

**Evaluation of the Heritage Lottery Fund
Landscape Partnership Programme
2011**

Landscape Partnership Case Studies



Stained glass window created by high school students

The window was produced as part of the Partnership's community history project. The process of creating the mural meant that young people became much more aware of their local heritage; the finished product is now on permanent display in Lochgilphead Community Hospital.

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This section of the 2011 Landscape Partnership evaluation presents six detailed case studies of partnerships which have completed, or nearly completed, delivery. For each partnership we briefly describe the landscape area in which it is based, the make up and history of the partnership, and what it set out to achieve. The central part of each case study reviews - on a project-by-project basis - what was planned and what has actually been delivered. A table summarising quantitative outputs is followed by our conclusions, which include a note on the partnership legacy, value for money and any particular strengths and weaknesses that have come to light.

The case studies have been drawn together through a desk study which drew on a variety of source documents, including stage 1 and stage 2 bidding documents, case papers prepared by HLF staff for regional committees and for trustees, output data collected in both 2009 and 2011, external and internal evaluations commissioned by the partnerships themselves, monitor reports (and in particular the final 'project closure' report when available) and the partnerships' management and maintenance plans. In addition, we have drawn on publicly available documents which can be downloaded from partnership websites, such as annual reports and newsletters, and educational and interpretive material.

The studies provide a useful insight into the extent to which these schemes have delivered in line with HLF's aim of conserving areas of distinctive landscape character. The partnerships have generally delivered what was expected of them, although some partnerships have inevitably been more successful than others. Nearly all the partnerships report a mix of success and disappointment across the different projects, but generally when one project has not been able to progress then resources have been switched elsewhere, meaning a shortfall in delivery in one area is matched by delivery which exceeds expectations in another. The largest partnership area (Sulwath) and the smallest (Kerridge Ridge and Ingersley Vale) are included in the group: our research suggests that these extremes of size should be avoided in the future. Another issue which has been highlighted is the problem caused by change of personnel, either within the partnership team or within the lead body. Again our view is that this should be expected as the norm, and systems developed to ensure information is not lost. HLF needs to adopt both carrot and stick incentives, and so partnerships needs appropriate support, in particular during the development stage. 'Permission to start' should not be granted until all conditions have been met and relevant agreements are in place, and final payments should not be made until relevant work has been completed (e.g. submission of evaluation reports and of comprehensive management and maintenance plans).

The case studies suffer – to a greater or lesser extent – from serious limitations as a result of two factors highlighted elsewhere in this report. Firstly, for far too many project outputs were only loosely conceived at the outset, and at the planning stage partnerships frequently failed to set quantitative targets or to identify indicators that would let them know the extent to which they have been successful. Secondly, the documentation available for the desk study was incomplete. As we have recommended elsewhere, HLF should insist that all material is submitted in an electronic format, and this should be held on a server which can be accessed by colleagues across all HLF offices.

1. Bassenthwaite Reflections

1.1 Introduction

The landscape.

The landscape of the Bassenthwaite catchment encompasses roughly one quarter of the Lake District National Park, and includes not only Bassenthwaite Lake, but also the fells, lakes and rivers which feed into it. The resident population is 7,000 (5,000 of whom live in Keswick) and the area welcomes 5m visitors each year. Few if any landscapes in Britain are as well known or as well-loved as the Lake District, not only for its scenery but also - for example - for its many sites of geological and wildlife importance.

The quality of the water in Bassenthwaite Lake – at the lower end of the catchment – is a concern in itself and also provides an indicator of what is happening in the wider landscape. For many years it has been clear that soil erosion and chemicals such as phosphates from household products are damaging the lake.



The Landscape Partnership.

The Bassenthwaite Reflections Landscape Partnership grew out of the pre-existing Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration Programme (BLRP), bringing in a strong community engagement and heritage element to complement the more technical and scientific stance of the BLRP. The lead body for both the landscape partnership and BLRP was the Environment Agency: the Agency's prime motivation in this instance is water quality, led by their duties under the Water Framework Directive. The Landscape Partnership ran from January 2007 – March 2011 (4¼ years). HLF awarded the partnership a grant of £1,858,000 out of a total budget of £2,842,658. 87% of this sum had been drawn down by December 2010.

The partnership vision.

The ultimate (and ambitious) aim of the landscape partnership was to capture local people's hearts and minds, and so change attitudes and behaviours. The intention was to “promote a philosophy whereby everyone in the catchment sees themselves as contributory to both the problems and the solutions”. The key finding of an external evaluation was that: *“The programme was actually rather successful at achieving its aim of promoting a philosophy of environmental responsibility, and several of the projects make the catchment more accessible and resilient for the future.”*ⁱ

1.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work.

The Partnership delivered its work through 30 different projects, grouped into five theme areas. Each of the theme areas, and many of the projects, contributed to at least three of the four aims set by

ⁱ Rebanks consulting Ltd (2010) Bassenthwaite Reflections Project Evaluation http://www.bassenthwaite-reflections.co.uk/images/stories/pdf_upload/bassenthwaite%20reflections%20evaluation.pdf

HLF for the Landscape Partnership Programme. A comparison of the figures presented in the stage 2 application against reports of what was delivered suggests that many of the anticipated outputs have been achieved. The extent to which planned outcomes have been realised is more difficult to establish, firstly because many were unquantified, and secondly because neither base line or subsequent measures appear to have been taken. As often happens, the applicants perhaps over-egged what might be achieved suggesting for example, that involvement in constructing a mountain to lakeside walk would result in: *“Young people being better able to understand issues facing the catchment, and then making different lifestyle choices”*ⁱ

In the following sections, for the sake of brevity, we comment on just a selection of the projects which have been delivered, highlighting both successes and problems.

A Landscape Shaped by Water.

Projects within this theme focussed on the way water has played a part in sculpting both the landscape and the culture of its people through the ages, and the part it plays now.

- The project based at Dubwath Silver Meadows involved the creation of a new wetland nature reserve. Planned outputs included 1500m of boardwalk, 100m of stone footpath, the involvement of 30 volunteers, and the delivery of 60 training days. Outcomes included increased understanding amongst volunteers, creating an additional reason for visitors to stay in the locality, and ongoing interest in environmental volunteering amongst those participating. All outputs have been achieved or exceeded, and in addition volunteers have constructed two shelters and a living willow hide. The volunteer-related outcomes have been successful as indicated by establishing a local volunteer group who are committed to undertaking site based management work and other activities such as an annual “International Dawn Chorus Day” event, attended last year by 40+ members of the public.
- Another successful project was ‘Alien Invasion’, aiming to remove Himalayan Balsam from the Bassenthwaite Lake catchment. A target of 200 volunteer days was set, but records show that more than 800 volunteer days have been achieved. Even more significant in terms of a longer term outcome is the establishment of a group who plan to monitor and control Himalayan Balsam over the coming years under the guidance of Derwent Rivers Trust. This achievement is in line with an outcome identified at the planning stage.
- Perhaps less successful was ‘Taming and Training Floodwaters’ which, although it delivered on most of its outputs (in terms of an exhibition, leaflets etc.), probably failed to engage as much as it could have done with local farming and school communities.

Community Woodlands.

This theme aimed to bring areas of neglected native woodland back into management and to raise community awareness about the value of woodland in preventing soil erosion.

- One of the more successful projects for this theme was based at Masmill Oakwoods; one planned output here was to create a pool of volunteers with skills in native woodland restoration. Regrettably the partnership failed to set quantitative targets in its original plans, but nonetheless an important outcome is the creation of a ‘Friends of...’ group which will take things forward with agreed support from the Forestry Commission.

ⁱ Papers submitted to HLF in June 2006, as part of the stage 2 submission by the Bassenthwaite Reflections Landscape Partnership.

- The Woodland Recovery Project involved a switch from traditional forestry management on the Forestry Commission estate to a system of continuous cover. Targets have been met on this project, and while one view is that the involvement of the landscape partnership spurred the Commission into action on this, others suggest that this change could have taken place without the use of HLF funds.

Serious doubts have been expressed about two projects within this theme:

- The Woodland Apprenticeship Project provided two-year apprenticeships in forestry for two individuals, and one of these people has continued with a career in forestry. The real goal for this project however was to act as a catalyst to support greater use of apprenticeship schemes amongst land management employers in the area, and this rationale was used to justify a large project budget (£138,900). This outcome has not been realised, and given the existing forestry courses available in the area perhaps the project was ill-conceived, and would seem to represent very poor value for money.
- Raising Woodland Awareness set out to work with local farmers to promote the benefits of woodlands in land management for the benefit of biodiversity, and to stabilise soils and so reduce sediment. Despite considerable activity, this project failed to meet its ultimate objective of getting farmers to plant more woods, as the incentives available through the England Woodland Grant Scheme were insufficient.

Education and Learning.

There were originally three projects under this theme, eventually delivered under five different headings. A major weakness of the original application is that no quantitative targets were set in this area, but nonetheless large numbers of children and families have been engaged in a diverse range of events, and a high quality resource pack has been developed and distributed amongst primary and secondary schools across Cumbria.

Cultural Routeways. Projects under this theme were designed to support celebration of the catchment's rich cultural and natural heritage, and to re-invigorate interest in traditional skills

- The most successful of these projects was 'Unlocking our Hidden Heritage' through which communities undertook archaeological surveys to discover and record features in the landscape, demonstrating how people have worked the land in previous generations. This project met all its targets, and revealed a previously undiscovered Roman fort and a stone circle. In common with 'Search for the Norse' and 'What's in a Name' projects, the number of people participating exceeded the original targets.
- Two other projects that absorbed a good deal of resource appeared a bit peripheral to landscape partnership aims. 'Fashion from the Landscape' (with a total budget of £124,000) aimed to use fashion as a hook to engage young people in the environment, while the 'Cultural Exchange' programme, which enabled more than 100 people from other European countries to visit the Lake District, and vice versa, involved some activities which have little resonance with this locality (for example building coracles).

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by Bassenthwaite Reflections

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- Expanded area of upland oak woodland by 10ha
- Restored 7ha of upland flushes / fens / swamps
- Maintained 523ha lakes
- Restored 0.5km riparian habitat
- Planted / restored 2km hedgerow
- Repaired 0.5km dry stone wall
- Removed Himalayan Balsam from an area of 20km²
- Engaged with 20 farmers / landowners
- Catalogued / restored 1 archive

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- Established 5 new self-governing community groups to carry on the work of some of the projects in the programme once it is finished
- Delivered 5 cultural tradition projects, with 1900 beneficiaries
- Delivered 5 festivals / re-enactments with 500 beneficiaries
- Mounted 3 exhibitions / displays with 300 beneficiaries

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- Interpreted 5, recorded 2 and restored 1 archaeological sites.
- Recorded / interpreted 4 other built features
- Interpreted / recorded 1 industrial maritime or transport feature
- Worked with 8 primary schools, 6 secondary schools, 3 colleges / universities (563 students / children) and with 10 community groups (150 people)
- 30 guided walks with 200 beneficiaries
- * 10 guided walks for people with disabilities, 75 beneficiaries
- Created 1.5km nature trail, 1.5km footpaths and 3.5km cycle tracks
- Made 4km route accessible to disabled people
- 12 interpretation boards, 15 leaflets, 1 booklet, 1 website, 1 DVD
- GPS-linked audio trails downloadable to mobile phones

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- Created 5 (internal) jobs and an apprenticeship scheme which resulted in 1 FTE.
- Apprenticeship for 2 people
- 12 x 1 day training courses in land and habitat management training – 100 beneficiaries
- 100 x 1 - 2 day training courses in rural skills and heritage conservation – 800 beneficiaries
- 5% of trainees consider themselves to be disabled.

Access for All. Most of the work under this theme improved physical access across the catchment, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of less mobile people. The targets for works on the ground were all either met or exceeded, and interpretation projects have also delivered against the targets originally set for them. Outcomes – in terms of the extent by which these routes are being used by the relevant audiences – do not appear to have been measured.

The Bird's Eye View project supported the establishment and training of a group of young osprey volunteers, and raised awareness about wider catchment issues to thousands of passionate bird watchers. A very visible contribution by Bassenthwaite Reflections was the provision of a summer season bus service, which ran in 2008, 2009 and 2010, and on average attracted 57 passengers each day. Despite this healthy level of use (by rural bus standards) the service was not financially viable and was discontinued in 2011.

1.3 Conclusions

Capitalising on the partnership approach.

From the preceding sections it can be seen that while many projects have delivered in line with what was anticipated, there have been some issues in terms of the conception and / or the delivery of others. Across the full suite of projects the partnership, and HLF, have achieved reasonable value for money.

Much of the work which has been carried out does not appear to have affected in any way by the partnership ethos. The footpaths constructed by the National Trust, for example, are no better than the ones they could have built outside the partnership, and it has been suggested that many of those involved in the programme of activities have not necessarily been aware of the wider context they were operating within.

There have been benefits from the partnership approach however. Firstly the size of the programme has resulted in economies of scale, and has reduced the administrative load on HLF colleagues. Secondly HLF funds have acted as an additional glue to bring organisations together. This has meant that individuals within partner organisations have learnt from one another, relationships have been built, and – even though the partnership itself is not continuing – there is a much stronger likelihood of further joint working. Organisations not previously concerned about water quality and its links to the wider environment are now much more focussed on the physical and hydrological links between different places within the catchment. For example, it has been suggested (notwithstanding comments under s2.3 above) that within the Forestry Commission there is now a much greater acceptance of the benefits of continuous cover forestry.

Legacy.

Although the Landscape Partnership has now ceased to meet, the Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration Programme is ongoing. Work over the last four years has demonstrated the importance of addressing the causes, rather than just the symptoms, of high nutrient levels and high sediment levels in the catchment, and the need to engage the widest possible constituency so that an ethic of environmental responsibility becomes the norm.

In producing this case study we have not had sight of the Partnership's maintenance and management plan, but there is evidence that for many of the projects benefits and further development will be sustained. One of the most pleasing elements of legacy is the set of new voluntary groups which have emerged linked to native woodlands, the wetland nature reserve, ospreys and community archaeology. With appropriate support these will hopefully become self-sustaining.

Summary of strengths and weaknesses.

It is clear that the partnership team worked hard to deliver the programme of projects, but the landscape partnership itself appears to have been quite weak in comparison with those elsewhere in the country. Many of the individual projects have achieved what they set out to do, but the totality of achievements does not appear to be much greater than that of the constituent parts. This might have been addressed at least in part if more of the projects had been genuinely cross cutting rather than stand alone.

At the planning stage some of the projects seem to have been ill-conceived, with insufficient focus on the aims of the HLF programme. The original submission to HLF contained a lot of outputs defined only in qualitative terms, and (too many) over-ambitious outcomes. It has also been suggested that budget planning at outset was weak.

In a survey of key stake-holders within the catchment the overwhelming feeling was that a lot of good projects had been delivered, leading to real change on the ground and leaving a legacy of informed converts amongst the wider population. A survey of that wider community revealed that a significant majority of those surveyed now have a greater commitment to rethinking their ecological footprint.

2 Dalriada

2.1 Introduction

The landscape.

The Dalriada Landscape Partnership scheme covers an area of mid Argyll on the west coast of mainland Scotland. Dalriada's name is derived from the area's supposed location of an ancient kingdom proclaimed as 'the birthplace of the Scottish nation', centred on Dunadd. The heritage interest of the area and the need to protect and promote it has long been recognised. There is a diverse mix of wildlife habitats and a unique landscape made up of Atlantic woodland, exposed coastlines, mires and hills.



Dalriada contains the Crinan Canal, a living monument to industrial heritage that continues to work its way through the 296km² area covered by the landscape partnership scheme.

The partnership.

The lead applicant was the Dalriada Project Company established in 2005 as a not-for-profit company to develop, manage and deliver the landscape partnership scheme. The board of directors included representatives of Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Waterways Trust Scotland, British Waterways Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council and Kilmartin House Museum. The Dalriada project was awarded a stage 2 pass of £1,800,000 (58% of £3.1m) in March 2007. Project delivery covered the period April 2007 to September 2010, with a skeleton team remaining to tie up all aspects of the project until February 2011. By the time of the final grant claim £1,671,000 (93%) of the sum awarded had been drawn down.

The partnership vision.

The Dalriada project aimed to enhance the natural and cultural heritage and promote the enjoyment of the Dalriada area, and developed a realistic vision that aimed to: *"promote sustainable social, environmental and economic regeneration by developing access, education, interpretation and recreation opportunities in the area, bringing communities together, conserving and celebrating their shared heritage"*.ⁱ

In order to deliver the vision the partnership oversaw the implementation of three distinct themes:

- **Natural Heritage and Landscapes** ~ with projects focussing on key habitats and species, landscape and access improvements and increased community participation and volunteering.
- **Built and Cultural Heritage** ~ a programme relating to the cultural, historical and built heritage of the area.
- **Enjoying the Landscape** ~ focussing on initiatives that give people increased opportunities to access, engage with, and understand the heritage of the area.

ⁱ Stage 2 application submitted to HLF in December 2006 by the Dalriada Landscape Partnership.

2.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work.

The Dalriada Project Company delivered its work through ten different projects, grouped into the three theme areas. Collectively, the three themes strongly met all HLF's aims for landscape partnerships. The projects and the inter-relationships between them were well thought through and funding was spent relatively evenly across HLF's aims.

The scheme was managed and co-ordinated by a small team. Projects were delivered both directly by the project team and through four identified lead partners. Some of the projects took longer to deliver than originally planned, and there were a variety of reasons for this. Many projects suffered as a result of the lack of a project manager and a much depleted staff resource in 2008, although those led by the project partners largely continued on track. In some cases unforeseen costs or difficulties in implementation arose, with project delivery adjusted accordingly to ensure the aims of the landscape partnership scheme were achieved.

A strategic review in 2009 set a new direction for some of the projects. The following sections comment on the individual projects that have been delivered, highlighting both successes and problems.

Natural Heritage and Landscapes.

Four projects were delivered within this theme that focussed on improving the biodiversity, key habitats and access to key landscape features in the area.

- The Biodiversity Action for the Wider Landscape project involved work on four existing sites. Planned outputs included the restoration of 13ha of open habitat to encourage key LBAP habitats and species, delivery of two training workshops for 20 volunteers to monitor benefits, and running six public open days to raise awareness and ensure continuation of grazing management schemes. The outputs were all achieved, with 113ha of open habitat restored and an additional six volunteers trained to carry out surveys.
- The Black Grouse Habitat Improvement project outputs included restoring 50ha of open habitat, training 16 volunteers to monitor black grouse population changes and 23 people attending the 'Black Grouse Safaris' to raise awareness of the project's work. Four additional volunteers were trained but the numbers attending the safaris were not achieved because it emerged that the original estimated numbers (20 people attending annual events) would be too many in a fragile habitat.
- All targets for the Ancient Woodland restoration project were achieved with one extra woodland event delivered. Some participating groups of disabled people came from the islands and other parts of Scotland. 300ha of ancient woodland sites were protected and restored within the project area.
- The Near to Nature trail project was completed later than anticipated due to adverse weather during construction, and because the landowner was unwilling to negotiate on certain servitude rights. This meant that anticipated visitor numbers and school visits were not quantified. The intended oak canopy platform proved too expensive so funds were used to upgrade access to the site and provide additional infrastructure like handrails, a willow tunnel, shelter and gathering area with benches.

Built and Cultural Heritage.

Three projects within this theme related to improving access and engaging the local community in the cultural, historical and built heritage of the area.

- The Examining and Understanding the Archaeological Landscape project included five archaeological digs using 21 trained volunteers with the findings incorporated into interpretive materials. 46 volunteers undertook three walk-over surveys over 50ha of historic landscape and consolidated and restored one key archaeological site. The output for recruiting survey and excavation volunteers (10 planned in both cases) was exceeded. The original intention to restore five key archaeological sites was reduced as only one of the 5 surveyed required consolidation work.
- The Community History project was very successful in exceeding planned outputs. Volunteers, local schools and all sections of the community were involved in producing a publication that exceeded the scope and quality of that originally anticipated. Some of the outcomes were achieved in different ways to the original plan. Six high quality, large-scale artworks celebrating history and heritage are in local schools and a stained glass window celebrating the Crinan Canal is located in the local hospital.
- The project that looked to Survey and Consolidate Key Historical Features was perhaps less successful. The original intention was to undertake 10 site surveys with the features being made safe and public access facilitated. Five surveys were conducted and it was found that most did not need consolidation and the cost of restoration of the iconic Linnet Shed became too expensive to justify the investment. In agreement with HLF the outputs for this project were revised with local volunteers being involved in graveyard surveys, the Kilmichael Cross being restored and relocated and interpretation material produced.

Enjoying the Landscape.

This theme delivered three projects with a focus on involving people and increasing opportunities to access, engage with and understand the heritage of the landscape partnership area.

- The second project team largely achieved the targets for the Heritage Access Network in a much-condensed timescale. 195km of pathways were linked and incorporated into the interpretation project, which exceeded the planned output by 95km. In addition 20km of paths were upgraded or constructed (16km planned) to provide strategic links within the access network of the project area. Public transport services within the area were improved and are now being run by the local council. The project created eight of the ten planned new routes but these were to a much higher specification than originally intended.
- The original planned outputs set for the Interpretation and Information project were less specific at the application stage. It was intended to invest a large sum of money on digital and electronic interpretive media including the development of an event alert system that was developed but was not practical to manage and maintain beyond the life of the project. The second project team identified the need for an interpretation plan. This brought a focus to the project and tied the achievements of the landscape partnership scheme together. 30 sites benefited from new signage, while 76 panels were installed. Four leaflets, two films, podcasts, and a virtual landscape model that were produced and integrated into the website and a network of six local hubs. 21 volunteers were recruited and trained to provide ongoing visitor monitoring.

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by the Dalriada Landscape Partnership

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- Introduced grazing regimes to improve the habitat for wild flowers and rare butterflies (e.g. marsh fritillary) at 5 sites in Knapdale, covering 113ha.
- Improved and connected habitats at 3 sites in Knapdale to help reverse the decline of black grouse, covering 50ha.
- Restored ancient woodlands at 6 sites to improve habitat and landscape and support internationally important lower plant communities (e.g. lichens) covering 300 ha.
- Doubled the number of known archaeological sites to 800, through 3 surveys and 5 excavations in Kilmartin Glen and Knapdale.
- Surveyed and restored two historic graveyards at Kilmartin and Kilmichael and produced an online database that records the details of 600 stones and other features.
- Conserved and relocated the Kilmichael Cross, displayed in Kilmartin House Museum.

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- Captured the memories of the community for future generations through publication of the book 'Dalriada: Twentieth Century Kingdom', and an archive of 65 stories.
- Encouraged young people's interest in their community history through arts projects interpreting aspects of local history, at six schools.
- Opportunities for 100+ local volunteers for: archaeological surveys & excavations, habitat surveys, wildlife surveys, visitor surveys, and community history interviews.
- Delivered over 50 events including Dalriada Digs Discoveries, a Puppet Show, Woodland Events, Grouse Safaris, Archaeological Open Days, and Biodiversity Events.
- Delivered 'Discover Dalriada 2010', a two week events programme of 30 events, to celebrate the landscape and heritage attended by 3,400 people.

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- Provided 8 new routes, totalling 20 km, linking key heritage sites in the landscape, and connecting Kilmartin Glen, the Crinan Canal and Knapdale.
- Created the 3.25km Near To Nature Trail at Dunardry.
- Improved information about the heritage through providing 76 on-site interpretation panels at 30 locations and 4 information leaflets.
- Electronic based interpretation, 2 films, 2 podcasts, 6 touch screen hubs, and website.

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- Completed a baseline Visitor and Residents Survey in 2007, with 222 people.
- Development of a marketing and training plan and establishment of the Heart Of Argyll Marketing Group, engaging 100 people including 60 local businesses.

- The original aim of the Marketing and Training project was to develop a training programme for businesses, so they would be well equipped to tell visitors about the area. Little progress was made on this until the 2009 Strategic Review when it was decided to refocus this project on marketing and encouraging more visitors. A marketing plan was produced, and the Heart of Argyll Marketing Group was created.
- Discover Dalriada was a successful 2-week programme of 27 different events celebrating and raising awareness of the achievements of the Dalriada Project. 3,400 people attend the programme that had two signature events, the Discover Dunadd Footsteps Festival linked to the London Olympics Cultural Olympiad and the Crinan Canal Water Festival as the finale.

2.3 Conclusions

The Dalriada Project has delivered significant benefits to the landscape and people of mid Argyll. It can be seen that many projects delivered in line with what was anticipated, and adopting a flexible approach to project delivery meant that elements delivering less than anticipated were stopped in favour of others delivering greater benefits. Across the full suite of projects the partnership, and HLF, appear to have achieved good value for money.

Creation of a strong partnership.

Strong partnership working was a critical element in the success of the Dalriada Project. The partnership involved all the key agencies operating within the area. All of the partners saw the benefits of working together to form the Dalriada Project to integrate, extend and intensify their individual activities and create wider benefits for the landscape. It would not have been possible to achieve the scale of benefits, nor the integration, without the partnership and the co-ordination provided by the Dalriada Project team.

As the Dalriada Project moves on from the delivery phase there will still be a need for the active involvement of the partnership to oversee the maintenance and management of what has been delivered. The partners will continue to have an active role, not only in undertaking agreed maintenance work, but in reporting to the Board on an annual basis. This will allow the Board to have an overview of the long-term benefits of the project and to meet its continued legal liabilities as a not for profit limited company.

Continuity and legacy.

The Dalriada Project Company is keen to ensure everything that has been delivered through the landscape partnership scheme is looked after and that the legacy is sustained into the future. A detailed maintenance and management plan has been prepared and agreements and funding are in place to sustain the investment that has been made in the area. It is intended that a monitoring report focusing on ongoing benefits will be produced in 2012 for the Heritage Lottery Fund.

This legacy can be evidenced as the project won the Historic Environment Category and was runner up in the Recreation and Tourism Category at the recent 2011 UK Waterways Renaissance Awards. In addition the Dalriada Project is the only Scottish environment initiative to reach the semi-finals and public voting round of the National Lottery Awards.

Summary of strengths and weaknesses.

The independence of the Dalriada project team provided advantages in terms of autonomy as the team were focussed entirely on project delivery and they were not perceived as being too embedded in any one organisation. While this helped create the strong partnership there were disadvantages in that new management systems and administrative procedures had to be sorted: developing a new financial system was particularly onerous and took time that might better have been spent on project delivery.

A more detailed business plan and implementation strategy would have been useful from the start of the project. Predicted costs at the start were not always accurate, and it should be expected that these would vary over the implementation period. It would have been good to have a system in place that easily allowed for such variance to be accommodated.

The unique benefit of the project has been the opportunity to work at a landscape scale and deliver an integrated package of projects that is greater than the sum of its parts. A range of benefits has been delivered for both the natural and cultural heritage as well as the local economy of the area. Through increased recognition at national awards the Dalriada Project has demonstrated that landscape partnership schemes can deliver integrated benefits for valued and important landscapes that are not covered by national statutory landscape designations.

3 Kerridge Ridge and Ingersley Vale

3.1 Introduction

The landscape.

The Kerridge Ridge and Ingersley Vale (KRIV) landscape comprises 2½km² of Cheshire countryside lying between the town of Macclesfield in the west, and the boundary of the Peak District National Park in the east. The ridge and the valley combine to form an area of attractive countryside including many small traditional fields linked by unusual stone flag paths and divided by dry-stone boundary walls. The valley was once a hub for local industry and has a number of small mills and associated mill-ponds. The landscape contains a number of attractive historic features, many first built in the early years of the industrial revolution.



Today the area is highly valued by local people, providing a safe, accessible and traffic free environment which is heavily used for informal recreation. The ridge provides extensive views over the Cheshire plain.

The Landscape Partnership.

The KRIV Partnership was created in 2001, and was in the first tranche of landscape partnerships to be awarded funds by HLF in 2006. This was very much a community driven programme, with a steering group mainly made up of volunteers. This is in contrast to the situation in most partnerships, where the steering group is dominated by countryside management professionals who work for heritage organisations, local government or NGOs. The lead body for the KRIV Landscape Partnership was Groundwork Cheshire.

The programme of works ran from August 2006 until August 2010. HLF awarded the partnership a grant of £727,000 out of a total project budget of £1.03m, and 97% of this sum was drawn down by the end of the scheme.

KRIV was small in comparison with other landscape partnerships. The partnership area was only 2½ km², and the partnership only employed one member of staff – the programme manager. Average area for a partnership is around 200km² and a typical programme team is 3-4 people. While the budget was comparatively modest the amount of money spent per unit area was very high.

The partnership vision.

The partnership set out to preserve the natural and traditional features of the landscape focusing on the restoration of dry stone walls and other built features, hedge laying, footpath improvements and habitat works to the mill ponds, woodland and meadows that characterise the area. These physical improvements were underpinned by a volunteering and training programme run by the

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), which – together with educational and interpretive activities – was the principal way in which the local community were engaged.

3.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work.

The partnership set out to deliver its work under five theme areas: boundaries, access, training, historic sites and water courses. Activities and outputs linked to these themes cut across the four aims set by HLF for the landscape Partnership Programme.

Unfortunately the documents which were submitted by the partnership in 2004-06, while comprehensive in terms of spending plans, are much less specific in terms of quantified outputs, making it difficult to track the extent to which original ambitions have been achieved.

Boundary works.

A total of 4km of boundary features have been conserved across the landscape partnership area. The single largest project was to reinstate and repair the ridge wall, a significant landscape feature which runs along the 1.5km length of the Kerridge Ridge. This has been successfully completed, although there were long delays as a result of difficulties in gaining permission from all the affected landowners. This main walling project was undertaken by contractors, and the standard of the work is reported to be very high. As a result of this project a number of local people have now established themselves as professional dry stone wallers.

Other boundary outputs include 1km of hedge laid in the traditional Cheshire style, together with fencing work and other dry-stone walls.

Access.

Physical works. The aim for this tranche of work, as stated in the original proposal, was to maintain and improve footpaths and investigate the possibility of access agreements in the area. Unfortunately no quantitative targets were presented in the stage 2 documentation.

1km of new footpath has been established, and improvements made to a further 3km. Works have included the replacement of wooden stiles with kissing gates, better drainage along some footpaths and most notably the restoration of historic stone flagged footpaths. These routes were originally created for the use of mill workers over 200 years ago, and had fallen into disrepair and become overgrown with vegetation.

The original ambition to construct an 'Access for All' footpath was dropped in response to local opposition. No progress was made in terms of negotiating access agreements.

Interpretation and community involvement. In terms of activities, the partnership set out to engage with 100 school children in each year, and to work with all of the seven schools in the immediate locality. The initial intention was to deliver 12 school training days and a day of teacher training. Tangible outputs planned at the outset included a detailed heritage map, an illustrated booklet, a teaching resource pack and a website. Most of these targets were met or nearly met, but plans to instigate an oral history project never got off the ground. The teacher training session was not delivered, and while feedback

from teachers about the learning materials was positive, they felt more active promotion of the materials would have been useful.

Skills, training and volunteers

This was probably the most successful theme for the partnership, and most of the numerical targets set at the outset have been substantially exceeded. One of the most successful elements of the KRIV partnership was in establishing a very well regarded volunteer group,. This team have consistently produced high quality work, turning out in all weathers and regularly fielding between 10 and 20 volunteers on any given day. A total of 156 volunteers have been involved, and these individuals have contributed a total of 5,000 workdays. Ten individuals have come out with the group on more 100 occasions, suggesting their engagement with heritage has been profound. As well as completing practical conservation tasks, local volunteers also carried out an archaeological investigation of Cow Lane Mill in Rainow.

At the planning stage the partnership submitted a comprehensive training plan covering topics such as species identification and practical conservation skills (walling, footpath construction etc.). Once again however annual targets and measurements of success were inadequately presented within the plan. BTCV has delivered 20-50 different training days (different figures presented in different reports) with 70 people benefiting. All the training courses were accredited, and one volunteer has gone on to find employment with a local archaeologist after working on the community archaeological dig for three weeks; another has enrolled with the local agricultural college to study for a Higher National Certificate. While the volunteer group comprised a mix of retired, the unemployed, occasional probationers, students and working people, the majority of those taking part in the training programme appear to come from quite a narrow demographic group, with 75% of them falling in the age range 65-74.

At the outset the Partnership hoped that one legacy of the programme would be a rural skills training centre at Savio House (a residential youth centre located within the partnership area). This has not happened: initial projections regarding the training market may have been over-optimistic.

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by the Kerridge Ridge and Ingersley Vale Landscape Partnership

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- Maintained 2ha of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and restored a further 1ha
- Maintained 3ha of wood-pasture & parkland
- Restored 5 ponds and 1 river
- 1km of hedge laying, repaired 3km dry stone wall and 4km fencing, including fencing to enable good management of a wild-flower meadow
- 70 trees planted.
- Individual spp. projects: Daubenton's Bat, Southern Hawker (Dragonfly), Badger, Green Hairstreak, White Clawed Crayfish, Water Cricket (Velia), Bluebell
- Restored five built heritage features

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- Held 3 community consultation events, engaged a total of 307 participants.
- 156 volunteers engaged, contributing a total of 4,628 volunteer days. Activities included community archaeology as well as practical conservation work.

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- Created 1km of new footpath including 223 steps, 5km of improved footpath
- Five stone stiles
- Two new interpretation boards, one interpretive leaflet, one guidebook, a website.
- Worked with 6 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, 2 youth groups (184 people)
- Produced 1 learning resource pack,
- 7 visits to schools (140 children)
- 1 guided walk (8 beneficiaries)
- 2 guided walks for disabled (16 beneficiaries)

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- Training for volunteers:
- 12 one-day training courses in land and habitat management – 146 beneficiaries
 - 8 one day courses in rural skills and heritage conservation training – 64 beneficiaries
 - One-day course in participation / learning – 10 beneficiaries
 - 75% of volunteer trainees were in the age range 65-74
 - Created 1 project mgmt job, 2 staff training courses undertaken.
- 5% of trainees considered themselves to be disabled.

Historic Sites. This programme originally comprised two main projects. One of these (at Cow Lane Mill) was a great success, but the proposed works on Ingersley Mill chimney did not progress because of problems with the landowner. Many smaller features such as a dry stone well and several stone stiles have been successfully restored.

Water Courses. This only ever was a very small programme of works (£26,000) but in the event only £3,000 was spent on repairs to a stone footbridge. Other works did not proceed again because of a failure to gain the agreement of the landowner

Other Activities. These were brought in to substitute for abandoned projects, and included habitat works to 3ha of woodland and 3ha of wood pasture / meadow.

3.3 Conclusions

Strengths

The external evaluation report concludes that the project was efficiently and effectively managed by a local community partnership and the project officer, and the ambition to enshrine community inclusion as a guiding principle had been realised. The process through which the successful KRIV volunteer group was established has been described as “an example of the highest standards in community enablement”. The evaluation goes on to suggest that KRIV activities have had a big impact on those who got involved.

A stakeholder survey (which engaged landowners, steering group members and KRIV volunteers) suggested that the scheme had largely achieved its objectives and had achieved value for money. Surveys of those who use the area for recreation and of those who live in neighbouring towns suggested that people see the different projects as part of a greater whole, and that awareness and appreciation of the landscape improvements increased as time went on (97% of those who responded to the survey in 2010 were positive – but the scale and design of the survey means these results are cannot be seen as necessarily significant).

Legacy

Clearly there is a material legacy in terms of restored landscape features that the local community and future generations can enjoy, while teachers in the local schools now have the resources to allow children to learn about the history on their doorstep. Those involved in the partnership are particularly pleased that there is now an established autonomous volunteer group who have the motivation, skills and leadership capacity to continue with conservation work within the scheme area. KRIV volunteers will take on some of the maintenance work funded through the HLF maintenance budget, and some local landowners want them to continue working on their property.

The partnership positively sought to use local businesses in carrying out its activities. One outcome from this is that there is now a larger pool of rural craftsmen in the area, and in particular a group of local dry-stone wallers with a recognised accreditation

Challenges

The partnership area (2½km²) is smaller than many country parks or other sites in single ownership, and application of the landscape partnership approach to such a small area has been

questioned. Some of the project failures have been attributed to a lack of staff resource, and the lack of critical mass may have resulted in a higher percentage of funds going into overheads than is the case with larger schemes.

One benefit of working in a small area is that it is easier to make people aware of the full range of partnership activities, but one downside is closer scrutiny than would otherwise be the case. In this instance this has led to disquiet amongst some sections of the local community, leading to a degree of rivalry between different groups, and a failure to win hearts and minds. While there are clear benefits in a community based partnership, one local landowner has suggested that the steering group lacked a critical edge.

The scale and nature of landscape partnership funding has generally resulted in innovative thinking and significant added value. While KRIV can point to a number of solid achievements, there have been no ground-breaking activities – the volunteer training programme for example is very much in the vein of those which BTCV have successfully delivered across the country over the last twenty years.

The greatest setback the partnership faced was its failure to engage with some landowners whose holdings contain important heritage elements. This resulted in an uneven spread of work across the partnership area, and proved to be a major handicap. With hindsight it would have been better if HLF had not have awarded a stage 2 pass until the majority of landowner agreements were in place.

Finally while HLF has invested in excess of £700,000 in KRIV, and the local authorities involved achieved very good value for money (with reported financial leverage of 40:1) the HLF monitor feels, from an HLF perspective, that “the judgement of whether this has achieved value for money is a difficult one”.

4 Neroche

4.1 Introduction

The landscape

The Neroche Landscape Partnership scheme covers 91km² of the northern part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, spanning the border of Somerset and Devon. Neroche takes its name from the medieval hunting forest that once covered part of the area. The landscape is an intricate and intimate mosaic with a strong wooded character and a mix of traditional habitats that evoke a sense of enclosure, remoteness and tranquillity. The area has a significant concentration of Sites of Special Scientific Interest together with regionally important heritage features including a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



The landscape has retained its character and richness, but its distinctiveness has suffered and remains under threat.

The partnership

The Neroche Scheme is a partnership between the community of the Blackdown Hills and seventeen agencies, authorities, local organisations and companies, led by the Forestry Commission. Partners include Blackdown Hills AONB, Natural England, all the constituent local authorities, The National Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation and Somerset Art Works.

The Neroche project was awarded a Stage 2 pass of £1.88m (68% of £2.78m) in September 2006, with the aim of maximising the value of area for wildlife conservation, access and recreation, learning and skills development. The project runs from October 2006 to September 2011, having been extended from three years to five years. This timescale brings it into line with more recent landscape partnership schemes. To date £2.33m has been spent in the scheme area and £1.58m of HLF money has been drawn down.

The partnership vision

In the material reviewed no partnership vision was articulated but the Neroche Landscape Partnership recognised the opportunity to do something more than simply address individual landscape issues in isolation. The project was designed to take a 'holistic' approach to landscape heritage and weave together the delivery of overlapping solutions and innovations which require different groups to work closely together.

The aims of the scheme are to:

- Invest in the natural, built and cultural heritage of the area ~ to be achieved by the natural heritage, built & archaeological heritage and cultural heritage themes.

- Make the landscape more accessible to everyone ~ to be achieved by the physical access, collective knowledge and opportunity to learn themes.
- Improve people's ability to sustain the qualities of the landscape ~ to be achieved by themes that involved caring for the heritage landscape and developed skills for managing the fabric of the heritage.

4.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work

The Neroche Landscape Partnership delivers its work through 23 different projects, grouped into eight theme areas. The scheme was planned in excellent detail with clear aims, milestones, measures of success and risks associated with each individual project. Collectively, the identified themes strongly align with HLF's landscape partnership aims. The projects and the inter-relationships between them are well thought through and funding is being spent relatively evenly across the four aims of the programme.

The project is managed and co-ordinated by a small team, employed by the Forestry Commission and based in the Blackdown Hills AONB office. The team comprises a project manager, access & interpretation officer, community history officer, forest works supervisor, forest schools officer and administrator. Some of the staff are based for part of their time with project partners, to support partnership working and to provide for the possibility of staff being retained by partners beyond the life of the scheme.

Natural Heritage

Six projects were delivered within this theme to enhance and restore wildlife habitats across the Blackdown Hills, at a landscape scale. By October 2010 all of the intended outputs had been achieved with 280ha of forest habitat actively managed.

- 75ha of open pasture and heath, along with 140ha of wood pasture and wooded heath, has been created. Natural regeneration of 55ha of broadleaved woodland has been initiated and 10ha of neglected coppice brought back into rotation.
- 30km of fencing has been erected to establish a low intensity grazing regime with a breeding herd of 60 longhorn cattle. Seven nature reserves have been enhanced for wildlife and public access and a detailed habitat monitoring scheme is in place for 220ha of forest to enable progress with habitat restoration to be measured in the future. New cattle over-wintering facilities have been necessary following concerns raised by, and protracted correspondence with, a local resident.

Built and Archaeological Heritage

Four projects within this theme focused on the conservation of key built heritage features in the Neroche area. Key projects are at Castle Neroche, an Iron-Age earthworks and Wellington Monument, an iconic feature of the Blackdown Hills, managed by the National Trust. All of the intended outputs of this theme have been achieved although, at first glance, this theme appears less ambitious than the projects delivering the Natural Heritage theme.

- Castle Neroche has been made more accessible and protected from erosion with new steps, vegetation cleared, improved paths, signage and one new surfaced path created to 'Access for All' standard.

- A structural survey has been carried out on the Wellington Monument to gain an understanding of the scale of restoration works required. Public access around the site has been improved with the car park expanded and access track enhanced.
- Ringdown Barn has been restored as a historically important example of local vernacular farm buildings. Wychwood Lake has been restored as an example of a designed landscape estate feature and equipped with access for disabled fishermen.

Cultural Heritage

This theme is based around a Community History project, encouraging and resourcing communities and individuals to explore, research, document and celebrate the heritage of the Neroche area. 15 out of 20 parish based projects have been run to research, record and celebrate local history; four local history community events have been held each year and the Neroche local history book is going to print in line with original intentions.

Physical Access

Three projects have delivered the anticipated outputs to expand public access to the heritage landscape, including the development of a series of long-distance off-road trails. 40km of 'Neroche Herepath' trails have been established, accessible to walkers, horse riders and those with limited mobility. 23km of off-road trails have been created to provide links with Taunton, Wellington, Culmstock and Hemyock. 1km of upgraded multi-purpose track has been created for combined recreational, forestry and livestock management purposes. A new 45-place car park has been established at Staple Hill along with extending the parking at Castle Neroche for Herepath trail users.

Collective Knowledge

- Two projects interpreting the heritage landscape, using visual arts, music and storytelling.
- It is not clear if the original intention of parish based community arts and interpretation projects has been pursued but the original outputs have been exceeded. Extensive outputs of 11 'season' events, four music and story-telling workshops and 1 major event has been delivered. There has been two public exhibitions displaying commissioned art and a CD of recorded music and story telling has been produced.
 - A mixture of 39 public walks, events and training workshops has attracted over 600 participants. Mobile digital media has been produced; digital trail guide units are available for public hire.

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by the Neroche Landscape Partnership

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- 75ha of open pasture and heath created, 140ha of wood pasture and wooded heath created, natural regeneration initiated in 54ha
- 6ha of neglected coppice brought into rotation, 3.7ha of coppice restored on 3 reserves
- Breeding herd of over 60 longhorn cattle established
- 3,050m fencing erected and scrub clearance on 4 reserves
- Detailed habitat monitoring system in place for 220ha of forest
- Cleared vegetation round Neroche to open up viewpoints
- Structural survey of Wellington monument
- Ringdown Barn repaired and Wychwood Lake restored

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- 15 local history projects run over three years, four local history events held each year
- Book published to reflect local history, CD produced with music and storytelling work
- 11 'Season' events, four music and story-telling workshops delivered and one major event
- Exhibitions by two commissioned artists displayed publicly
- 800 volunteer days and 90 skilled volunteer days over three years
- Blackdown Hills Trust established by five members of the Local Steering Group

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- 23km off road trails , 40.5km circular short walks, 1km all ability trail
- 1.3km of upgraded multi-purpose track in Staple common and Middle room
- Access improved on four reserves, new steps improved paths and signage around Castle Neroche monument, one new surfaced path to 'Access for All' standard
- Car park expanded and access track enhanced at Wellington monument, new 45 place car park at Staple Hill, extended 35 place car park at Castle Neroche
- Digital content produced to interpret heritage in mobile form, Camera obscura constructed and used at six events; website established and maintained
- Nine newsletters sent out to local residents – three times a year for three years
- 25 public walks/events held with over 400 participants
- 14 public training events held with over 200 participants
- Approximately 480 children received three Forest School sessions per year for three years with 11 Forest School sites established on or off school grounds
- 140 health walks carried out for targeted audiences

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- 40 people trained to Forest School level 3, 16 trained to level 2
- Three apprentices employed and trained for 18 months achieving NVQ2 and units of NVQ3
- 74 visits providing advice and assistance to land managers

Learning amongst the Landscape

A two project theme, one developing Forest Schools as an approach to outdoor learning, the other bringing hard-to-reach groups into the countryside through a series of 'Health Walks'.

Forest Schools are being established in four locations on school grounds and elsewhere within the area. 40 teachers have gained an Open College Network qualification in outdoor education, enabling them to establish Forest School approaches at their own schools. 480 children (comfortably exceeding the 200 target) have received three Forest School sessions per year for 3 years. 140 health walks (exceeding the 100 target) have been delivered over three years to targeted audiences.

Opportunity to be Involved

This theme comprises three projects that focus on the community-based governance of the Scheme. An effective partnership board, local stakeholders group and website has been established and maintained throughout the Scheme. To October 2010, 800 volunteer and 90 skilled volunteer days (1000 anticipated over the whole scheme) have been recorded. In addition five members of the local steering group have established the Blackdown Hills Trust to help with the continuation of the central elements of the Neroche Scheme.

Training for Employment

A theme with two projects designed to maintain the ability of the community to sustain the qualities of the heritage landscape in a manner that supports the local economy.

- An 18 month Apprentice Training programme in countryside management has been provided with the 3 apprentices achieving NVQ Level 2/3. As is the situation with other case studies, this scheme has a large project budget (nearly £150,000) and could be interpreted as a way of providing additional resource to the host organisation rather than fulfilling the aims of HLF and the landscape partnership programme.
- Advice, training and grant assistance has been provided to at least 74 (exceeding the 40 anticipated) land managers in landscape heritage management. It is not clear if the network to enable sharing of skills and equipment between land managers has been established.

4.3 Conclusions

The Neroche Project is delivering significant benefits to the Blackdown Hills. It can be seen that all the theme areas are delivering in line with what was anticipated. The scheme has achieved a balance between strong and decisive management informed by a clear vision, and it has allowed partners and project team members the freedom to innovate, design and deliver projects in accordance with their experience and knowledge of local context. Across the full suite of projects the partnership, and HLF, are achieving good value for money.

Creating a strong local partnership

A key innovation and success of this partnership was the early creation of a local stakeholders' group to represent community interests. Expert and local knowledge was combined from the partners, stakeholders and consultations with local communities to develop and produce the plan of work and

activities. The project team provided the vision and enthusiasm to develop and run the scheme while actively involving others.

The local stakeholders' group was empowered through having a strong role in decision-making within the scheme and having the casting vote in decision-making on the landscape partnership board. In 2010, five members of the local stakeholders group formed the 'Blackdown Hills Trust' to continue their work on supporting landscape and community-related projects to benefit the area. This will be an important legacy of the scheme.

Impacts of the scheme

Opening up the landscape through tree clearance and cattle grazing was an innovation, transforming areas into low intensity mixed wood pasture. The speed and scale of forest clearance caused some concerns and opposition amongst some members of the local community. Despite investing much effort and time into communicating and publicising the scheme, it remained difficult to achieve widespread local involvement.

The wide and diverse range of activities undertaken as part of the scheme enabled new audiences to be reached and provided some existing users with new experiences. Those who took part in the various activities talked about gaining new knowledge about the area, learning new skills and increased confidence to participate in and enjoy the local landscape.

Summary of strengths and weaknesses

A diverse partnership with a talented project team to lead the scheme was central to the success of the Neroche Landscape Partnership. The preparation of comprehensive project information documents at Stage 2 meant that possible synergies between the work streams of partners and the projects were identified early on to give greater impact and benefit when delivered. The achievements of the partnership were rewarded when Neroche was the South West regional heat winner of the 2010 UK Landscape Award.

The early decision to grant significant influence and power to the local stakeholders' group increased legitimacy and helped to achieve sensitivity to local context and provided a strong sense of 'acting in the community interest'.

It was recognised that the addition of a dedicated post for a communication expert and the development, within the partnership, of a communication strategy would have helped target different audiences early on and could have mitigated some of the complex issues arising from project delivery. In the evaluation some frustration was expressed that the scheme was coming to an end, suggesting that the management and maintenance implications should have been woven into the projects earlier in delivery.

It is acknowledged that the Neroche Landscape Partnership Scheme is more than a collection of individual projects and activities – the sum total of the scheme's achievements includes the numerous connections that have been created between organisations, groups and individuals, and between people and the changing landscape.

5 Purbeck Keystone Project

5.1 Introduction

The Landscape

The Purbeck Keystone Project was a landscape partnership located on the Isle of Purbeck in the south-eastern corner of Dorset. The 'Isle' is really a peninsula, bounded by the sea to the east and south, and by Poole Harbour to the north. Regular and extensive winter flooding of the rivers Frome and Piddle, prior to the advent of modern day infrastructure, meant that access from the north-west could also be difficult, and this helped perpetuate the notion of an 'Isle'.



Geologically the area is fascinating: of greatest repute are the exposures in quarries and more especially along the coast, providing sections across the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods that are of international standing. These are complemented by the Purbeck limestone plateau in the south, the chalk ridge which bisects the area west-east, and the Purbeck Heaths and the Frome Valley to the north. The area is notable for the quality of its stone and craftsmanship, for its tremendous diversity of nature conservation interest, for the strength of its cultural identity, and as a much visited historic landscape. The area's standing is reflected in the way it can boast a string of conservation designations: within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and containing several National Nature Reserves, SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and RIGS (Regionally Important Geological and geomorphological Sites), a Ramsar Site, a Heritage Coast and a World Heritage Site.

The Landscape Partnership

The landscape partnership was established by the Purbeck Heritage Committee, a partnership in its own right, and a task group of the Dorset AONB. The lead partner for the Purbeck Keystone Project was Purbeck District Council, and the landscape partnership benefited from the support of an independent chair, Prof. Vincent May from Bournemouth University.

The Purbeck Keystone Project ran from October 2006 to December 2010. The original HLF award was for £1.4m, and by the end of the scheme nearly £1.2m – 82% of the award – had been drawn down.

The partnership vision

The landscape partnership scheme aimed to promote the historic stone landscape, to conserve and revitalise Purbeck's stone working skills, to open access to Purbeck's rich geology and the story told by its fossils, and to conserve and raise awareness of the area's biodiversity. This last element was to be achieved in part by emphasising the link between biodiversity and pastoralism, by engaging the farming community, and supporting the marketing of local produce.

5.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work

The partnership delivered its work through three different theme areas, which together comprised approximately 20 different projects. The theme areas were the natural landscape (farming), the cultural landscape (stone working) and outdoor education.

While it can be seen below that a great deal has been achieved, the documentation describing the partnership's initial aspirations does not provide targets against which we can compare what was actually delivered.

Natural landscape (farming)

The partnership aimed to support farming practices that encourage biodiversity and restore threatened habitats in two areas. In the chalk grassland of the Purbeck Ridge the primary challenge related to gorse encroachment and consequent loss of species diversity, while wetland habitats alongside the River Frome were suffering from low water tables.

Works carried out on the Purbeck Ridge achieved 1% of the national target for the UKBAP Priority Habitat for calcareous grassland, restoring 190ha to favourable condition. Works on the ground included scrub control (18.8ha gorse cut or burnt, 14.5ha gorse sprayed with herbicide) installing fencing, providing cattle handling facilities and creating a reliable water supply. To secure longer term change, the scheme worked with farmers to establish conservation grazing regimes using traditional breed cattle and sheep. This proved extremely popular. The scheme intervened at both ends of the marketing chain: supporting the establishment of eight grazing herds, and helping a number of landholders to set up and promote the 'Loving the Land' brand through what has now become a revitalised producer's co-operative. Public engagement in these elements of the partnership's activities has been achieved through the delivery of guided walks which showcase conservation herds, and by providing funds which result in school visits to farms.

Although the Frome Valley is largely undesignated, works here helped to achieve the UK Grazing Marsh BAP target for habitat rehabilitation as well as restoration of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. Two water level management plans drawn up by the scheme have now been incorporated into HLS agreements. Other projects included restoration of neglected ditches (2.1km of ditches brought into management) and helping farmers install and implement small scale water level management schemes to help wetland birds. As a result of engagement with the partnership the Ministry of Defence funded a programme of ditch restoration works financed from their own resources. Problems in delivery were encountered as a result of delays in obtaining the relevant permissions from the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission. A recent report from the partnership mentioned the possibility of setting up a ten year management and maintenance agreement with Dorset Wildlife Trust to provide continuity in the management of biodiversity in the Frome Valley.

A conservation business support project evoked less interest than expected amongst the farming community and a vocational training initiative was underspent when candidates for farm apprenticeships failed to come forward. Two apprentices have now moved on to permanent jobs, and support for a

National Trust careership post had a successful outcome when the person involved moved on to a permanent warden post elsewhere in the country. There were also delays in achieving 'Environmental Quality Mark' accreditation as state aid rules were negotiated. One ambition which was not achieved was professional publication of an oral history project, which proved to be too expensive.

In total the partnership has engaged with 22 different landowners, helping seven to submit successful grant applications valued in total at over £600,000.

Cultural Landscape (stone working)

The highest profile output from this area of work has been the restoration and conversion of old quarry sheds for use as the Purbeck Stone Centre. By September 2010 the three workshops in the centre were fully operational, delivering recreational stone carving course, and with reasonably healthy course bookings. Responsibility for the centre has now been transferred to the Stone Centre trustees, with continuity hopefully ensured through a ten-year, £60,000 management and maintenance agreement. While it was always anticipated that the centre would not be self financing within the first few years, the hope is that this will be the case in the longer term.

The stone outreach project has delivered, for example, stone carving courses, dry stone walling events and events directed specifically at children. Stone walling grants to landowners have resulted in the repair of 2.8km of stone walls which make such a key contribution to the Purbeck landscape. To secure longer term continuity the dry stone training project has supported two apprenticeships and created a three-year dry stone wall careership post with the National Trust. The partnership also supported the establishment of a dry stone walling test centre in collaboration with the Dorset branch of the Dry Stone Walling Association.

The Purbeck marble initiative provided internships in 2006 and 2007, but these did not take place in 2008 or 2009. The initiative delivered workshops and created links with the Cathedral Architects Association, reflecting the way in which Purbeck Marble can be seen in virtually all the cathedrals of the south of England. The initiative unfortunately came to an early halt when the lead craftsman became unavailable.

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by the Purbeck Keystone Project

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- Engaged with 22 different farmers / landowners, including 125 farm visits
- Carried out 26 wildlife surveys and produced 15 management plans
- Supported farmers in making 7 successful grant applications, total value over £600,000 and covering 240ha
- Restored 55ha of lowland calcareous grassland and 153ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (128ha of this grazing marsh achieved favourable condition).
- Repaired 2.8km dry stone wall. Constructed 9.1km fencing.

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- Worked with 15 community groups (389 people)
- Mounted six consultation events, engaging 65 participants
- 238 volunteers contributed over 8,000 volunteer hours

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- 17.5km footpath and 20km cycle track improved
- 0.5km Pathway accessible for disabled people improved
- 6 heritage trails, total length 25.5 km
- Worked with 22 primary schools, 9 secondary schools and 2 colleges / universities (over 2,500 students / children engaged)
- Produced 2 learning resource packs
- 6 school visits to site, 36 outreach visits to schools, 16 teacher training events
- Approximately 7,000 people engaged in 32 adult learning events, 44 guided walks (1 specifically for disabled people – 11 beneficiaries), 11 open days and 19 exhibitions
- 10 interpretation boards, 18 leaflets, 1 guidebook, 2 websites, 1 blog

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- 5 training courses delivered to land managers / rural businesses over a total of 26 days to 23 individuals (Land and habitat management, tourism and business development training, Participation/learning activity training)
- 12 training courses delivered to volunteers, over a total of 71 days to 117 individuals, land and habitat management training, rural skills and heritage conservation training
- 12 training courses delivered to staff, over a total of 207 days to 49 individuals
- Employment for at least 2 dry stone wallers, 3 local producers and 8 contractors through the scheme. The building of the Burngate Stone Carving Centre has also had a positive impact on local employment.
- 5 FTE jobs created (internal) – no economic impact study been carried out of external impact.

Outdoor Learning (outdoor education)

The field studies project was set up to co-ordinate and resource the work of the many different outdoor education centres in Purbeck. Outputs have included a teacher's guide and website as well as a wide range of training and networking events. The original ambition to establish a young persons' conservation group has not been realised.

The inland Jurassic access project researched five quarries – in line with the partnership's original intentions - and made results available in a variety of media, including artworks and a 'virtual geology field trip', Seven self guided heritage trails have been produced and resources also went into an 'Access for All' route at Redcliffe. The landscape art project has resulted in an anthology of creative writing, a teachers' resource park and a set of 'stone walk' leaflets. The events which enabled these resources to be created are outputs in themselves, but in addition one of the most tangible and durable outputs is a set of large carved stones incorporated into the dry stone wall alongside the coastal path at Chapman's Pool.

The Purbeck Cycle Way project has resulted in better signage, supported the establishment of a cycle hire facility at Wareham, and improved and extended a Forestry Commission cycle trail. Cycling routes starting in Swanage were not developed, in light of a feasibility study which suggested they would be unsuitable for younger children. A guide to Purbeck was not produced when research revealed that this would simply duplicate existing material.

Over 200 volunteers have been involved in a wide range of activities across the programme. Nature conservation activities have included conducting wetland bird surveys, botanical surveys and butterfly walks both before and after conservation works, and undertaking practical work such as scrub clearance. Volunteers have also been involved in dry stone walling, tuition of stone masonry, promoting local food, local history research, developing walking routes and local geology research.

5.3 Conclusions

From the written evidence summarised above, and from first hand experience gained when members of our team visited Purbeck early in 2010, the Purbeck Keystone Project appears to have delivered a substantial set of outputs and outcomes, and – using other landscape partnerships as a baseline – a provisional judgement is that good value for money has been achieved through the use of HLF funds.

In this instance it has been particularly difficult to draw firm conclusions about effectiveness of delivery or value for money because on the one hand no clear quantitative targets seem to have been set before delivery started, and on the other we have not seen a final (external) evaluation of the landscape partnership scheme, and neither have we seen a project closure report from the HLF monitor or a management and maintenance plan which spells out how the partnership legacy will be sustained. This lack of information has been compounded because two of the principal project staff left in the autumn of 2010, and others left early in 2011. This of course often happens in the closing months of a scheme, as individuals look to pursue their own careers elsewhere.

Programme legacy

The Purbeck Heritage Committee will hopefully continue to maintain an oversight of Purbeck Keystone interests, and tangible outputs on the ground (e.g. stone artworks, water level management systems) will be sustained. Key partners such as the Dorset Wildlife Trust will have a key role to play here, and since the work required is in line with their own mission it seems likely this will happen.

Other elements of the scheme should be self-financing in the future: the producer's co-operative and the grazing herds should now stand on their own merits and should not require further external support. Landholders who have entered into agri-environment schemes will continue to receive payments from this source, and Natural England is charged to ensure agreed outcomes continue to be delivered.

The Purbeck Stone Centre faces a major challenge in moving from receiving significant external support to a position where it is financially self sufficient. Experience suggests that covering the costs of running a training centre relying on course fees alone is never easy. The generous £60,000 management and maintenance grant, to be used over the coming ten years, will need careful management, and an early priority will be to develop and start to deliver a successful programme of events against a robust business plan.

6 Sulwath Connections

6.1 Introduction

The landscape

The Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership scheme focussed upon the northern coastal area of the Solway Firth in Dumfries and Galloway in southern Scotland. The overall distinctiveness of the area is dominated by the Solway Firth an open estuarine landscape. The headland and bay landscape forms a distinctive coastline shape, sweeping down to remote rocky peninsulas.



The influence of the Solway travels northwards along broad dales, and narrow, wooded river valleys to the upper pasturelands of the upland fringe. Rounded foothills and exposed plateau moorland take over as the upland edge visible from the Solway.

Approximately 131,000 people live within the 3,055km² covered by the landscape partnership scheme. An area that is considerably larger than the 200km² recommended by HLF.

The partnership

The lead applicant was Dumfries and Galloway Council with the management of the scheme being directed by 25 different partners. Project decision making was co-ordinated by a steering group made up of ten members representing Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Solway Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway, Galloway Fisheries Trust and RSPB Scotland.

Sulwath Connections was awarded a stage 2 pass of £1.91m (48.7% of £3.9m) in November 2006. The duration of delivery of the projects was from April 2007 to September 2010. By the end of the project £1.89m (99%) of HLF funds had been drawn down.

The partnership vision

The partnership promoted an ambitious vision that conserved, enhanced and celebrated the area's landscape and cultural heritage with the ultimate intention that by 2020: *"The coast and river valleys which form the Sulwath Connections area will have developed further as a very special and distinctive place in which to live, work or visit."* with *"Everyone sharing an understanding and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural heritage, working together to ensure the features and resources are managed sustainably."*ⁱ

ⁱ Natural Capital (2010) [Evaluation of the Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership Project](http://www.sulwathconnections.org/uploads/sulwath_low_res_final.pdf) (see http://www.sulwathconnections.org/uploads/sulwath_low_res_final.pdf for summary document)

In order to deliver the vision, the partnership agreed more realistic aims that were:

- To deliver projects which will conserve, enhance and promote the distinctive landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity of the area
- To focus on projects which provide defined benefits to local people and visitors alike, in relation to Dumfries and Galloway's Natural Place image and improvement of the region's economy.

6.2 Ambitions and achievements

The overall programme of work

The Partnership delivered its work through 20 different projects, grouped into six theme areas. Each of the themes contributed in varying degrees to at least three of the four aims set by HLF for landscape partnerships. A comparison of outputs and outcomes presented in the stage 2 application against reports of what has been delivered is difficult because (for some projects) they were not quantified. In other cases the identified measures were never going to give the necessary information to evidence successful outcomes.

It should be noted that the external evaluation revealed that only 8 out of 20 projects were identified as having a high impact against the four aims of the landscape partnership programme. A high impact was identified as a project that: *"has conserved or restored the built and natural environment distinct to Dumfries and Galloway on a large scale, either through a single large example of the built and natural environment or a series of smaller scale projects."*ⁱ

The following sections comment on the individual projects that have been delivered, highlighting both successes and problems.

Landscape Features

Projects within this theme were designed to reinforce characteristic landscape features and local distinctiveness.

- The Galloway Natural Heritage project involved work on three existing reserves. Planned outputs for access, habitat management and community engagement and interpretation were all achieved. 96 events and activities comfortably exceeded the original planned figure in no small part due to employing a community liaison officer.
- The success of the Fleet Valley, Nith Estuary and East Stewartry National Scenic Areas project is difficult to track as some of the proposed activities were not quantified although the achievements are in line with what was planned. Outputs included the production of design guidance, a village appraisal and design statement, eight wildlife surveys, creation of 3km of hedgerow, delivery of 700 volunteer workdays, 59ha of habitat management, the involvement of 26 schools, and delivering 264 events.

Conserving and celebrating local cultural associations

Projects within this theme were designed with the goal of sustainably managing and celebrating local cultural heritage through enhanced understanding, appreciation and community ownership.

ⁱ Natural Capital (2010) Evaluation of the Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership Project

- The Castle and Hightae Lochs and Robert the Bruce Trail projects delivered ten arts based interpretive features, 30 interpretation boards and four promotional leaflets between them. Other outputs included the creation of hedgerow, 57ha of habitat management and improvements to footpaths and fishing platforms.
- In the external evaluation Balloch Wood Heritage and Bruce's Motte and Bailey were two projects that did not achieve a high impact score. The projects did however deliver a number of outputs including access improvements, habitat management and interpretation.

The success of all the projects in this theme area are difficult to judge as many of the planned activities were not quantified at the outset.

Local Priority Habitats and Species

This theme was designed to conserve, enhance and promote local priority habitats and species and attracted nearly £1million in terms of financial investment.

- The Action for Wood Pastures project benefited from the employment of a part time project officer. 3,281ha of wood pasture was mapped along with 167 wildlife surveys. Three demonstration sites were set up and eight interpretation boards produced. 588ha of habitat management contributed to four biodiversity action plan targets. It is unclear if the original intention of 30 action plans for woodland pasture was achieved.
- The Black Grouse Habitat project achieved identified outputs with 1.8km of vegetation swiped, 20 scrapes created, 12ha of conifers removed and 13ha of mixed woodland planted. In terms of outcomes it is not clear if this management work has led to an increase in black grouse numbers or whether awareness of the work has been raised.
- The work undertaken on the Threave Wetlands achieved the planned outputs relating to access and awareness and exceeded the original intention of creating 593m of planted screens with 1.8km of hedgerow being created and managed.
- The Esk Riparian Management project is more difficult to assess as neither proposed activities nor outputs achieved have been quantified although habitat improvement, access work and awareness raising activities have been undertaken.

Access for All to the Natural and Cultural Heritage

The intention within this theme was to promote greater social inclusion through appropriate access to the natural and cultural heritage using interpretation and recreation opportunities.

- The Annandale Way project created 55 mile distance walking route following the river Annan. This project exceeded intended outputs access infrastructure and awareness activities have been implemented but evidence of use remains anecdotal. SNH is now promoting this route at a national level.
- Kirroughtree Lade Trail exceeded all intended outputs because it was agreed the original (and more expensive) access improvements were no longer necessary.
- The Rivers Kirtle and Annan Habitat Project met all outputs: 35km of riparian corridor received management, 68ha of land was safeguarded and 75 events were put on to explain what was going on to both landowners and members of the public.
- The Angling for All project exceeded infrastructure outputs with eight improved or new facilities rather than the three proposed. The awareness raising outcomes are more difficult to assess as neither proposed activities nor outputs achieved were quantified.

Principal quantitative outputs delivered by the Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership

Conserving or restoring built and natural features that create historic landscape character

- 927ha of active habitat management contributing to 13 local Biodiversity Action Plan targets
- 52km of riparian corridor management
- 310 wildlife surveys completed
- 7,983 hectares of land surveyed
- 9km of hedgerows managed or created
- 15 new community wildlife sites created

Increasing community participation in local heritage

- 3,826 volunteer days
- 218 events involving communities/community groups
- 9,486 participants attending 614 guided walks and community events

Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage

- 344 new gates, bridges and finger posts installed
- 137km of new and improved access completed
- * 154 interpretation boards produced and installed
- * 7 websites developed or improved
- 73 newsletters produced and circulated
- 52 promotional leaflets or publications produced
- 90 press and media releases
- 24 art based interpretative features installed
- 9,289 children attending 404 school events

Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

- 131 training courses benefiting 1,272 individuals

Education on the Natural, Cultural and Landscape Heritage

This awareness raising and information theme was aimed at local people and visitors to educate and inform them about the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

- The Galloway Red Kite Trail exceeded planned outputs. Achievements included engagement with 28 local businesses (against 10 planned), involving 12 schools (4 planned) and working with 27 community groups (7 planned). Additional outputs included 35 events, 19 interpretation boards and the creation of a local business partnership.
- Galloway Bankside Habitat delivered some substantial outputs with 22 schools involved in projects to discuss freshwater issues, as well as 18km of riparian management and 37 wildlife surveys completed. Whilst all of these outputs were intended specific figures were not given, making it difficult to assess overall success.
- Wigtown Bay to Loch Ken Interpretation focussed on interpretation and promotion, it is not clear if the library of recorded landscape stories was achieved.

Conserving and Developing Heritage Skills

The Conserving and Developing Local Skills theme comprised an ambitious programme of work including the creation of an education and training centre for a total budget of £½ million. Many of the measures identified within this programme area related to numbers of individuals trained rather than identifying downstream benefits such as skills developed, or outcomes as trainees move into new or different employment.

- A Community and Visitor Liaison Officer was employed along with four field teachers to help deliver the Mersehead Natural Heritage project. Some planned outputs have been exceeded and others have not been achieved, particularly those relating to habitat management work. It is not clear how the education and training centre operated with no outputs identified for the training programmes. 282 school visits were recorded so the target of delivering an education programme to 1,000 children per year (assuming 30 pupils per class visit) may well have been exceeded five-fold.
- Conservation of Historic Graveyards was identified as having a high impact for this theme although this was another project that had few quantifiable outputs identified at the planning stage.

6.3 Conclusions

Capitalising on the partnership approach

Sulwath Connections as a brand has been effective as the 'umbrella' for undertaking the portfolio of projects. The particular strengths of this partnership have been strong partnership working together with the engagement of local communities and volunteers. The scheme adopted a strategic regional approach to projects, with associated outcomes and benefits, and clear guidance and support was provided to partners by the central project team.

In a limited visitor survey that was carried out at the end of the project around 25% of respondents reported that they had heard of Sulwath Connections. However a number of people involved with the partnership acknowledged that outside of those immediately connected with projects they felt that the awareness of the Sulwath 'brand' and logo was likely to be limited.

The nature of the programme meant that the majority of projects have been completed during the final year of the scheme. Consequently while some outputs can be demonstrated - since in most cases these are tangible and easily measured. - the anticipated outcomes have proved difficult to measure and evidence as they will generally take longer to materialise. From the preceding sections it can be seen that many projects have delivered in line with what was intended, but there have been some issues in terms of defining project outputs during the conception and / or the delivery of others. As a result of this, combined with the large project area, we conclude that the partnership, and HLF, have achieved only average value for money, notwithstanding of some impressive specific project achievements.

Continuity and legacy

The main weakness highlighted in the project evaluation was the lack of planning for succession and continuity. The evaluation revealed that there was no plan for the period beyond HLF funding, particularly in terms of the continuation of the Sulwath Connections 'brand'. It is not clear where responsibility lies in terms of future obligations. While the Economic Development team in Dumfries and Galloway Council hosted the project, senior staff changes between securing Stage 2 approval and the project implementation period meant that there was no real project champion within the host authority. Such an individual could have helped lay the foundation for a more concrete legacy.

Summary of strengths and weaknesses

It is clear that the partnership team and individual partners delivered a comprehensive programme of projects, particularly where there was the employment of dedicated project staff. Many of the individual projects have achieved what they set out to do, particularly when measured against the partnership theme objectives but the achievements of the projects when measured against HLF aims are more questionable.

At the planning stage some of the projects seem to have had insufficient focus on the aims of the HLF programme. The original submission to HLF contained a lot of outputs defined only in qualitative terms, and (too many) over-ambitious outcomes which cannot be measured. In part this shortcoming may be a reflection of the large partnership area.