

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust Business Plan

2013 – 2018

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Background
2. Our Customers
3. Our Strengths
4. Vision
5. Intended Outcomes
6. Operations & Management
7. Five Year Outline
8. Annual Work Plan

Appendix 1 Organisational Structure

Appendix 2 2013/14 Budget

Appendix 3 12 Month Cash Flow

Appendix 4 Risk Register



**LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST**



*Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust
Company Number: SC422457
Registered Scottish Charity (SC043266)*

Executive Summary

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust is a registered Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee. It was set up in April 2012, initially as a partnership between Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage with the aim of being an effective mechanism to conserve and improve the landscape and ecology of the National Park and to enhance the visitor experience of its countryside. It supports and adds value to the work of public, private, voluntary and community organisations within the Park.

Building on its strengths, its lean and flexible partnership structure and collaborative way of working, the Countryside Trust aims to be an established and respected organisation capable of bringing important habitats into favourable condition, increasing opportunities for recreation, access and active travel, reducing invasive species, and improving quality of life for the residents and visitors of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park.

Using a collaborative approach we will attract significant grant funds such as Scottish Rural Development Programme or Lottery funding. The Countryside Trust has currently secured substantial project funds for 2013/14 and is confident that it will have similar successes over the next few years.

Background

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust, a registered Scottish Charity (SC043266) and Company Limited by Guarantee (422457), aims to be an effective mechanism to conserve and improve the landscape and ecology of the National Park and to enhance the visitor experience of its countryside. It was formed in April 2012 initially as a partnership between Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage and it supports and adds value to the work of public, private, voluntary and community organisations within the Park.

The Trust has emerged during a difficult economic climate when innovative approaches to funding for conservation are required. In order for a benchmark standard for conservation to be achieved within the National Park, new projects need to create high quality habitats and maintain valuable ecosystem services. Supporting good quality outdoor experiences will also be a key area of work for the Trust, there will be opportunities to improve facilities such as paths and cycleways and there is work to be done to support marginalised groups to overcome barriers to accessing and enjoying the National Park.

Our Customers

In total, there are just under 7million visitor days in the Park each year, with just over two thirds of these being a day out or holiday, whilst the remaining third are scenic drives through the Park en route to another destination¹. More than 15,600 people live in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, with many communities looking to improve their local areas and become more sustainable in the future. Residents within the park will engage with the Countryside Trust as project participants, as consultees or as landowners. Some of the larger estates, in particular, are key customers. Our funders are also customers of the projects we deliver, meaning that it is essential we meet their targets, many of which will be influenced by the political landscape in Scotland or Europe. The Countryside Trust will also serve the natural ecology of the Park which holds a diverse range of internationally important species and habitats. Our landscape demands high quality nature conservation, invasive species control and resilience building against threats such as development and climate change. Just over 39% of the 107 designated SSSI features within the National Park are assessed as having an unfavourable non-changing or declining condition for some or all features, this is a trend that we would like to see reversed.

Our Strengths

The National Park encompasses around 720 sq miles (1,865 sq km) of some of the best scenery in Scotland. Within the National Park, our countryside contributes to the health and social well-being of our residents and visitors, contributing to a healthier Scotland (valued at just under £100million²). The Countryside Trust is in a unique position to add value to

¹ Valuing the National Park – Final Report (2011)

² Valuing the National Park – Final Report (2011) Public health benefits calculated at £95.4m for physical health (not including any benefit on mental health which would undoubtedly increase this figure). Figures were also given for the intrinsic value of nature (£10.6m) and carbon sequestration (£7.4m) but no other ecosystem services were quantified.

existing work which is happening within the National Park by attracting additional project funds and offering an alternative structure in terms of project management and delivery. Our partnership approach enables us to facilitate collaborative efforts, resulting in bigger and better connected projects on the ground. As an independent organisation we can maximise public sector funding whilst utilising public sector resources in terms of expertise and land ownership, and by maintaining our lean organisation structure we can be reactive and flexible where others are constrained.

Our partners bring a wealth of knowledge and experience together, enabling cross portfolio projects to be conceived and delivered. We would prefer to solely concentrate on projects which add value however we will inevitably be driven by necessity and priority when timely interventions bring greater benefits in terms of nature conservation or when projects fall under the radar of larger organisations.

We are privileged to have a rich landscape populated by passionate local communities, containing unique and special habitats, and being one of Scotland's top attractions, this will undoubtedly be our most valuable resource and the driving force behind our work.

Vision

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust aims to be an effective mechanism to conserve and improve the landscape and ecology of the National Park and to enhance the visitor experience of its countryside.

Intended Outcomes	Indicators of Success
That important habitats are brought into favourable condition	At least one qualifying feature shows improvement in condition within five years, at least one project is implemented within or connected to important habitats within the first 18 months and land is brought under positive management and/or receiving funding through the actions of the Countryside Trust.
That opportunities for recreation, access and active travel are increased	A minimum of one new or improved recreational, access or active travel facility is provided, annual awareness raising and promotional activities are undertaken, and at least one project which facilitates engagement and reduces barriers to access is delivered annually.
That invasive species are reduced	Measured quantities of invasive species are controlled within a five year period, annual awareness raising activities and promotions take place.
That people experience improved quality of life	Two new opportunities to engage with nature are provided annually, in each year at least one facility is improved, participants in projects report improved mental and/or physical fitness and at least one community is supported to become more sustainable.
That collaboration enables larger and better connected actions on the ground	A minimum of one collaborative project is delivered, new stakeholders are engaged with the Countryside Trust and at least one large scale project is planned and/or implemented within a five year period.

Operations & Management

To date the Countryside Trust has received core funds from the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland and these funds are secured for the first three years of operation.

Organisation	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
LLTTNPA	£40k core funding	£40k core funding	£40k core funding
SNH	£10k core funding	£10k core funding tbc	£10k core funding tbc
FCS	£5k core funding	£5k core funding	£5k core funding tbc

Shaded funds have been received to-date

In addition specific in kind support for the provision of office space and expert services are provided by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, and all of our partners provide in kind support in terms of management and project expertise.

Unrestricted In-kind Support 2013/14 (estimated)	
Board Members (Input & Meeting Attendance)	£12,600
Administrative Support	£504
Specialist Services (HR/Finance/IT/Legal)	£996
Provision of Office Space	£800
Total	£14,900

The Countryside Trust Board is comprised of seven Directors drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors and is supported by a Company Secretary and Trust Manager.

In the future there are opportunities for the Countryside Trust to receive revenue through local development planning conditions and through donations from visitors at large scale events. The Trust will also make general appeals for unrestricted funds and will seek to secure grant support for projects from a range of funding providers locally, nationally and from Europe.

We will evaluate our progress against this business plan at the end of each financial year and the Annual Work Plan and Cash Flow will be updated on a rolling basis.

The Countryside Trust financial year ends on 31 March and our accounts are externally examined by MacFarlane Gray Chartered Accountants.

Registered Scottish Charity (SC043266)
Company Limited by Guarantee (422457)

Five Year Outline 2013 – 2018

The Countryside Trust will be delivering innovative landscape scale collaborative projects and will be attracting significant investment to the Park.

Programme Themes	Potential Projects	Benefits of Delivery through the Countryside Trust	Delivering Outcomes	Resource Needs & Timescale
Habitats & Species	Rhododendron Control - A strategic Rhododendron control project initially assessing target areas which link existing control sites and significant islands of Rhododendron habitat across the park.	Access to Funds: <i>Assess feasibility of third Party SRDP or grants for private holdings.</i> Collaboration is essential for delivery. Feasibility assessed & additional funds secured.	Contributes to our outcomes for Invasive Species. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	£7500 secured – a minimum of £1.5M needed for priority clearance. 2013/2018
	Heritage Tree Management & Replacement Programme -A programme to interpret and help promote important heritage trees in the National Park.	Key priority for CT partners. Good profile raising project. May lead to wider project - Specimen trees replaced, landscape character enhanced, knowledge of heritage trees improved, existing trees safeguarded.	Contributes to our outcomes for Important Habitats.	£10,000 secured, 2013/2014
	Atlantic Oakwoods (lower plants) – assist with LIFE+ and/or extend, add value or champion within the National Park.	Key priority for CT partners. Oakwoods in declining condition & opportunity to add value to existing efforts. Raised awareness, additional funds secured.	Contributes to our outcomes for Important Habitats. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	2013 – 2018 Funds dependant on project choices. High workload?
	Water Environments – improve water quality, river catchments / loch habitats for species such as water vole and salmon. Assist with mink monitoring / control programmes.	Collaboration essential for delivery, need to work in partnership – including Fisheries Trusts, Bailiffs and SEPA. Additional funds secured.	Contributes to our outcomes for Invasive Species. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	2014- 2018 Funds dependant on project choices. £25 per floating trap, licenses required.
	Building Capacity and Empowering land managers – assisting with integrated land management plans & simple survey work linked to the provision of support for SRDP applications.	Access to Funds: <i>Costly activity limits availability.</i> Partners have experience of similar projects. (Depends on revised SRDP which may have provision for this through new programme) NPA provides a similar service though whole farm plans.	Land managers have greater capacity to apply for funds and take greater responsibility for conservation – will link to multiple outcomes dependant on choices for each holding.	2015 – 2018 May require a Project Officer to coordinate – Trust needs capacity to recruit staff.
Landscapes	Collaborative SRDP applications – Following initial work through the Rhododendron Control project develop collaborative applications for 2014 – 2020. (Could include invasive species control and biodiversity work).	Access to Funds: <i>Third Party SRDP or grants for private holdings.</i> Collaboration is essential for delivery.	Contributes to our outcomes for Invasive Species. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	2014-2020 £3000 per holding for specialist advice? Consultant services.

	Designed landscapes – Scoping for a project to support designed landscapes within the park.	Further development needed. Landscape character enhanced – link to healthy people and sustainable settlements.	Contributes to our outcomes for Important Habitats. Contributes to our outcomes for Quality of Life.	Following Heritage Trees Project. Tbc
	HLF Funding proposals – briefing paper leading to project development, submission during 2014 for a large scale project.	Partnership in place, enabling action on the ground, must be collaborative. Opportunity to attract significant funds.	Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	Initial scoping 2013/14, full development has a high workload (2014-16).
	Peatland landscapes – after the release of new peatland policies and NPA progress on scoping consider supporting practical implementation of restoration projects.	Access to Funds: <i>Third Party SRDP or grants for private holdings</i> . Peatland restoration funding. Collaboration is essential for delivery.	Contributes to our outcomes for Important Habitats. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	Potentially £3000 per Ha.
	Profile raising around the Great Trossachs Forest – Opportunity.	Good profile raising opportunity.	Awareness of CT increased. Could attract additional funds.	Tbc.
	Land purchasing - in collaboration with Development Trusts (land reform review group) - be aware of opportunities that may arise and require a quick reaction from communities.	Reactive situation, would require funding support but likely to be community driven. Land secured for conservation and community benefit.	Contributes to our outcomes for Important Habitats.	Tbc.
Access & Recreation	Walk in the Park – National Park wide health walks programme.	Existing project which meets our aims and intended outcomes.	Contributes to our outcomes for Recreation & Active Travel. Contributes to our outcomes for Quality of Life.	2013 – 2015 c.£28K secured, additional funds required for 2015 – 2018, low input required.
	Access Infrastructure Project - Review of the NP ORP post 17 th June leading to one or several on the ground infrastructure projects.	Good profile raising project, seed funds in place enabling match funding, CT has capacity to make applications.	Contributes to our outcomes for Recreation & Active Travel. Contributes to our outcomes for Quality of Life.	2013 – 2018 use some of £30K secured to match funds.
	Facilitating active travel - Cross profile project tying into Commonwealth Games Legacy.	Good profile raising project, seed funds in place enabling match funding, CT has capacity to make applications. Promotion at CP Gathering Event.	Contributes to our outcomes for Recreation & Active Travel. Contributes to our outcomes for Quality of Life.	2013 – 2018 use some of £30K secured to match funds.
	Collaborative SRDP applications: Joint access provision/maintenance application to SRDP.	Access to Funds: <i>Third Party SRDP</i> . Collaboration is essential for delivery.	Contributes to our outcomes for Recreation & Active Travel. Contributes to our outcomes for Collaboration.	£3000 per holding for specialist advice? Consultant services.
	Information Provision/hub – Signposting to the correct information providers.	Ensures effective communication.	Contributes to our outcomes for Recreation & Active Travel.	2013-2018 Signposting on website, low input.

CASE STUDY: Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust

Initially delivered a start-up 1 year plan, then a transitional 2 year Business Plan featuring the LEADER programme, then a 4 year plan underpinned by the CMH project. It helped that they had a narrow focus and knew the likelihood of being able to tap into one off grants in year one, a good £1/2M of LEADER in years 2 and 3, and £2.1m of HLF and ERDF in years 4 to 8.

Annual Work Plan

Between April 2013 and March 2014 a detailed plan of work will be delivered which will provide the foundations for future growth and success.

Programme Themes	Confirmed Projects: Description	Project Outcomes	Actions in 2013/2014
Habitats & Species	<p>Rhododendron Control - A strategic Rhododendron control project initially assessing target areas which link existing control sites and significant islands of Rhododendron habitat across the park. Aim to assess the feasibility of a third sector SRDP application in 2014 for target sites. Consider and scope the potential uptake of such a scheme by landowners and identify the risks involved in engaging in a collaborative contract. Also assess the options for key areas of private land not eligible for SRDP and to try to identify ways to encourage uptake of funded Rhododendron control (possible use of Rhododendron for biomass fuel/charcoal). Report data to be transferrable to a range of available funding streams, on the ground action subject to securing additional funding.</p>	<p>Feasibility of options assessed. Additional funds secured, invasive species reduced, awareness of invasives increased.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with stakeholders and assess previous work. Produce a project plan which tackles both the SRDP element and how to coordinate control on private land. Commission Rhododendron Management Plans and/or report on SRDP. Manage Contract, Evaluation Consider a token area of on the ground control for marketing/promotion?
	<p>Heritage Tree Management & Replacement Programme - A programme to interpret and help promote important heritage trees in the NP. The programme will also help identify and action opportunities to replace examples of key specimen trees which enhance the landscape and biodiversity around the towns, villages and settlements of the Park. Landowners, community councils, organisations or individuals will be eligible to apply for funds, (for interpretation, individual arboricultural remedial work, trees for planting, tree guards, etc) in 2013/14.</p>	<p>Specimen trees replaced, landscape character enhanced, knowledge of heritage trees improved, existing trees safeguarded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with stakeholders and assess previous work. Produce a project plan. Commission Tree Survey for heritage specimens. Tree planting/remedial works. Interpretation – online/on the ground. Celebrate Success.
	<p>Atlantic Oakwoods (lower plants) – assist with LIFE+ and/or extend, add value or champion within the National Park.</p>	<p>More Oakwood habitat in favourable condition, raised awareness, additional funds secured.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with stakeholders and assess previous work. Scope potential for added value and report to the Board.
Landscapes	<p>HLF Funding proposals – briefing paper leading to project development, submission in 2014. Care to avoid multiple HLF bids in same period.</p>	<p>Additional funds secured – Project should meet several CT intended outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a briefing report for the Board. If favourable look for initial submission during 2014.
Access & Recreation	<p>Walk in the Park – Provides Health walks lead by Trained Volunteer Walk Leaders. The routes are chosen because they are mostly flat, with slight inclines, and because they have good walking surfaces. Specifically those who have experienced illness or are recovering from surgery, who have experienced a fall or long periods of inactivity.</p>	<p>Opportunities for recreation, access and active travel are increased. People experience improved quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair WITP Steering Group. Regular management meetings with the Co-ordinator. Report to Funders. Think about future developments and the need for additional funds.

	Access Infrastructure Project - Review of the NP ORP post 17 th June leading to one or several on the ground infrastructure projects. Possibly this could be a small bridge project or a section of footpath and/or cycleway. Options include: Arrochar to Tarbet Link feasibility, Kilmahog Path with GTF & Ben Dubhchraig Bridge, multi-use path Killin, Strathyre to Kingshouse cyclepath.	Opportunities for recreation, access and active travel are increased. People experience improved quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the ORP. • Meet stakeholders and agree where the most added value can be provided. • Tender Feasibility study/s. • Apply for additional Funds. • Plan project delivery for 2014+
	Facilitating active travel - Cross profile project tying into Commonwealth Games Legacy. Possibly would suit a cycle path however if Commonwealth Games Legacy Funding is pursued then may need to have a sport related angle and/or be able to provide a lot of data/evidence of use. May lead on from feasibility studies above?	Opportunities for recreation, access and active travel are increased. People experience improved quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet stakeholders and agree where the most added value can be provided. • Apply for additional Funds. • Plan project delivery for 2014+
	Information Provision/hub – Ensure that if people come to the Trust seeking information they are signposted to the correct information providers.	Opportunities for recreation, access and active travel are increased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure suitable information is provided during website development. • Scope wider interpretation opportunities. • Respond to enquiries.

Organisational Projects	Branding – In house branding exercise	The Trust is seen as a reliable delivery mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with NPA Communications team to produce brand options for July. • Finalise branding guidance and implement across CT projects.
	Website – Creation of web presence and review of communication strategy.	The Trust is seen as a reliable delivery mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following branding process develop a website to be hosted alongside NPA. • Appraisal of Social Media requirements
	Unrestricted Fundraising – Regular appeals for unrestricted funds through charitable trusts, build up relationships with regular funders. Consider methods for individuals to donate through the website.	Additional funds secured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a short two sided appeal. • Target 3-4 charitable trusts each quarter. • Report on successes and ensure good communications. • Set up ability for donations via website
	Sharing Good Practise – Working with other Countryside Trusts.	National Promotion, increased collaboration and sharing best practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a briefing paper to the Board outlining similar organisations. • Approach and meet with local Trusts. • Consider National SGP events.