
CLYDE MUIRSHIEL PARK AUTHORITY



Annual Report 2009-10



Approved the Park Authority Joint Committee
February 2011.

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The past year has seen the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority deliver on its aim to provide services that meet the needs of visitors and the communities within the Clyde Muirshiel area.
- 1.2 The achievements and setbacks are summarised below and described more fully in the main report that follows. The full report is available from Park HQ or as a downloadable document on www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk.

- 1.3 The long term £1 million project of the Greenock Cut has reached fruition with the completion of the exhibition within the Cornalees Visitor Centre and the formal opening of the project on 26 March 2010. To coincide with the completion of this project the visitor centre was renamed the "Greenock Cut Visitor Centre" after public consultation (see section 4.04).



- 1.4 The Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) reported that there was an expenditure of £67.52 million in 2008, a 4% increase over 2007 within the Park influence area. The report also estimates annual visitor numbers at 1.2 million which is in general agreement with Park derived estimates of 1.5 million visitors annually (see section 7.02). However, over the year visitor numbers dropped slightly for the second consecutive year (see section 4.03).

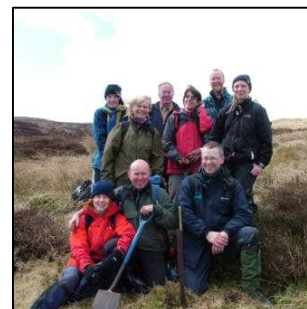
- 1.5 Our outdoor activities team delivered 576 courses to 2,306 children and 1,423 adults. There is an observed downturn in educational and social work spending in outdoor experiences, especially in school groups attending for multi-activity courses (see section 8.04).



- 1.6 The SRANI partnership project continues to bring in external funding and provide path infrastructure developments at Castle Semple (see section 4.07). The externally funded development officer has been key to these achievements.



- 1.7 The Park continues to deliver conservation projects on a range of species including Juniper and Hen Harrier, together with woodland management programmes at Muirshiel, Parkhill and Cornalees. The Park has successfully responded to the identification of the non-native weed *Crassula helmsii* at three sites.

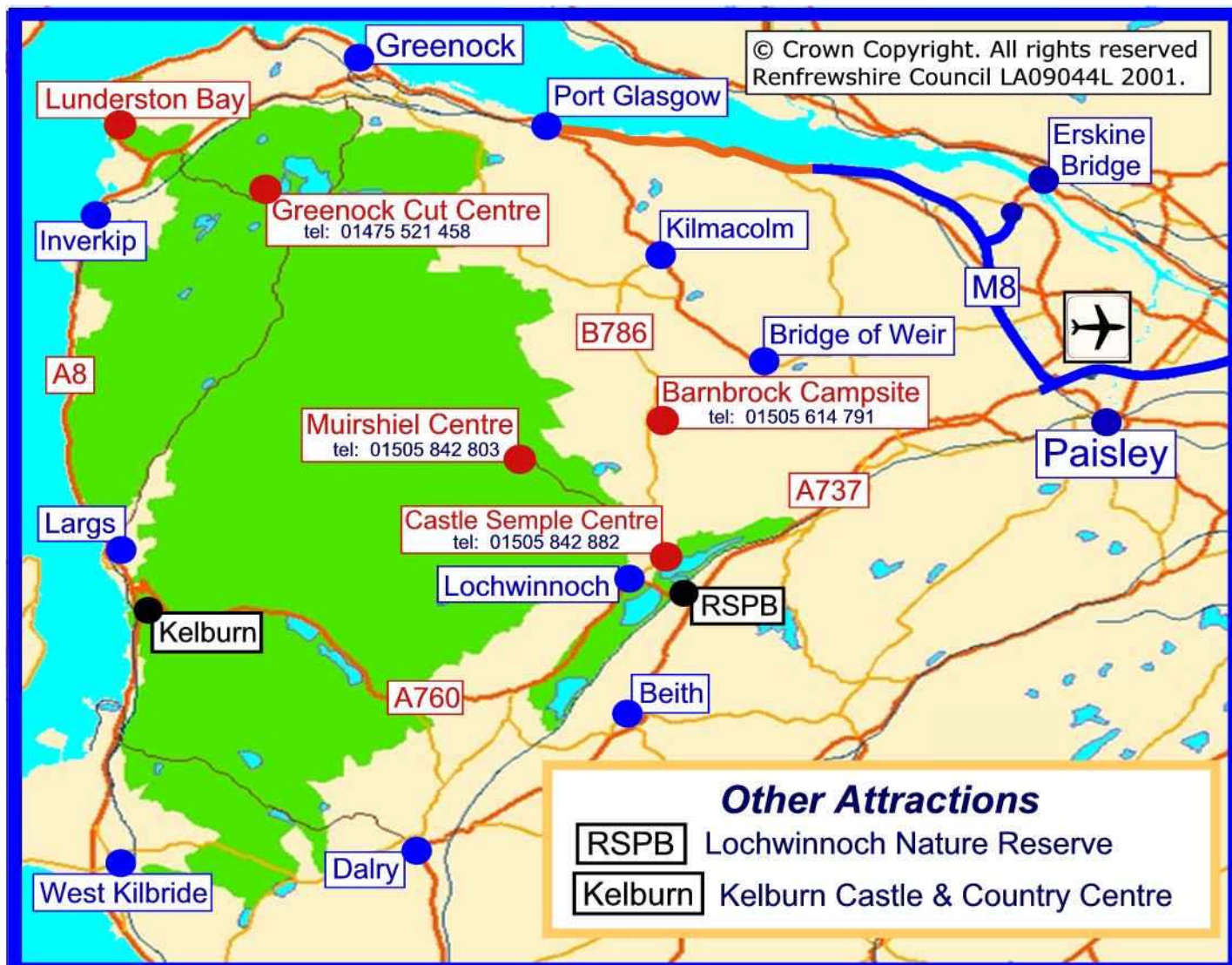


- 1.8 The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Countryside Ranger Service is the largest staff unit in the Park. Scottish Natural Heritage has produced a new annual reporting format which the Park's management has adopted as a monitoring and reporting tool. The submission to SNH was presented to the Park Authority in December 2010 in a paper titled "*Ranger Service Output Measures*". The outputs are reproduced in full in section 11 of this annual report.



- 1.9 At the start of the year Scottish Natural Heritage ceased direct funding to the Park Authority (section 10.03) which transferred to the local authority contributions. Due to one-off compensation payments arising from the implementation of the "Single Status" initiative, the Park has entered the 2010/11 year with a deficit of £28,842.

2.0 Location of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park



The Park Authority is a Joint Committee of Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Councils.

3.0 Introduction

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is an internationally designated landscape of 265 sq. km adjacent to the Firth of Clyde. Its coastal zone, river valleys, hills and high moors have been shaped by man over the centuries. Today the area is still actively farmed by hill farmers. On the boundaries of the Park are the urban settlements of Inverclyde, the Garnock Valley, Paisley and the coastal town of Largs. The area is easily accessible to over 2 million people in west central Scotland. We attract an estimated 1.5 million visitors annually who tell us that they visit because it is a special place with beautiful landscapes and views, a diversity of wildlife and easily accessible facilities for informal recreation, leisure and tourism. The Park is a rich resource for formal education and lifelong learning. It contributes to visitors' physical and mental well-being. The management of the Park provides a cohesive force and is an economic driver for the rural communities. To many people it is the only countryside they ever visit.

Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority is a public body providing recreation, conservation and tourism services across the Regional Park. It owns no land but directly manages sites at Muirshiel, Cornalees (now Greenock Cut), Lunderston Bay, Barnbrock and Castle Semple. The Park Authority is a Joint Committee of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils.

The Park's original Aims were revised with the intention of having a new set of Aims approved for the 10th anniversary of the signing of the original Park Charter. After public consultation the following were adopted by the Park Authority in September 2006: -

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, biodiversity and cultural heritage of Clyde Muirshiel Park
- To encourage and enable learning, understanding and enjoyment of Clyde Muirshiel Park
- To promote and foster environmentally sustainable development for the social and economic well being of the people and communities within the Clyde Muirshiel Park area

Increasingly the benefits delivered by the Park Authority are recognised as making a positive contribution to wider national and local agendas in the areas of health improvement, active lifestyles, community engagement, environmental justice and inclusion.

This report will present the work of the Park Authority and its staff in the year 2009 to 2010. The activities described will show how, and to what degree the Park has fulfilled these aims.

4.0 RECREATION AND ACCESS

4.01 Access Legislation and the Code

The Ranger Service in particular has been at the forefront of disseminating the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and its key messages to landowners/managers and recreational users of the Park.

The Park is represented on access forums or officer working groups covering the three local authority areas, bringing its experience and knowledge for the benefit of the forums and the implementation of responsible access. Core Path Plans have been adopted in the three partner council areas.

4.02 People and Car Counters

The year saw a programme of installation and updating of car and people counters at Park sites.

Car counters.

- Entrance to Castle Semple Car Park; installed in Aug 2008 and recorded 136,695 cars in 2009/10.
- A replacement will be installed at the entrance to Muirshiel in the early summer of 2010 and new counters will be installed at the Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) Centre and Lunderston Bay.

People Counters.

Counters are located in the centre at Castle Semple and on paths around the Park.

- Muirshiel Mine track. Approx 10,000 people per year.
- Johnshill, Lochwinnoch. Approx 7,000 people per year
- On Greenock Cut, near centre. Approx 11,000 people per year
- Locherwood Community Woodland. Approx 7,000 people per year
- Path near to pedestrian bridge over the River Calder, Lochwinnoch. Approx 60,000 people per year.

4.03 Visitor Numbers 2006 to 2010

The Park has been recording visitor numbers to centres; numbers taking part and spectating at events and numbers of pupils in our schools programmes. These figures are detailed below and elsewhere in this report. It is recognised, though, that these are only a fraction of our users and visitors in the Park. Extrapolations from actual counts, sample surveys and estimates suggest that the Park has about 1.5 million users per year.

Previous years had seen dramatic increases in visitor numbers to our sites, which had in recent years stabilised. These increases were the result of the marketing and promotional efforts together with the improvement in the range of facilities, activities, catering services and retail stock. Whilst these efforts have continued, the visitor numbers into centres decreased this year, for the second year in succession. The summer season, especially the second part of the summer was particularly poor weather.

At Castle Semple Centre, visitor numbers dropped marginally in the 09/10 year by 2% to 78,506.

Muirshiel visitor numbers dropped by 24% to 8,805. In part this is due to the snow in the latter part of the year (Jan – March 2010) and the fact that there was no Hen Harrier TV viewing project during the 2009 season.

This year, 2009/10, at the Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) Visitor Centre there has been a decrease of 33 visitors to 9,818.

4.03.1 Castle Semple Centre

Centre open daily.

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	5108	3432	3518	3905	5211
February	5266	5042	5367	4525	5178
March	5092	5779	5334	6165	6816
April	8346	9838	7209	8856	
May	7843	7632	10042	8850	
June	7515	8044	7880	8313	
July	12338	10678	10678	8680	
August	10407	8823	9227	7431	
September	6880	6944	6611	6379	
October	6208	6325	4710	6069	
November	3602	4067	4447	3869	
December	2585	4151	4559	2854	
Totals	81190	80755	79582	75896	

4.03.2 Muirshiel Centre

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	602	231*	352*	425*	278*
February	924	457*	457*	452*	302*
March	600	687*	906*	573*	365*
April	2218	2603	1534	1298	
May	1701	1934	1831	1343	
June	1946	1485	1258	935	
July	2413	2211	1605	1132	
August	1794	1485	1130	1081	
September	968	1298	926	787	
October	1204	1027	809	814	
November	316*	378*	467*	278*	
December	206*	431*	279*	192*	
Totals	14892	14227	11556	9310	

*weekend opening only

Mar 05 includes Easter w/end; 5 Dec – 7 Jan 06 Closed due to water pump/supply problem.

4.03.3 Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) Centre

After being closed for more than two years the Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) Centre opened on 5 April 2003.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	857	221*	264*	147*	189*
February	877	374*	380*	Nil	255*
March	999	656*	1259*	201*	301
April	2558	2482	1217	1575	
May	1954	1304	1969	1303	
June	1996	1368	1398	1172	
July	2250	2036	1597	1360	
August	2005	1514	1304	1122	
September	2814	1637	973	1561	
October	1058	1092	604	732	
November	204*	380*	369*	187*	
December	134*	264*	72*	61*	
Totals	17706	13328	11406	9421	

*weekend opening only

**closed weekends

4.04 Greenock Cut

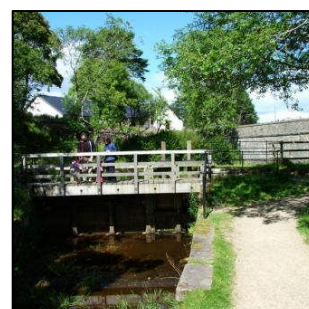
The long term £1 million project of the Greenock Cut has reached fruition with the completion of the exhibition within the Cornalees Visitor Centre and the formal opening of the project on 26 March 2010.

During the 2 year capital restoration works on this ancient monument disruption to physical access had been minimal. A dry stone wall bench seat was built at the start of the Cut by the West of Scotland Branch of the Dry Stone Walling Association. The route has been well used since restoration and a people counter has been installed.



Within the Centre an interpretive exhibition has been installed. This features interactive elements and a “walk through a section of the Cut”. Additional resources will be required to develop the necessary signage and any outdoor interpretation.

To coincide with the completion of this project the visitor centre was renamed the “Greenock Cut Visitor Centre” after public consultation.



The Park Authority was the project originator and secured the funding package before handing this over to Inverclyde Council for implementation. Other partners have been Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire, Historic Scotland and Scottish Water.

4.05 Activities

The Park continues to offer a range of outdoor recreational activities, mostly at Castle Semple. Monthly “what’s on” and activity course posters are produced. For the more serious water-sports participant we offer a range of courses, some certificated, as described in section 8.04.

4.06 Access Initiatives

Park staff continue to offer assistance and advice to the various access forums and groups as they develop. The Park is represented on Renfrewshire’s Access Steering Group and Local Outdoor Access Forum; Inverclyde Access Steering Group; North Ayrshire’s Access Forum.

This year saw the development of a survey on hill-walkers through recording their routes using a GPS unit. This will be an ongoing activity at Muirshiel Centre for two years before transferring elsewhere in the Park. The results will be useful for surveying impact of recreation in the Special Protection Area, assisting in the production of walk guides and the allocation of future resources.

Responding to concerns about responsible dog ownership the Park held a one day “Pawsativity” event to give advice and highlight positive actions.

The Park hosted part of a Scottish Natural Heritage initiative, and welcomed a “Black and Ethnic Minority” group visit. For many it was their first experience of the countryside since their arrival in Glasgow more than 2 years ago.

Responding to a different need, the Castle Semple site became the finale for a Processional Play that wound its way through Lochwinnoch.

4.07 South Renfrewshire Access Network Initiative (SRANI)

This multi agency project has, since 2002, made dramatic improvements to the access infrastructure in the Castle Semple area. The developments have advanced in phases with strong community consultation and involvement at all stages.



The Park Authority has played a key role in SRANI and has helped to obtain more than £1.15 million in external funding so far. The major funders have been:-

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Westrans (through Renfrewshire Council) | £510k |
| • Sustrans | £198k |
| • Renfrewshire Council | £216k |
| • Scottish Executive (Forward Scotland) | £120k |
| • Scottish Natural Heritage | £115k |
| • Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park | £19k |
| • Heritage Lottery Fund | £22.5k |
| • WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd) | £8.5k |
| • Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire | £8k |
| • RSPB | £3k |
| • Lochwinnoch Millennium Events Group | £0.3k |

- Johnstone and Villages Local Area Comm. £2k

The Conservation Statement and Management Proposals report for heritage features within the SRANI project area was completed. This report can now be downloaded at www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk/Downloads.aspx

A part time Path Development Officer has been in post since June 2005. The postholder provides a point of contact for the communities, partners and funders and has developed funding strategies for projects as required. Following external funding, the post has now been extended for further months to allow submission of additional applications for funding for the next stages of the project. It is hoped the next steps in development of the main route (now called Semple Trail) will involve creation and upgrade of additional route options, conservation of heritage features, biodiversity enhancements and provision of signage and interpretation.

4.08 Recreation Events

The Park develops and delivers a range of recreational events, devised by Rangers, Activity staff and others. Many of these are described throughout this document. The Park is also a resource utilised by outside agencies. Local Authority Outdoor Education units, Sports Development units, Outward Bound, commercial organisations, sports clubs, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and Boys Brigade groups for example use the Park frequently.

The Park hosts a number of active watersports clubs who run regattas, training sessions and provide social as well as sporting opportunities to all ages.



4.09 Paths to Health programme

"Paths to Health" and Community Health Walks continued around the Park. Weekly Lochwinnoch walks, started by our Rangers in Jan 2005 continued all year. On the Greenock Cut school sponsored walks and Ramblers' groups from all over Scotland enjoy the unique "Cut" experience.

The culmination of the Renfrewshire Walking Network programme was a 10 mile walk from Paisley to Castle Semple in August. This was the sixth year of the event, attracting 70 walkers and we will support efforts to develop this annual event as part of an "Active Weekend" incorporating the Paisley 10k road race.

These walking networks are burgeoning and the Park Authority is supporting and encouraging these groups and this type of activity. Walks taking place are highlighted in our What's On Guide and in Lochwinnoch weekly walks were led by Rangers. This year's walks had 1,789 participants. Parent and pushchair guided walks entitled "Slinky Strollers" are based at Castle Semple Centre and take place on Thursday's over most of the year.



5.0 Biodiversity & Nature Conservation

5.01 Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP's)

The Park staff continue to implement actions in the Ayrshire and Renfrewshire (including Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire) Action Plans.

- Monitoring of birds of prey such as hen harriers and other important birds is ongoing. Six sites are monitored for peregrines. Seabirds and wetland birds were counted as part of national initiatives.
- The fenced 17ha moorland site at the Cample Burn continues to have volunteer groups planting young Juniper brought on by various propagation techniques. The Juniper restoration scheme has been grant aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage and Hunterston Estates.
- Seasonal Ranger staff have contributed a variety of reports including a study of reptiles at Muirshiel, a rock-pool species guide and a water vole survey in Parkhill wood.
- *Crassula helmsii* was identified by botanists in December 2009 at a site beside the RSPB centre, Lochwinnoch. Subsequently this invasive non-native weed was confirmed in three sites within the Regional Park. The Park Authority led a successful multi-agency programme of action, including field survey, collation of survey data, staff training, public information and control measures.

5.02 Woodland Plans

At Muirshiel Country Park the first phase of improvements is coming to an end after 6 years. New paths, bridges and picnic sites have been constructed and sculptures and other art works have been created. Woodland management has continued across the whole area as part of the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. Fixed point photography and plant surveys undertaken each year provide the means of comparison of tree growth and other slow processes.

Public consultation has taken place on plans for Parkhill Wood. The responses were collated and a modified draft plan is being prepared for consideration the Park Authority.

At Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) plans have been drawn up to clear fell all the conifers in the plantation behind the centre and to re-plant with broadleaved trees. The small pond will be enlarged to improve the area as a resource for visiting schools and to increase the diversity of habitat.

5.03 Water Quality at Castle Semple Loch

At Castle Semple Loch (a Site of Special Scientific Interest) the Park Authority has an unrivalled knowledge of the water quality. The loch has a eutrophic standard of water quality with relatively high levels of total phosphate and chlorophyll-a. As part of ongoing water quality management of Castle Semple Loch, Park staff have continued the programme of sampling, recording, reporting and implementing action on water quality.

The results of the summer 2009 monitoring programme were reported to the Park Authority in December. A large variety of parameters are measured, and in general the water quality continues to improve.

Monitoring of water quality is required to assist the safe operation of water based activities and is also an important determinant of biodiversity.

5.04 Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make a major contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation in the Park. Many of the tasks they achieve for example control of invasive species, establish native species and develop habitats are identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Volunteers are discussed further in Education and Understanding (section 8.02).

5.05 Crawhin Reservoir

With financial assistance from Scottish Water works were carried out on two artificial islands, suitable for use by breeding Red-throated Divers were completed.

6.0 Landscape and Built Heritage

6.01 Renewable Energy

There is considerable wind resource across the Park and as a result much commercial pressure to build windfarms in and adjacent to the Park.

The preparation of a Framework Guidance Document was completed with its adoption by the Park Authority in February 2005. Essentially the guidance uses the Park's aims and objectives to construct a landscape value and sensitivity map. The quantitative assessment is presented as tables and maps.

The windfarm development of twelve turbines at Haupland Moor, north of Ardrossan was constructed in late 2003. This site is just outside the Park. An additional 3 turbines have been constructed in an extension of this site into the Park. A development of six turbines at Wardlaw Wood within the Park (north-west of Dalry) was opened in June 2006.

Following a Public Local Inquiry development proposals for 22 turbines at Corlick Hill, above Greenock were refused consent by the Scottish Ministers in March 2007.

The development of the Kelburn Windfarm (14 turbines) at Blaeloch Hill was approved, following a Public Local Inquiry, in Feb 2009.

An application for 5 turbines on Kaim Hill was submitted in March 2009 and refused by North Ayrshire Council in December 2009.

The re-submitted proposals for the Millour Hill Windfarm (6 turbines adjacent to the Wardlaw Wood Windfarm) were approved in December 2009.

The application for the Wings Law Windfarm (24 turbines) was refused by North Ayrshire Council February 2009 and an appeal has been lodged. A Public Local Inquiry is anticipated.

A longstanding application for a windfarm at Waterhead Moor awaits the production of an Environmental Statement.

6.02 Monitoring of Planning Applications

Staff continue to respond to planning applications and scoping reports in or adjacent to the Park. We have responded to scoping reports and consultations on a variety of developments including windfarm proposals and an anaerobic digester.

6.03 Greenock Cut

The completion of this conservation and access project is reported in the Recreation and Access chapter, section 4.04.

The restored Cut makes a major contribution to landscape character and peoples' enjoyment of it.

7.0 Tourism

7.01 Visit Scotland

Linkages with national activities & campaigns continued with Visit Scotland - Glasgow and Prestwick Offices. The Regional Park was invited to join the Renfrewshire Area Tourism Partnership. Membership of Ayrshire and Arran Visitor Attractions Association (AAVAA) continued providing joint marketing, promotion, training, communication channels and networking opportunities helping to meet Park Strategy objectives. Ideas are being considered to contribute to the "International Year of Biodiversity 2010" initiative in all Council areas.

7.02 Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor ("STEAM")

The Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) is a report produced annually, giving information on the economic impacts (primary and secondary) of tourism within a given area. The report's authors calculate tourist numbers and expenditure from both overnight and day visitors. Since 2001 there has been a STEAM report for the Clyde Muirshiel Park influence area.

The STEAM report 2008, published in 2009 reported that there was an expenditure of £67.52 million in 2008, a 4% increase over 2007 within the Park area.

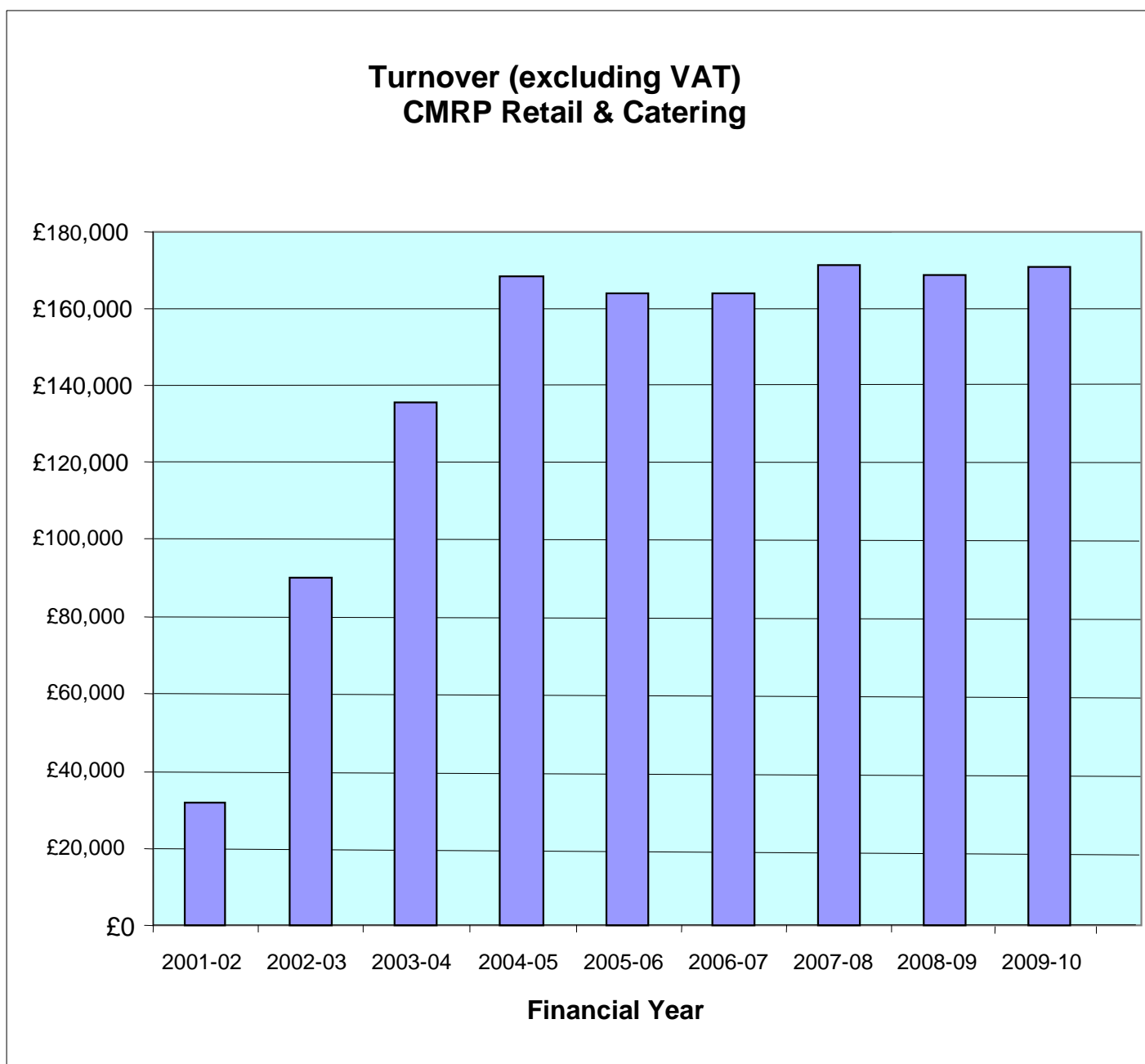
The report also estimates visitor numbers at 1.2 million which is in general agreement with Park derived estimates of 1.5 million visitors annually.

The report was cited in the Scottish Parliament in response to a question about the tourism impact of Scotland's Regional Parks.

7.03 Retail and Catering

Following the cessation of the catering franchise in 2001 at Castle Semple an integrated service of reception, retail sales and limited catering has been provided by Visitor Centre Assistant staff. The improvement in these services was maximised in 2005/06. Since then, despite the reduced opening hours at the smaller centres of Muirshiel and Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) the income targets in retail income have been met.

Turnover increased by 0.5% during the 2009/10 year, after decreasing by 1.7% the previous year.



7.04 Marketing and Promotional Activity

The Park continues its promotional activity utilising the Park activities programme and special events. The production of a quality seasonal "What's On" for both summer and winter has undoubtedly contributed. The summer edition has a print run of 5000 and was twelve page full colour. The winter publication with a print run of 3000, eight page full colour, is a timely reminder that the countryside is open throughout the year although, unfortunately our opening hours at some centres have reduced. These publications are now in their eighth year and are supported by posters and the Park website.

Due to continued budget restrictions there was no systematic monitoring of press coverage. However there was much local coverage of events in the local media.

- The Park received positive comments in The Herald's coverage of the parliamentary discussion of economic impact of tourism.
- BBC Radio Scotland's "Out of Doors" programme visited the Park twice.
- The stargazing events were mentioned on the Fred McCauley radio show
- The frozen loch at Castle Semple and the winter weather generated images and news stories in local and national media

An increase in the quality and number of local free newspapers and magazines has led to a further improvement in opportunities to promote the park.

The information for the press releases, leaflets and posters comes from many areas of staff, particularly Rangers.

7.05 Year of Homecoming 2009.

Several events were targeted to tourists. A guided walk through the Semple Estate in March heralded the Park's focus on the Semple family for Homecoming in 2009. Later a Semple flag was purchased and this was raised by any "Semples" who visited Castle Semple Centre. They were invited to sign a visitor's book and have their photo taken with the "first Lord Semple". A room in the centre was re-named the "Sempill Room". The Homecoming 2009 Photographic Competition was won by a resident of Australia.



7.06 Visitor Centres

Actual opening hours remained as last year. Visitor numbers into Visitor Centres reflect this. The smaller centres Muirshiel and Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) were closed on winter (Nov – Mar) weekdays and Castle Semple closed at 17.00 hrs throughout the summer.

Numbers at Cornalees (now Greenock Cut) have declined, but it is expected that new signage and the opening of the new exhibition in the centre will reverse this trend.

Muirshiel Centre visitor numbers are thought to have been badly effected by the lack of a Hen Harrier on TV project.

Calendar Year: Visitor Centre Numbers

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Castle Semple	76,222	83,070	81,190	80,755	79,592	75,896
Muirshiel	17,903	16,229	14,892	14,227	11,514	9,310
Cornalees (now Greenock Cut)	16,469	21,104	17,706	13,328	11,406	9,421

7.07 Events

The operation of the Park Authority and in particular the expenditure of Park budgets has a continued positive economic impact to businesses and communities in the Park area. Events like the Model Yacht Championships and the club regattas bring significant sums of money into the area.

Farmers' markets, a new venture in 2000/01, have continued this year. Local producers were to the fore at markets held on the first Sunday of June, September and December. During November and February Craft Fairs were held.

Stargazing nights, in partnership with Paisley Observatory were held throughout the winter.

Green Woodworking demonstrations took place at various venues such as Gourock Highland Games, Culzean Castle's Celebrate Ayrshire and Irvine Scottish Wildlife Trust's open day.

7.08 Website

The creation of interesting, useful and up to date web content is a continual task, with time and effort going into the website throughout the year.

All Park users are encouraged to use the website to get detailed information on activity courses. All printed materials and electronic communications continue to go out with the web address.

A content managed website went live on 20 June 2008 and in this year there has been increased use of the "blogs" facility, which comprises short, often illustrated news items. These serve to provide fresh content for regular web-users and "human interest" stories. The Park also started a "Twitter" page and anticipates greater involvement with social media.

Visit the website at www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk.

7.09 Largs Information Bureau

A local initiative in Largs led by Lord Glasgow of Kelburn has led to the conversion of a shop in the Main Street into a facility providing community and visitor advice services. The Park has purchased a section of the front window display for Park promotion. This is good value for money and demonstrates partnership. The Park was advertised for 6 months of the year during 2009/10.

7.10 Campsite

The campsite has 8 shielings (including two large ones with ramped access and wider doors to assist those with a mobility impairment). These larger two and a new facilities block were possible through a grant from the New Opportunities Fund, following applications led by Renfrewshire Council. These facilities opened for use in July 2007, part way through the summer season.

When linked to our activities provision, mostly at Castle Semple, the site is now attractive to groups and special arrangements and charges for “sole use” have been developed.

The campsite opened on Friday 3 April for the 2009 season and closed on Sun 25 October. There were 432 camping bed nights (191 in 2008, 370 in 2007 and 99 in 2006) and 200 shieling bed nights (307 in 2008, 355 in 2007 and 243 in 2006). In addition there were 18 youth group visits (20 in 2008, 16 in 2007 and 5 in 2006) generating 686 bed nights (643 in 2008, 443 in 2007 and 166 in 2006). Total Bed Nights for the site is 1318 (1141 in 2008, 1168 in 2007 and 454 in 2006).

Income was £5,691 (£8412 in 2008, £4243 in 2007 and £3136 in 2006).

7.11 Tourism Partnerships.

Park staff continue to support various tourism partnerships in all Park areas; this has included the Chamber of Commerce Tourism Groups in both Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. In Renfrewshire, the Park Authority is now member of the Area Tourism Partnership. Park staff supported Inverclyde Tourist Group activities as they welcome cruise ships to Greenock. In Ayrshire membership of a Culture Heritage Development Group and a Visitor Attractions Association continues.

8.0 Education and Understanding

The contribution of the Ranger Service to events, volunteering and formal educational opportunities is quantified in the Ranger Output Measures (see section 11).

8.01 Ranger Events

The Park Ranger Service continues to offer a wide variety of activities to encourage use, appreciation and enjoyment of the Park. Bat walks, star gazing, Semple estate exhibitions, poetry walks, adopt a beach, rock-pooling and a host more have joined the ever-popular Green Woodworking. Rangers have added storytelling, wool preparation and shadow puppetry to their interpretive skills.

Ranger led walks, talks and events continue to be free to all.

The Output Measures report identifies 469 events/activities during the year with an audience of 11,047. Rangers also contribute to events organised by other staff, for example Farmers' Markets and Art Club shows. In 2009/10 Rangers met an increased demand for events and delivered their programme as advertised in the "What's On" publications.

The Knights and Princesses Fun Day at Castle Semple in August was a popular family event. This and 19 other events in 2009 were linked to the national "Homecoming Scotland 2009" tourism initiative. This programme of events was reported to the Park Authority in December 2009.



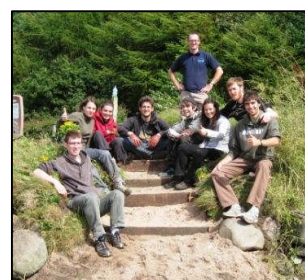
8.02 Volunteers

The Park continues to offer volunteering opportunities. Adopt - a - Beach took place quarterly at Lunderston Bay. Supervised Adult Training Centre groups worked at Muirshiel on tree planting and woodland maintenance. The Green Gym initiative started doing regular voluntary work. The Prince's Trust, together with restorative justice programmes and special needs groups have continued to be significant partners. Work experience pupils were taken on our week-long programme developed for S4 pupils.

597 volunteer days (223 in 2008/09, 150 in 2007/08 and 290 in 2006/07) were recorded on projects like those above.

The dramatic increase in volunteering in the Park this year is at least partly the result of the fruition of the partnership with Johnstone High School. We also facilitated some of the volunteer effort into the Lochwinnoch Community garden.

Of special note this year was a partnership with Xchange Scotland that brought a group of 12 foreign young people to a two week residential experience in the Park.



8.03 Work with Schools

The Park continues to offer a range of services and opportunities for formal education. 340 formal educational activities were delivered to 8,534 pupils at our centres or at schools (9,308 pupils in 2008/09, 4,820 pupils in 2007/08 and 7,744 pupils in 2006/07).

Eco Schools are a way of interesting children in their natural surroundings and sustainability. Ranger staff have assisted in many Eco School projects in all three council areas.

8.04 Activities

The Park provided an extensive programme of courses, including kayaking, sailing, archery and multi-activity courses, principally at Castle Semple. The advertised courses and activity sessions are developed to meet the needs of participants. Accordingly we run everything from “Multi-activity” sessions to certificated coaching courses.



Two leaflets a year are produced to promote the courses and list dates, with these details also available on the website. A summary is included below:

Activity	No. of courses	No. of participants	
		Child	Adult
Archery	0 (0)	0 (0)	68 (0)
Powerboat, Level 2	14 (11)	-	12 (10)
Kayak/canoe	50 (45)	41 (0)	88 (120)
Kayak Rainbow Award	N/A (13)	N/A (39)	-
Map & compass	6 (6)	0 (0)	8 (8)
Multi-activity	18 (22)	90 (160)	0 (0)
Sailing	58 (51)	66 (39)	46 (67)
Totals	146 (148)	197 (238)	222 (205)

(Last year's figures in brackets)

Increasingly our activities staff are working with young adults, frequently individuals with special needs or from socially disadvantaged sections of communities. In this we work with charitable organisations, social workers, sports development workers and Community Police officers to provide outdoor recreation experiences. There is no “one size fits all” and bespoke courses are developed for each booking. A summary is provided below:

Bespoke courses Activity	No. of courses	No. of participants	
		Child	Adult
Archery	16 (5)	84 (0)	50 (30)
Trail cycling	66 (14)	102 (80)	122 (30)
Canadian canoe	36 (19)	50 (120)	111 (40)
Kayak	64 (48)	410 (320)	116 (80)
Map & compass	28 (18)	80 (60)	62 (120)
Multi-activity	105 (240)	1202 (1675)	426 (950)
Rafting	37 (12)	85 (45)	47 (50)
Team building	47 (13)	67 (30)	185 (100)
Birthday Parties	3 (5)	29 (40)	-
Wheelchair accessible boat	28 (27)	-	82 (81)
Totals	430 (401)	2109 (2370)	1201 (1400)

(Last year's figures in brackets)

We continue to provide “tailor-made” services and activities. The bespoke service, tailored to the needs of users, is increasing our customer base and is growing in its importance. The delivery of activities in schools, working with Active School Sport Coordinators, has been expanded. Links with Renfrewshire schools have been strengthened this year through staff visits over the winter. This was primarily done to encourage schools to use the facilities at Clyde Muirshiel.

The range and quantity of opportunities continues to be developed through the latest scheme of partnership working with 3 Renfrewshire schools delivering activities to children in Intensive Support Facilities.

“These children have benefited hugely from this programme of out of school learning helping them to integrate back into mainstream education”

Ann Smith, ISF Unit Paisley Grammar.

Activities offered to these groups included – canoeing, kayaking, sailing, mountain biking, orienteering, team building challenges and other similar opportunities.

Park staff have been trained as delivery agents for the John Muir Award and have run several longer programmes for groups.

Since becoming a BCU Registered centre, regular BCU courses are now run at the centre.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) is due next year and the Activities team expect no problems due to continued high standard of procedures and training and delivery.

We have started to offer activities away from Castle Semple Loch to retain the clients who wish to move on to more challenging activities. These outreach activities and expeditions continued to develop this year after a successful introduction. For example, two day Map and Compass courses are now run with the second day being delivered in the Loch Lomond area. Other areas are available on request.



The development of the campsite at Barnbrock Farm has enabled residential activity sessions to be accommodated. This year four groups booked multiple days activities with overnight stays at Barnbrock campsite.

This year participation has dropped slightly despite concerted efforts to acquire new business. This reflects the downturn observed in educational and social work spending in outdoor experiences. The largest drop is in school groups attending for multi-activity courses.

Colleges and universities are approaching us for more provision in the form of larger Groups. This will be further developed in 2010.

8.05 Hen harriers on TV

The core area of the Park is fortunate to have several nesting pairs of Hen Harriers. The importance of the species is recognised in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Over the previous six years projects seeks to raise awareness and understanding of these spectacular birds of prey have brought live pictures of nesting harriers to the centre at Muirshiel. However, the project was not undertaken this year. It is hoped that new resources will be acquired to enable the continuation of this project featuring Clyde Muirshiel's iconic species in 2010.

9.0 Management

9.01 Management Team

The Senior Management Team comprising the Regional Park Manager, two Assistant Managers (part time) and the Development & Marketing Officer continues to manage the Park “day to day”, implementing Park Authority policy.

9.02 Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum met twice in the year, during April and October (see section 9.10).

9.03 Strategic Planning

The Park Strategy 2008/11 was adopted at the Park Authority meeting December 2007. It directs and informs the establishment of workplans and programmes for three years. During the year the Park Authority approved a change to an annual Workplan, sitting under the three-yearly Park Strategy.

The preparation of the Workplan included consultation with a variety of partners and stakeholders. The continuation of the Park Consultative Forum, established five years ago, has provided a mechanism for greater consultation on the Workplan.

9.04 Staff Establishment

In order to achieve savings targets some vacant posts were not filled. This included the Chief Ranger who retired in November 2006. Establishment staff levels continue to drop. The totals (in Full Time Equivalents, FTE) for each team were:-

Management	3.0
Administration	5.5
Ranger	14.1
Activities	5.46
Visitor Services	5.14
Estates	3.86
Cleaning	2.88
Total	39.94 FTE

In addition there is 0.8 FTE fully externally funded Paths Development Officer.

The Park Authority has previously approved the seasonal post of Site Attendant as a trial but this position has not yet been filled.

9.05 Personnel Management

The Estate Team members continue to work modified hours during British Summer Time. This has meant that they start and finish an hour earlier each day. These flexible working arrangements benefit the Park and its visitors as much maintenance, like grass cutting, can now take place before visitors arrive.

The personnel policies of the lead partner, Renfrewshire Council, continue to be applied.

9.06 Incident reports

Staff routinely monitor incidents using a system developed many years ago, although care should be taken when reading trends over time into the tables. The system complements other statutory reporting systems. Part of the system is that the reports are available to the Senior Management Team on a weekly basis. A summary of this year's reports together with previous years' is:-

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Vandalism	86	76	30	57	42
Theft	9	9	3	5	1
Abandoned Vehicles	16	11	1	7	5
Fire/Alarm Call Out	12	13	3	33	10
Health & Safety	73	53	17	43	34
Law & Country Code	63	50	32	33	49
Maintenance	57	28	11	29	33
Accident Assistance	19	9	6	7	14
Other	77	46	19	34	23
Total	412	295	122	248	203

Health and Safety incidents continue on the previous downwards trend after an abnormally low incidence in 2007-08.

9.07 Feedback & Complaints.

Only 2 people (9 in 2008/09, 13 in 2007/08 and 42 in 2006/07) specifically completed a customer feedback/complaints form during the year. One was providing general feedback and the other suggested a viewpoint indicator on Windy Hill. One letter was received complaining about a misunderstanding between Park staff and a craft worker who had requested a stall at a Craft Fair.

9.08 Single Status

The year saw the completion of most aspects of "Single Status" – the employment equality initiative in local authorities and public bodies. Park Staff, as officers of Renfrewshire Council have been considered within the arrangements being made by that council. Following the adoption of a Pay and Grading model in October 2006 and the outcome of job evaluations in March 2007, this year a few staff were successful in appeals.

9.09 Lunderston Bay.

The Park Authority has, for some time, recognised that the facilities for staff and visitors are poor since the visitor centre was destroyed by fire. The Joint Committee receives regular updates on progress on aspects of the difficulties. The local authority, Inverclyde Council, has confirmed its commitment to this key recreational site and has allocated capital resources for the construction of new facilities.

9.10 Park Authority

Cllr. David Arthur is the Chair of the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee. There have been 4 Joint Committee meetings and 2 meetings of the Consultative Forum in the period of this Annual Report and papers have been considered on:

Joint Committee

12 June 2009

- *SRANI Semple Trail Project*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Retail and Catering at Castle Semple*
- *Wild Food Cookschool*
- *Consolidation of Scottish Planning Policy*
- *Core Path Plans*
- *Update Financial Regulations*

Joint Committee

11 September 2009

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Unaudited Annual Accounts 2008-09*
- *Internal Audit Annual Report 2008/2009*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Consolidated Scottish Planning Policy*
- *Park Workplan 2010/2011*
- *Annual Report 2008/2009*
- *Conferences*
- *Private Members Bill*
- *International Volunteers*

Joint Committee

11 December 2009

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Revenue Estimates 2010/2011*
- *Annual Accounts 2008-2009*
- *Review of Charges for Service*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *Meetings Timetable 2010-10-15*
- *Park Workplan 2010/2011*
- *Homecoming Scotland 2009*
- *Water Quality at Castle Semple Loch*
- *“Steam” Economic Impact Study 2008*
- *Report of conferences*
- *Semple Trail Heritage Project: A Heritage Lottery Fund Application*
- *Proposed Re-Branding of Cornalees Bridge Visitor Centre*

Joint Committee

19 February 2010

- *Revenue Budget Monitoring Report*
- *Preparation of A Park Strategy 2011-2016*
- *Water Weed Crassula Helmsii*
- *Proposed Re-Branding of Cornalees Bridge Visitor Centre*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*

Consultative Forum

24 April 2009

- *Appointment of Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons*
- *Update on Matters Discussed at Meeting on 24th October 2008*
- *Lunderston Bay Update*
- *“Get Oot, Get Active” Project Review*
- *Review of the “Discover Clyde Muirshiel’s Wildlife” Project*
- *Core Path Plans*
- *Revenue Budget 2009/2010*

Consultative Forum

23 October 2009

- *Update on Matters Discussed at Meeting on 24th April 2009*
- *Annual Report 2008/2009*
- *Park Workplan 2010/2011*
- *Consultation on Parkhill Woodland Plan*
- *International Youth Camp*
- *Partnership Project Opportunities*

The Park Authority members and their supporting officers have been:

Cllr David Arthur	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Neil Bibby	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Marie McGurk	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Iain Nicolson	Renfrewshire Council
Cllr Jean Highgate	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr Anthea Dickson	North Ayrshire Council
Cllr David Wilson	Inverclyde Council
Cllr Jim Grieve	Inverclyde Council
Cllr Innes Nelson	Inverclyde Council

Officers

John Laurenson	Renfrewshire Council
Derek Bell	Renfrewshire Council
Willie Wilson	Inverclyde Council
Jim Leckie	North Ayrshire Council
Cameron Sharp	North Ayrshire Council
John Imlach	Renfrewshire Council
Jean Wilson	Renfrewshire Council
Fraser Williamson	Inverclyde Council
Sandra Black	Renfrewshire Council
Paul Gannon	Renfrewshire Council
Paul Maguire	Renfrewshire Council

10.0 Financial Summary

The Park Authority is supported financially by the 3 founding Local Authorities; Inverclyde, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire councils.

The Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010 have been confirmed by Audit Scotland. Extracts from the accounts are shown below.

10.01 Expenditure

	2008/09	2009/10
• Employee costs	1,042,363	1,168,804
• Property costs	70,267	70,753
• Supplies and Services	243,850	263,149
• Contractors	11,248	10,387
• Transport and Plant	46,157	44,276
• Admin Costs	87,827	68,816
• Payments to other Bodies	1,801	2,806
Total	1,503,513	1,628,991

10.02 Income

	2008/09	2009/10
• Scottish Natural Heritage and other Grants	265,518	3,399
• Sales fees and Charges	169,339	140,827
• Retail and catering	168,303	169,138
• Miscellaneous	102,739	98,179
• Requisition from member authorities	816,500	1,102,000

10.03 Annual Accounts

There were two significant changes to the Park's revenue budgets during the year. Firstly, grant previously received from SNH (£265,518 in 2008/09) is now made direct to the Park's local authority partners direct, from the Scottish Government. This is reflected in the figures above. Secondly, a major element of "Single Status" the public sector's equality initiative was implemented in the Park during the year. As a result, one-off compensation payments amounting to £112,925 were paid to employees. This accounts for the increase in employee costs shown in the table above. As a consequence the Park's budget deficit for the year was £104,448. Combining the deficit with accumulated reserves produced a cumulative deficit total of £28,842 to be carried forward into 2010/11.

The Project Fund established in 2008/09 was subsumed into the cumulative year-end position.

11.0 Ranger Service Output Measures

Annual Reporting Table 2009/10

Name of Ranger Service	Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park				Reporting Year eg 2009/10	2009/10
Number of Rangers Posts & FTEs (220 days = 1 FTE)	Posts	18.5	FTEs	14.5	Contact details in case of query	David Gatherer 01505842882
Area of land and water that the Ranger Service operates over:	28100 hectares	Area of land and water with a national or international natural heritage designation*:	9514 hectares	Area of land and water with a local natural heritage designation**:	28100 hectares	

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<i>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</i> <i>Before completing please refer to the explanatory notes at end of document</i>
1. To ensure a warm welcome and provide support for people to enjoy the outdoors	<p>1. What did your Ranger Service do to promote opportunities to enjoy the outdoors?</p> <p>Please note that this winter there was a lot of H & S work during extreme weather. This included tree work, path closures/survey and patrolling and daily monitoring of frozen loch</p>	<p>A. Number of promotional opportunities = 175 + - includes press releases, posters, leaflets, articles or editorial in papers, local press etc</p> <p>B. Key actions to promote opportunities (<i>list max. 10 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worked with other members of Park staff to deliver this aim 2. Winter & Summer whats on Guides and walks leaflets produced, updated and distributed 3. Promotion of SNH print materials 4. Green woodworking at outdoor events combined with leaflet distribution. 5. Website updated and maintained promoting park activities 6. Ranger Blogs produced for website 7. contributed to community websites, newsletters and local newspapers 8. Hen Harrier footage shown at local agricultural show with leaflet distribution 9. AA road signage for events and projects 10. Talks and presentations to groups on and off site

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<p>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</p> <p><i>Before completing please refer to the explanatory notes at end of document</i></p>
	<p>2. How many people did your Ranger Service welcome?</p>	<p>C. Number of people welcomed = 97,129 people visited centres (counters). 136,695 cars visited Castle Semple Visitor Centre (counter) normally 2.3 people per car equates to 314,400 people. No car figs for Lunderston Bay, Greenock Cut visitor centre or Muirshiel Country Park. The total estimated visitors to the park is 1.5 million based on accurate people counters (see above), car counters (see above) sample counts extrapolated out and best guestimates.</p>
	<p>3. What did your Ranger Service do to increase participation by a broader range of people?</p>	<p>D. Audiences targeted: Adults with learning difficulties Youths with learning difficulties Medical referrals Young people - some from SIMD areas Young mothers and toddlers Retired people</p> <p>E. Key actions to encourage participation (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Running structured, agreed volunteer programmes for adults with learning difficulties 2. Running work experience for young people with special needs. 3. Compiling and running walking programmes for medically referred groups. 141 events with 1789 participants. 4. Volunteer opportunities for youth groups and young people including BB and guides. 5. Volunteer opportunities for members of public to improve well being including Green Gym and volunteer Sundays.

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<p>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</p> <p><i>Before completing please refer to the explanatory notes at end of document</i></p>
<p>2. To increase awareness, understanding and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage</p>	<p>4. How many events or activities that raise awareness of the natural and cultural heritage did your Ranger Service deliver? How many participants were involved?</p> <p>Of these, what was done in relation to formal education, and how many people benefitted?</p>	<p>F. Number of events/activities = 469</p> <p>G. The number of people attending the events/activities = 11,047</p> <p>H. The main events/activities (<i>list max. 5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmers markets 2. Knights and Princess Day 3. Star gazing nights 4. Homecoming year-long programme inc. photo competition 5. Biodiversity Week events <p>I. Number of formal education activities delivered = 340</p> <p>J. Number of people benefitting from formal education activities in I. above = 8534</p> <p>K. The main formal education work (<i>list max. 5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Hop Out" environmental education programme of Renfrewshire Council. 2. School Work Experience placements for 27 pupils including 4 with special needs. 3. Work with students from West of Scotland University. 4. Curriculum for excellence and Eco schools work with Inverclyde secondary and primary schools 5. Transects and sampling techniques with schools

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<p>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</p> <p><i>Before completing please refer to the explanatory notes at end of document</i></p>
	<p>5. How many different people were involved in volunteering with your Ranger Service and how many volunteer days did that amount to?</p>	<p>L. Number of people involved in volunteering = 397</p> <p>M. Number of volunteer half days = 144</p> <p>N. Number of volunteer days = 597</p> <p>O. The main volunteering opportunities (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Johnstone High School citizenship programme 2. Xchange Scotland - foreign volunteers 3. Duke of Edinburgh Queens badge service. 4. Volunteer days for members of the public 5. Govanhill intervention programme.
<p>3. To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives</p>	<p>6. How many different partnerships, projects and initiatives did your Ranger Service contribute to?</p>	<p>P. Number supported = 19</p> <p>Q. Please list the key ones (<i>list max.5 main examples</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core path planning and events with Renfrewshire Councils Paths development officer. Input to initiatives and information provided to North Ayrshire, s access officer. 2. Outdoor education initiative with North Ayrshire Community Education Dept. 3. Core path re- route with Inverclyde access officer and local community. 4. Semple Trail Heritage Project at Castle Semple 5. Juniper propagation and restoration with Action for Mountain Woodlands, Lochwinnoch Community Garden and volunteers

Ranger Aim	National output measures	<p>Please write your answers against the points A – S below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</p> <p><i>Before completing please refer to the explanatory notes at end of document</i></p>
	<p>7. How did your Ranger Service contribute to the monitoring and management of BAP/LBAP species and habitats?</p>	<p>R. Number of UKBAPs and BAPs contributed to = 5</p> <p>S. Please list the key plans/actions supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Wetland Birds Survey National Bird Atlas Hen Harrier Survey – hen harrier LBAP Butterfly surveys –Green Hairstreak LBAP Plant survey for SFGS broad leaved woodland LBAP spignel plan - Willowherb removal with volunteers to protect habitat. Rhododendron removal at Muirshiel to support broad leaved woodland LBAP Water vole survey Parkhill Wood Field vole survey.