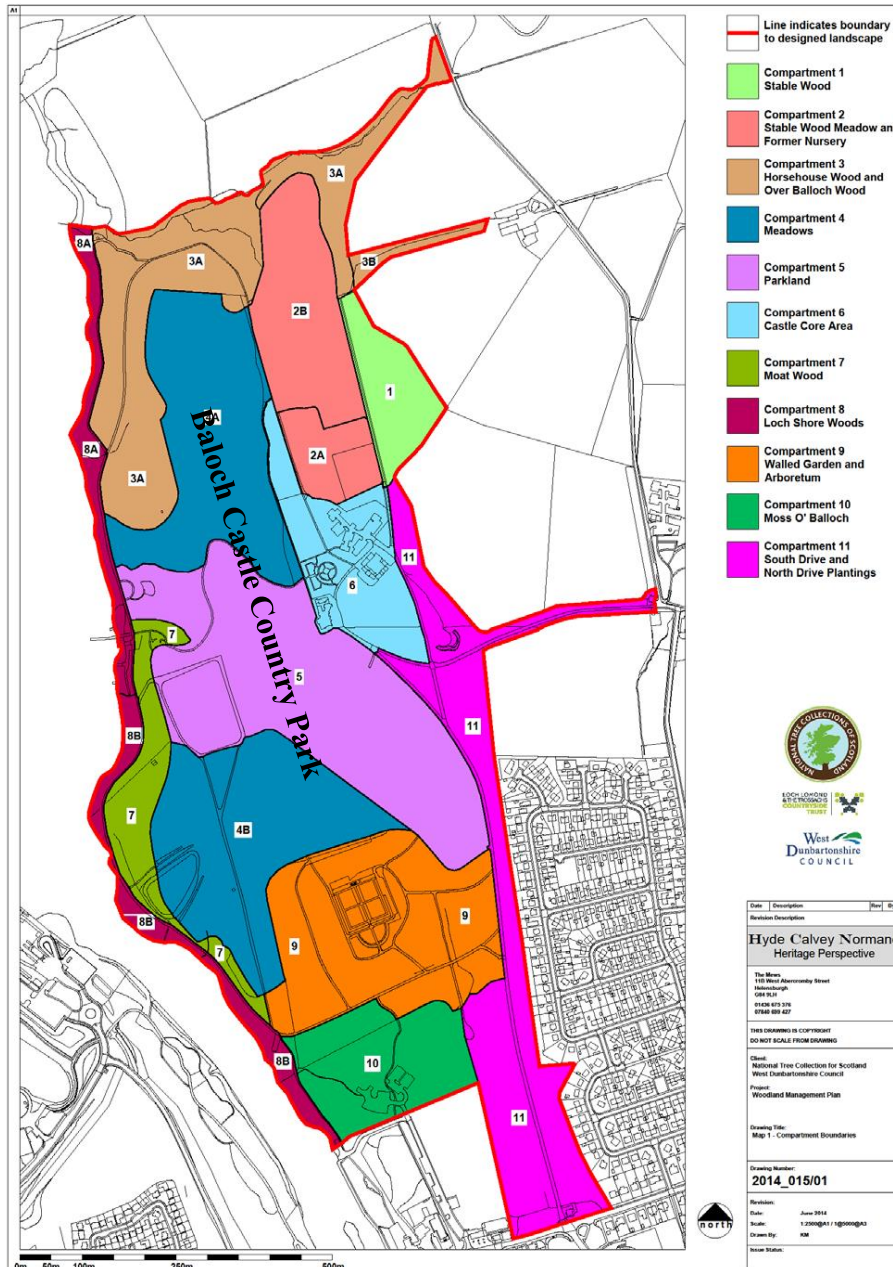
The Castle now lies semi-derelict, having once been the main visitor centre for the Park while also acting as the headquarters for the *Countryside Ranger Service*. The Castle and other built structures present a significant opportunity for restoration to offer a range of services, facilities, education and wellbeing, events, employment and revenue generation. However, the initial investment needed to fully restore the built assets (Castle, stable block, lodge houses, slipway building and walled garden) to generate income is likely to run into tens of millions of pounds.





# Layout of Balloch Castle Country Park

Balloch Castle Country Park – Woodland Management Plan



MAP 1

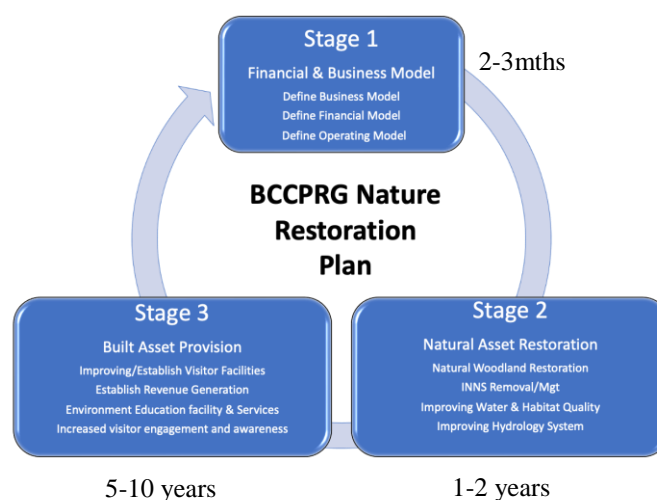
Hyde Calvey Normand Heritage Perspective

Funding support from:

# Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group (BCCPRG)

## High Level Nature Restoration Plan Structure

*Three distinct stages:*



**Stage 1** of the nature restoration plan is to identify and implement the appropriate business structure and financial model that best supports the Park's owner, leaseholder, BCCPRG, other stakeholders and the community.

**Stage 2** is solely concerned with identifying and addressing the key environmental issues currently facing the natural environment within the Park and any synergies with adjoining landowning. The implementation timescale of this stage of the restoration plan is considered to be short to medium term (1-2 years)

**Stage 3** of the development plan is concerned with the identification and delivery of improvement to the 'built' assets of the park and the development and delivery of facilities and services that will increase visitor engagement, generate income, awareness and education concerning the importance of the natural environment.

### Our Vision

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group will bring together local organisations, businesses, and park users to -

- restore, protect, and enhance the natural environment -
- explore income and funding generation opportunities -
- improve facilities to enhance visitor experience.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to bring stakeholders and park users together to restore nature, heritage and recreational assets and explore income generation opportunities. Our focus will be on health, wellbeing, and improving biodiversity in the park.

We hope to encourage people of all ages to become involved and give younger generations an interested in enhancing the park for the future.

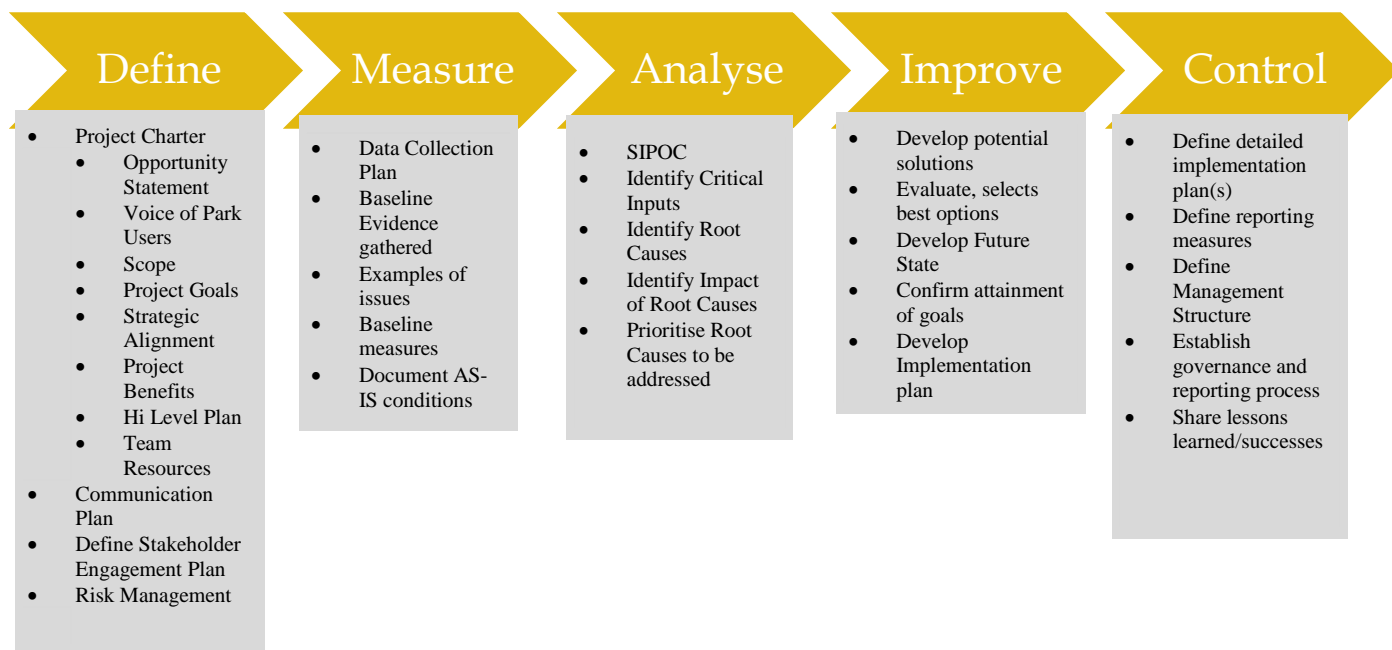
## BCCPRG Purposes and Values

The organisation's purposes and values are detailed in the Group's constitution which can be found using this link: [BCCPRG Constitution](#)

## BCCP Nature Restoration Plan Methodology

The DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control) improvement cycle is an **effective technique for structured change management**. The emphasis on measurement and analysis helps ensure that true root causes are identified and opportunities for improvement are executed in a way that ensures the most positive and measurable impact

The intent is that DMAIC will be deployed at both a macro plan and individual sub project level in order to ensure clarity and focus in the delivery of the defined overall benefits and improvements.



## DEFINE PHASE

Objective of the Define Phase

*The purpose of the define phase is to:*

1. Clearly describe the problems and issues that this plan addresses;
2. Provide a clear definition of what is in and out of scope;
3. Define the specific achievement goals that this plan will deliver;
4. Provide a clear indication of improvements and benefits that will be realised;
5. Provide a clear outline of who will be responsible for the design and delivery of improvements.

## Opportunity Statement

Balloch Castle Country Park sits on the banks of the Loch Lomond within the boundaries of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and attracts around a million annual visits, but its natural and built assets are either closed or in terminal decline.

## Park Users' Voice

In order to understand visitor views and needs, 246 park users contributed to a survey by BCCPRG in summer 2022 which demonstrated that while the vast majority visit the Park to enjoy nature, only a tiny proportion prioritised nature restoration for funding and action. [Follow link to view BCCPRG Visitor Survey 2022](#) Most respondents indicated that they wanted money to be spent on permanent toilets, a cafe and restoration of the castle. This lack of understanding of our reliance on nature is Code Red for action and education. BCCP provides one of Scotland's best opportunities to engage people in nature restoration in action.

Working in partnership with stakeholders, BCCPRG has produced this nature restoration plan for Riverwoods Stage 2 that starts the journey to restoration by putting riparian woodland health and expansion as its top priority to ultimately achieve an inspiring, hopeful, viable and sustainable Country Park and neighbouring nature networks.

Park users and the local community would be invited to join a series of engagement opportunities during development stages for their Park. We anticipate nature (and especially woodland and waterways) restoration, which is the focus for our Riverwoods proposal, will be uncontroversial but it is vital that people understand why the woodlands and waterways need help and what opportunities there could be to get involved. To build on our 2022 park users' survey we would seek to engage with specific hard to reach groups, communities and we would be guided by the principles in the Scottish Community Development Centre's National Standards for Community Engagement (<https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards>). Equality of participation will be sought by providing multiple different platforms, from face-to-face meetings and social media to creative tools, for example physical ideas walls and, sand and light boxes, craft discussions and drama workshops.

To show transparency will be key for BCCPRG. The reflection, evaluation and feedback on our community engagement will inform our objectives and progress which will be published on our website, as well as being at the heart of our Annual General Meetings.

## Scope

- The natural assets within the designated area of Balloch Castle Country Park
  - Native woodland along the riverside, lochside and within the park
- The built assets within the designated area of Balloch Castle Country Park
  - In particular those assets that are currently underutilised or vacant.
- Local and adjoining landowners that would benefit from partnership and participation in the natural restoration and remediation improvement within this plan

## Strategic Alignment of BCCPRG's Nature Restoration Plan

The key objectives and deliverables of this nature restoration plan is closely aligned to the *United Nations' 'Global Top 5 Priorities'* of environmental threats facing our planet:

1. Changes in land and sea use
2. Direct exploitation of natural resources
- 3. Climate change**
- 4. Pollution**
- 5. Invasive species**

In the 2023 Global Risks Report from the World Economic Forum, six of the ten most serious threats to the global economy over the next ten years are environmental: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2023/digest> . As

Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, said at the Biodiversity COP15 in 2022: "*Without nature, we have nothing*". This Nature Restoration Plan is directly aligned to local, national and international strategic plans in relation to addressing climate and environmental threats facing our planet.



## Relevant National Strategies include:

**National Planning Framework 4** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/> with its emphasis on preserving and enhancing nature, adapting to and mitigating climate change and establishing nature network.

### **Managing INNS Forestry Species in Scotland**

<https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/25-managing-invasive-and-non-native-forestry-species>

### **Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy 2022-45**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-2045-tackling-nature-emergency-scotland/>

### **The Environment Strategy for Scotland 2020**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/environment-strategy-scotland-vision-outcomes/>

### **Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029**

<https://forestry.gov.scot/forestry-strategy>

### **Scotland's Climate Change Strategy 2018-2045**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015

<https://www.scdc.org.uk/hub/community-empowerment-act>

## Relevant Local Strategies include:

### **West Dunbartonshire Council Climate Change Strategy**

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4320717/climate-change-action-plan.pdf>

### **Loch Lomond & Trossachs Trees and Woodland Strategy 2019-39**

[https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Trees\\_woodland\\_2019\\_2039.pdf](https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Trees_woodland_2019_2039.pdf)

### **West Dunbartonshire Climate Forest Pledge**

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/newsroom/news/2021/jun/clyde-climate-forest/>

### **Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Plan**

[https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3197361/biodiversity\\_plan\\_2010\\_final.pdf](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3197361/biodiversity_plan_2010_final.pdf)

## BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 1

### **Riverwoods Pioneer Stage 2 funding would facilitate the following deliverables within Stage1 of this Plan.**

The objectives and deliverables of Stage 1 of this plan are to provide confidence and trust that the BCCPRG can demonstrate a robust Business and Financial model and plan that addresses the needs of investors, stakeholders and business partners.

Given the scope and scale of this development plan and the fact that the park is owned by Glasgow City Council and leased to West Dunbartonshire Council BCCPRG have recognised the importance and need to identify the appropriate structure and business model.

It is planned that a proportion of the initial funding is invested in developing a robust business plan that includes the following components.

- **Business Model/Structure**
- **Finance Model**
- **Revenue Model**
- **Operating Model**

It is recognised that it will be necessary to identify the appropriate financial expertise in order to support this stage.

## BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 2

### **Summary**

The scope and objectives of Stage 2 of this plan are focussed upon the restoration of the woodland environment of the park. This restorative and remediation work includes the woodland areas bordering the River Leven and Loch side in addition to the internal natural woodland areas of the park.

This stage will therefore be focussed upon delivering the following:

- a. Removal and treatment of the various invasive species detailed within the 'Measure' phase of this plan.
- b. Increased awareness and enforcement of Biosecurity standards and protocols following the investment in INNS removal and follow-up treatment in order to reduce recurrence.
- c. The planting of native tree saplings in identified locations along the waterside and within specific internal park areas. Where appropriate planting of native tree saplings within areas previously occupied by INNS.
- d. Identification and implementation of sustainable solutions to improve water quality within Loch Lomond and the River Leven by reducing pollution and improving the hydrology within the park.
- e. The identification and implementation of successful ways to reduce littering and damage to the park's natural environment.

## BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan - Stage 3

### Summary

**Stage 3** of this development plan will focus upon the utilisation of 'built assets' within the park. This stage is a larger longer term stage requiring further significant investment and funding. This stage will require further consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the community. The focus and intended outcomes of this stage are likely to include:

- Revenue generating opportunities
- Improved visitor facilities
- Improved educational facilities and services

### Key outcomes

- Exploring establishment of key revenue generating opportunities required to sustain the natural and built assets going forwards.
- Increased public, community, visitor engagement and awareness of our natural environment and its importance.
- Explore the implementation of a 'Centre of Excellence' that is focussed upon the importance of nature & biodiversity which increases awareness, learning and participation. Leverage technology where possible to create an immersive experience to increase engagement and learning.
- Establish improved educational facilities and services for children and schools that increases and supports the opportunities for environmental awareness and learning in the outdoor classroom.

## BCCPRG People

### Sally Page, Chair

I was a Councillor for five years on West Dunbartonshire Council. During this time I sat on the Education Committee, Housing and Communities Committee, Fostering and Adoption Panel. Being a very active Councillor, always looking for improvements across my Ward, I have made many connections that I am able to call upon for support of the regeneration of Balloch Park. My motion 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 to update the Council's Park Management Plan of 2014 and seek funding to carry out the required works, was fully supported in the Council Chamber. I am responsible for Stakeholder Engagement and lead on the 'built assets' within the Park.



### Audrey Baird, Vice Chair

I have over 30 years of experience working in journalism and broadcasting, community development, project management, marketing, mental health and resilience.

As a BBC multi-platform campaigns project manager I worked for five years with 72 local groups throughout the UK that were striving to restore historic buildings at risk in their communities. I project managed the



campaign elements of the BBC Two landmark audience participation series 'Restoration', which was presented by Griff Rhys Jones, including organising a skills development package aimed at supporting groups that did not win the public vote and Heritage Lottery Funding on offer.

This training, and the publicity generated by the series, resulted in many of the groups featured going on to secure the funding they needed after the programme finished. I also developed and secured a commission from BBC Scotland for a Lottery Scotland partnership called 'Primetime', which aired on BBC One and involved co-producing and assessing a new Lottery grant scheme for intergenerational projects.

In addition, I managed a third sector grants scheme for a local authority and was lead officer for community development, responsible for six community centres that were co-managed with local 'user groups'.

I'm a lifelong environmental activist for wildlife, action on marine pollution and protections for native woodland (<https://www.parliament.scot/get-involved/petitions/view-petitions/pe1812-protect-scotlands-remaining-ancient-native-and-semi-native-woodlands-and-woodland-floors>). In 2021 I developed and currently coordinate a mental wellbeing project for people suffering from eco grief and climate anxiety (<https://www.surefoot-effect.com/current-work/eco-anxiety-peer-support>).

### **Gillian Clark, Secretary**

I was a Community Councillor for the Balloch and Haldane area for six years, a role which I enjoyed very much. I have lived in Balloch most of my life, grew up in the park, played there as a child, took my children and walked my dogs there.

I know how much people love the Park, how lucky we are to have it and we need to preserve and improve it. However, it needs some help to reach its full potential and I wish to be part of that.



### **Karn Bianco, Web Developer**

Hi, I'm Karn (he/they), I'm a jack of various trades, park user, and I help build and run the BCCPRG website. You can learn more about me on [my website](#), but in brief:

I'm the Digital Platform Lead at [Doughnut Economics Action Lab](#) which helps create economies that are [regenerative and distributive by design](#).

I'm a video game and web developer; I worked in the games industry for many years before switching gears to focus on the climate crisis.

I'm a climate activist, contributing to initiatives such as the [Divest Parliament](#) campaign.

I'm a writer. I write about games, the climate crisis, technology, and more.



### **Catherine O'Hare, Group Treasurer**

A lot of work is required to restore, protect and enhance the natural and built environments within the park. As a group we have come together to make that happen. We want to work in partnership with stakeholders and the community to create a park that can be enjoyed by everyone, for many years to come.

I have a background of volunteering with local charities and community groups, project management, procurement and working with local authorities, and a strong desire to see the park restored and thriving.

### **Karon Battersby, Group Member**

I'm a local resident who has enjoyed the beauty and nature of Balloch Park for many years. It is a special place for me and my family.



As a retired teacher, I understand the value of outdoor education and appreciate the joy that experiencing the natural environment can bring to all ages. Balloch Park has so much to offer, ranging from magical woodland trails to big spaces to run and play in. The BCCPRG is full of people who recognise how much the park means to both locals and visitors and I'm happy to help, as we work together as a community to restore the Park back to full health.

### **Maurice Donohue, Group Member**

I have lived in this area for over 30 years and Balloch Castle Country Park is one of nature's gems, where we are so lucky to have it on our doorstep. The park provides so much enjoyment for the local community and visitors to our shores, however it does need protecting and this is where the activity surrounding the Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group is so important.

Having previously worked in Balloch Castle in my role as a Sports Development Officer, I have seen the benefits and beauty of the park on a daily basis through the different seasons of the year. Having hosted various sporting and community events over the years, making the most of this attractive greenspace area is enormous, where it can provide such positive impacts on mental and physical well-being, with going for a walk, jog or run around the park.



Being a passionate supporter of Balloch Castle Country Park, I frequent the park along with my wife, to help contribute to keeping the park free of rubbish by litter picking and helping the good work carried out by WDC Greenspace Team.

Every little bit helps and this is where the community needs to get behind and support the Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group to aid developments for future generations in making most of our beautiful assets.

### **Obus Jack, Group Member**

I grew up in Nigeria and moved to Balloch in 2011, since then I have made Balloch my home. I love where I live because Balloch park and loch Lomond are just across the road from our house. When I had my son, Balloch park was a place I could take my son to when I need that quiet time, and fresh air, and immerse myself in nature as a new mum. In fact, the walled garden was our best spot. My son loves the park as well, that was where he learned how to ride his bike, you should have seen his face the first time he saw a deer running in the park. He thinks Balloch park is an extension of our garden as we go for a walk/ride almost every day. I am passionate about Balloch park because I want new mums and families with young children to be able to come and experience the wonders of nature, and the peace of mind nature can bring to them in a place just a throw stone away from their home. We don't have to go far to experience the beauty of nature!!

### **Angela Burns, Group Member**

After reading that a group has taken up the baton to save Balloch Park and Castle from the destitute state that the park and castle has become, which is far from the magnificent location and outdoor space that I have known for over 70 years having been born and brought up in the area.

I have worked with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park as a volunteer for many years doing litter picking and other conservation tasks i.e. Himalayan Balsam Bashing within the park grounds.

I am disgusted at the lack of public amenities at this amazing location with no food or beverage facilities available within the park for first-time visitors or regular users of the park. With public transport links to the gate of the park on its doorstep and close to the major A82 road network north, the lack of facilities within the park is a disgrace.

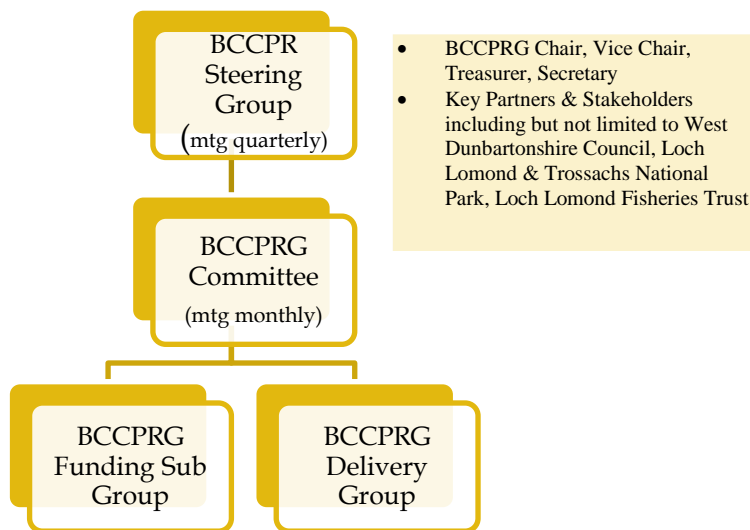
The park is used by dog walkers, joggers and adults and children alike taking delight in the pathways running throughout the park. If only the additional care and work within the park and castle could be achieved this area would certainly be the jewel in the crown for not only the area but for the whole of Scotland.

I whole heartily support the group and wish them every success.

**Sylvia Morrison, Group Supporter and Contributor**

I have been resident in West Dunbartonshire for some 30 years. Recently retired from a career as a Senior NHS Manager and Management Consultant, I try to support local charities and organisations. I am a supporter of the work of Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group and the commitment of the Chair and members to work in partnership with others to sustain environmental and experiential improvements for the many local people and visitors past, present and future who love the park and Loch Lomond.

**BCCPRG Management and Reporting Structure**



**Communications Plan**

BCCPRG has established a ([Balloch Castle & Country Park Regeneration Group](#)) website and Facebook Page ([BCCPRG Facebook Page](#)) to drive community awareness and engagement. Significant publicity has also already been achieved and there is a clear interest in the traditional media in efforts to restore the Park. Examples of recent publicity reporting:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/community-group-aiming-enhance-balloch-28456824>

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/balloch-castle-country-park-granted-28714792>

<https://www.dumbartonreporter.co.uk/news/23191167.west-dunbartonshire-balloch-park-running-125k-funding/>

BCCPRG will create a publicity plan that includes our continued working with “Turkey Red Media” to add new film content to the initial promotional video to increase awareness and support and to demonstrate the involvement and support of key stakeholders.

**Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

BCCPRG have developed a detailed stakeholder engagement plan in order to ensure that:

- All required stakeholders are defined, categorised

- Individual Stakeholder needs are identified in relation to engagement, communication and awareness
- Appropriate stakeholder engagement actions can be planned, implemented and tracked

This is a working document and will be regularly updated and reviewed by BCCPRG.

## MEASURE PHASE

### Introduction

*The purpose of this phase is to detail and summarise the 'evidence and data' that describes the problem(s) concerning the current condition, including issues and opportunities relating to Balloch Castle Country Park, the surrounding areas and the local and wider communities.*

## Stage 2: Improvement of Natural Assets

### Goals

1. **Restore** the Park's-woodlands by addressing invasive species, pollution, erosion and tree loss and disease (ash dieback etc) by identifying and implementing the appropriate remedial improvements in nature sensitive ways.

A summary of prevailing issues and priorities concerning the natural environment and its biodiversity within the park can be found in the table below. It is worth noting that BCCPRG are already engaged with many of the adjacent landowners with a view to working collaboratively with them concerning the environmental issues to be addressed within the park. This collaboration is intended to ultimately lead to an increased footprint of restored natural woodland.

## Key Environmental issues and priorities

	Issue	Impact	Priority	Comments
1.	Invasive Non Native species	High	High	Direct threat to local native woodland within the Park and adjoining land areas. Potential ownstream proliferation of INNS throughout the River Leven which is a key migratory and spawning water within the overall Lomond System catchment
2.	Water pollution from abandoned / submerged craft (plastic, hydrocarbons, other). This is a time dependent risk due to degradation of sunken craft.	Med	Med	The River Leven is a key spawning area for larger adult atlantic salmon hence habitat & water quality is key
3.	Hydrology problems	High	Med	Pollution impacts upon water quality of Loch Lomond (currently is ranked as 'Average' by SEPA) and the River Leven which is a key migration and spawning area for atlantic salmon and other species. Flooding and hydrology issues are related to a raised water table in the areas identified.

				The damage is to tree roots and other plants. These areas need new and improved drainage in order for the trees to recover. The existing regime and operational parameters of the barrage on the River Leven is a key factor affecting Loch Lomond water levels throughout the seasons.
4.	Lack of tree cover Balloch Burn Glen	Med	High	Lack of shade and protection from predation for juvenile trout and other marine species.
6.	Littering and damage	Low	Low	Environmental threat as a result of environmental damage to natural assets and environment.

## Data Collection Plan

<b>Data / Evidence</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>List of INNS present</b>	Understanding of the range of INNS present	BCCPRG/WDC/LLFT	Physical observations
<b>Scale of INNS</b>	Understanding of the current scale and impact of INNS present	WDC Greenspace/LLFT Survey Feb.2023	Initial ground Survey with aerial maps to show location and areas impacted. A further more detailed survey will be undertaken as part of Stage 2 execution of this plan
<b>Woodland tree stock health</b>	Provide an understanding of the current condition and threats to native woodland within the park		Physical observations and reference to “Woodland Management Plan” and update by WDC Greenspace
<b>Hydrology issues</b>	Provide an understanding of current hydrology conditions, issues and threats	WDC	As part of Stage 2, engage with key stakeholders including SEPA, LLFT to provide detailed understanding of key issues, priorities and practical solutions
<b>Existing Statutory Responsibilities</b>	Understanding of the current lease and tenancy requirements concerning natural and built assets	BCCPRG/WDC	Use of the current Park Lease to indicate the current statutory responsibilities concerning tenant obligations. Examination of the current lease to determine any restrictions that may affect the Nature Restoration Plan.
<b>Potential Funding opportunities</b>	To provide an initial understanding of potential sources of funding & grant opportunities	BCCPRG	Riverwoods Pioneer Stage 2 funding application/Development Plan. Additional funding opportunities are identified within BCCPRG <a href="#">Potential Funding Plan within Appendix 3</a>
<b>Partnerships</b>	To provide technical expertise and improvement capability/resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT)</li> <li>- Loch Lomond Angling Improvement</li> </ul>	Contact and discussion with key partners to identify areas of collaboration and support.

		Association (LLAIA) - WDC Greenspace - Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) - Woodland Management Trust	
--	--	--	--

## Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) – Current State Conditions

The following examples of invasive non-native species (INNS) have been identified within the boundaries of Balloch Castle Country Park.

### Japanese Knotweed

Whilst not yet measured Japanese Knotweed presents a serious threat within Balloch Castle Country Park and has proliferated to the extent that it can be found in **at least eleven** areas of the Park.



**Himalayan Balsam** occupies an **enormous 67,810sqm** and within thirteen areas within Balloch Castle Country Park and has proliferated to the extent that it can be found in very large outcrops where it has completely taken over the surrounding area.

### Skunk Cabbage

American Skunk Cabbage presents a major threat within Balloch Castle Country Park and has spread to the extent that it currently occupies at least **four areas and approximately 29,350sqm** within the park. Including areas bordering the Loch and River Leven. It is therefore unsurprising that Skunk Cabbage can also be found down the course of the River Leven



## Western Hemlock



Western Hemlock and other non native conifers are a major threat within Balloch Castle Country Park and has proliferated to the extent that it is currently found in **thirteen areas and occupies 27,492sqm.**



## Other Non-Native Invasive Conifers

Other introduced conifers including Douglas Fir and Sitka Spruce represent a major threat to the native woodland trees and shrubs where they are visibly **blocking and overwhelming existing tree and shrub species**

## Rhododendron

Whilst yet to be quantified Rhododendron represent a significant issue within Balloch Castle Country Park and it can be found in significant quantities in many areas where it is increasingly expanding, taking over ground cover and overwhelming existing natural trees and shrubs.



## Bamboo

Bamboo currently occupies **10,790sqm** within Balloch Castle Country Park and has proliferated to the extent that it can be found in at least **five locations** within the park.

# Initial INNS Survey

An initial survey to identify and quantify the range and extent of the most serious issues associated with invasive non-native species in the Park was conducted in February 2023 in partnership with West Dunbartonshire District Council (Greenspace) and Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT). The results of this INNS survey are detailed below where aerial maps show the location and scale of each INNS.

This initial work to identify the extent of the problem will be built upon as part of Stage 2 when a more detailed assessment of INNS present, recommendations for eradication and cost estimates will be defined.

Aerial Survey (Feb. 2023) Japanese Knotweed, Skunk Cabbage, Bamboo

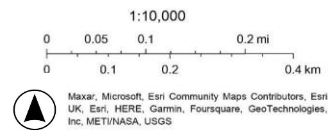
Balloch Park - INNS - Japanese Knotweed, Skunk Cabbage and Bamboo



27/02/2023

- INNS\_J\_Knotweed - INNS\_J\_Knotweed\_points
  - INNS\_Skunk.Cabbage\_area
  - INNS\_Bamboo\_points
  - INNS\_Bamboo\_area
- World Imagery

Low Resolution 15m Imagery  
High Resolution 60cm Imagery  
High Resolution 30cm Imagery  
Citations  
2.4m Resolution Metadata



(C) Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. West Dunbartonshire OS Licence Number 100020790

Arial Survey (Feb. 2023) Rhododendron and Himalyan Balsam

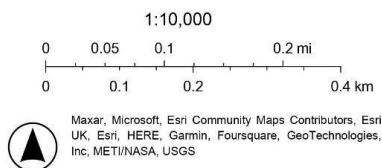
### Balloch Park - INNS - Rhododendron Ponticum & Himalayan Balsam



27/02/2023

- INNS\_H.balsam\_area
- INNS\_Rhododedron\_points
- World Imagery
- Low Resolution 15m Imagery

- High Resolution 60cm Imagery
- High Resolution 30cm Imagery
- Citations
- 2.4m Resolution Metadata



(C) Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. West Dunbartonshire OS Licence Number 100020790



Arial Survey (Feb. 2023) Western Hemlock

### Balloch Park - INNS - Western Hemlock



27/02/2023

- INNS\_Western\_Hemlock\_area
- World Imagery
- Low Resolution 15m Imagery
- High Resolution 60cm Imagery

- High Resolution 30cm Imagery
- Citations
- 2.4m Resolution Metadata

1:10,000

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 mi  
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 km

Maxar, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

(C) Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. West Dunbartonshire OS Licence Number 100020790

## INNS Survey area data



### Accompanying information to support Invasive Non-native Species plant maps for Balloch Castle Country Park 2023

Area extents of mapped INNS. Including Bamboo, Himalayan Balsam, Skunk Cabbage and Western Hemlock. Each area is identified by a number and the following provides the area of that particular patch in meters squared. Please note all area measurements are approximations adjusted each year in relation to the varying spread each species has in that specific growing season.

#### Bamboo

Note there are also individual point locations identified but they were not large enough to warrant plotting their area.

Area Number	Area in m <sup>2</sup>
1	2085.00
2	2453.30
3	3115.10
4	2922.10
5	214.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>10790.10</b>

#### Himalayan Balsam

Area Number	Area in m <sup>2</sup>
1	184.70
2	631.10
3	116.00
4	715.10
5	6168.90
6	3319.00
7	4876.40
8	8466.50
9	9177.60
10	4585.90
11	29080.90
12	350.90
13	137.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>67810.20</b>

### Skunk Cabbage

Area Number	Area in m <sup>2</sup>
1	13502.10
2	9610.70
3	1177.30
4	5060.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>29350.30</b>

### Western Hemlock

Area Number	Area in m <sup>2</sup>
1	1076.50
2	148.60
3	2624.10
4	974.80
5	3448.70
6	2083.70
7	657.10
8	5044.50
9	5087.70
10	1315.30
11	2698.70
12	482.10
13	1850.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>27492.60</b>

Some species were unable to be mapped as areas as they are individual plants and not as extensive. The 2 species in question are Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron ponticum. These have been represented as point markers on the accompanying maps. Due to their sparse nature and small size areas could not be plotted, however further details as to the extent within the park can be found below for each species. As with area please note some individual plants may have been missed and new surveys are carried out each year to account for the varying spread each species has in that specific growing season.

### Japanese Knotweed

Number of known current instances across Balloch Castle Country Park – 11

### Rhododendron ponticum

Number of known current instances across Balloch Castle Country Park – 15

## INNS Survey Baseline Summary

INNS Species	INNS Area (sqm)	Comments
Bamboo	10,790	5 locations
Japanese Knotweed	requires to be quantified	
Himalayan Balsam	67,810	13 locations
Skunk Cabbage	29,350	4 locations
Western Hemlock	27,493	13 locations
Rhododendrom	requires to be quantified	
Sitka Spruce	requires to be quantified	
<b>Total</b>	135,443	16% of total park area*

*\*note: excludes areas of Japanese Knotweed, Rhododendrom, Sitka and other non native conifers. A more detailed assesemnt of INNS present will form part of Stage 2 deliverables.*

### Key Observations INNS

Even without the quantitiave data concerning the areas of Japanese Knotweed, Rhododendrom, Sitka and other non native conifers, which are significant, then the extent of INNS within the park can be clearly seen. Taking into account all of the above INNS species then the total area currently occupied by INNS is likely to represent **20-25%** of the total park area. INNS are visibly impacting and threatening the health of the existing native woodland and are negatively impacting the wildlife that it otherwise would support.

### Water Pollution

There are issues concerning the presence of numerous sunken craft within the waterfront areas of the Park. These issues are not restricted to the upper reaches of the river. Numerous submerged boats can be found at the lower reaches of the River Leven. These submerged, mainly plastic, vessels present not only an environmental threat to water quality in terms of pollution hazards concerning micro plastics and hydrocarbons being released thus negatively impacting water quality and habitat. They also do nothing for the otherwise truly beautiful scenic surroundings of Loch Lomond and the surrounding area. There appears to be specific issues concerning the process and responsibility for identifying and removing such vessels and what the management process and resources for achieving this is. BCCPRG intends to help act as a catalyst with others to help try to find the solution.

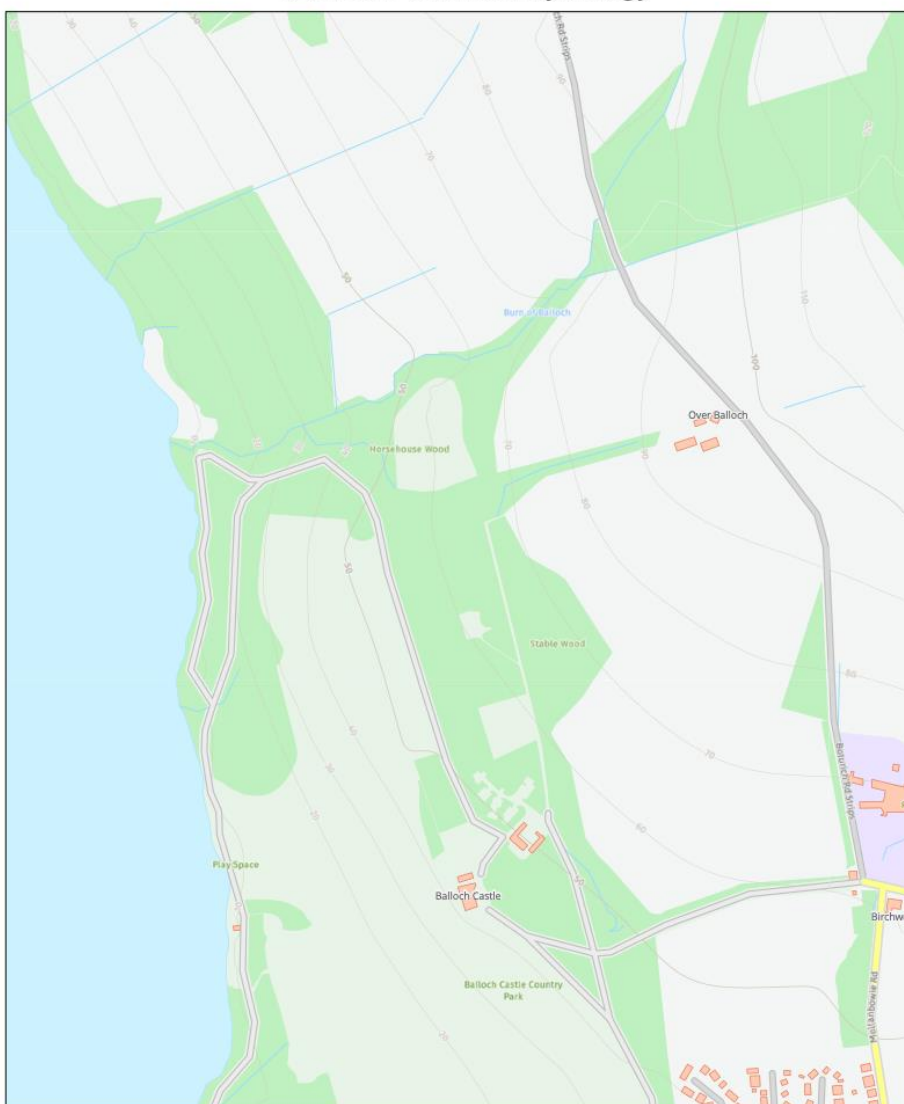


## Area Hydrology

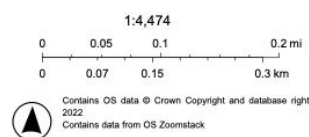
There is one small stream within the park, Burn of Balloch and several other small water courses and drainage ditches. There are existing issues that can be observed concerning damage to the existing watercourses relating to walking and cycling erosion, litter pollution being washed down these courses and the impact of neighbouring INNS. All of these factors contribute to a degradation in water quality.

The hydrology issues also relate to a raised water table in the areas identified in the hydrology maps. The damage is to tree roots and other plants during periods of high water. These areas need new and improved drainage in order for the trees to recover. Other mitigation measures may involve discussions with Scottish Water and other stakeholders regarding the current barrage height management and gate trigger levels.

\_Balloch Park north hydrology



20/02/2023

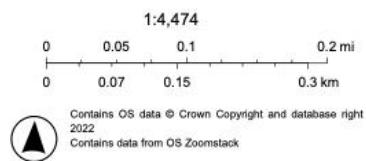


Gillian Neil  
(C) Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. West Dunbartonshire OS Licence Number 100020790

Balloch Park south hydrology



20/02/2023



Gillian Neil  
(C) Crown copyright and database right 2023. All rights reserved. West Dunbartonshire OS Licence Number 100020790

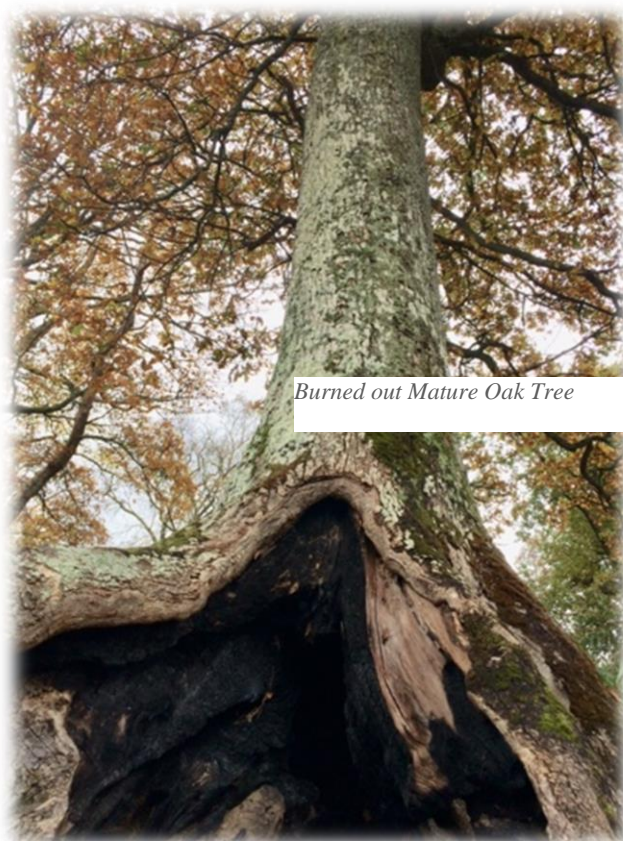
## Woodlands Management Plan 2014

This plan was commissioned by the National Tree Collections of Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Council. It was jointly funded by the National Tree Collections of Scotland and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust. The management plan's main purpose was to set out a clear vision for key woodland and arboreal elements of the designed landscape to guide and inform future management decisions for the medium-term (20 years: 2014-2034) and set out sound, deliverable, and sustainable recommendations.

The Woodland Management Plan for the Park is nine years old. BCCPRG's goal is to work with West Dunbartonshire Council to produce a detailed Woodland Management Plan update and help to raise funds to remove INNS. WDC reviewed the Woodlands Management Plan earlier this year, but it is unclear as to how and when the recommendations will be implemented. The Woodlands Management Plan can be found here [The Woodlands Management Plan 2014](#)

## Littering and Damage to the Natural Environment

At times, high levels of anti-social behaviour within the Park result in littering and damage to the natural environment. Sadly, this includes harm to woodland and mature trees. During peak visiting periods littering in waterways and the woods can also present challenges that are a danger to park users and wildlife. Currently a BCCPRG member undertakes litter picks on a volunteer basis between 3-5 times every week to help the beleaguered Park staff.



*Burned out Mature Oak Tree*

## Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT) – endorsement and support

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group have and continue to work closely with key partner organisations in relation to technical and scientific advice and support. One such partner organisation is the *Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT)* who based upon their extensive research and operational work over the past 20 years have summarized the current threats facing the natural environment of Balloch Park and the waterside areas. The summary and letter of support below provides clear emphasis on those issues that directly impact upon Atlantic Salmon and other species, the importance of water quality and habitat improvements.

The specific threats highlighted by the LLFT include:

1. The threat to habitat and water quality arising from degrading sunken water craft
2. The increasing threat and impact of INNS with particular reference to the negative impact downstream upon River Leven and its key spawning habitat.
3. The requirement to address provision of tree cover via planting at the Burn of Balloch in order to provide valuable shade to existing Brown and Sea Trout juveniles.



### Support of Riverwoods Stage 2 Bid – Balloch Castle Country Park

Balloch Castle Country Park is a 217 acre haven for nature and people on the south shore of Loch Lomond and it is located within the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. The Park is a crucial green space that is enjoyed not just by the residents of West Dunbartonshire but also hundreds of thousands of visitors from other parts of Scotland, the UK and abroad.

However, the beautiful vistas and rolling green park lands, for which this area is renowned, also go hand in hand with issues which not only detract from the majestic beauty of the park but have the potential to impact negatively on other nearby natural habitats.

The Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT) is a charitable body that has been monitoring and tackling environmental issues in the area for over 2 decades. The Trust has been monitoring both Loch Lomond and the River Leven throughout this time and can say categorically that the River Leven is one of the most important salmon spawning areas in the whole of the Loch Lomond catchment. Indeed there is every likelihood that the Leven is the natal spawning ground of the large spring fish that run this river into the Loch every year. Therefore, if there are negative impacts in the upper reaches of the River Leven this may have a knock-on impact on the lower Leven where the salmon spawn.



Bearing this in mind the LLFT has highlighted 3 main environmental issues that they believe require immediate attention within the park boundaries, given the potential negative impact they may have on the lower Leven and consequently on the highly important salmon population that it sustains.

The first issue relates to the presence of abandoned and sunken boats in the upper channel of the River Leven. Not only are these craft an eyesore they also are ticking time bombs with many containing residual fuel which could be a direct threat to not just the fish that inhabit the Leven but the other wildlife that live in or near these waters.

Furthermore, in an age that is rightly concerned about microplastic pollution, these boats also contribute to such waste as their decaying structures fragment over time with the resultant debris finding its way throughout the lower Leven catchment.

It is imperative that these craft must be removed from the water to protect the wider environment. We don't want oil slicks on the river and we certainly don't want our juvenile salmon snacking on microplastics from this, or any other source.

A successful bid to the Riverwoods scheme will hopefully remove a high risk pollution source from the upper reaches of the River Leven.

The second issue relates to the preponderance of invasive non-native species (INNS) that have managed to colonise parts of the park.

In particular American skunk cabbage, bamboo, conifers, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed have begun to out compete native plant species and have started to turn areas of the park into depressing areas of plant monoculture. Not only do these plants edge out native species, reducing levels of biodiversity, they also spread on the waters of the Leven further downstream, impacting far from their original source.

Two of these plants, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, are unfortunately very common. They have shallow root systems, which are easily washed out by large winter floods, for which the Leven is famous, causing bankside erosion and silting of clean gravel to the detriment of spawning salmon and also sea lamprey which utilise the clean waters of the Leven each spring.

The park is also home to another invasive species, the American mink. This is a voracious predator that was originally bred for the fur trade, but escapes and releases led to its spread across the UK and it is a common visitor to the park. These animals predate on fish, water fowl and small mammals like water voles. It is essential that they are kept in check to promote healthy populations of prey species. Moreover, mink have also been spotted on derelict boats on the Leven, given they are convenient and secure nesting spots, another good reason why these craft must be removed.

A successful bid to the Riverwoods scheme will hopefully help the Trust remove these INNS sources from the upper reaches of the River Leven, to the benefit of the whole river.

Finally, the third issue relates to the Burn of Balloch a small stream that flows through the park before entering the southern basin of Loch Lomond. While this burn does not contain salmon it is used by trout (brown trout / sea trout) for spawning. Like many sections of woodland in the Lomond catchment the burn is shaded by mature trees, however, uncontrolled deer numbers have

led to the destruction of most regenerative growth that should be providing low level shade adjacent to the water course.

The burn urgently needs to be re-planted along the riparian strip to ensure that in the long term there will be replacement trees which will provide all important shade at a time of increasing summer air temperatures that will inevitably have a major impact on the water temperatures of unshaded water courses.

While many people might not be surprised at the interest the LLFT have taken in the regeneration of the park's spawning tributary they may pause to consider why we are taking such a keen interest in the developments elsewhere in what is one of the most popular civic parks in Scotland. For us it is simple, a Balloch Castle Country Park that is clear of abandoned water craft and invasive non-native species will have a significant positive impact on the highly important lower stretches of the River Leven.

This application therefore serves to benefit not just the park but the wider environment. The Trust therefore fully supports this application.

*Malcom MacCormick – Operations Manager LLFT*

## Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA) endorsement and support

Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA) are another key partner which BCCPRG have been and will continue to work closely with. LLAIA are the riparian owners of the majority of fishing within the Lomond system catchment which includes the River Leven, Loch Lomond, River Endrick, River Fruin and the Clyde Estuary.

As can be noted from the letter of support below, BCCPRG and our goals are aligned and supported by those of the LLAIA.

### LLAIA Key Issues/Opportunities: Summary

1. INNS threat to water and habitat quality and resultant impact upon key spawning areas (Salmon & Sea Trout).
2. Hydrology and tree cover improvements resulting in increased oxygen content, reduced water temperatures benefiting marine and other wildlife.
3. The impacts of pollution resulting from micro plastics, hydrocarbons and other materials upon the River Leven.
4. Education support and opportunities to provide increased awareness and education concerning the 'remarkable' lifecycle of wild Atlantic salmon.



MANAGED BY ANGLERS, FOR ANGLERS

### Balloch Park Regeneration Group,

**27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Re – L.L.A.I.A Support For Your Application For a Riverwoods Project.**

### To Whom It May Concern,

Further to our initial letter of support for your regeneration group dated the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (L.L.A.I.A) has now detailed below a number of the expected main benefits and enhancements not only to the water quality of all the water courses running through and present around and bordering Balloch Park.

We would also indicate the benefits of such a project would be not only to numerous fish species but to many other species of flora and fauna. There would be without doubt by making these improvements social benefits to the local population that visit the park daily or weekly but those

that travel to the Balloch area from across Scotland and the wider UK and international tourists who visit the Loch Lomond area.

For the Balloch Park Regeneration Group to be successful in the Riverwoods Project for 2023 would bring long needed improvements and address many natural and human issues currently present. These improvements we can see as having many short, medium and long term benefits to the park and the park users and would hopefully kickstart further investment and work in the future. We can reconfirm that the L.L.A.I.A committee would fully support your group in its submission to Riverwoods.

Our Association which has existed for over 140 years to manage the fishings on the whole of the Loch Lomond catchment. Our aims have always been to improve the whole fishery for all fish species and that includes every water course, burn and river.

1) Over a long number of years, many invasive non native species of plants and trees have taken over many of the areas of the park especially surrounding the water courses, Rhododendron in particular has been rampant blocking out light and removing natural ground covering plants plus likely affecting the Ph of the water courses in the park. By removing these plants and by reintroducing native plants appropriate to the soil and ground conditions will be helpful, these plants will provide shade, cover and food source for many species and in particular insects and that will help the invertebrates both species and numbers within the water courses which in turn will provide food source for fish species. At the moment, much of the existing water courses are stagnant and dry up in the summer months. Human traffic not using the dedicated footpaths and people using off road mountain bikes have caused the banks of the water courses to collapse slowing the flow of water and reducing oxygen content. This in turn with poor litter management and a UK wide problem of discarding of litter such as single use plastic bottles, coffee cups and fast food containers and plastics results in a mess that people are quite happy to add to at this time. When we have high rainfall this detritus is washed downstream and then into the wider R Leven and onwards towards the main Balloch Village centre and downstream thru the Vale of Leven. Having pleasant looking water courses, and adequate litter bins etc encourages visitor's to the park to bag it and bin it.

2) By improving all the watercourses in the park brings multiple benefits, a well flowing water course with high oxygen content and deeper pools and streamy glides provides important water source for many animals and birds. Together with sensitive planting of appropriate shrubs and trees provides shade over the water course allowing water to be cooler and again help many animals, birds during periods of high temps, even visitors to the park, and dogs to cool down by going in the water or taking a drink. Fish species and invertebrates will of course flourish with these conditions.

3) The whole Loch Lomond catchment has had a very good population of Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout across hundreds if not thousands of years, in fact during the Industrial revolution when many other rivers in Scotland and in particular the nearby Rivers, Clyde, Kelvin, Avon, Carts, Gryffe were so heavily polluted by industrial and chemical run off the Lomond catchment survived. Our fish managed to deal with the industry pressures because the Loch acts as a filter plus the short six mile course of the R Leven which by volume is the second fastest flowing river in Scotland prevented those industrial pollutants from collecting and impacting the fish species. Research by Glasgow University field station (S.C.E.N.E) has identified a diverse range of genetic trains of Atlantic Salmon across the catchment more than any other water catchment in Scotland. What the catchment does lack compared to other systems in Scotland are well suited

tributaries and burns providing suitable spawning habitat for Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout. Despite the huge size of the catchment spawning areas a very limited, even on the R Leven there are only half a dozen spawning burns such as the Murroch, Haldane, Carrochan, Ballagan and three unnamed burns, Only a couple have Salmon spawning in them. That said Sea Trout do not need a large burn, as long as the substrate is suitable, and a reasonable flow and access Sea Trout will access and spawn anytime between October and end of December. We believe that the water courses in Balloch Park could provide a valuable spawning and nursery stream for Sea Trout. Sea Trout are nomadic so as long as there is a flow, fish will find the burn, even in a unnamed burn that was realigned thru the nearby Lomond Shores car park Sea Trout spawn in that burn every winter. Having extra spawning streams will only enhance the existing fish populations we already have, but acknowledge Salmon are unlikely to enter the water courses in the park due to its flow rates and width, that said we could have a very few pairs enter the very bottom reaches where the water courses enter into the R Leven. Salmonids are very sensitive to pollution and changes in the environment. So having these species present and flourishing indicates a positive marker on the water and wider environment quality. On the Lochside and main R Leven adjoining the park, impacts have occurred due to manmade and human impacts, the water levels are higher now and more shoreside erosion due to the Scottish Water Barrage at Fisherwood a short distance downstream from the park. Hydrocarbons and emissions for the large increase in watercraft and personal watercraft over the last forty years and the park borders the most heavily used part of Loch Lomond. Over time many boats have been abandoned and left to rot and break up at the very top of the Leven and it would be helpful if through this project mechanisms could be put in place to remove these vessels to make the Balloch Park area more appealing when sitting looking at the vista and encourage people to do the right thing as far as no impact on the environment.

4) If the project were to proceed and we hope it does, just using the life cycle of the Salmon where the eggs are laid in the winter, hatch out the following spring, juvenile's feed in the local freshwater for anything up to three/four years then migrate to the North Atlantic and return as adults after 1 to four years at Sea returning to the exact water course of their birth can be captivating for children and visitors, even the Sea Trout following a similar life cycle but this time the migrate out and around the whole of the Clyde estuary is still a fascinating story. With appropriate notice and information boards many child, youth and adult groups would be interested and let people take a pride in the environment that surrounds then in Balloch Park.

We at the L.L.A.I.A as the riparian owners of the fishings on the R Leven and Loch Lomond support your project to improve and enhance the water courses and burns through Balloch Park and adjoin the park would get our wholehearted support.

On behalf of the L.L.A.I.A we wish you the very best of success in your application, and if somebody needs to speak with us from Riverwoods then please put them in contact with myself.

Yours Sincerely

**Gareth Bourhill L.L.A.I.A Secretary**

**L.L.A.I.A  
C/O 4 Woodside Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow.  
G3 7QF**

## Tree Planting

WDC's Biodiversity Officer has indicated that where INNS are removed in the Park replacement native tree and shrub planting will be undertaken to restore biodiversity. This will amount a substantial acreage (as yet to be accurately measured) within the Park. The extent of this replacement planting will be developed within Stage 2 of this restoration plan.

### Stage 3: Improvement of Built Assets / Services/ Facilities

#### Strategic Goals:

1. **Unlock** the Park's potential to be a 'centre of excellence' for promoting environmental engagement, education & nature restoration that significantly improves visitor experience and engagement which motivates them to take the urgent action needed to slow global warming and biodiversity loss.
2. **Ensure long term sustainable improvements** can be implemented and sustained by identifying and implementing revenue generating opportunities and consequently reducing the current burden on local Council budgets.

#### Key Issues and Priorities

Issue	Impact	Priority	Comments
1. Currently the existing 'built assets' within the park are under utilised or do not exist in order to realise and to leverage the full potential of both the natural and built assets within the park.	High	High	Currently very limited toilet facilities exists for visitors. There are no Café facilities and Baloch Castle is currently boarded up. All of the above points scored highly in BCCPRG Visitor Survey. The low level of facilities and services offered is likely to have a negative impact upon the number of visits and educational use of the park today.
2. Current levels of awareness and engagement of visitors concerning the threats and importance of the natural world and their role is relatively low	High	High	With no built assets to provide and promote environmental awareness then visitor awareness and engagement is consequently very low.
3. The provision and current utilisation of the park's natural and built assets for nature education and engagement could be significantly improved	High	High	Currently there is a very small, limited room within the Stables building for school, child educational use. The current level of services and facilities is likely to be a barrier to schools and other educational groups making use of the park today.
4. Anti social behaviour has a negative impact upon visitor experience and the natural and fixed assets of the park	Med	Med	Whilst this is not a problem unique to the park, this behavioural issue has a very negative impact upon both the natural environment and visitor experience
5. Given the economic and financial pressures faced by the landlord there is decreasing resources and funds available to WDC in order to	High	High	West Dunbartonshire currently employ 2.5 FTE to collect litter, cut lawns etc. The built assets appear to be being managed on a 'care & maintenance' only basis with the castle closed to the public.

provide the necessary maintenance, services and resource.

## Data Collection Plan

Data / Evidence	Reason	Who	Method
<b>Visitor Survey</b>	To gain an understanding from visitors and users of Balloch Castle Country Park in relation to such things as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reasons for their visit</li> <li>- Visitor priorities for improvement</li> <li>- The importance that they attached to nature and the environment</li> </ul>	BCCPRG	An online survey conducted during the Summer of 2022 <a href="#">BCCPRG Visitor Survey 2022</a>
<b>Visitor types and characteristics</b>	To provide insight as to the make-up of total park visitors	BCCPRG	Source Visitor Survey July 2022 <a href="#">BCCPRG Visitor Survey 2022</a>
<b>Current Educational / Nature Engagement utilisation</b>	Provide baseline information of current educational / environmental utilisation of park assets today	BCCPRG	Source West Dumbartonshire Education Department
<b>Existing Statutory responsibilities</b>	To provide a clear understanding of the additional value add that this regeneration plan will provide beyond current statutory obligations by the current leaseholder of BCCP (WDC)	BCCPRG/WDC	Use of the current lease agreement to inform the key areas of 'additionality' or Value Add
<b>Potential Partnerships</b>	To gain an initial level of confidence regarding potential partnership opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical support partners</li> <li>- Revenue / Commercial Partners</li> </ul>	BCCPRG	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
<b>Potential funding opportunities</b>	To provide an initial understanding of potential sources of funding & grant opportunities	BCCPRG	Desktop research, Stakeholder Engagement, Potential Funding Opportunities (see Appendix 2)
<b>Opportunities and Threats</b>	To provide a clear understanding of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats concerning current built assets, facilities and services	BCCPRG	SWOT Analysis – part of Stage 1&2 further analysis activities

Details of the outputs from the above data and evidence gathering are provided within the 'Analyse' section of this plan

## ANALYSE PHASE

### Introduction:

The objective of this phase is provide a critical review of the evidence, findings and information gathered concerning the current state condition of BCCP whist highlighting key issues and opportunities for improvement that exist.

## Evidence Analysis - Stage 2 Improvements to the Natural Assets

### Invasive non-native species

INNS Species	INNS Area (sqm)	Comments
Bamboo	10,790	5 locations
Japanese Knotweed	requires to be quantified	
Himalayan Balsam	67,810	13 locations
Skunk Cabbage	29,350	4 locations
Western Hemlock	27,493	13 locations
Rhododendrom	requires to be quantified	
Sitka Spruce	requires to be quantified	
<b>Total</b>	135,443	16% of total park area*

*\*note: excludes areas of Japanese Knotweed, Rhododendrom, Sitka and other non native conifers. A more detailed survey oof INNS present will form part of Stage 2 deliverables.*

As can be seen from the initial INNS Survey results both the extent and range of INNS within the park is extremely serious. If the current situation is allowed to continue unaddressed then the impact to the park and the adjoining waterways will have an increasingly negative impact upon the native woodland, water quality and the salmon and sea trout populations.

A significant area of the Park's waterfront borders the top section of the River Leven. The River Leven is a key migratory and spawning area within the Lomond catchment. As previously highlighted by LLFT and LLAIA, the impact of INNS within the Park is not restricted to Baloch Park as this issue does and will continue to have a negative impact upon the water quality and habitat down the course of the River Leven.

### INNS issues and impact

Given the above current state concerning INNS then, if left untreated, the negative impact upon the natural woodlands, wildlife and the natural assets as a whole of the park will continue to accelerate causing increasiing damage to the woodlands, wildlife and biodiversity. BCCPRG are working closely with partners including the WDC Green Space organisation and Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust concerning the potential treatment approaches required to address these INNS.

### Water Quality and habitat issues and risks

As has been highlighted above the continued presence of abandoned and submerged water craft presents a significant risk that increases over time to water and therefore habitat quality for marine wildlife across the entire waterfront and course of the River Leven. The River Leven is a key migratory route to the entire Loch Lomond catchment and is a key spawning habitat for Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout. The River Leven provides critical spawning grounds for the larger Spring Salmon and threats to their habitat and water quality is therefore critical.

### Hydrology Issues



There is one small stream within the park, Burn of Balloch and several other small water courses and drainage ditches. There are existing issues that can be observed concerning damage to the existing watercourses relating to walking and cycling erosion, litter pollution being washed down these courses and the impact of neighbouring INNS. All of these factors contribute to a degradation in water quality.

### Anti-Social Behaviour

There is direct evidence of anti-social behaviour within the park, such behaviour impacts the quality of visitor experience and often results in environmental damage. An improved management model to address this area will be required. This will require collaboration with several key stakeholders in order to identify and agree an improved management approach to monitor and control this issue.

### Tree Planting

Within Stage two it will be necessary to undertake tree planting of indigenous saplings in order to address the following needs and issues.

1. Restoration of natural tree cover along the Burn of Balloch Glen
2. Replacement of damaged / diseased tree stock with native saplings
3. Planting of additional native saplings within areas currently occupied by INNS (following any remedial work or resting periods)
4. Replacement planting of native tree saplings along river and loch side areas

### Key Issues and Root Causes (Stage 2)

Issue	Root Cause(ss)	Impact of Root Cause	Impact	Effort
<b>The existing and increasing threat posed by INNS within BCCP to native woodland and wildlife</b>	It would appear that the Management process to monitor maintain and manage INNS within the park is either not effective or not being followed, most likely due to financial and resource pressures within WDC	<b>1.</b> NNS edge out native species, reducing levels of biodiversity, including insect, birdlife and many other species. They also spread on the waters of the River Leven further downstream, impacting far from their original source. <b>2.</b> Many of the prevalent INNS within BCCP have shallow root systems, which are easily washed out by large winter floods, for which the River Leven is famous, causing bankside erosion and silting of clean gravel to the detriment of spawning salmon and sea lamprey which utilise the clean waters of the Leven each spring. <b>3.</b> INNS also have a direct negative impact on water pH which has a detrimental impact upon Atlantic Salmon, Sea Trout and other species	High	Medium
<b>Water pollution from abandoned / submerged</b>	The management process to monitor and control this situation is either not	Direct risk to Salmon and other marine species due to	Medium	Medium

<b>craft (plastics, hydrocarbons, other)</b>	effective, followed or not clearly agreed and defined	negative impact upon water quality and habitat.		
<b>Hydrology Issues within the park's water courses</b>	The management process to monitor maintain and manage the park's water courses is either not effective or not being followed due to financial and resource pressures.  The existing barrage operating parameters have a direct impact on water height within Loch Lomond. Any changes to the barrage operation parameters will require to be reviewed with Scottish Water	Direct risk to Salmon and other marine species due to negative impact upon water quality, oxygen levels and habitat degradation as all water courses eventually drain into the Loch and then River Leven system  Flooding damage to waterside trees along the Lochside areas of the park	Medium	Medium
<b>Lack of tree cover Balloch Burn Glen</b>	Over grazing by deer and other wildlife have removed the cover provided by regenerative cover	The absence of cover and shade and increasing climatic temperatures directly impacts the existing Sea Trout and Brown Trout parr and adults	Medium	Medium
<b>Littering and damage to the natural environment</b>	Current resources and/or management, monitoring and enforcement process are either insufficient or not effective. A review of the existing management model and resources to control/deter this issue is required.	Damage to the natural environment including woodlands Reputational damage and negative impact upon visitor numbers and experience	Medium	Medium

## Partnerships and Key Stakeholders

BCCPRG have recognised the importance of and have consequently been in discussion and meetings with the following key potential partners and stakeholders.

- **West Dunbartonshire Council** – CEO Peter Hessett and Chief Education Officer Laura Mason who have provided their support and endorsement of the BCCPRG redevelopment plan.
- West Dunbartonshire Council's Greenspace Team have already engaged with us and provided excellent support concerning the INNS Survey in conjunction with LLFT in February 2023.
- **Glasgow City Council**
- **Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority** – BCCPRG have been in active discussions and meetings with LLTNP including Dominic Hall, Nature Development Mgr LLTNPA

- **Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT)** – The Fisheries Trust have over 20 years experience of monitoring and managing and improving habitat for migratory and other species across the entire Loch Lomond catchment (River Leven, Clyde Estuary, River Fruin, River Endrick and Loch Lomond). BCCPRG enjoy a good relationship with the trust and have already had informal discussions regarding addressing the INNS issues highlighted.
- **Boturich Estates (neighbouring landowner)**
- **Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA)**
- **Loch Lomond Association**
- **Woodland Management Trust (neighbouring landowner)** are the owners and managers of a significant area of natural woodland at “Whinney Hill” . BCCPRG have already had productive meetings and discussion with the Woodland Trust concerning potential areas of collaboration and the offer of technical and other support.
- **Scottish Environmental Protection Authority (SEPA)**

Other Key stakeholders BCCPRG are engaged with include but not limited to the following:

- **Scottish Wildlife Trust**
- **Leven Cruising Club**
- **Tulliechewan Residents Associations**
- **Keep Scotland Beautiful**
- **Countryside Learning Scotland**
- **Cashel Forest**
- **Royal Forestry Scotland**
- **The Countryside Trust**
- **The Green Action Trust**
- **Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) Glasgow University**
- **Strathleven Regeneration Committee**
- **Turkey Red Media**
- **Kilmarnock Community Trust**
- **Kilmarnock Old Kirk Trust**

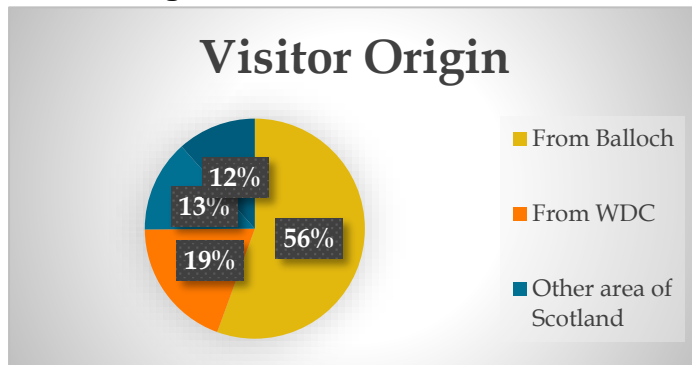
# Evidence Analysis Stage 3: Improvement of Built Assets / Services/ Facilities

## Visitor Survey Summary

July 2022

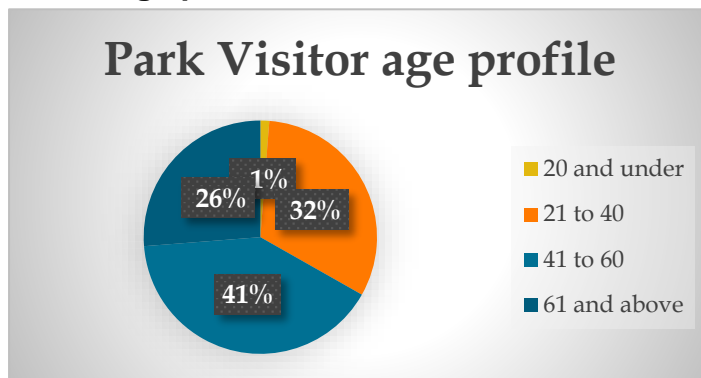
Whilst those surveyed are a relatively small population sample (247 completed surveys), a high confidence exists in that the results are representative of overall visitor characteristics and visitor priorities. Seasonal variation will of course exist. To view the entire Visitor Survey follow the link [BCCPRG Visitor Survey](#) Subsequent Visitor Survey results will be used to measure and report progress in relation to our key objectives.

### Visitor Origin



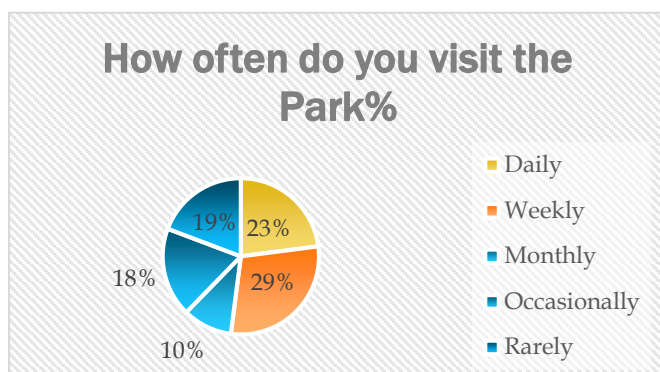
75% of visitors to the park are either local to Balloch itself or from the West Dunbartonshire Council area. Visitors from other parts of Scotland and other countries represent a substantial contribution to annual visitor numbers.

### Visitor age profile



The age profile of park users who contributed to the survey is skewed to an older age group and does not reflect the true diversity of users. Our additional community engagement activities will prioritise young people and other hard to reach groups.

### Frequency of visits to the park



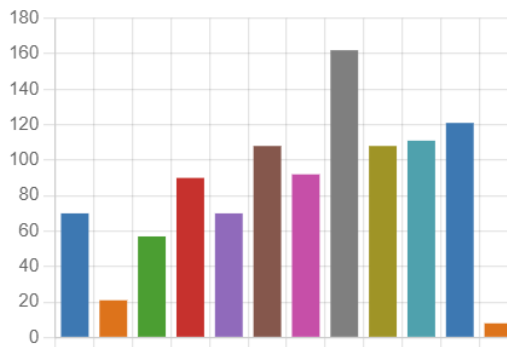
52% of the Park users who engaged with the survey use the park either daily or weekly. This would suggest that the majority of visitors are from the local area which aligns to the visitor origin data above. There is a high percentage of visitors who currently use the park on a monthly and occasional basis. From a potential growth viewpoint this is encouraging given that we wish to increase park visits and engagement.

## Reasons Given for Visiting the Park

6. Why do you visit this park? (check all that apply).

[More Details](#)

Bring children	70
Biking	21
Sightseeing	57
Time with family and / or friends	90
Exercise or jogging	70
Walk dog	108
Relax	92
Walking	162
Physical & mental wellbeing	108
Spend time in nature	111
Enjoy the environment & wildlife	121
Others	8



Walking, enjoying the environment/wildlife and spending time in nature were the top three reasons given for visits to the Park, but one in ten prioritised caring for the environment, which indicates a critical need to support people to better understand the threats to the natural world.

### Visitor priorities

Concerning visitor priorities' 69% of responses were related to the need for improved services and facilities. Visitor responses indicate that the greatest need relates to the availability of toilet facilities within the park. There is also strong evidence supporting the need to 'restore the castle' and a need to provide café facilities. The need for improving litter collection rated highly both in terms of the number of responses and the supporting comments. It is interesting to note that 'caring for the environment' ranked only 4<sup>th</sup> in overall priorities scoring only 10%. From an opportunity viewpoint there is clearly an opportunity to increase this baseline score as a measurable outcome of this plan and it's objectives.



Full details of feedback from the survey carried out by BCCPRG in July 2022 can be found here [BCCPRG Visitor Survey 2022](#). Going forward, this survey will provide a baseline reporting measure in relation to the key objectives and outcomes defined.

## Current Education/Nature Engagement Utilisation of the Park

**Who** - BCCPRG and WDC and WDC Greenspace

**Method** - Consultation with WDC Education Dept. and local education establishments. An online survey is planned to be sent to all WDC educational establishments in order to determine a baseline of current use and to identify development needs against which improvements can be measured.

Any action would be in consultation with WDC Education Dept, staff in establishments and existing staff who currently deliver nature education (e.g. Countryside Ranger Service)

### STAGE 3 Strategic Goals

1. **Unlock** the Park's potential to be a "centre of excellence" for promoting the importance of the natural environment, increasing engagement, via education & awareness and improvement to visitor experience and engagement in order to increase awareness and motivation to take the urgent action needed to slow global warming and biodiversity loss.

2. Ensure **long term sustainable improvements** will be implemented and sustained by identifying and implementing revenue generating opportunities and consequently reducing the current burden on local Council budgets.

### Stage 3 Key Issues and Root Causes

The following is a summary of the current key issues and likely root causes concerning the park in relation to the built assets and facilities. Impact and Effort indicators are related to the impact and effort in relation to the achievement of one or more of the strategic goals within this development plan.

	Issue	Root Cause(s)	Impact	Effort
1.	Currently the existing 'built assets' within the park are underutilised or are closed. In order to realise and to leverage the full potential of the natural and built assets within the park then these assets need to be better utilised or introduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restore/Improve Toilet facilities</li> <li>- Café &amp; hospitality facilities</li> </ul>	Economic and financial pressures and competing priorities for resource upon park tenant WDC	High	High
2.	Current levels of awareness education and engagement of visitors concerning the threats and importance of the natural world and their role is	Currently there is very limited focus, facilities or resource within the park to increase visitor awareness and engagement concerning nature and the importance of the natural environment.	High	High

	relatively low (Survey July 2022)			
3.	Littering and damage within the park	On a wider level this is a social issue and not unique to Balloch Park. Other root causes are likely to include lack of resource to ensure effective patrolling, policing and enforcement . Inadequate provision of litter disposal bins and the management of litter may also be a contributory cause.	High	High
4.	Utilisation of the park for educational awareness and learning is low.	The existing physical facilities and services supporting indoor and outdoor learning and nature education are 'low'. Significant potential exists to increase availability and utilisation	High	Medium
5.	Anti social behaviour has a negative impact upon visitor experience and the natural and fixed assets of the park	On a wider level this is a social issue and not unique to Balloch Park. There is a need to examine the existing management model, processes and resources to manage and control this situation..	Med	Med
5.	It would appear that there is currently no long term strategy concerning BCCP beyond the provision of a day to day care and maintenance approach	Currently the financial burden appears to lie solely upon WDC as tenant to maintain the natural and built assets within the park. There appears to be no statutory obligations upon the leaseholder to maintain natural and built assets. Lack of additional or alternate revenue support limits the council's ability to improve or provide additional facilities beyond care and maintenance provision	High	High

## Existing Lease Agreement

Concerning the existing lease between West Dunbartonshire Council and Glasgow City Council BCCPRG have obtained a copy of this lease. BCCPRG are satisfied that we are not aiming to assume responsibility for any of the existing responsibilities that WDC currently are required to undertake within this lease.

BCCPRG supporter and Lawyer Matt Dillon has examined this lease on behalf of BCCPRG in order to determine whether any potential restrictions exist concerning the objectives of this Nature Restoration Plan. In particular to determine whether any restrictions relating to the development or use of the built assets are indicated. As can be seen below there appears to be no restrictions of this nature within the existing lease agreement.

### **Matt Dillon BCCPRG Supporter & Lawyer**

BCCPRG are vital to ensuring that Balloch Park has a sustainable future in providing enjoyment and maximising utility for the community. Their work to consult with park users, identifying the amenities that users wish to see and ultimately seeking to implement those wishes will benefit the park and community no end.

Having had sight of the Lease between Glasgow City Council and West Dunbartonshire Council, there seems to be no significant impediment to allowing a third party to operate amenities within Balloch Park as a sublessee.

It is clear from the lease that written consent is required from Glasgow City Council in order to permit such a sub-let. Clause 6 of the lease provides that Glasgow City Council has the option to either consent to a sub-lease or instruct a new lease. It is worth noting that a sub-tenant was in place at the time of the lease being agreed for Balloch Park between Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire. That being said, it is difficult to imagine Glasgow City Council refusing such a request if it is in the best interests of the park and community.

I hope that BCCPRG will find the support they need in their continued efforts to improve the park and what it has to offer for the benefit of the community.

**Matthew Dillon. LLB (Hons), Dip L.P.**

### **Summary of the current state**

It is very clear that significant potential exists to improve the range of facilities and services that could be offered to visitors and users of the park. Both the natural and built assets offer substantial opportunity for improvement and increased development and utilisation. The castle and existing stables buildings present real potential to provide facilities and services that increase visitor experience, engagement and nature education whilst providing key revenue streams that underpin sustainment. There have already been significant indications of interest and support by local organisations who are excited at the potential opportunities for improvement. Similar models that demonstrate ‘the art of the possible’ in such environments and the associated benefits already exists locally in country parks such as Mugdock Country Park, East Dunbartonshire.

## **IMPROVE PHASE**

### **Introduction:**

The objective of this phase is to identify and prioritise the solutions required in order to address the key issues and root causes already identified in order to deliver the ‘ideal’ or ‘future’ state conditions reflected within the strategic goals of this Nature Restoration Plan.

### **Development Plan Stage 1 Improvements**

The successful design and implementation of the appropriate business and financial models to underpin the overall restoration plan will provide BCCPRG and its investors, key stakeholders and partners with the confidence in the structure, management and delivery of the overall restoration plan. The deliverables from Stage 1 include the following:

- **Business Model/Structure**
- **Finance Model**
- **Revenue Model**
- **Operating Model**
- **Initial evidence demonstrating INNS treatment**



## Stage 2 Issues, Root Causes and Solutions

### STAGE 2 Key Objective

1. **Restore** the Park's woodlands by addressing invasive species, pollution, erosion and tree loss and disease (ash dieback etc) by identifying and implementing the appropriate remedial improvements in nature sensitive ways"

2. **Ensure long term sustainable improvements** can be implemented and sustained by identifying and implementing revenue generating opportunities and consequently reducing the current burden on local Council budgets.

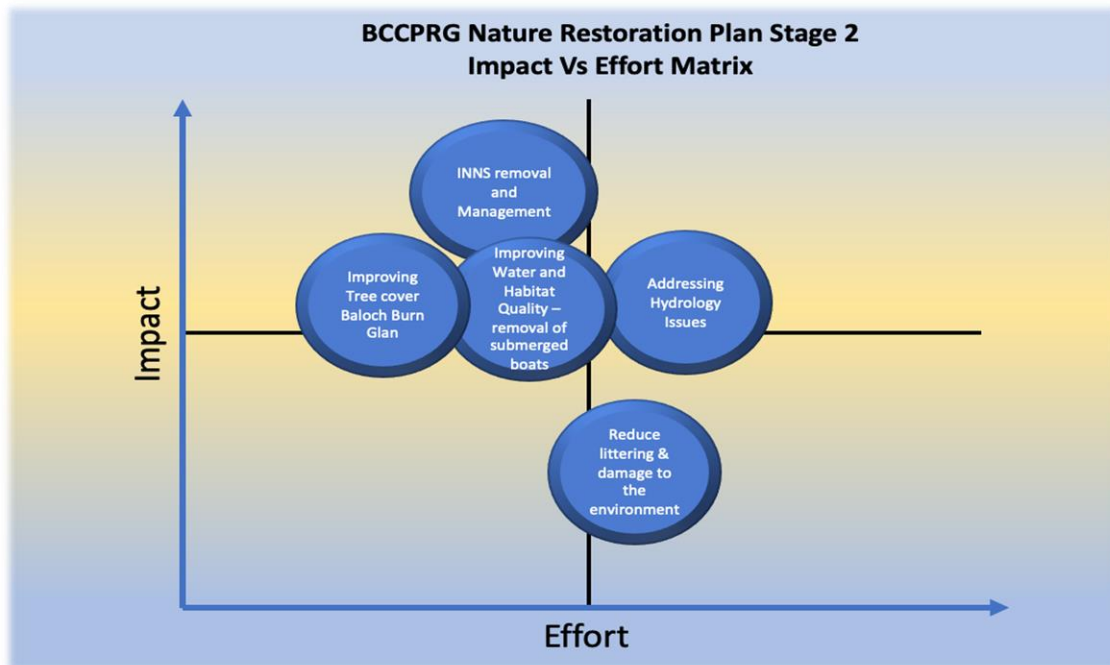
Issue	Root Cause(ss)	Impact of Root Cause	Solution	Environmental Impact	Effort
<b>The existing and increasing threat posed by INNS within BCCP to native woodland and wildlife</b>	The current management process to monitor maintain and manage INNS within the park is either not effective or not being followed, most likely due to financial and resource pressures	<p>1. INNS within the park edge out native species, reducing levels of biodiversity, including insect, birdlife and many other species.</p> <p>INNS undoubtedly also spread on the waters of the River Leven and cause issues downstream,</p> <p>2. Many of the prevalent INNS within BCCP have shallow root systems, which are easily washed out by large winter floods, for which the River Leven is famous, causing bankside erosion and silting of clean gravel to the detriment of spawning salmon and also sea lamprey which utilise the clean waters of the River Leven each spring.</p> <p>3. INNS also have a direct negative impact on water pH impacting water and habitat quality for Salmon, Sea Trout and other marine species.</p>	<p>Working with key partners and stakeholders including WDC Greenspace, LLFT in order to:</p> <p><b>Stage 2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and agree priorities regarding INNS removal/treatment.</li> <li>2. Identify likely source(s) of INNS and agree countermeasures, including review of existing bio security procedures</li> <li>3. Identify &amp; agree technical treatment solution and process in each case for addressing each INNS</li> <li>4. Identify requirements for tree planting post INNS removal / treatment (where appropriate)</li> <li>5. Identify metrics and targets to monitor and report progress in this area.</li> <li>6. Identify resource requirements in each case</li> <li>7. Create project plan to define timing and sequence of work including any required follow up sustainment and recurrence prevention</li> <li>8. Review / agree sustainment</li> </ol>	High	Lo-Med

			management processes and resource requirements		
<b>Water pollution from abandoned / submerged craft (plastics, hydrocarbons, other)</b>	The management process to monitor and to mitigate this situation either not effective or not followed or is not clearly agreed and defined	Direct risk to Salmon and other marine species due to negative impact upon water quality and habitat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review any existing process concerning removal of such vessels.</li> <li>2. Where process does not exist or is not followed then: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage key stakeholders to understand and define the problem, roles, responsibilities</li> <li>- Work collaboratively with all stakeholders to identify and agree a process to manage the current issues and which mitigates future occurrence.</li> <li>- Process should include performance and reporting measures.</li> <li>- Document and communicate the management process to all stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Medium	Medium
<b>Hydrology Issues within the park's water courses</b>	The management process to monitor maintain and manage the park's water courses is either not effective or not being followed most likely due to financial and resource pressures	Direct risk to Atlantic Salmon and other marine species due to negative impact upon water quality, oxygen levels and habitat degradation as all water courses eventually drain into the Loch and then River Leven system impacting migratory route and key spawning areas of Atlantic Salmon	<p>Stage 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review and understand the current River Leven Barrage Gate operating regime and protocols with Scottish Water and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Investigate how waterside trees and their root systems can be protected during periods of high water</li> </ol>	Medium	Medium
<b>Lack of tree cover Baloch Burn Glen</b>	Over grazing by deer and other wildlife have removed the cover provided by regenerative cover.	The absence of cover and shade and increasing climatic temperatures	<p>Stage 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage with key stakeholders in order to fully define and</li> </ol>	Medium	Low

	Any sustainable solution therefore needs to take into account the primary root cause of over grazing by deer.	directly impacts the existing Sea Trout and Brown Trout parr and adults	<p>communicate the problem and to understand their role, responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Agree the required solutions and tasks including proposals to control or protect habitat from deer.</li> <li>3. Create project/intervention plan to define timing and sequence of work, resource requirements including any required follow up including monitoring, sustainment measures and recurrence prevention</li> <li>4. Review / agree sustainment management processes and resource requirements</li> </ol>		
<b>Littering and damage to the natural environment</b>	Current management, resources for monitoring and enforcement process currently ineffective or unable to address this difficult issue. Once more this may be a result of financial pressures.	Long term damage to the natural environment including woodlands Reputational damage and negative impact upon visitor numbers and experience	<p><b>Stage 2&amp;3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage with key stakeholders in order to fully define and understand the problem and to understand their role, responsibilities</li> <li>2. Understand key drivers of littering and damage (where, when, how often, who, contributory, causal links. ...)</li> <li>3. Review existing management and control processes including roles, responsibilities, resources, skills)</li> <li>4. Evaluate /benchmark how this problem is addressed elsewhere</li> </ol>	Medium	Medium

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Identify 'gaps' or opportunities to improve the existing management and control process</li> <li>6. Identify and agree improvements based upon gaps and best practice</li> <li>7. Identify 'ideal state' process including resource requirements, performance measures</li> <li>8. Define implementation plan to realise new 'ideal' management process</li> <li>9. Monitor / report performance regularly</li> </ol>	
--	--	--	---	--

### Stage 2 Solutions: Impact/Effort Matrix



As can be seen from the “Impact Vs Effort Matrix” above, improving tree cover at Balloch Burn Glen and improving its water quality by reducing pollution risks are relatively quick wins in relation to effort required. Addressing INNS issues, whilst a larger project will have significantly high environmental impact upon the native woodland, neighbouring wildlife, loch and river water quality whilst requiring a medium degree of effort and resource. Repeated focus and treatment

will likely be needed and ongoing monitoring. All of these projects above will be addressed within Stage 2 of this Nature Restoration Plan.

## Development Plan Stage 3 Improvements

### Development Plan Strategic Goals (Stage 3)

**1. Unlock the Park's potential to be a centre of excellence for promoting environmental engagement, education & nature restoration that significantly improves visitor experience and engagement which motivates them to take the urgent action needed to slow global warming and biodiversity loss.**

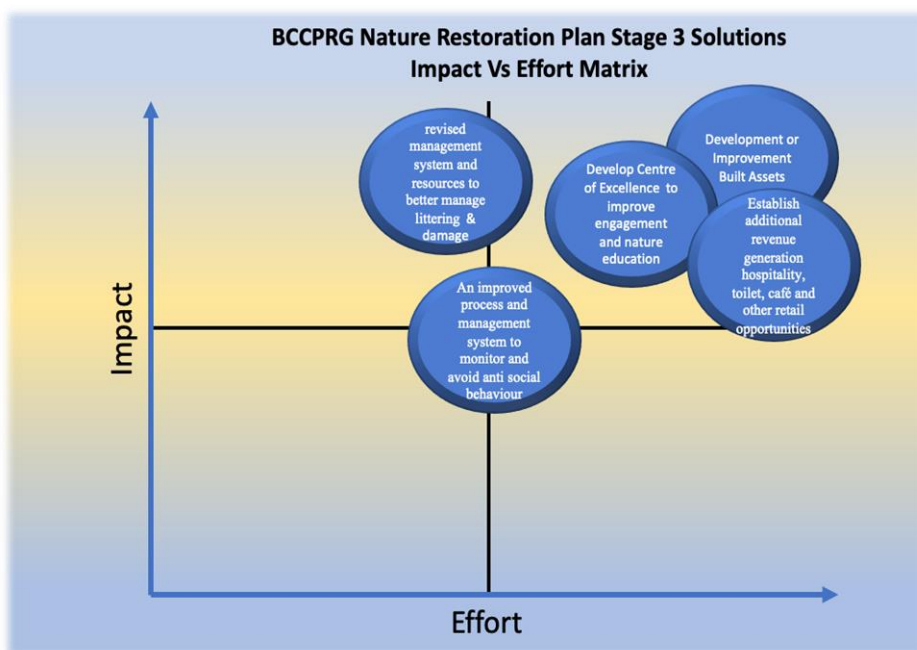
**2. Ensure long term sustainable improvements can be implemented and sustained by identifying and implementing revenue generating opportunities and consequently reducing the current burden on local Council budgets.**

## Stage 3 Issues, Root Causes and Solutions

Issue	Root Cause(s)	Solution	Impact	Effort
<p>1. Currently the existing 'built assets' within the park are either under utilised or are closed In order to realise and to leverage the full potential of the natural and built assets within the park then these assets need to be better utilised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide key revenue streams to sustain the improved future state and make further improvements</li> <li>- Provide improved Toilet facilities</li> <li>- Café &amp; hospitality facilities</li> <li>- Provide increased educational facilities</li> <li>- Increase visitor engagement and awareness in nature</li> </ul>	<p>Economic and financial pressures and competing priorities for resource upon park tenant WDC</p>	<p>Stage 3 – Development or improvements to the Built Assets &amp; Facilities in order to provide sustainable revenue streams, improved visitor experience, increased awareness and engagement in nature and to increase educational learning opportunities.</p> <p>These are a relatively large, complex range of improvements requiring significant investment. However the intent is that these improvements can and should be implemented on an incremental basis.</p>	High	High
<p>2. Current levels of awareness education and engagement of visitors concerning the threats and importance of the natural world and their role is relatively low (Survey July 2022)</p>	<p>Currently there is very limited focus, facilities and resource within the park to increase visitor awareness and engagement concerning nature and the importance of the natural environment With over 12,000 local school age children in WDC there is significant scope to increase nature education and awareness for these and other young people.</p>	<p>Stage 3: Develop/Improve the asset utilisation and services offered within the park. Establish a Centre of Excellence' to improve engagement and nature education and indoor&amp;outdoor education.</p>	High	High

3.	Littering and damage within the park	On a wider level this is a social issue and not unique to Baloch Park. Other root causes are likely to include lack of resource to ensure effective patrolling, policing and enforcement. Provision of adequate litter disposal bins and the management of litter may also be a contributory cause.	Stage 3: Establish a revised management system and necessary resources to better manage and monitor littering.	High	Med
4.	Anti social behaviour has a negative impact upon visitor experience and the natural and fixed assets of the park	On a wider level this is a social issue and is not unique to Baloch Park. Other root causes are likely to include lack of resource to ensure effective patrolling, policing and enforcement	Stage 3: Establish an improved process and management system to monitor and avoid anti social behaviour	Med	Med
5.	It would 'appear' that there is currently no long term strategy concerning BCCP beyond the provision of a care and maintenance approach	Currently the financial burden appears to lie solely upon WDC as tenant to maintain the natural and built assets within the park. Lack of additional or alternate revenue support limits the council's ability to improve or provide additional facilities beyond care and maintenance provision	Stage 3: Establish additional revenue generation streams by investing / developing hospitality, toilet, café and other retail opportunities which increase visitor footfall, experience and engagement	High	High

### Stage 3 Solutions: Impact/Effort Matrix



## The Future State

### Introduction

The following section defines the key characteristics of the target future state based upon the successful implementation and delivery of our strategic goals that are defined within Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the BCCPRG Nature Restoration Plan.

## Future State Outcomes and Deliverables

### Environmental

#### Balloch Castle Country Park

- Demonstrable restoration of the Park's woodlands by addressing the issues related INNS, hydrology and water quality improvements thus restoring the rich biodiversity within the park and its surrounding area.
- Establish an improved habitat and water quality for Salmon, Sea Trout and other marine life and wildlife within the River Leven and Loch Lomond.
- Progressing and accelerating the identified actions within the Woodland Management Plan (West Dunbartonshire Council)
- Establish a leading example of natural restoration and its importance to the local, national and international nature and climate agendas.
- Utilise this platform to work with local landowners using the experience and knowledge gained to encourage collaboration and synergy in order to link up areas of native woodland 'corridors'.

#### Extended Area

Establishment of a significant area of restored native and riparian woodland that not only provides an example but by working with local landowners this can be linked and extended to adjacent areas to the north and south of BCCP going forwards in order to create a 'corridor' of natural woodlands.

#### Visitor Experience

Provides a significantly improved visitor experience and value proposition by establishing or significantly improving visitor facilities that include the following potential initial examples:

- Visitor toilet facilities.
- Improved indoor & outdoor education provision and facilities.
- Café and hospitality provision.
- Nature exhibition Centre to increase engagement and understanding of local and global challenges and threats to our natural environment.
- An annual calendar of visitor events and activities.
- Commercial Office and Meeting facilities.
- Appropriate Retail Outlet opportunities.
- Retail cycle hire.

#### Visitor Engagement

- Provides the opportunities to increase visitor engagement in relation to the threats and challenges facing our planet, locally, nationally, internationally and why this is important to everyone

- Provides evidence of local impacts, plans and examples of improvements that can and have been delivered.
- Leverages technology to increase engagement and understand (interactive displays, immersive technology for example).
- Provides opportunities for visitors to get involved via volunteering.
- Creates a high quality valued visitor attraction on Loch Lomond's famous shores for the benefit of local, national and international visitors.

### **Nature Educational Facilities**

- Develop existing nature educational facilities and resources for local nurseries, youth organisations and schools.
- Scheduled nature focused event calendar for participation by schools and other organisations.

### **Potential Revenue Streams**

Establish sustainable revenue streams that will support the development and the ongoing provision of services and facilities within the park. Examples of potential revenue streams have initially been identified but not limited to the following:

- Charging fee for car parking
- Café and hospitality
- Retail Cycle Hire
- Nature Exhibition Centre to increase engagement and understanding of local and global challenges and threats to our natural environment
- An annual calendar of visitor events and activities
- Commercial office leasing and meeting facilities
- Appropriate Retail Outlet opportunities

Country Park models of successful similar revenue generation sources already exist within several local Parks including *Mugdock Country Park* and to a lesser extent *Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton*

The definition of projected demand, revenue and costs will be a deliverable from Stage 1 as part of the required Business Plan and Operating Model that is needed to support this restoration plan.

### **'Green Finance' Opportunities for BCCP outlined by Dominic Hall, Future Nature Development Manager, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority**

The situation facing Balloch Castle Country Park's natural environment are not unique to the Park but represent the combination of two connected and long term national funding and structural challenges:

The management of parks and greenspaces

Dating back to 2016 the Heritage Fund: State of UK Public Parks report showed the growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources that are available to manage them.

It called for "collaborative action to deliver new ways of funding and managing public parks to avert a crisis".

And stated that "without urgent action the continuing downward trend in the condition of many of our most treasured parks and green spaces is set to continue. Whilst new



ways of working and generating income are showing potential, more support, shared learning and collaboration is needed to support those that manage public parks.” This was before the additional challenges of the Covid 19 Pandemic placed still further pressures on our outdoor spaces and impacted the management capacity and funding to manage them

### **The funding gap for the Nature crisis**

Economic analysis commissioned by the Green Finance Institute identified a £15 to £27 billion gap in financing nature-related outcomes in Scotland  
Considerable focus around the world and specifically in Scotland is on how to close this gap with innovative public / private partnerships around emerging markets such as carbon credits or biodiversity offsetting

Whilst interesting and exciting opportunities are developing at pace around both of these funding areas - both remain major national issues, and remain challenging and in their formative stages. Nonetheless we have identified possible developing opportunities for Balloch Castle Country Park

### **The Opportunities Balloch Castle Country Park**

As part of their new Future Nature Strategy for the National Park – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority are actively exploring many of these opportunities – notably through the national Revere partnership and an IRNS funded project with Landscape Finance Lab. These projects are exploring options ranging from woodland carbon credits, stand-alone biodiversity credits and through to wider income generation options such as donations and Future Nature products and badging schemes

Sitting as a key visitor site within the National Park – this wider work on financing Nature Restoration in the National Park could generate wider opportunities which could be part of the financial solution for Balloch Castle Country Park as part of wider landscape scale nature restoration

In reality the Country Park does not have large scale options for woodland creation or peatland restoration and whilst there are huge ecosystem service benefits from the Loch and River – they are ones which are hard to currently monetise with existing systems We therefore believe that the most viable options are likely to be a combination of stand-alone voluntary biodiversity tokens such as those in development with CreditNature, in combination with more visitor focused opportunities such as payment for parking, a café and some dedicated corporate partnerships and sponsorship all channelled through a new Park Trust

This all needs considerable exploration through the Riverwoods programme but given the high nature value, the iconic loch and river and the high footfall and popularity of the park it is excellently placed to capitalise on a range of different funding models”.

## Balloch Castle Regeneration Group (BCCPRG) Nature Restoration Plan - Additionality

Additionality in the context of this Nature Restoration Plan can be defined as the difference between the 'current' or baseline state that has been defined above within the Measure Phase and the 'future' state that will be realized by the implementation of the identified improvements to both the natural and built assets. The 'current state' of Balloch Castle Country Park reflects the statutory requirements and obligations as defined in the current lease agreement and of the financial and budgetary pressures facing the leaseholder – West Dunbartonshire Council.

All of the improvements identified within this restoration plan are focussed upon delivering measurable improvements to both the *natural environment* and the *built assets*. Given that the current lease agreement makes no reference to the maintenance of 'natural assets within the park then today there appears to be no statutory requirement by the leaseholder in this respect. All of the environmental improvements identified within this restoration plan are therefore '*additional*' to the current state. There are also no statutory obligations within the lease concerning the provision of facilities or services. As a result, all of the objectives within this restoration plan relating to improved or additional facilities and services, including educational provision, can be considered also to be '*additional*' in the absence of any existing or planned development by the leaseholder.

### Additionality Drivers

#### ***The Natural Environment***

- Restoration of the natural woodlands.
- Identification and removal of INNS.
- Planting of additional or replacement trees.
- Linkage and collaboration with neighbouring woodland landowners.
- Improvement to water quality.
- Addressing pollution risks and impact.
- Improved visitor experience and awareness of the importance of biodiversity.
- Environmental example of best practice to support visitor education, learning and engagement in the natural world and current threats.
- Increased community involvement.

#### ***The Built Environment***

- Revenue Stream to sustain future state.
- Reduced reliance upon Council financial resources.
- Improved Facilities.
- Improved Toilet facilities.
- Café.
- Retail outlets.
- Commercial Office & Mtg facilities.
- Nature Education Centre, facilities & Services.

## Key Partnerships

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group to date have identified and have already engaged with several key partners and stakeholders including but not limited to:

- **West Dunbartonshire District Council**
- **Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust**
- **Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association**
- **Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park**
- **The Woodlands Trust**
- **The Countryside Trust**
- **The Green Action Trust**
- **Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) Glasgow University**
- **Strathleven Regeneration Committee**
- **Turkey Red Media**

## Letters of Endorsement and Support

In addition to the other statements of support within this plan, BCCPRG have received wider support from the following key individuals who recognise the potential of this Natural Restoration Plan and its wider benefits, BCCPRG have received endorsement and support from the following:

**MSP Pam Gosal**, *Member of the Scottish Parliament for West of Scotland.* [Appendix 3.](#)

**Archie Wilson**, River Leven Cruising Club, owner of Tree Surgery & Sawmill. [Appendix 4.](#)

**Martin Rooney**, Leader of West Dunbartonshire Council and a local elected member in the Lomond Ward. [Appendix 5.](#)

**Jackie Baillie**, *Member of the Scottish Parliament, Dumbarton Constituency.* [Appendix 6.](#)

## Initial Revenue and Demand indications

Following very initial enquires in relation to potential buyers or users of the improved facilities within the park BCCPRG have received very positive feedback and endorsement of the proposed plan including the following examples of support:

### **Demand for Nature Education (Outdoor & Indoor)**

#### **West Dunbartonshire Schools**

Increasing the engagement and education concerning the natural environment is a key outcome of this plan. BCCPRG want to work closely with West Dunbartonshire Education Department in order to understand their needs and interest concerning outdoor nature education demand.

The following statement of support from the Chief Education Officer reinforces the support, importance and the need for the improvement of nature education and the proposals.

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023



**Laura Mason**  
Chief Education Officer

Council Offices  
16 Church Street  
Dumbarton  
G82 1QL

Dear Colin,

**BALLOCH CASTLE COUNTRY PARK REGENERATION GROUP (BCCPRG)**

Educational Services are committed to further developing our approaches to Learning for Sustainability of which Outdoor learning is a key work stream.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our children in Early Learning and Childcare Centres and approximately 12,500 school aged children and young people benefit from their entitlement to regular, planned, quality learning in the outdoors.

This outdoor learning can be in the establishment grounds and to local greenspaces. In West Dunbartonshire we also benefit from being on the doorstep of Balloch Castle Country Park.

There is an opportunity through our already well developed infrastructure that the proposed developments by BCCPRG would enhance how our establishments use Balloch Castle Country Park to extend opportunities for:

- an increased number of children and young people developing their knowledge and skills through learning outdoors.
- our staff to build on their knowledge and skills within the natural environment to support outdoor learning.
- increasing the range and duration of learning experiences
- supporting the health and wellbeing of learners.
- involving partners in the planning, delivery and evaluation of outdoor learning.

Therefore I am writing to extend the commitment of West Dunbartonshire Council Educational Services to work with BCCPRG. The plans that they have a set out would enhance and further develop the scope of the use of Balloch Castle Country Park to enhance outdoor learning opportunities for the children, young people and families we serve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Mason".

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer

### **WeeStems Organisation**

Another educational organisation is *weeStems* a local organisation who have also provided positive endorsement of support in relation to this nature restoration plan with particular emphasis and interest in any improved nature education facilities and services.

“weeSTEMs is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Maths) club for children ranging from infants all the way up to upper primary age. Pre-covid I ran sessions on the weekends in Balloch Country Park in the forest school section of the park. We explored a different STEM concept every single week and children were encouraged to use natural resources to aid their learning.

Unfortunately due to the Scottish weather, many sessions had to be cancelled or postponed (for example it's unsafe to run sessions during high winds due to the dense wooded area) which had a negative effect on the children's learning.

The Balloch Castle Regeneration Group have fantastic plans to create an indoor learning space where children could continue to learn in all weather. Not only would this benefit the many families who attended weeSTEMs outdoor sessions previously - but would also encourage many new families who aren't confident spending time outside to attend and learn more about the natural world. (I couldn't believe how many families contacted me to find out if I ran sessions indoors as their kids don't like getting wet and so I feel education of many more local children would be vastly improved if there was also an indoor space available).

It is vitally important in this day and age (especially with all of the draws that technology has) that we work tirelessly to encourage children and their families out into the open spaces available to them which will improve their social skills, mental health, physical health and allow them to learn about how to care for the world around them.

I am so very excited by the work of the Balloch Castle Regeneration Group who have such wonderful ideas to help improve the lives of so many local families”.

### **Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS)**

CHAS Children's Hospice facility at Robin House have expressed strong interest and support concerning our plan to redevelop the natural and built assets within the Park. Informal discussions have also indicated their possible interest in undertaking the operation of a Café facility within the park in order to both raise funds and to acquire a public outward facing presence within the community. CHAS have also expressed their interest in having access to a 'sensory garden' within the park for example.



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

**Head Office** Canal Court, 42 Craiglockhart Avenue, Edinburgh EH14 1LT  
Tel: 0131 444 1900 Email: support@chas.org.uk Web: www.chas.org.uk

Tuesday 21 February 2023

To whom it may concern,

At CHAS, we are big fans of Balloch Park. It is right next door to Robin House Children's Hospice and many of the children and siblings we have staying with us love visiting. Many of the children we support use wheelchairs and rely on other medical equipment, so we really appreciate the fact it is accessible to people with lots of different abilities.

We are very excited to hear about the prospect of improved facilities within the park.

We are also excited about the environmental potential of the restoration of the designated tree collection and the tackling of invasive species. Being outdoors is so important for many of the children we support but when they are at home or in a hospital, it is hard for them to get out and play in nature. Having a beautiful and ecologically sustainable environment so near the hospice is therefore brilliant.

Making sure the park has a face-lift for the future is really exciting and we at CHAS are very supportive of this.

Please do feel free to contact me via the details above- I would be happy to discuss any aspect of my note above with you.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rami Okasha'.

Rami Okasha  
Chief Executive

### Keep the joy alive

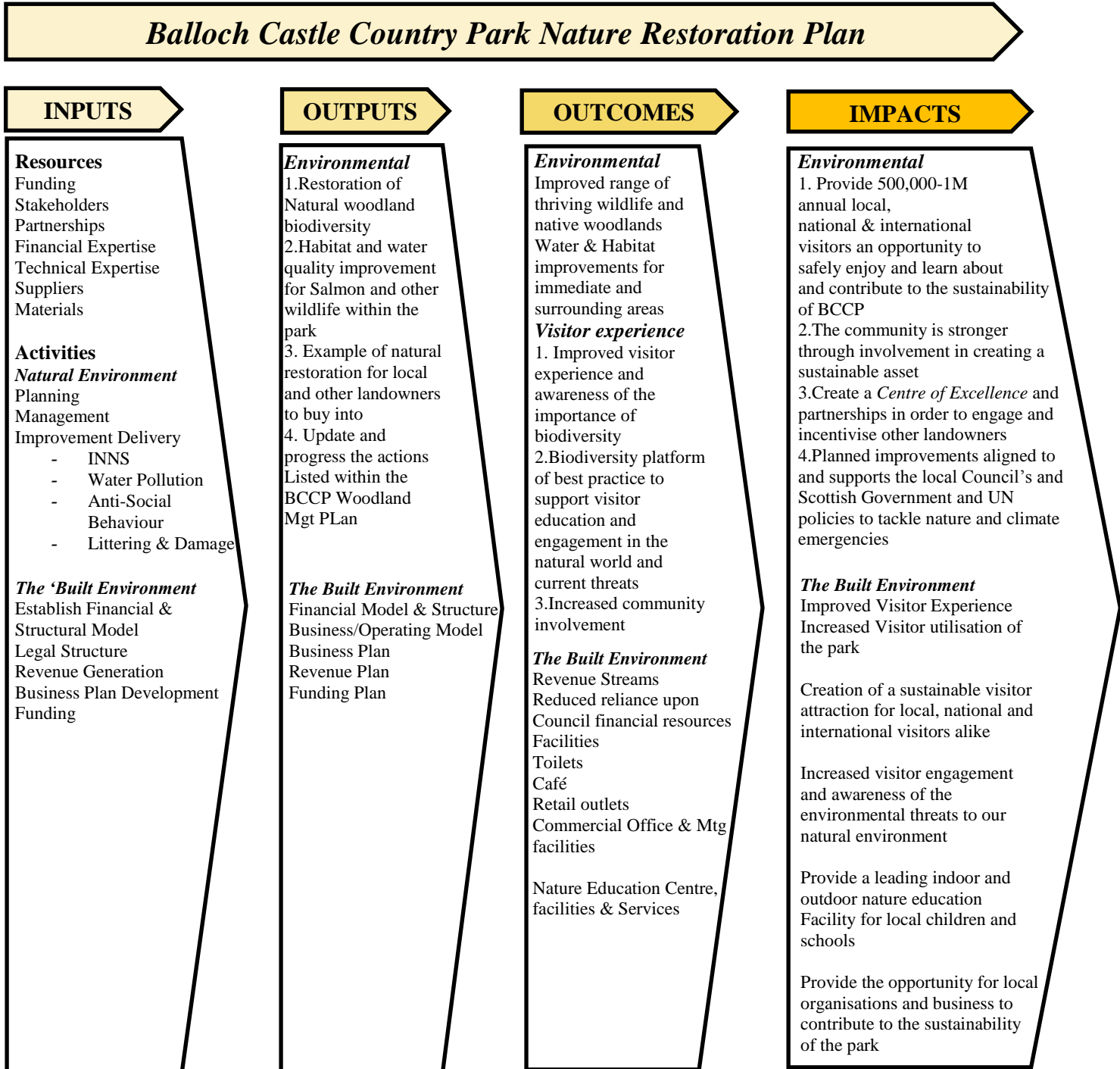
Rachel House Children's Hospice at Kinross . CHAS at Home Team . Robin House Children's Hospice at Balloch  
**Head Office and Registered Office:** Canal Court, 42 Craiglockhart Avenue, Edinburgh EH14 1LT  
Children's Hospices Across Scotland (known as CHAS) is a Scottish charity, SC019724, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).  
CHAS is a company limited by guarantee and is registered in Scotland, SC136410. VAT Registration number 214 8303 34.



# Summary of Total Inputs, Outcomes & Impacts

“What we want to achieve”

The chart below illustrates the impact of the Nature Restoration Plan will have both upon the natural environment, visitor engagement and experience and the communities, mapping back to show what we we will deliver and how we will do this.



## Potential Risks and Mitigation

### Key Risks

Risk	Impact	Probability	Existing Controls	Action Required	Lead Responsibility
Failure to secure funding to proceed with Stage 1&2	High	Medium	Seed funding from successful Riverwoods Pioneer Stage 2 submission	<p>Proceed with Riverwood Pioneer submission.</p> <p>Continue to explore other potential funding opportunities including crowdfunding.</p> <p>Identify recruitment needs in terms of financial skills needed to develop robust financial &amp; business model</p>	BCCPRG
Failure to agree business model & structure of the partnership with owner and leaseholders to address INNS	High	Medium	Continue positive discussion with West Dunbartonshire Council CEO and Green Space staff are ongoing with strong endorsement and support from CEO of WDC.	<p>Continue to develop and build upon good relationships with West Dunbartonshire Council leadership.</p> <p>Continue to develop good relationships with Glasgow City Council leadership. Within Stage 1 develop an appropriate operating model and finance model that demonstrates the financial, environmental, community and other benefits to WDC &amp; GDC</p>	BCCPRG/WDC CEO/GDC
Failure to agree business model & partnership with owner or leaseholders to address INNS & other Stage 2 goals	High	Medium	Continue positive discussions with West Dunbartonshire Council CEO and staff are ongoing with strong endorsement and support from CEO of WDC.	<p>Continue to develop good relationships with West Dunbartonshire Council leadership.</p> <p>Continue to develop good relationships with Glasgow City Council leadership.</p>	BCCPRG/WDC CEO/GDC

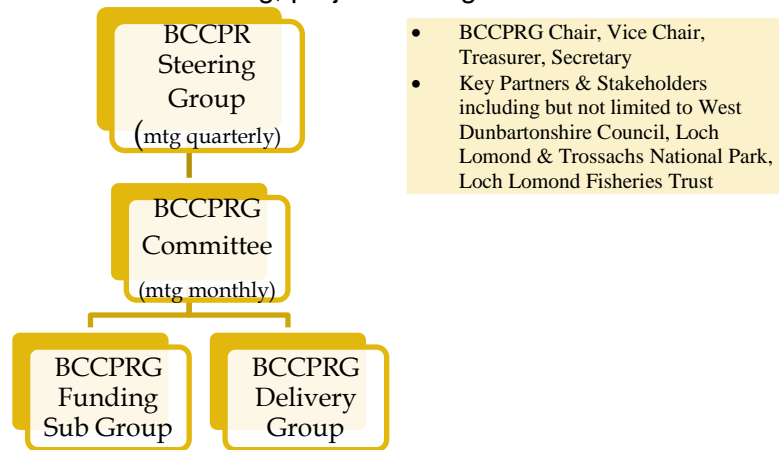


				Within Stage 1 develop an appropriate operating model and finance model that demonstrates the financial, environmental, community and other benefits to GDC.	
Failure to secure funding / investment to deliver Stage 3 'Built Asset' development	High	Medium	Focus upon developing the business and financial models delivered from Stage 1 and which clearly articulate the investment and resultant financial / potential revenue generation opportunities that reduce the current financial burden	Continue to develop good relationships with West Dunbartonshire Council leadership. Continue to develop good relationships with Glasgow City Council leadership. Within Stage 1 develop an appropriate operating model and finance model that demonstrates the financial, environmental, community and other benefits to WDC & GDC	BCCPRG/WDC CEO/GDC
Failure to secure technical resources to support and execute INNS eradication processes	High	Low	Continue to maintain dialogue and good relationship with Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust who have significant local knowledge and experience in surveying and addressing INNS treatment and native tree planting	Evaluate alternate sources of technical and operational support as a contingency and to provide alternative costs.	
Loss of key BCCPRG Members or Staff	Medium	Low	Shared leadership and transparency across the Team	Peer learning / cross training across the board to develop cross section of skills and experience.	

# CONTROL PHASE

## BCCPRG Management Structure

The BCCPRG committee currently has a Chair, Vice, Chair, Treasurer and Secretary as serving office bearers which is complimented by several ordinary committee members. We have a Chair with extensive skills and experience as a previous local councilor which provides strong relationship and engagement opportunities with key stakeholders and partners. We have a Vice Chair with 30 years of experience in journalism and broadcasting, community development, project management and marketing. Our remaining committee members bring a rich variety of experience including education and learning, project management and finance.



The precise nature and structure of the ‘Steering Group’ will be accurately defined once the business and operating model of BCCPRG has been agreed within Stage 1. It is planned that sub-groups will be required to focus upon individual operational project delivery and reporting and a sub-group to focus upon funding progress and reporting will be required.

In terms of resourcing then as indicated we plan require to recruit a financial/business consultant on a temporary basis to provide the skills required to successfully inform and deliver the objectives of Stage 1 including definition of a robust business and financial model. The need for a development manager has also been identified to develop and to manage the implementation of this restoration plan and its component stages. Initially this will be on a part time basis.

### Reporting / Metrics

Progress and performance measures and metrics will be identified to inform reporting of performance and progress versus defined KPI’s and targets to ensure on time delivery and long-term sustainment. Example of measures, metrics and targets would include measures relating to nature improvements, financial performance, visitor awareness, visitor engagement, educational utilisation etc.. Regular reporting would be via BCCPRG Monthly meetings and AGMs.

### Project Management

It is recognised that detailed project plans and schedules with the appropriate milestones, resources and timelines will be required for each operational project that underpins each stage and key objectives of this restoration plan. The responsibility for managing projects and such schedule will be the responsibility of the development manager.

# Appendix:

## Appendix 1 : Potential Funding Sources (working document)

### Initial view of Potential Grant Funding Opportunities

The Group created an initial table of grant funding opportunities which will be reviewed and updated.

#### **BALLOCH CASTLE COUNTRY PARK REGENERATION GROUP – GRANTS & FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES**

September 2022

FUNDER	SMALL GRANTS (<£10K) DETAILS	FUNDING PRIORITIES	TIMESCA LES
<b>Glasgow Airport's Flightpath</b>	Mainly wards of £5k and under <a href="https://www.glasgowairport.com/about-us/flightpath-fund/#anchor-gla-info-area-flightpath-fund">https://www.glasgowairport.com/about-us/flightpath-fund/#anchor-gla-info-area-flightpath-fund</a>	Employment, Environment, Social & Education	Cttee meets every 2 months
<b>Robertson Trust</b>	Wee Grants (up to £2k) tackling poverty and trauma and supporting emotional wellbeing. <a href="https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/funding/wee-grants">https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/funding/wee-grants</a>	Poverty and Trauma (esp childhood)	Meets regularly
<b>Lush Charity Pot</b>	Grants of £2-4k <a href="https://weare.lush.com/lush-life/our-giving/charity-pot-the-essential-guide/">https://weare.lush.com/lush-life/our-giving/charity-pot-the-essential-guide/</a>	Human Rights, Environment, Animal welfare	Meets regularly
<b>National Lottery – Awards for All</b>	Grants up to £10k <a href="https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland">https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland</a>		Ongoing
<b>Henry Smith Charity</b>	Various. <a href="https://www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk/">https://www.henrysmithcharity.org.uk/</a>	Reduce deprivation and social inequality	Ongoing
	<b>MEDIUM GRANTS (£10K - £50K)</b>		
<b>National Lottery</b>	£10k-£50k <a href="https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/grants-for-community-led-activity">https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/grants-for-community-led-activity</a>	Community led initiatives that support wellbeing, esp in deprived communities.	Ongoing
<b>Lottery Climate Action Fund</b>	Grants up to £50k <a href="https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/climate-action-fund-programme">https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/climate-action-fund-programme</a>		Ongoing
<b>Architectural</b>	Grants up to £40k <a href="https://ahfund.org.uk/grants/scotland/">https://ahfund.org.uk/grants/scotland/</a>	Various grants	Ongoing

<b>Heritage Fund</b>			
	<b>LARGE GRANTS (&gt;£50K)</b>		
<b>Scottish Land Fund (in partnership with Lottery)</b>	Grants up to £1million <a href="https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund">https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund</a>		Ongoing
<b>Scottish Landfill Communities Fund</b>	<a href="https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/scottish-landfill-communities-fund/looking-for-funding/">https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/scottish-landfill-communities-fund/looking-for-funding/</a>	According to the Eligibility Tracker, BCCPRG would be eligible	Ongoing
<b>NatureScot</b>	Nature Restoration Fund <a href="https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/nature-restoration-fund/nature-restoration-fund-how-apply">https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/nature-restoration-fund/nature-restoration-fund-how-apply</a>		Ongoing (various funds)
<b>Heritage Lottery Fund</b>	<a href="https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/what-we-fund">https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/what-we-fund</a>	BCCP ticks several eligibility criteria	Ongoing Various
	<b>OTHER</b>		
<b>NatureScot</b>	Better Places Fund <a href="https://ahfund.org.uk/grants/scotland/">https://ahfund.org.uk/grants/scotland/</a>	Funds wardens & rangers etc	
<b>NatureScot, Scottish Wildlife Trust &amp; Partners</b>	Riverwoods Investment Ready Demonstration Projects <a href="https://www.riverwoods.org.uk/project/riverwoods-investment-readiness-pioneers/">https://www.riverwoods.org.uk/project/riverwoods-investment-readiness-pioneers/</a>		30/09/22: Deadline to Note Interest. <b>DONE</b> 31/19/22: Deadline for Full Submission
<b>Keep Scotland Beautiful Upstream Battle</b>	Focus on River Clyde <a href="https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/upstream-battle/raising-awareness/">https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/upstream-battle/raising-awareness/</a>		

## Appendix 2: MSP Pam Gosal Letter of endorsement and support



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Pam Gosal MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland

Ruchir Shah  
Harbourside House  
110 Commercial Street  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6NF

9 March 2023

Our Ref PG2541

Dear Ruchir,

**Re: Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group**

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneers Project; I would like to support the phase 2 application of Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group.

As you will be aware, the group, which now has a formal constitution and stakeholder engagement document, has been working towards this application for some time now.

They were successful in their initial proposal receiving the second-highest number of votes, this has enabled them to revive £4000, this money was put towards producing a full development plan for the park.

The Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group's volunteers have also carried out a survey of park users and a count at all four entrances to the site.

Park users said they were appreciative of the park and recognised the need for the regeneration of the natural environment, a purposeful use of the castle, a stable block, accessible toilets, a café and educational facilities.

The research also identified an increase of at least 50 per cent in visitor numbers since the last official count in 2003 – with the total being close to one million per annum.

However, despite receiving an estimated one million visitors yearly, this vast park is suffering a rapid, managed decline under its current ownership.

Abandoned watercraft litter the waters, while invasive, non-native, self-seeding conifers and bamboo plague the land. Flooding and erosion undermine woodland, mature trees, and paths alike.

The Scottish Parliament Edinburgh EH99 1SP  
Pam.Gosal.MSP@Parliament.scot  
0131 348 5950



fb.pamgosalmsp



@pamgosalmsp

You're more likely to encounter anti-social behaviour or littering than organised events or volunteering opportunities. There are few accessible toilets, the castle is deteriorating, and there's nowhere to grab a drink or snack.

I think there are huge opportunities to tackle these issues and improve the park.

That is why I am supportive of Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group's mission of bringing stakeholders and park users together to restore nature, heritage and recreational assets and explore income generation opportunities. With a focus on health, wellbeing, and improving biodiversity in the park.

Yours sincerely,

**Pam Gosal MSP**

### **Appendix 3: Archie Wilson River Leven Cruising Club & owner: Tree Surgery & Sawmill Ltd): Letter of endorsement and support**

For my family Balloch Park is an invaluable asset to our local community.

On a personal level walking in the park offers me an opportunity to educate my boys on trees -there are a wonderful variety of veteran native trees(my passion is teaching kids the historical functionality of trees).

It is an absolutely stunning space and has an immeasurable impact on people's health and mental wellbeing.

As an owner of a tree surgery and sawmill company we travel all around Scotland and rarely come across a collection of such beautiful old trees in such a stunning setting as Balloch Park.

More and more medics are understanding the value of immersing oneself in nature when coping with modern life. I would love the opportunity to explore setting up a business in the park in education and helping people with their mental health.

This would be impossible if we don't have the Park for everyone to enjoy.

Kind regards

Archie Wilson

(Owner of Tree Surgery and Sawmill Ltd)

## Appendix 4: Martin Rooney, Leader of West Dunbartonshire Council and a local elected member in the Lomond Ward -Letter of endorsement and support

### West Dunbartonshire Council

**Councillor Martin Rooney** B.Sc. (Hons) Soc Pol(Open)

Municipal Buildings

College Street

Dumbarton G82 1NR

Tel: (01389) 737579

Mobile: 07909 890 846

E-mail: martin.rooney@west-dunbarton.gov.uk



MR/SP

Sally Page.  
Chair BCCPRG.  
Claddock,  
Gartocharn,  
G83 8NQ.

13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**By E-mail**

### **Balloch Castle Balloch Country Park Nature Restoration Plan**

As Leader of West Dunbartonshire Council and a local elected member in the Lomond Ward, I am absolutely delighted to be able to lend my support to the Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group ambitious plans for our area.

Balloch Castle Country Park is one of the finest public spaces in the West of Scotland with fantastic views of the iconic Loch Lomond and has significant potential which will be realised through the development of the Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group masterplan.

The Council is committed to our local environment in ensuring areas are protected, enhanced and valued and our public spaces are attractive and welcoming to every one of the one million visitors who pass through the gates annually.

One of our key strategic priorities is to ensure our residents feel pride in their local neighbourhood and also to increase and promote diversity of habitat and species. Our communities and our residents are our biggest assets, we aim to ensure that West Dunbartonshire has resilient and thriving communities, in which people support each other, take responsibility for their local area and can take advantage of the community empowerment act.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance both of community action and also of local green spaces in supporting health among people of all ages which is particularly important in an area such as West Dunbartonshire. Physical health, mental wellbeing and life satisfaction are all enhanced through access to and use of parks and green spaces. Our residents recognise the asset that is Balloch Park and that is reflected in the formation of the Regeneration Group.

The Council shares the values of Regeneration Group and will work with members to raise awareness of environmental impacts and harness community capacity to address them by promoting positive environmental action and collaborative working.

We also support the group's commitment of raising awareness and providing education on biodiversity and the importance of natural habitat to create, protect, enhance, and manage sustainable biodiversity on Council managed land and assets.

The group's proposal to undertake a tree planting program and water course clearing will all improve the conditions for aquatic life and help improve water quality in the Loch and Leven all of which



enhances biodiversity. This is aligned with both the ambitions outlined in our strategic plan to create a greener future and also current national policies for action on climate and nature.

Balloch Park is renowned for its unparalleled landscapes and is unique in being the only registered historic designed landscape within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. It also benefits from excellent transport links to Glasgow and beyond by road and rail

There is opportunity to enhance the natural landscape with additional amenities including a slipway, café and toilets. Longer term the potential for improvement and benefit to all through upgrading the Park is huge.

The Council values parks and green spaces and recognises the critical role they play in people's lives, providing space for recreation and physical activity, to meet and socialise, to reflect and think. We will work with the group to champion the value of Balloch Castle Country Park to enhance and protect the area today and for future generations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Rooney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**COUNCILLOR MARTIN ROONEY, BSC.HONS  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

## Appendix 5: Jackie Baillie MSP, Dumbarton Constituency



Constituency Office  
6 Church Street  
Dumbarton  
G82 1QL  
Tel: 01389 734214  
Email: jackie.baillie.msp@parliament.scot

Our Ref: JB27133

14 March 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in support of Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group.

I was delighted that members of the group secured a grant as part of the first phase of the Riverwoods Pioneer funding and are now working towards a bid for the second phase.

This additional funding would allow them to engage professional help to formulate a masterplan and to initially eradicate invasive, non-native species within the park. They are also looking to plant trees, improve water courses, clear the burns, the shoreline and the head of the River Leven to improve conditions for Atlantic Salmon.

They have a clear vision of engagement with neighbouring landowners hoping that good practice will spread and slowly the natural environment will improve. Their environmental aims are clear.

The group have already carried out a public survey, to ensure that their priorities align with those of the community. They plan to restore and repurpose the castle and stable Block to include a coffee shop with the aim to fundraise for the local Children's Hospices Across Scotland facility, Robin House.

Balloch Park is very accessible due to great transport links and it is estimated that there are approximately one million visits per year.

This group are intent on improving the park which will have a positive impact on the entire local area.

I have no hesitation in recommending this group for funding.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Baillie MSP  
Dumbarton Constituency

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group would like to thank all at the Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneers initiative for the funding and advice needed to produce this Outline Nature Restoration Plan 2023. We are also very grateful to the many people who have contributed information and letters of support.