

**Balloch Castle Country Park Regeneration Group
Minutes of Trustees Meeting held on Thursday 8/8/24 @ 7pm
Balloch House Hotel**

Present: Sally, Audrey, Matt, Gillian, Fraser McLaurin, Cat attended via Teams.

Sally welcomed all to the meeting.

Previous minutes proposed by Sally, seconded by Audrey.

Email Michelle Lynn, WDC Assets Officer, for follow up on the possibility of reopening the kiosk in the Castle and to find out what is happening to the South Lodge. Gillian

Fraser has developed the Balloch Park App which covers the history of the Park, facilities and orientation. He currently charges £2.99 which covers his running costs. Fraser is passionate about the history of the Park and is concerned that it could be lost in time. We will speak to WDC at our next Partnership meeting to see if they can promote the App on their notice boards etc.

Audrey suggested we work with Fraser on a Living History Project.

Fraser has worked with Paul Murdoch on a short film based in the Park, Paul to be invited to our AGM.

Cat will run a training session for Microsoft 365, w/c 26/8/24.

Audrey gave an overview of the walkabout meeting with Ian Bain, WDC Greenspace Manager, unfortunately Michelle Lynn and Gillian Neil were unable to attend. Notes below:

“WDC and BCCPRG Partnership meeting on site at BCCP, 23/05/4

In attendance: Ian Bain, Sally Page, Audrey Baird

Apologies: Michelle Lynn, Gillian Neil, Gillian Carke, Matt Buckland

Information

- According to Ian, the WDC/BCCPRG draft partnership agreement is still with the Council's lawyers awaiting comments.
- The Council is investigating a new site within BCCP for the proposed mountain bike trail that was previously being planned for long established woodland behind the Castle. The new site is the area of the former tree nursery.

- Sally suggested appropriate commercial sponsorship could be sought for specific projects, including for the maintenance of the walled garden.
- The thinking around maintenance and felling of ash trees with dieback has changed and Ian and his team are considering how best to protect the veteran ash on the main lawn and how to ensure members of the public are not at risk.
- Ian agreed to ask for vegetation smothering a veteran Yew tree on the lawn to be removed.
- Ian confirmed WDC would provide maintenance materials for any of the volunteer jobs identified.
- Robotic lawnmowers, which could free up staff time for other tasks in the Park, are not currently being considered.

Actions

- Ian agreed that BCCPRG should pursue joint working with CHAS, on the basis that the partnership agreement will be forthcoming. Audrey to make contact with CHAS to arrange a discussion on progressing the art/banners project, as well as the pop-up cafe idea.
- Ian agreed BCCPRG members could assist with sprucing up signage in the Park as well as assisting with the ongoing maintenance of tree saplings and helping with repairs to picnic benches. Ian agreed to arrange a meeting with Gillan and MAC to discuss volunteering further. He also agreed that space within the Stable Block could be made available to store materials like paint etc.
- Ian agreed to seek advice on whether or not commercial sponsors could be approached, specifically with respect to the walled garden which is in need of specific repairs, including to the oak frame for the wisteria and also tree regeneration damaging the stone walls."

The Partnership Agreement sent to WDC on 23/10/23 is still outstanding, Sally contacted Peter Hessett, WDC, Chief Executive on 22/7/24 to ask for his help to progress this.

Michelle Lynn to be contacted again for a date to access North Lodge with Grand Bequests drone.

Audrey and Karon Battersby attended the WDC Biodiversity Event in June, useful contacts made. Audrey will register with the Conservation Trust.

Sally and Gillian met up with Natasha from Balloch Castle Heritage, she is keen to mount an exhibition about the Castle, the foyer area in the Castle could be a possibility, we can suggest this to Natasha.

Sally met up with staff at Dumfries House, Sally suggested to them that they could use Balloch Park as a site to show students the issues with INNS as they have largely overcome the problem at Dumfries House. They are happy to host WDC officers to show them possible programmes which could be run in Balloch Park.

CHAS Arts Project

Audrey has written an initial brief for the project and will liaise with CHAS, Cat will work with Audrey on funding applications. Matt will speak to the LLTNP Planning Dept to find out if planning permission would be required to hang banners.

Action Plan/Green Shoots Document

Matt will incorporate Audrey's suggestions into the Action plan and once agreed by Trustees and WDC/BCCPRG Agreement signed off we will present it to WDC. Matt and Gillian will meet up to discuss the Sensory Garden Project.

Contact WDC to set up a partnership meeting in October.

EFTEC

We are currently pursuing funding opps to pay for their report, awaiting outcome of application to Strathleven Foundations Helping Hand Fund.

Our website renewal has been paid and been transferred into Cat's name.

Cat to check with Karn that he is still happy to manage the website for us.

Sally and Gillian will meet up to discuss the invite list for our AGM, Facebook to be updated and membership to be contacted. Sally will contact Fraser at The Reporter to ask if they will do an article.

Teams meeting to be booked for Monday 2/9/24 to finalise AGM details.

Matt and Fraser will meet up to discuss (orientation and interpretation) signage.

Speak to Ian Bain and MAC to discuss voluntary opportunities that we could advertise at our AGM.

Sally thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

DONM - AGM 5/9/24 @ 7pm.