

# The Carse of Stirling Partnership Newsletter Summer 2014

## Background Information

Over the last year, a group of 30 local people and organisations who live, work, use or visit the area – or to put it in jargon “have a stake” in the area – were invited to embark on this project. The group (“Stakeholder Panel”) was challenged to look at the area in an integrated way – in more jargon “use an ecosystems approach”.

The challenge was to consider the wide range of benefits that are derived from the land in the Carse of Stirling. The Carse is a mosaic of farmland, mosses, woodlands, hills, the natural and cultural heritage, villages, businesses, buildings (old and new), the communities and of course people.



*Looking down on the patchwork of the Carse from the Gargunnoch Hills*

It is one big living ecosystem in which we have our place and which we value, and where all parts are connected so that the health of one part will potentially have wider impacts across the system.

A key aim for the first year was to come up with a collective Vision to guide the future of the Carse, and to propose actions that could be taken to improve all aspects of life and work on the Carse. The Vision and a proposed Benefits Action Plan has been prepared, and can be downloaded from the Stirling Council website:

<http://www.stirling.gov.uk/services/community-life-and-leisure/your-community/community-information/stirling-carse>

## Moving Forward

The Stakeholder Panel has now been constituted as a formal body, the Carse of Stirling Partnership, made up of members representing different interests in the Carse of Stirling.

It is proposed that the majority of members will be farmers or landowners, and other members will represent community, recreation, environment and heritage interests.

## The Benefits Action Plan

The Benefits Action Plan is divided into six inter-related themes:

- Agriculture
- Habitats & Wildlife
- Landscape & Sense of Place
- Flood Management
- Low Carbon Economy
- Communities, Recreation & Tourism

We ran a competition for all primary schools in the Carse for children to produce art work that reflected what they liked about the Carse of Stirling.



This is the winning picture, produced by Kirsty Flynn of Buchlyvie Primary School. It is now the cover of the Action Plan document!

Scottish Natural Heritage is now funding a further one year “development phase” to help the group to progress with the Action Plan. Four Action Groups have been set up to develop a few initial pilot projects to take forward priorities from the Action Plan.

Please get in touch with the main contact for each group if you are interested in getting involved, or would like more information.

As a constituted organisation, we will be able to apply for funding and work in partnership with other organisations for the benefit of all who live & work in the Carse of Stirling.

Office bearers: Chair: John Armstrong  
Vice Chair: Sandra Stewart  
Secretary: Stuart Ogg & Laura Graham  
Treasurer: Bob Sparkes

## Communities, Recreation & Tourism Group

The long term ambition is to link the Carse Villages by a network of off-road and quiet-road routes. This would not only be good for local people but would have a positive benefit on tourism to the area. To this end, our immediate task is to identify, inspect and report on all rights-of-way, Core Paths and other known footpaths within the Carse, in order to discover any "missing links".

The current focus of the group is on cycle routes through the Carse and in particular to find a solution to the missing 1 mile of path between Gargunnoch and Cambusbarron. Closing the gap will help to complete a longer distance route through the Carse and into Stirling.

The group are looking to find a route in conjunction with local landowners to avoid any negative impact.

The group are also working closely with Gargunnoch Community Trust who have been trying to progress the same path improvements for some time.

*Contact: Bob Sparkes  
[bobsparkes@fsmail.net](mailto:bobsparkes@fsmail.net)*

## Landscape and Sense of Place Group

The group has an initial focus on developing a Carse of Stirling "Brand", which can be used to identify and promote produce, places, activities, and experiences in the Carse of Stirling. This will also involve gathering information for a website which can be used to share information and stories about the Carse of Stirling.

There is an existing Facebook page which we would invite everyone in the Carse of Stirling to like!

<https://www.facebook.com/CarseOfStirlingProject>

*Contact: Keith Graham  
[jkeithgraham@hotmail.com](mailto:jkeithgraham@hotmail.com)*

## Flood Management and Carbon Sub Group

This group combines 2 themes. The initial focus is on flood management, with the proposal to commission a study looking at the issues around farming and land management in the Carse including case studies of four farms in different locations, and also along the catchment of the Goodie Water.

With collaboration between land owners, the group hopes to do some work to improve the ecological and morphological status of the Goodie as well as tackle priority flooding issues. But first the group would like to understand the Goodie and the possible options for improvement, and to look at four farms as case studies.

A brief has been developed for the study, with input from the farmers involved – Duncan MacEwen, David Bennie, Robin Kyle, Iain Beaton, Kate Sankey and Alan Turner. The next step is to secure funding for the study.

*Contact: Ronald Graham  
[ronaldggsc@aol.com](mailto:ronaldggsc@aol.com)*

## Farming and Wildlife Group

This group integrates Agriculture & Food with Habitats & Wildlife. Two initiatives are currently being developed as follows:

A farmer survey of habitats and wildlife on the Carse

Establishing a Carse of Stirling Clover Project

The aim of the survey is find out from farmers which wildlife species they currently have and used to have on their farms, and identify the changes that have taken place on their farms in their lifetime. This information will be used to identify future projects to help retain and increase our 'iconic species' in the Carse.

The survey has already been piloted to around 15 farms, and the ambition is to get it completed by as many farms in the Carse as possible.

If you are a farmer and interested in being part of the survey, and/or the group, please get in touch with us.

### The Clover Project

This project aims to raise awareness of the importance of clover to the health and vitality of pollinators (such as bumblebees).

Clover seeds will be provided to Carse schools, community groups and farmers to plant.

*Contact: Sandra Stewart  
[sandra@farmingandconservation.co.uk](mailto:sandra@farmingandconservation.co.uk)*



## Everyone in the Carse can be Involved!

Anyone and everyone who lives or works in the Carse of Stirling can get involved. There are lots of groups and individuals and businesses already doing great work to make the Carse a special and wonderful place.

By getting involved in the Carse of Stirling Partnership we can all work together to make it even better.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 12th August, 7pm at the Inn at Kippen. Please COME ALONG if you want to be involved.

## For more Information about the Carse of Stirling Partnership, please contact:

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